

Coming out of Silence: Candidates' Stances on LGBT Rights in Taiwan's 2014 Municipal Councilor Elections

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Abstract

Although public opinion in Taiwan is increasingly in favor of gay rights, there is no corresponding trend at the elite level and no concrete policy changes have been achieved. Based on the logic of electoral competition and political socialization, this paper takes the 2014 elections for municipal councilors in Taiwan as an example and examines the factors influencing support for LGBT equality among local politicians. Theoretically, although the centrifugal effect of the SNTV system motivates candidates of the same party to differ from each other on a variety of issues, political socialization, on the contrary, encourages a more unified issue stance taken among party members. The results of multilevel models suggest that there is little linkage between the characteristics of constituents, the electoral rule, and candidates' stances on gay rights. However, both partisanship and age play an indispensable role. Candidates who are members of the DPP or one of the liberal parties are more likely to support LGBT rights than their KMT counterparts.

Keywords: gay rights, position taking, political socialization, centrifugal effect, 2014 Taiwanese municipal councilor elections

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I. Background

In most East Asian countries, the issue of gay rights is rarely raised in political discussions. Although homosexuality has been decriminalized in all the countries of this region, the stereotypes associated with homosexuality discourage most LGBT individuals from speaking out. Of the countries of East Asia, the Republic of China (ROC) on Taiwan (hereafter referred to as Taiwan) has the reputation of being one of the most liberal, and sexual minorities there face less social stigma and better legal protection against discrimination. This creates a favorable atmosphere for proposing and discussing policies on gay rights.¹

The increasing visibility of LGBT policy issues may be observed in the 2008 presidential election debate, during which the question of gay marriage was raised.² In addition, the results of several public opinion surveys indicate that there is a steadily increasing number of people in Taiwan who are accepting of same-sex marriage.³ However, despite these favorable conditions, no concrete policies have been initiated concerning the rights of same-sex spouses.⁴

¹ These favorable conditions are closely associated with democratization, which began in Taiwan in the late 1980s. Since martial law was lifted on the island in 1987, various economically or socially disadvantaged groups have initiated social movements. However, in contrast to groups advocating women's and workers' rights, there was little policy advocacy on the part of the LGBT community in the 1990s.

² Both Ma Ying-jeou, the Kuomintang (KMT) candidate, and Frank Hsieh Chang-ting of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) merely appealed for a "social consensus," stating that only when there was widespread public support for marriage equality would it be further pursued.

³ In the early 2000s, only 23% of respondents of a survey conducted by the Research, Development and Evaluation Commission of the Executive Yuan supported same-sex marriage. However, in polls conducted by a number of TV companies in 2012, around 50% were in favor, and this percentage has remained quite stable even in polls conducted by academic institutions such as the Institute of Sociology at Academia Sinica. See Nan-sen Lin, 2015, "Kaohsiung City Took the Initiative for Official Registration as Same-sex Couples," (in Chinese) *BBC Chinese*, May 20, http://www.bbc.com/zhongwen/trad/china/2015/05/150520_taiwan_samesex_marriage (accessed April 10, 2016).

⁴ In the national legislature, namely the Legislative Yuan, there have been two attempts to introduce legislation on same-sex marriage. In 2006, Hsiao Bi-khim, a DPP legislator, drafted and introduced a bill on marriage equality. Her efforts were ultimately unsuccessful, due to a petition circulated by twenty-three legislators. After several years of inactivity, two other DPP legislators, Yu Mei-nu and Cheng Li-chiun, proposed bills legalizing same-sex marriage, both individually and jointly. Legislator Yu, who served as convener of the Judiciary and Organic Laws and Statutes Committee from September 2014 to January 2015, called for a public hearing in October 2014. She asked the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) and other executive agencies to propose legislation addressing LGBT spousal rights. However, the session

The failure to introduce same-sex marriage legislation can also be attributed to the widespread “don’t ask, don’t tell” attitude among politicians at various levels. During the eighth session of the Legislative Yuan, nearly two-fifths of the legislators did not explicitly express a stance on same-sex marriage (Rich 2015).⁵ With the rise in conflicts between groups of religious conservatives on one side and sexual minorities on the other, more and more gay rights groups have started to provide information on politicians’ attitudes to LGBT issues. This may not only encourage constructive public discussion of gay rights issues, but also encourage politicians to “come out” regarding their position.

