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**Eyeing marriage equality: News media representation of
same-sex marriage legalization debate in Taiwan**

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Abstract

In 2016, Taiwan was on the verge of becoming the first in Asia to allow same-sex marriage. An amendment aimed at changing marriage definition in Civil Code has passed the first-round reading in legislative committee in 26 December 2016. However, although Taiwan is seen as one of the most gay-friendly places in Asia, the same-sex marriage bill has generated intensive debates among citizens. And massive street demonstrations on both sides have rolled through the city of Taipei over the last few months. During the legalization process, the media has played a significant role in presenting the arguments for and against marriage equality. And how a controversial issue is covered will also affect readers' perception of it.

The aim of this thesis is to investigate how does Taiwanese media represent the two opposing sides in the same-sex marriage debate, as well as what role the media play in shaping the tone of the debate. By applying the method of qualitative content analysis, I examined and analyzed the news coverage of same-sex marriage legalization in three main Taiwanese newspapers within two months. The study reaches the conclusion that within the media coverage of same-sex marriage opponents, the homosexuals are negatively represented as the other, as deviation, as a threat to social survival and social norms. On the contrary, within the supportive arguments, homosexuals are represented as normal citizens as heterosexuals, and therefore they deserve the equal right to marry. In general, the opposite opinions are more vocal in the press media, which shape negative tone of same-sex marriage discussion.

Keywords: same-sex marriage; Taiwan; newspaper; marriage equality; media representation

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Introduction

“A historical shift is underway. The time has come.” This is a quote from former U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon in his historic speech at the United Nations Human Rights Council on March 7, 2012(UN website 2012). The same-sex marriage legalization issue has received high concern worldwide. In 2001, the Netherlands became the first country to allow same-sex marriage between gay men and lesbian women; since then, same-sex marriage has been legally recognized in more than 20 countries in the world up to February 2017. However, most of them are located in Western Europe and Northern America, while Asian countries are nearly absent from the list.

For several years now, Taiwan has been at the forefront of Asia’s gay right movement. While gay sexual behaviors are still illegal in Singapore, and LGBT issues are considered politically sensitive and culturally alien in mainland China, Taiwan holds a more inclusive and friendly attitude towards the LGBT community: for example, gays and lesbians are allowed to serve openly in military; students accept gender equality education in school; in the run-up to the 2016 election, President Tsai Ing-wen publicly declared her support for same-sex marriage; And the gay-pride parade in Taipei has become the biggest one among Asia, drawing more than 200 thousand people from Asian region and around the world. During these years, Taiwan has earned the reputation as a regional leader on gay rights(*Washington Post* 2017.3). And Taiwanese outstanding gay-theme media artifacts, such as TV drama, movies and advertisements have been playing a positive role in the improvement of gays and lesbians equality and changed the general mood in society. (Zhu, 2003)

In 2016, Taiwan was on verge of becoming the first Asian country to legalize equal marriage. On October 2016, a group of lawmakers from different political parties worked together to pledged to legalize same-sex marriage in Taipei. The proposal would legalize same-sex marriage by changing the law’s definition in the Civil Code of the constituents of a marriage from “a man and a woman” to “two sides”. This act would entitle same-sex couples to the same marital, parental and adoptive rights and obligations accorded to heterosexual couples. In December 26, 2016, the

proposal passed the first-round reading in Legislative Yuan, bringing the country one more step closer to becoming the first in Asia to legalize same-sex marriage. Although the marriage equality bill is still on legislative session, and its future is full of uncertainty, it is undeniable that Taiwan is playing a pioneering role in promoting gays and lesbians equal rights in Asia.

My choice of this thesis topic is based on my experience as an exchange student in Taiwan, during which the local debate of marriage equality was at its climax. The intensive public debate in Taiwan over this issue is a reaction similar to the Western European and North American countries, when they, too, were tackling the topic of marriage equality. Although with the groundswell support of marriage equality, it has been strongly backlashed by a certain Christian groups and social conservatives. They have mobilized against the marriage-equality movement, warning that same-sex partnership is a threat to children and that giving families legal protection will hurt Taiwan's future.

Taiwan is now standing at a crossroad. The decision it is going to make will be critical to the its future as well as other Asian countries gay right movement. While the media has been playing a significant role in the public debate and the public policy formation(Dahlgren, 2009; Li&Liu 2010), it is well-timed and compelling to give an examination of Taiwanese media reports of the issue. Although the field of same-sex marriage and media has been developed by many scholars, most of the researches are situated within Western Europe and America. However, same-sex marriage debates are often culture-specific(Jowett 2014). The issue of marriage equality within an Eastern, Confucianism cultural context in media perspective is still under discovered.

I hope to fill the gap by exploring the Taiwanese newspaper coverage, to see how the debate was represented in media, and how the people for and against marriage equality justify and legitimize their arguments. I also hope to critically analyze the role of Taiwanese news media outlets in this issue, and whether it succeeded in challenging or undermining the heterosexual hegemony through its coverage of same-sex marriage. In order to achieve this aim, I will conduct qualitative content analysis to examine the newspaper coverage of three main newspapers in Taiwan, including *Apple Daily*, *China Times* and *United Daily News*. In a larger context, I hope

to provide some new perspectives of marriage equality developed in Asian countries. And I wish to contribute to the gay right movement in Asia, and the battle for a more equal society.

The thesis started by analysing that some significant changes have taken place in marriage institution during the past several decades, and same-sex relationship is one of them. Then I will turn to debates within LGBT community about marriage. An overview of the research about media, homosexuals and same-sex marriage will be followed. After describing the method and methodology, I will analyze the media representations of opposite side and supportive side respectively, and the overall media performance in this case.

Research Questions:

How do the Taiwanese newspapers represent the same-sex marriage legalization debate?

- How are homosexuals, and the marriage between homosexuals, represented within the media coverage of the opponents?
- Which arguments are used to support the same-sex marriage?
- What is the main tone of the newspaper coverage of the debate?

Literature Review

Marriage

To better understand the representation of same-sex marriage in Taiwanese media, it is crucial to first give an overview of the marriage institution about its characteristics, and the changes that have taken place.

Marriage, arguably serving as one of the most central institutions of modern life, is currently regarded as a site of contestation, rather than a consensus(Hull 2006). Although there are widely varying opinions towards the definition and understanding of marriage, most scholars agree that marriage is an institution of human creation, with its form and justification varying historically and cross-culturally. Marriage cannot be easily captured with one definition. If one looks back to the historical precedents, one could see dramatic changes has taken place in marital relationship. As a state-created institution, those alterations - the legalization of interracial marriage, the allowance of no-fault divorce and adoption of children - essentially serve the newly recognized state interests and social ideals.

Marriage is generally considered as a private issue between two people, a personal commitment of love and loyalty. However, although marriage is often seen as a covert realm of privacy, it is also regarded as a public institution that not only creates a right to a private sexual relationship, but also an institution that defined by public policy(Cott, 2000; Coontz, 2004; Hull, 2006). The dual feature is embedded in the essence of marriage - on the one hand, it is understood as a natural and pre-political cornerstone of human society; on the other hand, it is structured by state law and policy. And this tension is partly what leads to the conflict and confusion every time when marriage law undergoes changes.

Historian Coontz(2004) believed that, we are now in a time when the social role and mutual relationship of marriage is qualitatively different from that in the past. Although there is nothing really new when it comes to a particular variation or practice of marriage, such as divorce and single parenthood, “the coexistence in one society of so many alternative ways” (p.974), is never seen before in history. Although marriage has never been a statics institution, since the beginning

of 21st century, it is no exaggeration to say that marriage has been facing one of the most significant changes in its 5000 years history. The past several years have witnessed the demand of gay and lesbian couples for social and legal recognition of their unions, which challenges the definition and boundaries of marriage as never before. The wave of demanding marriage equality first started in Western Europe and America, and has spread around the world, including Asian countries. As a historian embracing the changes, Coontz(2004) argued that the legalization of same-sex marriage is a symptom, instead of the cause, of how great changes have taken place in marital relationship. And the changes are irreversible and inevitable.

The transformation of marriage

Today, we are surrounded by all kinds of imagine of love and marriage images in mass media and popular culture, from romantic films and TV dramas to popular love songs and fashion magazines. Within media, the concept that love is the foundation of marriage and family life is almost taken for granted, and marriage is seen as an appropriate and exciting culmination of a romantic love relationship. Interestingly, according to Coontz(ibid), love has not been regarded as the necessity of marriage and family forming until as late as recent as 200 years ago. In the past, marriage served as organizing people's position in the social and political hierarchy of society. Most people entered into marriages for the political and economic benefits it would bring. The individual's emotional desires were a secondary consideration, especially for women. In the 19th century, a new marital ideal of love inaugurated, correlated with a series of changes taking place in Western Europe and America. Couples were supposed to put the majority of their emotion energy to nuclear families. From the historical trajectory of marriage, it is obvious that marriage and its meaning are culturally and historically specific, and one of the major sites for the meaning construction is the media.

Noted by Coontz(ibid), from the 1970s, almost all Western countries and some non-Western countries have experienced a blurring of differences between married and unmarried individuals in terms of legal responsibilities. Andrew Cherlin(2004) termed the process as “deinstitutionalization” of marriage in American context. By using deinstitutionalization he meant that the social norms to define partner's behaviors in social institution like marriage has been weakening. More and more unmarried individuals can enjoy the same rights and be

subjected to many obligations that used to depend on the marriage license, making marriage become more indefinable. Conversely, the married couples who want to be apart no longer are bound together by legal responsibilities or economic necessity. The trend of deinstitutionalization showed up in demographical statistics as the fading distinction of labor division in home, increasing out-of-wedlock babies, the growth of cohabitation, and emergence of same-sex marriage. Specifically, the transition in the meaning of marriage has further changed from what Ernest Burgess (1945 in Cherlin, 2004) called companionate marriage to individualized marriage. To say individualization he meant that people care more about their own feelings and fulfillment in marriage, rather than being satisfied with building a family or playing the roles of spouse and parent. He described it as an emphatic shift “from role to self” (p.852).

Consistent with Cherlin’s argument, the famous sociological theorist of modernity (or late-modernity) such as Anthony Giddens (1992) and Ulrich Beck and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim (1995) have written about the trend of growing individualization within personal life. They both noticed the dominant power of the mechanisms of family life, such as social norms or traditional concepts, gradually declining. Instead, the role of personal choice is expanding. After giving a close look at the rise of the social status of women in modern society, Giddens (1992) asserted that the extraordinary increase in the economic independence and legal equality of women has reshaped the social landscape of family life.

He illustrated that we are witnessing “the transformation of intimacy”: the traditional idea of “marriage for life” is replaced by a “pure relationship” (p.58), which means that both partners are willing to enter into and sustain relations for their own sake, and this relationship can only be continued when both sides think about delivering enough satisfaction for every individual to stay within it. Unlike in traditional culture, when marital relationship was constructed for economic or symbolic convenience, people’s decision of marriage orient towards mutual fulfillment in modern society. The emergence of “plastic sexuality” (p.2), the sex that freed from reproduction, is a crucial prerequisite of this transformation. Due to the arrival of effective contraception, women can truly enjoy their sexual pleasure without the fear of pregnancy. The joy of sex almost seemed impossible in the past for women, because pregnancy came with sex, as well as the pain

and fear of childbirth. By engaging in plastic sexuality, women for the first time in history, have gained their sexual autonomy, making it possible to achieve sexual and emotional equality with men in marriage. Yet, the description of a “pure relationship” was criticized that it is not suitable for the couples who have less optimistic financial situations (Jamieson, 1999), and it took a little consideration about children (Cherlin, 2004). Still, Giddens demonstrated ideal-type of extreme autonomy in relationships that placed both partners on equal footing, and enabled them to develop their own sense of self identity.

Sharing with the Giddens an interest in “pure relationships”, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1995) pointed out the collision of interests between love, family and personal freedom. The individualized self is exactly where the problems come from. In the domain of intimacy, the trend of individualization self results in the devaluation of standardized models for intimate relationships. According to them, the “normal” biographies of love, are being replaced by “do it yourself biographies.”

Does marriage still matter?

What’s more, the notion that seeing marriage as a golden standard of romantic love has been challenged by modern scholars. Although they admitted that people have an ever-growing need for true emotions and intimacy, Beck and Beck and Beck-Gernsheim predicted that marriage will not remain distinctive and important as now. They claimed that marriage would become a choice for companion or intimacy, rather than a necessity. And we would see “a huge variety of ways of living together or apart which will continue to exist side by side” (pp. 141–142). Giddens (1992) even argued that marriage has already become “just one life-style among others” (p. 154), although people may not yet realize it because of institutional lag.

However, Gross (2005) criticized that the overthrow of marriage is empirically problematic. According to him, a distinction between “regulative” and “meaning constructive” tradition must be identified in understanding the detraditionalization of marriage. What has indeed declined in recent years is the regulative traditional marriage - the lifelong, internally gender-stratified marriage which “premised on and unequal labor division of labor, power and resources between a heterosexual dyad” (p.288). Nevertheless, while those who deviate from traditional lifelong,

internally stratified marriage(LISM) are subject to less social and legal norms than the past, it does not follow that the images of certain form of couplehood that underpin LISM become less important. Instead, they continue to serve as the hegemonic ideal form of intimacy relationship, at least in America. The “meaning-constructive” tradition manifests itself in the phenomenon that there is still a significant numbers of couples who conceive of and struggle for the idealized form of traditional marriage, a relationship that is associated with commitment, lifelong stability, child-rearing and constructing family(Green, 2013).

Overall, research and writings on the changing meaning of marriage suggest that it is now situated in a very different context than in the past. Within marriage today, roles are more flexible and negotiable. Individuals aim for personal growth and deeper intimacy through more open communication and mutually shared disclosures about feelings with their partners. The personal satisfaction is placed at the central in marriage. Therefore, we can see there are more forms of marriage and more alternatives to marriage. Among them, marrying someone of the same gender and building a shared marital world is a crucial part.

Marriage debate among gays and lesbians

However, when it comes to the LGBT community, the idea of marriage as an institution has been criticized for a long time. A quick look through the media coverage of gay rights campaigns and other, may lead to the conclusion that all gays and lesbians support marriage in both its legal and cultural forms. For example, we saw the images of happy faces of homosexual couples in news reports when US Supreme Court ruled gay marriage is legal nationwide. However, the current situation of same-sex marriage debate is more complicate than media coverage suggests.

Scholars in feminism and queer studies have been debating for years whether marriage quest is desirable, and it reveals different opinions about the political and cultural goals of the gay rights movement as well as which tactics should be taken to reach the them. I do not intend to judge which position is more reasonable. Rather, this section will shed a light on diverse perspectives of intra-community debate among LGBT theorists and activists. In particular, I want to unfolds a fault line among LGBT community between activists who embrace a material-benefit-oriented approach in the gay rights movement, and those who advocate an entire transformation of mainstream understanding of sexuality, marriage and citizenship(Hull 2006).

1. Arguments in favor of same-sex marriage

The supporters of same-sex marriage are obviously more vocal and visible in media. Activists argue that same-sex marriage is a worthy and more realistic goal to fight. Many of them (Stoddard, 1992; Wolfson, 1994; Sullivan, 1996) asserted that legislation of same-sex marriage could solve some practical and political problems at stake. For example, homosexuals will have tax benefits and legal protection such as getting inheritance rights, making the medical decision for one's spouse and so on. In the political perspective, advocates situated the quest for marriage within a broader civil right movement context, asserting that the civil rights movement and same-sex marriage rights movement shares the similarity of calling for equality in society. (Wolfson, 1994; Chauncey, 2003 in Hull, 2006) Legal recognition of same-sex marriage would be a big step forward in constructing an equal society, as the right to marry should be available to all citizens. These ideas have become more commonly seen in mass media, and same-sex marriage has been taken as a hallmark of gender and sexual equality.

2. Arguments against same-sex marriage:

The prevailing argument against same-sex marriage within the queer community has nothing to do with abandoning the pursuit of equal status of sexual minority groups. Rather, they criticize that same-sex marriage is not a desirable goal for the gay rights movement, because it cannot truly provide equal citizenship to LGBT persons, and it is contrary to many core beliefs of queer thoughts (Josephson 2005; Warner 1999). However, these voices that are against marriage within LGBT communities are barely represented in media, which leads to little space for public discussion of more radical changes in marriage institution (Jowett & Peel 2010).

Ettelbrick (1992 in Hull 2006) feared that the fight for same-sex marriage legalization may force homosexuals couples to conform and assimilate to a mainstream heterosexual culture. During this process, some core appeals of gay liberation, such as respect for diversity family forms and intimate relationship, would be undermined. Echoing Ettelbrick's point, Lisa Duggan (2002; 2003), as one of the most vocal queer opponents of the same-sex marriage, proposed the "homonormative critique". Inspired by the concept of heteronormativity - an ideology that institutionalized heterosexuality constitutes a "normal mode" for legitimate and expected social

and sexual relations, she termed the depiction of desirability of same-sex marriage as homonormativity. It does not challenge the mainstream heteronormative assumptions and institutions, instead, it requires acceptance and internalization of heteronormative ideals to create families within the gay and lesbian community. By distracting gay men and lesbians with domesticity and consumption, she noted, it demobilized gay activists, and further privatize and depoliticized gay culture. Therefore, the act of LGBTQ individuals entering into marriage will inherently lead to normalization tendencies.

Furthermore, the conservative nature of marriage itself, which links a particular form of intimate association with adult citizenship, is problematized by queer scholars (Warner 1999; Josephson 2005). They insist that marriage is an inherently stratifying institution that privileges one specific form of sexual relationship among others. They fear that the marriage quest may result in a secondary exclusion in the queer community (Warner 1999; Phelan in Josephson 2005), because married couples could enjoy greater social, economic and political privileges than those non-married or choosing alternative forms to establish families.

In sum, queer theorists seek for a progressive, egalitarian citizenship, which requires entirely new ways in thinking about intimacy and full citizenship. What hinders them from the same-sex marriage social movement is the worry that the success of same-sex marriage would be a step backward in the quest for equality and civil rights in a more radical queerness (Josephson 2005).

Media representations matter

People get their understanding of the world, including the beliefs of marriage and sexuality, from their personal interaction with others and from cultural artifacts around them. Mass media, serving as fundamental part of culture, is now playing an ever-increasing important role in people's everyday lives in a modern and capitalist society. Communication scholars have long held that the media has a strong influence on people's perspective of what and how things come to be defined in society (Meyer, 1994; Gauntlett, 2002). It can either contribute to or undermine the inequalities in our society (Dines & Humez, 2015). Rather than simply reflecting the reality, the media produces and constitutes the understandings and versions of the world (Gill, 2007).

Furthermore, Silverstone(2006) even argued that although the world exists outside the media, it works as boundary to “make an appearance” in the eyes of everybody.

Undoubtedly, news media coverage can have important influence on public discussion and policy-making. Being a central role in the public sphere, news reportage is important to provide citizens with information about social issues, ideas and debates(Dahlgren, 2009). The usage of framing in news has been highlighted by many media studies scholars to study the way media make sense out of news events(Moscowitz, 2010; McFarland, 2011; Rodriguez&Blumell, 2014). According to Entman(1993 in Rodriguez&Blumell, 2014), the media use frames to select and emphasize specific components of an issue or event, while ignoring or giving a lower profile to other components. Such media practice, ultimately shapes the way that the public receives and accepts information on the issues. In other words, by framing, the news reportage, rather than presenting an objective recording of events, takes part in the social construction of what occurred.

The way of the media represents or constructs a public issue can profoundly influence the way that audiences or readers to learn, understand and think about it (Li&Liu, 2010; McFarland, 2011). When coming to the controversy issues concerning public interest, such as changing the definition of marriage in the Civil Code, the news industry is an important site for meanings contestation, since groups in power and those trying to have a voice compete in media to be justify their arguments. Leigh Moscovitz(2013) pointed out that the battle for marriage equality has become a mediated issue in America. She illustrated that the fast-paced media environment, the journalistic norm of “balance” and the incline of highlighting conflicts oftentimes results in simplistic and two-sides framing of same-sex marriage debate. These problematic frames not only shaped the discussion in the media-centric public sphere, but also pressured movement leaders to develop a set of narratives as respondent to oppositions. She even came to the conclusion that journalism frameworks have shaped the gay rights movement strategies to a large extent.

Media, homosexuals, and discourse

Media representations are subject to many determining influences. Academic works from feminists and critical cultural studies revealed that media representation operate within an overall

set of sexual power relationship that privilege the heterosexuality and reproduction (Robins 1989 in Moscovitz, 2010; Meyer, 1994; Gill, 2007). When we talking about the power within media practices, it is important to refer to Foucault's analysis of discourse and knowledge/power relationship. In the *History of Sexuality*, Foucault (1978) argued that the ways people understand sexuality are shaped by a certain kind of discourse, which is bound up with the power relations. "Sexuality" is an arena for the playing out of power and knowledge relationships among multiple actors. Through the process of confession of sexuality in religious and medical, science and medicine experts began to take up discourse on sex, situating themselves as the authority on sex, both physically and morally. The "species" of homosexual is invented through discursive practises. Foucault pointed out that discourse is a particular way of talking or presenting about things, which can shape how we perceive the world and ourselves (Gauntlett, 2002). Power have an intimate connection with the production of knowledge, which has a regulatory function. The ability to influence the certain discourse is a form of power that can be exercised. (ibid) Therefore, the discourse provides a framework for people to make sense of the world and their own experience, and it can be seen to be bound up with a social structures and practices that mask power relations operating in society.

Today, the popular media is obviously regarded as one of the primary channels to produce, reinforce and disseminate the prevailing discourse. It is argued by feminists scholars that the media have being doing discursive practices to create and regulate the boundaries of gender and sexual identities, and presenting it as natural or common sense. The newspaper, as the other kinds of media, is seen as a part of "larger hegemonic power structure" (Moscovitz, 2010: 26), journalists who produce them are unavoidably influenced by and thus internalize the prevailing social norms, values, and beliefs. Therefore, the discursive practices defined by Foucault have been fully integrated in news production. It contributes to the manifestation and reinforcement of heterosexual hegemony, while subordination in heterosexual relationship have been marginalized and stigmatized. Even though the visibility of gays and lesbians within the media have improved in the past several decades, media scholars have revealed that negative discourse has have been consistently reproduced within the media coverage of the legislative changes that concern the LGBT equality issue (Meyer, 1994). In addition, the media has been criticized that in most occasions it has failed to recognize the subordinated position of LGBT communities in society.

The media is more inclined to give preference to heterosexual interpretation, and does not challenge hegemonic notions of gender and sexuality in reporting equality demands for gays and lesbians (Rahman, 2004; Moscovitz, 2010; Jowett & Peel, 2010; Rodriguez & Blumell, 2014).

The media representation of gay marriage

Most of the researchers working on the media coverage of gays and lesbians entering into marriage started after 2003, when the Massachusetts Supreme Court passed the law to allow same-sex marriage. Coinciding with the election campaigns, same-sex marriage was put by mainstream media on the national stage as never before. In media studies, there are two main approaches to explore the topic of the media and same-sex marriage issue. Some scholars studied people's attitude towards same-sex marriage, and tried to summarize the affecting demographic variables. (Herek, 2011; Schwartz, 2010; Becker & Scheufele, 2009; Lee & Hicks, 2011)

They indicated that heterosexuals' attitudes towards marriage equality are related with a series of individual characteristics, such as political values, ethnicity, religious beliefs, daily contact with LGBT individuals and their sexual prejudices. Lee and Hicks (2011) found that those who back same-sex marriage share a media consumption preference of watching television and reading blog. However, such attitudinal researchers have been criticized, for they considered the heterosexuality as pre-existing knowledge and individualized a political problem. The heterosexuality, pointed out by critical cultural studies theorist Ingraham (2016), operates as an institution that is being structured, reproduced and maintained in daily practices and mass media. Jewett (2014) argued that 'attitude' towards matters of controversy and debate should not be treated as individual's internal thoughts, but rather the reflection of a rhetoric that constructs and represents the issue.

In an effort of focusing on rhetoric perspective rather than attitudes, Jowett and Peel (2010) examined the British newspaper coverage of marriage and civil partnership, and highlighted their view that both marriage and civil partnership are the outcomes of social constructions. Their meanings, rather than fixed, have been culturally contested within the field of media. The civil partnership may be able to be regarded as an empty container that different stakeholders can invest with different meanings.

Besides, other studies took a closer look at how the media framed the gay marriage issue. The media framing is a useful approach to provide a closer look at how the media makes sense out events (Anderson, 2008; Moscovitz, 2010; Rodriguez 2014). A bulk of studies have shown that same-sex marriage is mainly framed by two core values: equality and morality. (Brewer, 2003; Rodriguez, 2014; Pan, Meng&Zhou, 2014) Those who are in favor of same-sex marriage focus on the human right issue and argue that the right of to marry should be granted equally. And the opposite side insists that changing the definition of marriage will endanger the long-standing social and religious institutions of family and marriage. Thus, the marriage debate has been represented as a two-sided “culture war”, in most of the researches (McFarland, 2011).

Some research, however, found greater diversity of frame constructions in their studies. Brewer (2003), McFarland (2011) and Rodriguez&Blumell (2014) have uncovered that the American media has used more than the two dichotomous value frames to report LGBT issues. While the equality and morality frames can be viewed as master frames, they were used in combination with each other and other values, such as partisanship and ideology (Brewer, 2003). After analyzing 600 newspaper articles in the United States, McFarland (2011) described 17 different frames that were used in same-sex marriage debate. Those frames can be classified by 7 overarching themes: morality, government, rights, marriage, children, harm, and distraction. And she examined the section, ‘letters to editor’, concluding that elite and non-elite letter writers have obviously difference preferences in frame usage. The nonelites were significantly more likely to use morality, marriage and children when they discussed the same-sex marriage. Rodriguez and Blumell presented us a more up-to-date landscape of marriage discussion in the *New York Times*. They highlighted that journalists tried to “draw these extreme polarized ends together”, and reposition the frames in more intermediate stage. For instance, within the themes of children, reportage that shows scientific results to support gay parenting can be seen. And more religious groups show their acceptance to marriage equality in press media.

Scholars who studied the media coverage of gays and lesbians marriage quest also focused on who is talking in media. They noticed that the quoted sources were mainly from government officials or elites, while gays and lesbians were rarely given the opportunity to speak out their perspectives. (Moscovitz, 2010; Rodriguez&Blumell, 2014; Pan, Meng&Zhou, 2010)

Moscowitz(2010) argued that although gay and lesbian couples often appeared in news as “image bite”, they contributed little to the linguistic content. According to her, they served as a “visual ornamentation” in television news reports, which means they were largely seen but not heard. She thus criticized that the debate of marriage redefinition was “dominated by conventionally ‘straight’ perspective”, and the representation of LGBT individuals was “largely normalized and mainstreamed in typically heteronormative ways.” Scholars also worried that if the lack of voice from the LGBTQ community continue, the power imbalance of sexual minority might be reinforced. (Rodriguez&Blumell, 2014)

Media and same-sex marriage in Taiwan

The researchers focusing on the media and same-sex marriage debate have been mainly conducted in the United States, since this issue has been more visible on American political agenda, and attracted a more sustained media attention (Jowett, 2014). Undoubtedly, the issue of same-sex marriage is culturally specific. Hung(2007) considered that the two aspects of same-sex marriage debate—homosexuals and marriage—can not be observed and discussed without specific social context. On the one hand, each society has its unique history, form and socio-cultural meaning of marriage. On the other hand, the tolerance and perspectives towards homosexuals and their marriage vary in different social cultures. Therefore, when studying the issue of same-sex marriage debate in Asia, it’s necessary to conduct research grounded in Taiwan’s historical and cultural context.

The studies that dig into the relationship between LGBT individuals and media didn’t start until the last several decades in Taiwan. Researchers who studied media coverage of gays and lesbians issue revealed that the widespread anti-gay tone and “straight lens” has been rooted in newspaper and television reports throughout 30 years history(Wu, 1998; Wang, 2011; Lai, 2002; Lin, 2015). Consistent with the argument of discourse and power relationship operated within the media, that the stereotypes and stigmatization that in favor of heterosexuality is preferred by media outlets. Lai(2002) found that such news coverage underpinned a presumption value that gay communities were homogeneously live in an immoral lifestyle, and they were inclined to indulge in sexual pleasure without real emotion. Lin(2015) concluded that the gays and lesbians in news were routinely pictured as abnormal, criminal and horny in 1970s to 1990s. Also, gays were

constructed as victims of drug abuse and physical or mental disease. As the emergence of gay-themed television, films and advertising, and the fight of the gay rights movement in Taiwan, some voices from LGBT community appealing for equal human right have been presented, and they have received unprecedented visibility from media and popular culture after the 1990s.

However, the critical cultural scholars noticed that the prevalence of gays and lesbians in entertainment cultural products is just a part of emerging consumerism in media, and it has not challenged homophobia or questioned the hegemony of heterosexuality(Zhou&Zhao, 1995 in Lin, 2015; Ma, 2003; Li, 2008). Media consumed gays and lesbians topics by presenting them in sensational words and expressions to grab readers eyeballs, even when covering a serious political gay right issue (Zhao&Zhou, 1995 in Lin, 2015). Ma(2003) investigated the gays and lesbians media representation in television news reports, arguing that although LGBT individuals have more media exposure, they are placed at a position of “to-be-looked-at” with strangeness through heterosexual lens. They criticized that media consumed the topic of gays and lesbians to feed audience curiosity, especially in entertainment celebrities news. From a feminist perspective, Li(2010) critically examined the gays and lesbians media images in entertainment news, and revealed that lesbians are suffering double discrimination for their gender and sexual orientation. They are regarded unable to have “real” sex under the patriarchal, heterosexual social environment. Despite the unfavorable media environment, nevertheless, LGBT activists and scholars admitted that media reportage is one of the best channels for gays and lesbians to claim their rights and against discrimination. Therefore, the emotion of ambivalence is embedded between media and LGBT communities - on the one hand, gays and lesbians rely on media to speak up for them, on the other hand, they were placed under the spotlight for media consumption and sensationalization(Zhang, 2004).

As the gay rights movement was introduced and developed in Taiwan since the 1990s, the appeal for same-sex marriage legalization has first emerged in media in this time. However, The existing studies about same-sex marriage in Taiwan and mainland China are predominately focus on the legal aspect. A series of legal researchers argued that homosexuals are under the protection of citizen’s basic right based on constitution, and justified the same-sex marriage legalization from the Principle of Equality(Tu, 2008). As there’s no legal precedent in other

Asian countries, Taiwanese scholars studied the development of same-sex marriage legalization in America and Europe, and aim to provide Taiwan with a practical approach in the legalization process.(Wang, 2009) As mentioned above, there are a certain degree of discussions in same-sex marriage legislation perspective, however the relative studies from culture studies and/or media studies are still under explored.

Methodology and Method

1. Methodology

The purpose of my thesis is to examine the same-sex marriage coverage in Taiwan news media and find out how marriage and homosexuals were constructed within the narrative to support and against the marriage bill. What I am looking for is to understand and interpret the meanings embedded in their arguments. By analysing the empirical material, I intend to unravel the author's assumption, motives and expected consequences in their written product. Therefore, I need to dig into a specific case, and not only describe what the visual and obvious in the text, but also be interpretive to find the underlying meaning of the text.

Therefore, the qualitative content analysis has been utilized in my thesis to uncover both overt and subtle themes of media coverage. It is a well-established tool with long tradition in field of media studies (Altheide, 1996). The qualitative analysis of texts is necessary to understand their deeper meanings and likely interpretations by audiences in media studies. Unlike the quantitative content analysis, qualitative methods focused on the nuances and context of text, and the analysis of text is extended to an interpretive level (Bengtsson, 2016). As Krippendorff (2004: 8) said, it is "a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use." It allows researchers to examine text with intention, and draw the latent meanings between lines.

However, the researcher's self-reflection is an essential part of qualitative research methods. (Bengtsson, 2016). The pre-existing understanding of the researcher towards the issue must be taken into consideration, both in the planning and analysis process, in order to minimize the bias of his/her own influence. Hence, the qualitative methodology often been criticized because it is difficult and maybe impossible to do with scientific validity, reliability and generalizability (ibid). The analytical codes and categories, theories used for understanding the content are an inevitable subjective result of a choice of a researcher.

Flyvbjerg suggested that case study is crucial. It can provide precisely the context-dependent knowledge, while "context is central to understanding what social science is and can be" (2001:

9). The context must be understood to grasp the significance of the document itself(Altheide, 1996). Case study well-suited to get in-depth understanding of how certain phenomena are presented in given groups and gives concrete, practical knowledge that can serve, if not generalized, at least a specific community. This research intend to dig into a case that suited in a specific socio-cultural context of Taiwan in the year of 2016, and it enable the specific contextual knowledge of marriage and homosexuals to be understood. Also, studying case does not necessarily sacrifice the generalizability. Instead, a strategic choice of cases can significantly increase the generalizability of case study(ibid). Coming to study of same-sex marriage debate in Taiwan, it can help us to understand the current perceptions towards homosexuals and their marriage in the Asian culture environment.

2. Sampling:

Even in a small island like Taiwan, there is a very large number of media outlets. And therefore, I have been selective in deciding which media to examine. As mentioned above, the news media have been playing a crucial role in the way that public learn, understand and think about a public issue. Although the newspaper subscriptions have dropped for several years, print media is still relevant. All the main newspapers put their news articles on Facebook pages so that readers can read and repost them in social media platform. The newspaper reports can still be regarded as one of the major news sources for Taiwanese citizens. However, we should bear in mind that newspaper has its drawbacks. Most of its readers and letter writers are older, well-educated and cares more about politics than the remainder of the population(McFarland, 2011). Nevertheless, the young people between 20 to 30 holds a more favorable stance towards the issue(*Apple Daily* 11.29). That is to say, there may be less voices from the supportive part in newspapers opinion sections. Despite these weaknesses, newspapers are still a proper channel for researcher to gain a sense of how ideological and political implications of constructing the world in particular ways.

Taiwanese media has been deeply influence by its two main parties, Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) and Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT). Generally speaking, the media support DPP tend to be liberal and less friendly to China mainland, while media in favor of KMT is conservative and stay close to China mainland. Nowadays, the ruling party in Taiwan is DPP. When choosing the newspaper, the factors that I took into consideration including, newspaper

format, circulation, the political stance. Since it is a controversial issue that each newspaper has their own editorial stance, in specific, I looked briefly through the four main newspapers in Taiwan and had a basic understanding about how much coverage space was given to the same-sex marriage debate and the editorial guideline towards it. Finally, I chose three main national newspapers in Taiwan: *Apple Daily*, *China Times* and *United Daily News*. Both of them have online database of published newspaper, which is convenient for me to access and collect the material. I want to grab a comprehensive understanding of the media's representation of same-sex marriage, and the editorial attitude can be clearly shown in the opinion section, therefore, my empirical material will include the news reports as well as the commentaries, letters from readers and columns.

The *Apple Daily* is a tabloid owned by Hong Kong-based media corporation Next Digital. This newspaper was first put in circulation in 2003. Though it has a rather young history, it has become one of the most influential press media with daily circulation of more than 30,000. (*Apple Daily Website*)As a tabloid, its news reporting style is more lighthearted and entertaining. However it is often criticized for its yellow journalism, using exaggerated and sensational words in headlines for sales. In politics, it claims itself to hold a neutral and open stance within the chaotic Taiwan political climate, since it is financed by a Hong Kong media company. Concerning the same-sex marriage debate, *Apple Daily* holds an advocative attitude but also includes different voices in the opinion columns.

The *China Times* is a broadsheet founded in 1950. Traditionally it has been supportive of the ruling party DPP. And it was bought by the pro-China Taiwanese businessman tycoon Tsai Eng-Meng, head of Want Want Holdings Limited in 2008, and turn to a more pro-China stance. In this case, China Times stands firmly in the opposite side of same-sex marriage.

The *United Daily New(Udn* for short), founded in 1952, is one of the longest established Chinese-language newspapers in Taiwan. It belongs to the *United Daily News Group*, which is the biggest private-owned Chinese-language newspaper group. The *United Daily News* is regarded as taking an editorial line that supports the Pan-blue coalition, which means it tends to be sympathetic to the opposition KMT, and takes a friendly stance towards Mainland China. In

this case, this newspaper advocates a moderate and to some degree conservative attitude to same-sex marriage. It prefers a ‘middle way’ stance, setting a special law to protect gay men and lesbians rights.

The time period is selected from 25th October to 30th December, 2016. This period covers some main events happened during the legalization. The marriage redefinition bill was proposed by three lawmakers in the end of October, 2016. And it immediately aroused heated debate among citizens. During this period, there were a series of mass street demonstrations from both supporters and opponents. Among them, the most influential demonstration on 10th December, the Human Rights Day, had gathered more than 400, 000 people to support marriage equality, ranking one of the largest gay right movement marches in Taiwan(*Apple Daily* 10.10). While on 3rd December, approximately 55,000 opponents rallied against same-sex marriage. Together with a series of demonstrations, the debate surrounding same-sex marriage came to the climax together with these activities. On the 26th December, the amendment of marriage definition in Civil Code passed the first round hearing of legalization process, so I decide to pause my material collection on several days after it. I think three months is a proper time length for the marriage issue be fully discussed in media.

The news articles of *Apple Daily* was accessed through their own website, and the news of *China Times* and *Udn* was collected through the database of Knowledge Management Winner(KMW) and Udn Data respectively. The keywords “same-sex marriage legalization”(同性婚姻合法化), “marriage equality”(婚姻平權), “homosexual marriage”(同志婚姻) was used as search terms. All the related articles in every section of newspapers were taken into account, including the politics, economy, entertainment and editorials. There were totally 101 pieces of articles, with 28 in *China Times*, 50 in *Apple Daily* and 33 in *Udn*.

The collected data were analyzed using inductive thematic analysis and coding. It is a process that enable researchers to examine and identified the specific themes that emerged, instead of counting explicit words and phrases(Guest et al, 2012). Following David Altheide’s(1996) method, the empirical material was coded and categorized by the date, page, title, source(s), themes and tone. The tone of the overall article, positive, negative or neutral were assigned.

While some of news reports were not mainly discussing same-sex marriage, I categorized them by the stance the person spoke in news took. Although many of them self-claiming that do they are not against homosexual marriage in general, their attitude can still be learned between the lines. Based on previous studies of media's framing of same-sex marriage(McFarland; Rodriguez), I set up a preliminary category of my data, and have an expectation what kind of statements I would encounter in my analysis process. The qualitative content analysis requires "a recursive and reflexive movement"(Altheide, 1996: 16) between data collection, coding and interpretation. During the analytic process, I found that many of these statements have multiple themes, and some new themes emerged, which requires me to return to specific context and make adjustment of my categories. The main themes were fully grounded on the theoretical framework of this thesis throughout the whole process. And some important quotes were marked out by colors, to be further discussed and interpreted in the following steps.

Generally, the materials were categorised as:

- Marriage: marriage and children/marriage is for love
- State interest: marriage redefinition will hinder the country's development/ marriage redefinition contributes to the equal society
- Equality: homosexuals right to marry can be protected by special law/ special law means a secondary citizenship
- Public opinion: legislatures cannot represent the 'silent majority', we need to hold referendum to change marriage definition
- Human right: marriage is a human right issue

Limitation:

As I mentioned above, one limitation is that young people, are less likely to use traditional media to express their opinions. And it may reflect on the newspaper material that lack of the youth voices in opinion section, especially they are more intended to advocate same-sex marriage. In addition, the online version of newspaper articles did not include news pictures, which is crucial part of the reports as a whole. And all the news are written in Chinese, the quotes are translated into English by me. The words usage between two languages may cause some problems.

Analysis of the same-sex marriage debates

In this part, I will first analyze and discuss the main arguments that are proposed by both the pro and con sides of the same-sex marriage legalization issue. In the analysis of anti-marriage equality part, I will divide their arguments into two main intertwined themes: marriage and homosexuals, and then dig into the material, to interpret the embedded meanings and premises, with the help of theories. Also the media practices in representing and framing these arguments will be discussed. In the pro-marriage equality part, I will also engage in two main themes in supportive arguments: equality/human right and love. And then, I will critically analyze the media's overall role in framing and constructing the debate. Before I go detail, the difference of words that are used to term sexual minorities in Chinese and English should be clarified. The Chinese term *tongzhi*, means 'comrade' literally, is used in most of the reports to denote gay and lesbian(Huang, 2011:2). And most of the discussions in Taiwan are focus on gays and lesbians rights, rather than LGBTQ community as a whole. Therefore, in the analytical section I will use the term homosexuals or gay and lesbian to conduct my analysis.

1. The arguments against same-sex marriage

As pointed by critical cultural scholars, the homosexuals have being subordinated and marginalized by heterosexuals for a long time. And media is regarded being aligned with the dominant power relations(Meyer, 1994; Gill, 2007). However, in Foucauldian perspective(1978), power is also productive. A dominant or hegemonic discourse is likely to produce a reverse discourse; wherever there is power, there is also resistance. The power in dominant discourse become apparent when it is contested by the alternative discourse(Burr, 2015). In this case, the 'common sense' of heterosexuality that marriage should be limited within men and women has been challenged. Therefore, a series of discourse to re-affirm the truthfulness of heterosexuality in marriage is constructed and disseminated through the channel of media's news coverage.

I will further develop in the following sections that how heterosexuals use media to produce and reinforce a set of discourses to justify its dominant position in marriage, and how they build and confirm the sexual hierarchy to pathologize homosexuals.

1.1 Marriage is designed for raising children

In the overall media reportage of opponents, marriage was constructed from a heterosexual perspective that is supposed to be bonded with children bearing and rearing. It is because, on the one hand, the purpose of reproduction is a natural and inherent trait that is embedded in sexual behaviors between human beings; on the other hand, the heterosexuality lay the foundation of the sustainable development of the society and culture. By establishing such kind of discourses and depicting them as a “common sense” or “long standing beliefs”, the media justified the heterosexual perspective of marriage that should be designed to support and value heterosexuality. The myth of heterosexual marriage has been articulated by such linguistic mechanism (Barthes 1972). While the sexual relations between gay and lesbian couples are infertile in a natural way, they should not be protected by law. As Foucault described, “nothing that was not ordered in terms of generation or transfigured by it could expect sanction or protection.” (1978: 4) It also corresponding corresponds to Lin’s (2015) study, that infertility has been the key point in debate, where heterosexuals build a wall separating LGBT people from marriage in over the past ten years.

1.1.1 Heterosexual marriage is a natural result of evolution

First of all, the argument that giving birth to children is a “naturally drive” of human’s sexual behaviors can be seen in newspaper columns or quotes from news reports. The opponents argued that the heterosexuality in intimate relationship can be stretched back to the beginning of humanity thousands years ago, and labeled it as the outcome of “thousands years development of human civilization” (*China Times* 11.24) or “a natural choice of human evolution that helps us standing in the top of food chain” (*Apple Daily* 11.28). The heterosexuality is simply how our genes preserved and succeed among other natural competitors. Nowadays law merely recognize the “reality”, but not invent it. For example, in a piece of news report of a rally against same-sex marriage:

The religious leader Chen Ke said, to have offspring is the central motivating drive for human sexuality. Marriage is far more than the union of heart and mind, it also includes a bodily union made possible by sexual complementarity. Marriage bears the responsibility of rearing children and continue the family tree, otherwise it is unrealistic. (*Apple Daily* 11.18)

1.1.2 Heterosexual marriage have irreplaceable value to the country and Chinese culture

However, the essentialist accounts of heterosexual marriage are not as popular as those from the standpoint of society and culture in Taiwanese press media. Bonding marriage with giving birth to children, the heterosexual marriage is considered as a fundamental building block of Taiwan society and traditional culture in media representation of the opposition, since it can produce the next generation and keep the society in working order.

In the *History of Sexuality Volume I*, Foucault(1978) talked about the emergence of the concept of population in 18th century, when the country needed to manage and control its inhabitants for the national economic development. Population was formulated for estimating the country's labor force, the wealth it was capable to generate and resources needed for meeting that growth. Gradually, the sexual perversion has been conducted to control and analyze the population. Sex is the area with intensive interest of state (Burr, 2015). Though the social situation in Taiwan nowadays is greatly different from Western society 200 years ago, the fertility and reproduction are still crucial to meet capitalism's increasing need of labor force supplement. Within Taiwanese newspaper coverage of same-sex marriage debate, there were a significant number of news reports that implied the strong linkage between sexuality, population and the State's interest. And such relationship has become a plausible reason to justify the heterosexual dominant position in marriage.

By highlighting the sanctity of population within media reportage, the opponents illustrated that changing the definition of marriage in Civil Code could endanger the stable population reproduction that based on heterosexual marriage, and the country would run into trouble because of lacking enough population for development. Especially, since Taiwan is facing demographic dilemma of aging society with fewer children, the legalization of same-sex marriage would intensify social population problems, like the fertility rate will become lower, young people will far less likely to get married, and more likely to delay getting married or even avoid it, etc. Such panic of aggravating ongoing demographic problems was constructed and mongered by media reports. For example, the quote from the news reports that covered one

religious leader in *Udn* clearly showed how media was used to spread the fear that allowing same-sex marriage would undermine society long-term development.

“We don’t discriminate homosexuals, we against the same-sex marriage.” Shih-Chang Chien(The chairman of Caring Next Generation Association) said. Heterosexual marriage have irreplaceable value to the State’s stability and development, since our economical and cultural heritage can’t be carried on without the next generation ... The priest Chen Ke said, “The government should evaluate the cost to be paid after legalizing same-sex marriage. Don’t risk the country’s future on this issue.” (*Udn* 11.17)

As we can see above, here, sex is placed “in a agenda of future”. The future and fortune of society were tied to the every citizen’s manner of making use of sex. Every couple, no matter sexuality, have responsibility in achieving a certain goal of country’s development, which means their procreative behavior was socialized, according to Foucault(1978: 29). The heterosexuality is therefore justified though political and economic need of the state.

In addition, the ‘threat’ to heterosexuality has been located within the context of traditional family values and Chinese culture. Unlike the historical and cultural background of the knowledge of sexuality in western countries, the practice of scrutinising and confession in religious or psychoanalytic terms have less importance in constructing the discourse of sexuality in Chinese cultural context(Tung, 2015). Instead, the construction of sexuality in Chinese culture is based on the traditional idea to carry on the family line.

In Chinese traditional cultural, the offspring, preferred boy, are highly valued. They can continue family names, and support their parents when they grow up. The merit of filial piety that children are supposed to have a sense of respect and responsibility to their parents is one of the most important ethics. As an old Chinese saying goes, there are three ways to be unfilial, the worst is to not have offspring. The children-parent relationship is foundation of Chinese traditional ethics and Confucianism. However, according to the media reportage of opponents, if marriage is no more reproduction-oriented, there will be less children, and lead to the destruction of children-parent relationships. Therefore, same-sex marriage ultimately result in the collapse of family structure, and further endanger Chinese traditional ethics and culture as a whole. As we could see from the statement of the joint declaration issued by Taiwanese religious group:

In this statement they said, if the same-sex marriage legalized in Civil Code, it will result in the disappearance of kinship terms and breakdown of family structure. And the traditional family relations as well as social hierarchy which rely on the foundation of family will eventually come to the end. The same-sex marriage will destroy our traditional family value, the social ethics and morality, the meaning of life, and even thousands years traditional Chinese culture.(Udn 12.1)

In this case, the same-sex marriage was penalized as the scapegoat of nowadays loosening traditional family emotional bonds and family etiquette that was once responsible to maintain the Chinese moral ethics. The expanding discourses on sex and family values have been immersed in the field of multiple power relations. Power is exercised through influencing a certain kind of discourse.(Foucault, 1978) By establishing such kind of discourses to discredit homosexual marriage, the hegemonic effects of heterosexuality are sustained, and continue the non-egalitarian power relations.

This deduction that legalizing same-sex marriage will destroy the population reproducing system is empirically problematic in current situation, since the heterosexual couples will not stop giving birth to babies even though the definition of marriage change. And homosexuals will not marry heterosexuals and give birth to more children if the status quo maintained. Such arguments basically fail to withstand close scrutiny.

In addition, the idea that bonding marriage with child bearing goes against with the evident trend observed by many scholars in late modernity society. In Giddens(1995) terms, the emergence of “plastic sexuality”, that women gained sexual autonomy to enjoy sex without fear of getting pregnant, have freed sex from reproduction. The intimate relations are more likely to be entered for mutual emotional fulfilment, while some other traditional social norms are much less powerful.

What’s more, according to Giddens, the “plastic sexuality” liberate women from the burden of reproduction, by which women gain their sexual autonomy. It has been considered as a step forward of women’s equal status. However, the reason reproduction here, was taken as a criterion to judge whether homosexuals are qualified enough to access marriage. When drawing

the parallel with feminism movement, we can see that the “separating sexuality from procreation”(ibid: 164) was used for promoting women's equality, while in this case, against the homosexual equality. Therefore, it is untenable to exclude gay men and lesbians from marriage institution because of they are not able to give birth to children.

News media are not only reflecting the reality, but also doing a constitutional work(Gill, 2007; Dines&Humez, 2015). In this case, the idea that the purpose of marriage is to form a family and have children was justified and circulated by media reports. In addition, the perceived risk of overthrowing heterosexuality was emphasized and exaggerated, for journalists adopted the whole narratives of opposite side without critically examining the unreasonable accounts. In the ways of reporting the heterosexual privilege in producing population and maintaining family values and heterosexuality, the media have in turn fueled the panic of undermining traditional family values as well as the sustainable development of Taiwan society, causing negative discursive impact in the marriage equality movement.

1.2 Negative construction of homosexual identities

Besides constructing a discourse to define marriage, the opponents of same-sex marriage also try to marginalized homosexual identities by depicting them as ‘the other’ in media. In such media coverage, the homosexual relations are different, in most of the times because of their infertile nature. Their identities and behaviours are ultimately a deviation of ‘normal’. Therefore, the existence of homosexual relations itself is a threat to our society, not to mention the legal recognition of their relationship. The media coverage has constructed and emphasized the division between ‘us’ and ‘them’, which has been used as a tool of exclusion and demonization of gay men and lesbians. And the discourses to implicate what kind of behaviour or identity is normal or permissible, ultimately bound up with power relations(Burr, 2015).

1.2.1 “The Other”

Previous researches showed that the media bear responsibility to construct the longstanding cultural myths and stereotypes that depict lesbians and gay men as immoral, physically diseased and different from what most members of society would consider ‘normal’(Meyers, 1994; Rodriguez&Blumell, 2014). By examining Taiwanese media representation of same-sex

marriage debate, I find that such kind of stereotypes have been continued and reinforced. The differences, usually bounded up with infertility, between homosexuals and heterosexuals are emphasized. And the natural differences are used to justify the exclusion of homosexuals from Civil Code that should have been applied upon every citizen. Instead, the opponents insist that a special law is more suitable for homosexual partners, since they have “different physical structure”. The special law, is then justified by “following the principle of different but equal.” (*China Times*, 11.26)

For instance, the commenter Mr. Wang wrote in his column:

The equal right means citizens should be regarded equally under the same circumstances. However, the *heterosexual* partnership *can* produce offspring naturally, while the *homosexual* partnership *cannot*. They are fundamentally different kinds of relationship. Why can't this discrepancy be reflected in the legal system ? For example, according to Criminal Law, women should be frisked by female officials. It is a respect of gender difference. (*Apple Daily* 12.26)

And the following opinion article with title “The minority cannot overthrow the social values”, marked out that gays and lesbians should be treated separately, because they are born different. They are depicted as deviation from ‘normal’, which have the potential to undermine our social values.

Not everything in the world are created equally. Even though homosexuals, as well as their husband-wife-like partnership, should not be regarded as *deviation*, they only make up the minority. They ought to be respected and protected by law, but not deserve positive promotion, encouragement even support. There is no absolute equal right simply because the same-sex couples cannot give birth to child. It is a natural fact that we cannot deny. (*China Times* 12.15)

As we can see, some of these newspaper articles from opponents are doing a work of “othering”, that “stigmatizing certain groups that are perceived in some way to undermine the socio-cultural fabric or drain public resources.” (Dahlgren, 2009:31) The divisive language and categorical identities that presented in these commentaries, actually implied that a certain part of population, the sexual minorities, as alien in the society. And further separate them by advocating special law, deeming it as respect for difference. Such depressingly familiar strategy is also observed in invaliding women, immigrants and ethnic minorities fully citizenship (Rahman, 2004). Similarly, the physical or cultural boundaries have been used to marginalize a particular group, whether

such grouping be based on skin-color, religion, country or sexual orientation. And a series of discourses have been constructed to glorify and protect a group by demeaning and attacking another, and further support the inegalitarian power relations.

When the recognition of differences is excessively emphasized, it is likely to result in some negative effects, and the worst among them is the dehumanization of homosexuals. For instance, in covering the public hearing of the marriage bill, the journalists from *Apple Daily* quoted an extreme and malicious statements from a politician and put them in the newspaper sub-headline:

The politician Hsieh Chi-ta said, "If I see a cockroach, it does not mean there is only one, but that there are hundreds of cockroaches behind it." she insisted that "domino effect" of same-sex marriage cannot be ignored... She said the law to protect homosexual's right is similar to special route for visual impairment people. 'Is it necessary to cover every single road by tactile floor tiles, just to make sure those who visually impaired can walk safely?' She then concluded that it seems unreasonable to weight the minority's opinion more than majority's. (*Apple Daily* 11.25)

To draw parallel between homosexual and cockroach, can be interpreted as an attempt to dehumanize gays and lesbians identities, in Bauman's(1989) term. Dehumanization involves the denial of full humanness to others, and their exclusion from the human species. This is an extreme reaction to outgroups, to convince that the dehumanized lack such characteristics as civility, morality, self-control, and cognitive sophistication, and thus are less worthy of humane treatment(Esses, Medianu and Lawson, 2013). Historically, such measure has been used to conduct Holocaust and other mass violations of human rights. Recently, the discursive practice has been used to devalue the arriving migrants and refugees in western countries. For Hsieh Chi-ta, lesbians and gay men are a subhuman species. They are just like a kind of pest that almost nobody likes and even need to be cleaned out from the society. Their existence is a kind of violation of social order. Her other statements are not so extreme, but still, homosexuals were compared with handicappers, which means they are physically or psychologically impaired. What's more, there was no following critiques nor any response from gay rights activists in press media, after the cockroach and blind tracks remarks being widely circulated.

This report was originally published in the front page of *Apple Daily*, a tabloid that has been criticized for preferring sensational words to grab audience eyeballs. And I kindly assume that

journalists decided to publish a provocative statement according to the newspaper editorial style. However, media should have the awareness that the act of circulating such overt discrimination accounts without question is more than insulting, but also dangerous - It could fan a hatred of or distaste for Others. It may lead to extreme negative reactions to homosexuals – their removal from the human race through dehumanization. The unselective and careless media reportage not only run counter to journalist professionalism, but also played a role of hatemonger that may cause a more serious possible consequence outcome, since the media have important role in shaping the mental framework we employ when considering a specific groups or concepts.

1.2.2 A threat to children

One of the tactics to othering homosexuals, is to negatively portray them as a ‘threat’ to the children, and further endanger the social order. The notion of protecting children from the threat of homosexuality has been consistently reiterated in the press reports when the opponents were quoted. They insist that restricting marriage to heterosexual couples is considering for children’s right and interest. On the one hand, having a mother and a father is a right of children that can not deprived; on the other hand, the children raised by homosexual families, are likely to be ‘corrupted’ by parents’ sexual orientation, and further mislead their peers in school as well. What’s more, conservative parents backlash the education plan to introduce diverse family forms in schools, and insist that traditional familial ideology should be protected.

The supervision and education of children’s sex, in this case in the name of Chinese traditional family etiquette, have never been alone in history. Foucault(1978) pointed out that from 18th century, the sex education in school have already become a public problem, and received attention from doctors, parents and the educators. Children was imposed a certain reasonable canonical and truthful knowledge of sex on them. The children’s sex, has become the important area, within which “innumerable institutional devices and discursive strategies have been deployed.” (ibid, 30)

While we can see in these arguments, the statements that justify children’s sex is necessary to be supervised and regulated remain strong. Children are regarded as a highly dependent and immature, thus they are vulnerable to and easily affected by homosexuality. Within the

heterosexual perspective media coverage, both homosexual acts and identity are taken for granted as undesirable. No matter they are from same-sex families or heterosexual families, they could “learn” homosexuality from those “misbehavior” adults. For example, the following piece of news report is about a protester in anti-marriage equality rally. She believes that gay and lesbians parents have negative influence on children mind development.

Ms Chen, who protested against Civil Code amendment with her three-year-old boy, said that she doesn't agree with change of adoption legal rules. If the same-sex marriage is legalized and same-sex couples can adopt children by law, she worried that children who raised by same-sex parents would have a different level of mental development compared with children with a mother and a father. And she afraid that her own child will be affected by those peers as well. (*Apple Daily* 11.18)

Still, these arguments cannot stand up. First of all, noted the social facts that not every child is reared in heterosexual marriage with one mother and one father, nor every heterosexual couples give birth to babies, such argument glossed over the exceptions of family forms, and restricted them in terms of generalities. In addition, the argument seemed self-contradictory with the infertility excuse. One the one hand, same-sex couples are blamed for not giving birth to child, one the other hand they are also inappropriate to adopt and parent children. So, in fact, whatever same-sex couples choose is wrong.

From the material, it is not hard to draw the conclusion that, behind the shield of “for the children's sake” argument, the moral equivalence that marriage redefinition will bring is a defining core of opponents concerns. The moral hierarchy of sexuality, by which heterosexuals establish and justify its dominant position, will be deeply undermined by legalizing same-sex marriage(Rahman, 2004). Because as long as the gays and lesbians can marry, the homosexuals will have the same moral equivalence to heterosexuals, and will blur the moral boundary between “us” and “them”. Therefore, allowing homosexuals to marry is intolerable, “since it have crossed the baseline of ethics and morality” (*Apple Daily* 11.21). As shown in the following extracts, the commenter pointed out that the allowing same-sex marriage means recognizing of diverse sexual identities in law:

Legalizing same-sex marriage means that the public power intervent and give recognition to homosexual relationship. After that, the LGBTI(lesbian, gay, bisexual, transexual, and

intersex) will be all permitted legally, which will lead to a foreseeable increase of the number of homosexuals. It is a violation of public order and morality. (*China Times* 10.31)

Although the opponents deny that they are being homophobic or discriminatory, what they said in media is acting the homophobia, and trying to categorise LGBT individuals as deviants. In Foucauldian perspective(1978), our knowledge of sexuality, that what is the 'normal' sexual orientation and what is 'proper' way to educate children's sex, is inevitably enmeshed in relations of power. Such knowledge has been applied to regulate and discipline the social practices. To justify and mask such power inequality, a certain kind of discourses of moral arguments has been established, which induce consent to relations of dominant(Burr, 2014). In the Taiwanese example, the discourses that strengthen physical and moral boundaries between heterosexuals and homosexuals have been drawn upon to against same-sex marriage. By defining homosexuals is not qualified enough to bear and educate children, these accounts further marginalize and demean homosexuality.

After all, the arguments of considering children's well-being, which took up a large part of the Taiwanese newspapers, both implicate that heterosexuality is preferred norm morally and socially. Since media have been playing a crucial role in the dissemination of discourses, such news reportage continued and reinforce the heterosexual distinctions between 'normal' and 'deviant', representing the worries from opponents that children may be misled from 'normality' and become 'different'. To maintain the dominant position of heterosexual in marriage, the news media is used to construct and spread a serious discourse to discredit homosexual identity and behaviors.

1.3 Avoid talking the inequalities

Within these arguments in Taiwanese press media, the subordinated position has been masked and ignored. In some opposite articles, the existence of inequality has been denied. The marriage redefinition debate has nothing to do with gays and lesbians equal rights, since they already have. Interestingly, the increasing visibility of gay and lesbian in mass media and popular culture is often mentioned to proof their argument. However, the visibility does not equivalence to legitimacy(Moscowitz, 2010). As I analyzed above, the hierarchies of morality that underpin stigmatization of homosexuals remain evident in contemporary public discussion.

Besides, there are many articles that skip over the equality issue, and talk about other things. The same-sex marriage legalization has been presented as an issue that does not concern equality/human right, instead of something else, such as social conformity, public opinion, etc. Specifically, it is described as going against public opinion, hiding political scandal, distracting the nation's priority and a negative factor of social stability. And the gays and lesbians right has been set aside. I argue here that this ignorance of gay men and lesbians in same-sex marriage debate is also a way to cover the inequality status of them, and maintain the ongoing heterosexual social system. The silence is a part of sex repression, since the act that merely speaks about it is regarded as a deliberate transgression (Foucault, 1978). What's more, the Taiwanese media fails to recognize the repression embedded within the discourses of intentional ignorance, but further led the public discussion into a wrong direction. When media represent the same-sex marriage as an issue that have nothing to do with equality, the gay and lesbian have no chance to speak out and contest the current heterosexual system.

1.3.1 The marriage should be decided by public opinion

the "Marriage and Family, Defined by the Public" is a vocal slogan of the opposition camp that frequently appeared in Taiwanese newspaper. They insist that marriage works as social institution with legal and cultural significance, therefore should be defined and regulated by the public. A referendum is argued as necessity before changing the constitutional definition of marriage. Consistent with the finding of Jowett's(2014) analysis of same-sex marriage opponents' argument in British newspaper, the opponents label themselves standing in line with the majority public opinion, and use some opinion polls to prove it. They often self-construct as "silence majority", despite dozens of newspaper columns and journalist coverage showed the opposite situation. While refusing to acknowledge the marriage equality as human right issue, the conservatives draw on a commonplace principle that minority groups are supposed to yield to majority.

In a news report of public hearing revealed the majoritarian argument was employed:

The Professor Cheng from Dong Hwa University said, "It is unreasonable to change the longstanding tradition and law for a minority group that only represent 0.2% population. I suggest to establish special law instead."(*Apple Daily* 11.25)

Furthermore, within some newspaper articles, some opponents suggested that promoting marriage equality potentially harm other citizens' right. For instance, they insisted that the young gay rights activities and supporters are conducting "rainbow bully" to their opposition peers, which harms their right of speech freedom.

An anti-same-sex marriage young activist Mr. Wong said within interview:

Although the marriage equality supporters credit themselves as asking for equal human right and respecting diversity, they don't allow the existence of different voices in this issue. In fact, as long as we young students speak against the same-sex marriage on social media, we will encounter cyber bully and other verbal assaults in virtual and also reality. This is so-called "rainbow hegemony".(*China Times* 12.11)

This argument, again, self-conflicts with the majoritarian remarks. On the one hand, opponents are playing the weak, and accuse those who support marriage equality of infringing their freedom of speech; on the other hand, they claim that they stand in line with the majority of society. However, such problematic statement has not been challenged in press media, instead, it is presented fair and reasonable.

1.3.2 A political scandal

The framework of media coverage of same-sex marriage often shifts from an equality/human right issue to a political issue that concerning political jockeying and partisan interest. In specific, a large portion of the news coverage have been devoted to reported the opponent's criticism that the legislative process of marriage equality amendment was not open and transparent enough, while some under-the-table political deals were likely to happen. It was too hasty and rush to change an influential institution with only too legislative hearings, which are not enough to represent diverse voices from different layers of society. In addition, the news reports that aggressively bash government policies and allege official wrongdoing are traditionally preferred by Taiwanese journalists(Lin, 2015). Some sharp comments from opponents criticizing the lawmakers or government often hit the headline of Taiwanese newspaper, even though they are unconfirmed. For example, the legislators Yu Mei-nu, who is one of the leading figure of the marriage equality bill, has been labeled as "scandal legislator". The rage protesters asked her position to leave her position, because she cannot represent "the majority" voices, and intends to

push forward the marriage bill without thoroughly discussion in legislative committee. (*Udn* 12.20) And the ruling Democratic Progressive Party(DDP) is also blamed by several column writers for using the marriage equality as electrical campaign without careful consideration. The wills of major citizens have been sacrificed to partisan benefit.

Using the framework of politics to shape the same-sex marriage, Taiwanese media set aside the main goal of marriage redefinition, that is to pursue equality status of gays and lesbians. While the corrupted and incomplete political system in Taiwan has been highlighted, the emphasis of debate has been distracted to political scandals and partisan interest, and the inquiry of unequal status is therefore avoided. What's more, although legislator Yu Mei-nu was discredited by opposite side as corrupted politician, there is no convincing evidence about what dishonorable things she exactly did during that period. However, when the media presenting the textual and verbal attacks towards her, there is no following explanation to clarify that this accusation had not proofed by facts. The journalists may try to be stick to professionalism norms by covering the two sides augments straightforward without extra processing, however, it could result in facilitating the spread of the assertion with no evidence. Worse yet, readers may take it as truth. Such an irresponsible way to cover the unfounded claims from those opponents, would not only cause negative effects among readers in viewing these progressive politicians, but also further discredit the marriage equality movement.

1.3.3 What is best for the country

Although now there are less overt discriminational accounts in Taiwan public political discourse, it doesn't mean that Taiwanese media holds a welcoming attitude towards social changes of the heterosexual institution. Whilst many of these pieces were presented as simple reports on the two opposite sides, the editorial stance of the two newspapers, *China Times* and *Udn*, was explicitly advocacy in maintaining the current heterosexual marriage. The debate about what will be the most beneficial to country's development has occupied a significant part in the newspaper editorials and letters to editors. And such editorials or columns usually came to the conclusion that preserving the status quo of marriage, and putting the energy into other social and economic issues are the best of country's development. Paradoxically, in the media's framework of

highlighting national interest, gay men and lesbians, who should have been the core in the same-sex marriage debate, were maintaining completely invisible.

1.3.3.1 Not a priority

Some column writers pictured marriage equality as an issue of less importance and not emergency. Since Taiwan was reported that undergoing a financial crisis currently, the economy development was positioned in priority. An article in *China Times* titled as “Let’s strive for economy!” criticized that the government only focused on the controversy issues like same-sex marriage legalization, but not concentrate on solving the social problems of the most direct concern to the people. In addition, this argument was often used in conjunction with the suggestion that the changing constitutional marriage definition will require an enormous social cost, and demonstrate that the government and legislators will spend too much time and energy on the issue that yet not really matter. For instance, in reporting a public hearing of same-sex marriage bill in Legislative Yuan, the Head of Taiwan Ministry of Justice Chiu Tai-san was quoted:

It (Civil Code amendment) involves long-time discussions and reviews of more than 300 other law statements. Therefore, we must be very careful to reconsider the impact of the redefinition, and whether all these effort and risk are necessary. (*China Times* 11.18)

These news reports and editorials implicated that the proposal of same-sex marriage legalization is a social burden and a waste of social resources, while the economic issues should enjoy a higher priority in the political agenda. What’s more, by positioning the marriage equality issue in opposition with economic prosperity or people’s livelihood improvement, such media coverage constructed a false dichotomy between the pursuit of homosexuals’ equal rights and solving other economic or social issues, and hence an unwelcoming bill.

1.3.3.2 Intriguing social conflict

In the debate of what is the best for country, the destructive outcome of marriage redefinition were consistently reiterated in the press media. Generally, the opponents of changing marriage definition argued that it would “rip the society apart” (*Apple Daily* 11.29) and “people with different social and political beliefs will hate each other” (*Udn* 12.28). By highlighting the great

division of public opinions towards this issue, Taiwanese media portrayed changing marriage definition as a potential risk that are likely to intriques social conflicts and causes the instability. For examples, in covering the opinion poll result, the journalist wrote:

According to the result of opinion survey, there is zero consensus in this (same-sex marriage legalization) issue. “If the bill is passed in Legislative Yuan, the following consequence is just like a massive earthquake hitting Taiwan,” Miss You(the spokesperson of polling company) said. The contradictions will penetrate and torn apart every possible social relation, causing unimaginable shock to Taiwan society. Taiwan is not ready yet. (*Apple Daily* 11.29)

Instead of speaking directly against same-sex marriage, some conservatives changed their strategies to rendering the confrontation and antagonism between two opposing sides, and hence implied that such controversial issue should be put aside until “a common ground is reached by most of citizens”(*China Times* 11.24). Otherwise, the already divisive Taiwan society would be further riven, which is which is the least thing that most citizens expect.

In these newspaper articles, maintaining social solidarity and stability were considered best served country’s interest, while the change of marriage definition will destroy them. That is to say, the marriage equality was, again, constructed negatively in the opposite to social harmony and people’s solidarity.

In addition, the “special law” was depicted by newspaper of *Udn* as a desirable goal to find an common ground within such chaotic situation. By playing the society’s peace keeper, they persuaded advocates that the temporary concession and compromise are necessary in law setting process, which implicates that more importance should be given to social harmony than helping homosexuals gaining equal rights. In addition, the Civil Partnership has be portrayed as a “practical and quick” way to solve the same-sex couples’ problem at stake. For instance, in the opinion article from Professor Zhang as following, while he admitting the special law is an uncompleted status in marriage equality, he still urged that those same-sex marriage supporters should “make a compromise”(*Udn* 12.2) to ease down the tension between two sides. And he implied the special law was a phased target which will eventually lead to the change in Civil Code.

Setting a special law is less difficult in this situation... The civil partnership system can ease down the wave of intensive opposition. What's more, through the civil partnership, the general public can better understand that same-sex partners also live a healthy and happy family life."(*Udn* 12.2)

As mentioned above, by situating marriage equality issue within the national interest framework, marriage equality was represented by Taiwanese media as problematic to the society as a whole. The framework of State's interest is more preferred than the equal/human right framework, which means it is considered more newsworthy, meets the required threshold of public interest (or at least journalists' perceptions of public interest). As the discourse have a regulatory function, the rhetoric of focusing on bigger state interest can be understood as another way to maintain and reinforce heterosexuality. Although many of the articles didn't explicitly claim objection to marriage equality in principle, there was no any inquiry of the existing unequal institution; instead, the "damage" outcome of social change was repeatedly emphasized. Such media framework in fact downplayed the gay right issue and consolidated the current heterosexual institution.

What's more, media made a pessimistic forecast of the direct change of Civil Code. By emphasizing the sharp conflicts of the public, and the difficulties of law changing, the constitutional amendment was depicted as a task that insurmountable and impractical. In the contrast, the special law or Civil Partnership, was portrayed more desirable for the society as a whole. And it even titled as step-by-step legislation, to convince readers a false belief that Civil Partnership is a transitory measure before achieving the universal equality. Rendering the merits of civil partnership can be interpreted as a strategy to confuse the public, and demobilize gay right movement. Such rhetorical tactics that blur the main difference of civil partnership and marriage, intend to influence readers to turn to a legislation which sacrifices same-sex couples right.

2. The supportive arguments

2.1 Equality/ human right and valid citizenship

In the media coverage, the words “marriage equality”(婚姻平權) have frequently appeared in newspaper articles, thanks to the consistent struggle of gay right movement, and public rising awareness of gay rights in Taiwan recent years. In more than half of the articles in newspapers, it is equivalent to “same-sex marriage legalization”(同性婚姻合法化), especially in covering the supportive side of marriage redefinition. The usage of words matters, for it not only shaped the issue within equality framework, but also implicated the current inequality between heterosexuals and homosexuals in society.

Within the framework of equality, the notion that accessing to marriage is basic human rights and protected by Constitution was reiterated in many articles favor of same-sex marriage. Accordingly, the constitutional law of marriage should equally be applied to all citizens regardless of gender and sexuality. The gay and lesbian couples and families deserve to be regulated by the Civil Code, instead of special law, as the same as their heterosexual counterparts. As a gay right activist interviewee said, “What the LGBT individuals fight for is not a privilege, but an equal way of life.” (*Apple Daily* 12.11) By focusing on equality/human right, the media constructs this debate into an issue that oppressed minority strive for equal rights and valid citizenship through getting access to marriage, in which the pursuit of marriage equality movement is justified. Even though the supportive arguments rarely explicitly challenge the heterosexuality hegemony, the act of speaking about repression, has placed itself outside the reach of power. It somehow “anticipates the coming freedom” (Foucault, 1978: 6). And when

media shed a light to subordinated position of homosexuals, it actually inquires and contests the dominant position of heterosexuality.

In these reports, marriage equality movement is of great significance, as it is not only a struggle for gay men and lesbians getting fundamental rights, but also it contributes to a higher level social acceptance of homosexuality and eliminate the discriminations towards the marginalised groups. It is regarded as a mark of social progress that ultimately leads to evolution of a more open and equal society in general. For example, after the bill passed the first-round hearing in Legislative Yuan, one of the leading politicians in promoting marriage equality, was interviewed:

Hsu Yu-Jen said, the marriage equality issue concerns about whether LGBT individuals can be recognized as valid citizens. The law should not just reach the bottom line of moral standard, but rather should be a model of showing the society's advanced culture value. (*Udn* 12.28)

By talking about marriage equality as progressive movement that “representing a trend in the future”(Udn 12.02), these arguments in media contributed to a positive construction of marriage equality quest. Furthermore, the supporters illustrated that level of gender and sexuality equality should be taken into country's sustainable development. It will promote the social development instead of hindering it.

The marriage equality represents a possibility of Taiwan's development - a country that place more value in human right than Europe and America. ”(*Apple Daily* 12.13)

The marriage equality is not only the business concerns LGBT individuals, but is everyone's responsibility. It is a full demonstration of Taiwan's democratic values and an important manifestation of a society respecting diversity and embracing differences. (*Apple Daily* 12.29)

Such extracts from the column attached great importance to not only marriage equality but also the human right issues more generally. They moved beyond the trend to privatize same-sex marriage, and raised it to the level of public institutional changes. By positively relating same-sex marriage with Taiwanese future development, the media well-establishes and spreads the significance of sexual and gender equality.

What's more, some news reports revealed the strong linkage between marriage equality and full citizenship of gays and lesbians. These news coverages pointed out gay men and lesbians have been characterized as invalid citizens, suffering longstanding stigmatization and marginalization. The linkage of marriage and citizenship has been obviously shown when the two oppositions got into the debate that whether or not to set a special same-sex marriage law. Several pieces of news reports and commentaries in *Apple Daily* and *Udn* interpreted the special law as a way to classify homosexuals as second-class citizens by applying "isolating special law" (*Apple Daily* 12.11). In the pro-marriage equality articles, this special law was drawn parallels with racism in America. Professor Wong in Shih Hsin University strongly critiqued the civil partnership as a "separate-but-equal ghost". He illustrated that,

Those who against same-sex marriage, just like racists, regard the same-sex couples as 'others' who must be identified and even segregated from us. So they are not willing to accept same-sex intimate relationship as marriage, but rather classify them the nominal civil partnership. However, in fact it is a second-class equality, is the equality that been given, instead of deserved.' (*Udn* 12.04)

These arguments could be understood as a debate over equality and citizenship. And they have been provoked by the awareness of hegemonic heterosexual institutions and the determine to change it. By tackling the issue within equality framework, the discourses favoring a more diverse and equal institution have been founded, and in part it has problematized the heterosexual privilege.

2.2 "It's a business between two people"

Romantic love is another discourse is routinely mobilized within the media coverage of pro marriage equality side. Such opinions viewing the emotional bonds between two partners as the most important factor in the relationship of marriage. This argument echoes with the modernity theories that the marriage institution is going through a process of individualization (Cherlin, 2004; Beck&Beck-Gernsheim, 1995). People's own emotional satisfactions have been placed in central when considering the intimate relationship. And it is followed by the devaluation of the social constraints of marriage's standardized models. For example, a gay's father wrote to *Apple Daily* newspaper to share his feeling when he was at his son's marriage ceremony:

I don't mind he have married a boy, as long as they (the couple) can stay physical healthy and live a happy life. Anyway, their marriage is a business between our two families, what's that to other people? (*Apple Daily* 11.24)

And a lesbian couple registered married in Canada said in the public hearing:

It doesn't matter whether my partner is a man or women. The only important thing is I found the one I love. (*Apple Daily* 11.25)

By emphasizing the necessity of romantic love in marriage, it seems that Taiwanese press media endorses a progressive and inclusive interpretation of marriage and equality. However, it is a false impression. Instead, the overwhelming media representations of love's triumph, can be interpreted another way to exclude gays and lesbians from the political life and disconnected from the social issues. Such media framework of romantic love has continued to limit homosexuals within a private sphere and make no contribution to challenge the heterosexual hegemony in public institution.

When media tried to frame the topic within romantic love, readers have come across the slogan: "Marriage concerns about only two people. It is none of others business." Such argument illustrates that since the personal emotions have become the priority of intimate relationship, marriage is a privatized contractarian model within two partners. As long as the couples do not harm the public interest, the other irrelevant people have no reason to stop them. However, it goes against the public perspective that embedded within marriage institution (Coontz, 2004). Marriage can never be only a private business. When media representing such a public issue as a domestic business that only concerns about two partners' emotional attraction, it privatized and depoliticize the gay right movement, constrained it within domesticity (Duggan, 2002).

What's more, it is notable that in few occasions when gays and lesbians were given chance to speak, they were talking about domestic issues, such as family responsibilities and the emotions between partners. When the media constructs the same-sex marriage issue in framework of romantic love, more quotes from gays and lesbians can be observed. In the contrast, they are almost silenced when the media covers it from politics or national interest perspective. The love discourse in news reports is a double-edged sword, on the one hand it enables the oppressed,

marginalized homosexuals to speak out their emotions; on the other hand, it restricts them within the topics about love, family and domestic stuff, and further, and takes them out from the political discussion. Such media practices, in queer critiques, contribute to the reinforcement of the notion that homosexuality is only tolerable if it remains in private sphere. And it limits a more radical social and political changes in heterosexual hegemonic society.

2.3 A return to tradition?

In sum, the main divergence of views about same-sex marriage issues in two opposing sides is which element of marriage should be the criterion of legally recognized marriage status - a personal choice out of emotional desires or marriage's function of reproduction. However, it is noteworthy that debates represented by press media in Taiwan is more than a simplistic dichotomy between reformism and traditionalism.

When media covers the bill of allowing same-sex marriage, there are many opinion columns that back same-sex marriage from a heterosexual vantage standpoint. The marriage equality quest, rather than a threat, is constructed as a champion of heterosexual marriage institution as well as the traditional family values. For instance, in the only one commentary written by a lesbian, she didn't speak for the subordinated homosexuals, instead, she alleged that "letting gay and lesbian marry, can help to share the heterosexual family responsibilities." (*Apple Daily*, 11.12) In addition, some paradoxical conservative arguments of same-sex marriage was published, in which marriage redefinition was regarded exactly the right way to value family tradition:

Conversely, it (same-sex marriage) is a conservative social movement that LGBT couples demand to enter the marriage relationship to safeguard families... (The legalization of same-sex marriage in America) reconfirmed marriage as the most important bedstone of social stability, based on the traditional nature of marriage... Heterosexual couples enjoy exclusive privilege in law and social norms through their state-sanctified marriage status, while gay and lesbian couples was excluded from these norms, thereby they became the unstable factor of society. Therefore, expanding marriage definition and including homosexuals in marriage institution, it exactly the right way to safeguard families, enhance the social value of marriage and benefit the state... We are not going to overthrow marriage, but rather make it more available to everyone who needs it. (*Apple Daily*, 12.24)

It is clearly shown in the extracts that when media constructing the marriage redefinition as a favor of heterosexuality, it is repeating a set of discourses which heterosexuals used to facilitate and justify their dominant position. It is a dangerous signal, that the marriage equality may be separated from gay right movement, and backtrack to serve the heterosexuality. Within the traditionalist discursive practices, the 'traditional' family value and social order that privilege heterosexuality are re-established and reinforced. While the gay rights movement is demobilized, and still characterized as an "unstable factor" of society.

It brings me to feminist and queer theorists critique of the conservative nature of marriage (Walter 1999; Josephson 2005). The bond between certain social privilege and benefits with marital status is problematic and should be discarded by LGBTQ individuals. Therefore, they insisted that the same-sex marriage is not be a desirable goal of LGBTQ movement, because it is a distraction for a more equalitarian and diverse intimacy relationship. The traditionalist interpretation of marriage equality is exactly what queer scholars worried about: the assimilation of gays and lesbians.

Although in modernity theorists (Cherlin, 2004; Giddens, 1992)eyes, the power of social norms or law regulating mechanisms for family life is declining, while emotional satisfaction between partners is highlighted in the realm of intimacy. Married or unmarried people are having a burring distinction in legal terms or social status. Nevertheless, the same-sex marriage quest is exactly the way to reinforce this distinction. the same-sex couples want to be regulated by clear legal norms, and want their relations to be recognized by family members and society, from where they can gain self-identity. By carefully examining Taiwanese LGBT community's demand for an inclusive marriage definition, I would say that even though marriage is in some parts become more deindustrial or individual, the constraints of social norms still have great influence in both heterosexual and same-sex couples' perspective within the Asian cultural context. And the influence manifest itself in the form of requiring marriage redefinition.

3. The Media Practice

3.1 the unbalanced news resources

This content analysis of news coverage about same-sex marriage debate indicated that Taiwanese media represent the debate from a conventionally “straight” perspective. Although in the daily news stories, most journalists tried to be fair and cover both sides opinions; in opinion section where the stance of newspaper can be observed, the articles that speak against same-sex marriage or maintain the ongoing heterosexual privilege have occupied much more spaces than the supportive ones. The unbalanceness was clearly shown in the newspapers *Udn* and *China Times*, with respectively one and no opinion article that speak for same-sex marriage. And the China Times, which holds a most conservative stance among them, has the least frequency in mention same-sex marriage in its news stories. A possible reason for this could be journalists are under the pressure from media owner or editorial guideline. Whether media provide fair and balanced coverage affects public trust of media, particularly in covering a controversial topic like same-sex marriage (Li&Liu, 2010). I would not say newspapers should be totally objective and take no stance, but the overt unfair and unbalanced news reports are likely to lead to negative evaluation of the credibility of the media outlets(ibid).

What’s more, the dominant of heterosexuality in the same-sex marriage debate is also revealed in the sources of news stories. Among the sources cited in news reports and opinion articles selected by editors, the gay and lesbian couples were given the least opportunities to speak. Instead, the straight allies and gay rights activists speak on their behalf, even though in the pro-gay marriage articles. Especially in the section of comments, columns and letters to editor, those selected to express their opinions are predominantly heterosexual elites, such as legal or medical

authority, politicians and scholars. In contrast, the gays and lesbians, who had the most at stake on the issue, published only one commentary in total 33 articles. According to Meyers(1994), those official positions provided them the credits that are necessary for them to be regarded as legitimate or even preferred sources. By selecting news source that considered newsworthy, the media continues to grant the power to traditional authoritative source (Moscowitz 2010). This discovery adds to the findings of Moscowitz (ibid), Rodriguez and Blumell (2014), in which they argued that although the gays and lesbians gain unprecedented level of visibility in media, they were somehow appeared in the news in a position that “seen but mostly not heard”.

To interpret why gays and lesbians remains silenced in the media, we need to go back to the power relationship. News media is a place for meaning contestation, where reflects continual struggles of interpretation and meaning. (Dines&Humez, 2003; Gill, 2007; Jowett&Paul, 2010) The news, is not only an important channel through which the dominant can gain consent of its governing, but also a major site for the subordinated to challenge and contest the meaning construction. However, the nearly absence of homosexual’s voice is a one of the reasons that lead to the failure to challenge dominant position of heterosexuality within Taiwanese media context. By restricting the subordinated groups getting access to public sphere in media, the dominant discourses that privilege heterosexuals have been reinforced and continued. The alternative discourse from queer theories perspective, which may constitute a threat to heterosexuality, is still under-represented.

Lacking the voices of gays and lesbians in news coverage limits the ability of audiences to form a more complete understanding of same-sex marriage. Since media is capable to make an appearance of an issue, the readers cannot know how the gay and lesbian couples view the same-sex marriage proposal, nor how they perform their intimate relations, while it is simply absent in media. The over-reliance of elite as news source risks losing or delegitimizing the lived experience of homosexuals. What’s more, if the elites speak in media are themselves not members of the homosexuals themselves, they are more likely to reproduce discourses that privilege heterosexuality, and further exaggerate the power imbalance (Rodriguez&Blumell 2014). Referring to Harding’s standpoint theory that the knowledge is socially situated, including more voices from the marginalised people of their own experiences and understanding, can help

to reach more truthful accounts of the world. Therefore, there is a need for more news stories from the human interest to reflect the ordinary LGBT individuals voice in Taiwanese press media.

Conclusion

This paper examined the news coverage in Taiwan three main newspapers of the same-sex marriage legalization bill. The purpose of this study is to figure out that how the same-sex marriage issue is represented by different points of view in Taiwanese media, and what kind of role the media has played in shaping the tone of debate. A qualitative content analysis was conducted to understand the media coverage of the same-sex marriage debate. The theoretical frameworks, including intimate relationship and modernity of Giddens(1992), and Foucault's (1978) theories of the sex, discourse and power/knowledge nexus, were applied to help me analyze and interpret the media reports and opinion articles. The thesis finds out that in Taiwanese newspapers, the same-sex marriage debate is represented as a dichotomy between two sides: within the opposite arguments, homosexuals and their relationship have been constructed as a deviation, as something different, as the Other. While the supportive arguments emphasized that LGBT individuals are the same with heterosexuals. However, the opposition to marriage redefinition appeared so overwhelming that its supporters appeared less vocal and under siege.

To answer the first research question, media coverage of opposite views has been framed in ways that sustain the stigmatization and marginalization of lesbian and gay identities. Within the opposite arguments, marriage is entered with the purpose of giving birth to children and establishing families. And homosexual partnership is therefore excluded from marriage because its infertility. As Foucault(1978) pointed out, the production of sexuality, is generated by the discourses of the certain time period, and such discourse is governed by the power and knowledge structures of that time period. in Victorian time, the sex that get rid of reproduction would be driven out and denied. As we can see, such repressive discourses of sex are still powerful in part in 21st century Asian culture. Besides, homosexual identities and behaviors are regarded as something immoral or deviation from normality. Therefore, the homosexual parenting has been portrayed as undesirable, since children's well-being would be corrupted by those misbehaviour adults. By doing so, a series of discourses that privilege heterosexuality has been constructed and reinforced, and it tried to govern the ways that we understand the issue through media dissemination.

When some of the opponents do not directly speak against to marriage equality, they construct the same-sex marriage legalization within frameworks of politics and the country's interest in press media. By highlighting the themes of politics or national interest, the human right/equality perspective have been denied, or ignored on purpose, and gay men and lesbians become invisible in the media text. It is another way of repression, operating as "a sentence to disappear"(Foucault, 1978). Although the "semantic strategies" have been applied by opponents to denying being homophobic or gay basher(Meyers, 1994), what they actually doing is to exclude gays and lesbians from the public sphere, to maintain and confirm the institutional heterosexual dominant. In addition, the destructive outcome of marriage redefinition is emphasized and even exaggerated. To avoid it, the special law is portrayed by self-claim neutral as a desirable goal to ease down social conflicts as well as protect the gays and lesbians right. Above all, the same-sex marriage is negatively represented as a threat, a threat to children, a threat to the country's survival and culture continuum, a threat to social stability, and a threat to institutional heterosexuality. When the news media representing these accounts, it contributes to the reproduction and dissemination of the dominant heterosexual discourse.

To answer the second question, when the same-sex marriage debate is framed as an issue that concerning equality and human right in media, such discourse is cracking the hegemonic heterosexual institutions. The word "marriage equality" is often mentioned, even equated with "same-sex marriage legalization" in many occasions. By using egalitarian terms, the same-sex marriage is positively constructed as an advanced measure which will benefit Taiwan sustainable development. However, when the gays and lesbians are given opportunities to speak in news media, most of time their statements were presented about love and domesticity. The prevailing romantic love discourse on the one hand, provides a space for homosexuals to be heard in the debate, but on the other hand it constrains them within the private and domestic sphere. In addition, some advocates have argued that the same-sex marriage is an act to reaffirm and safeguard the traditional family value. Instead of challenging the institutionalized heterosexuality, such problematizing argument in turn revealed the intention to demobilize gay rights movement.

To answer the third question, generally speaking, a large part of media coverage fails to construct discourses out of heterosexual matrix, especially in the newspaper *China Times* and *United Daily News*. They tend to hold a pessimistic attitude towards the Civil Code amendment, and spend much more space in portraying how changing marriage definition would damage the society. The unquestioning representation of the idea that the purpose of marriage is forming family and having children, is doing a work to legitimate and widely spread it. The problematic inferences that allowing gays and lesbians to marry is equivalent to overthrowing heterosexuality, remain unchallenged and unanswered. Such representations are more than enough to intrigue ordinary heterosexual readers unrest and opposition. What's more, the stereotypes of gays and lesbians as sexually deviants or psychologically flawed have been reproduced and continued. The Taiwanese media overwhelmingly covers the statements that homosexuals are different from heterosexual physically and mentally, which draws a boundary to distinguish homosexuals from the 'normal' social members. Such media practices of 'othering' the homosexuals, are likely to result in further exclusion and marginalisation of homosexuals. The media fail to recognize the homophobia embedded within "for the children's sake" arguments, and present them as though they are appropriate and reasonable expressions of concern. The basis of parental anxiety and worries - the prejudices or even hatred - has never been explored.

Taiwanese newspapers could have pointed out, for example, in the countries that executing same-sex marriage for years, the children raised by homosexual families are not disadvantaged in any significant respect compared with children of heterosexual parents (Rodriguez&Blumell, 2014). Nevertheless, the media fail to discredit the arguments that same-sex marriage is not beneficial to their growth, instead, legitimate them.

The news coverage also presents a heterosexual narrative by primarily citing 'straight' sources, from government, academia, civil society organizations, while the gay men and lesbians who have immediate interest in the outcome of the debate were largely obscured. Such ignorance is evident in frequent political or social solidarity framework that media used to cover same-sex marriage issue. Furthermore, the few gay and lesbian voices published in newspaper are restricted within the field of domesticity. They are even represented as the spokespersons for heterosexual-centric traditional family values. The unbalanceness of news source hindered readers to have a more complete understanding of same-sex marriage. Indeed, there are some

newspaper reports - most of them published in *Apple Daily* - that succeeded in representing the gays and lesbians as a minority group that deserving of equality, and criticizing the homophobic and prejudices embedded in the reasons to against marriage equality. The supportive voices, do signal a contested discourse of equality, with both recognizing the repression to and subordinated position of homosexuals, and the need to value human right as “a matter of democratic principle”(Rahman 2004: 164). However, overall speaking, they are not enough to challenge and contest the heterosexual dominant discourses.

It seems that Taiwanese newspaper have done a counteractive work in promoting gender and sexual equality. Some activists have expressed their worries that Taiwan may “go backward” after the same-sex marriage debate. (*Washington Post* 4.20) Nevertheless, Hall (1997) warned against excessive resentment of the media. Notwithstanding their power, the media cannot instill in or impress meanings or explanations upon readers, because they are not mental blank slates. The media should not be regarded as a divisive factor in the shaping of public opinion. To further investigate the field, the research from audience perspective may be required, to see how audiences interpret these media reports. Since most of same-sex marriage supporters are digital generations, and they heavily rely on social media to get access to news and discuss with others, it is also vital to examine online news stories and reader’s understandings towards them.

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Appendix

News Report:

Time	Section	Headline	News Source	Tone	Theme
11.08	Local News	Hundreds gathered in front of DPP Service Office against same-sex marriage; Legislator Mr Zhang: I will listen to both sides and first consider the public opinion	Anti-ssm activists; legislator	Negative	Marriage and children's interest; SSM will hinder country's development
11.18	Hot Topics	President Support Marriage Equality	Government officials	Positive	SSM contribute to equality
11.18	Hot Topics	Thousands of anti-gay protesters storm legislature; Opponents: Amendments is too haste, marriage should be decided by public; Supporters: Many public hearings have been held, the human right issue can't be decided by referendum	SSM activists and anti-ssm activists	Neutral	The voices of opponents haven't been heard; Referendum is needed/ The gays and lesbians are secondary citizens
11.23	Yunlin News	Religious groups against amendment	Religious leaders, legislators	Negative	Referendum needed; SSM is not human right

					issue
11.25	Hot Topics	Gays: SSM lead to less discrimination Opponents: SSM will destroy monogamy	Gay citizen, anti-ssm activities	Neutral	Homosexuals have been oppressed; Homosexual rights can be protected by special law
11.25	Hot Topics	Civil Code Amendment or Special Law? Marriage equality debate in Legislature Yuan	University professors, SSM activities, anti-ssm activities, lawyer, lesbian citizen	Neutral	The special law means separate and inequality; The special law is a phased target before the society reach the consensus
11.26	Highlight	KMT: Support the special law	politician	Negative	The Civil Code amendment is not an emergency, and public opinion is greatly diverse.
11.26	Highlight	DDP tends to special law; Religious groups were invited in discussion Internal communication within DDP is ongoing	politician	Negative	The special law can reduce social conflicts

11.30	Life	The second public hearing of SSM in Legislature Yuan	Civil activists; legislators; politicians; entertainment celebrities; professors; government officials	Neural	Marriage for children benefit; SSM is political scandal and influence the country's future/ SSM for equality;
12.01	Hot Topics	Religious groups support special law Gay right activists reiterate Civil Partnership is not consistent with equality principles	Religious leaders; ssm activists	Neural	SSM is a threat to the country's future and Chinese traditional culture/ Civil Partnership is not marriage
12.04	Life	Thousands protest gay marriage in different cities Opponents: Recall the legislators and hold referendum	Anti-ssm activists	Negative	SSM amendment is political scandal; marriage should be decided by public opinion; The protesters are silent majority.

12.10	Breaking News	Marriage Equality rally: President Palace covered rainbow light	SSM activist	Positive	Marriage equality supporters demand equal rights
12.10	Breaking News	Celebrities support marriage equality in rain	Legislators; politics and entertainment celebrities	Positive	Same-sex marriage for equal rights.
12.20	Miao Li News	Xu: normal heart towards same-sex marriage	Government official	Negative	SSM is not priority; will intrigue social conflicts
12.26	Round-up	Twin rallies for same-sex marriage bill	Politicians	Neutral	Diverse opinion towards ssm
12.27	Breaking news	Same-sex marriage draft approved Preliminary approval to Civil Code amendments Supporters cried and opponents protest	Legislators; government officials	Positive	SSM contribute to social progress

12.27	Highlight	Civil Code Amendment or Special Law? Minister of Justice will submit Civil Partnership Law on February	Government officials	Negative	The public opinion is split. Referendum was proved acceptable in Ireland
12.27	Highlight	Anti-ssm protesters talk with President Tsai	Anti-ssm activists	Negative	SSM bill will intrigue social conflicts
12.27	Highlight	SSM supporters confident	Legislators	Positive	Human right issue cannot be decided by referendum; marriage equality is a symbol of social progress

Editorial Articles:

Time	Section	Title	Source	Tone	Theme
10.30	Highlight	Same-sex marriage have lots of problem that cannot be solved by amendment	Journalist	Neutral	SSM bill will encounter strong opposition.
11.18	Forum	Don't be sensible. Discuss the same-sex marriage from law	Government official	Negative	Homosexuals are no more subordinated; there's no consensus of this issue; marriage should consider children's benefit
11.28	Forum	The family member	Writer	Neutral	We should respect different sexual minorities
11.28	Hot Topics	One-step finish or gradually move on?	Journalist	Neutral	The special law is another separation/ The Civil Code amendment have encountered fierce opposition.
11.30	Highlight	If you want to please everyone	Column writer	Negative	The ssm bill is a political trick of President Tsai.
12.02	Forum	Civil Partnership is less difficult	Doctor	Negative	Many other countries have adopted Civil Partnership before completely legalize ssm. Civil Partnership is less difficult.
12.02	Forum	Special law can better protect gay and lesbian rights in detail	Professor	Negative	The special law can protect homosexual rights in detail.
12.02	Forum	Set another chapter in Civil Code	Professor	Negative	Although special law is unequal, changing Civil

					Code directly is too difficult
12.04	Forum	The ghost of “separate but equal”	Professor	Positive	Special law means secondary citizenship
12.28	Editorial	A government “good at communication” doesn’t care about hatred between people	Journalist	Negative	Homosexuals are no longer oppressed. The SSM bill is a political trick.
12.30	Editorial	President Tsai and her team should be more open-minded	Journalist	Negative	SSM bill is not a priority.