Since the focus of this paper is local elections for municipal councilors, it is important for us to review what influence local legislators have on policies affecting the LGBT community. Taiwan is a unitary state and only the Legislative Yuan can make laws which recognize same-sex relationships nationwide. However, in the summer of 2015, both Kaohsiung City and Taipei City started to allow same-sex couples to register partnerships, although these administrative measures have no legal validity. Regardless of their lack of legal effect, these moves are considered to be the starting point for further nationwide reforms leading to administrative recognition.⁶ In both the Kaohsiung and Taipei cases, the measures were proposed and pushed forward by municipal councilors (Councilors Jian Huan-zong and Kao Min-lin in Kaohsiung and Councilor Wang Hong-wei in Taipei). Therefore, it is reasonable for us to take municipal councilors as an example when issues of gay rights are under discussion. Furthermore, in the 2014 municipal councilor elections, the issue of gay rights was particularly important, due to voter mobilization by gay rights groups and also on account of the large number of socially liberal young voters, many of whom had taken part in the Sunflower Student Movement (*Gay Star News*, March 12, 2014).⁷

ended without any proposals coming from the MOJ or any other executive agency.

⁵ For the data source, please refer to the webpage, <http://www.pridewatch.tw/beta/8th-legislators> (accessed April 10, 2016).

⁶ However, there are concerns in the LGBT community that registration without any legal effect is no more than an effort to appease Taiwan’s increasingly dissatisfied sexual minorities. Kaohsiung’s “sunshine registration” measure does not guarantee any meaningful spousal rights. See Hsu-lei Huang, 2015, “Mixed Reaction to Registration for Gay Couples,” *Taipei Times*, May 21, <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2015/05/21/2003618806> (accessed April 10, 2016).

⁷ Po-han Lee, 2014, “How ‘Rainbow Factors’ are Influencing Taiwan Local Elections,” *Gay Star News*, March 12, <http://www.gaystarnews.com/article/how-rainbow-factors-are-influencing-taiwan-local-elections031214/> (accessed April 10, 2016).

II. Research Question

Although Taiwan is relatively liberal on LGBT issues in comparison to other Asian countries, the lack of substantive policy outputs and the widespread silence among politicians on these issues indicate that they are still controversial in nature. Furthermore, none of the major political parties has explicitly endorsed marriage equality, although two minor parties—the Green Party and the Social Democratic Party—have done so. Therefore, given the “don’t ask, don’t tell” attitude prevalent among the political elite, the first question I would like to explore is what are the main factors that influence candidates’ likelihood to offer a positive response on gay rights.

Party politics in Taiwan has long been dominated by the issue of Taiwan’s relations with the People’s Republic of China (Wang and Liu 2004; Wu 1999). There is little difference between the manifestos of the two main political camps—the Pan-Blue and the Pan-Green—apart from the issue of national identity (Fell 2006; Lin 2008). In municipal councilor elections, I would expect the degree of similarity between them to be even higher because in most cases, cross-Strait issues are beyond the scope of policy discussion at this level. However, I need empirical evidence to show that this platform similarity in local-level elections may not exist across issues and candidates. Rich (2015) finds that there is a higher percentage of DPP legislators who support LGBT issues, as compared to their KMT counterparts. So given these signs of partisan division on gay rights at the national level, the second area I wish to explore is whether this gap between the parties is significant at the local level. Furthermore, once we take into account other factors such as demographic variables, the constituency, and local gay communities, does the effect of partisanship, if there is any, still remain significant?

III. Position Taking by Candidates

The political science literature includes many studies that deal with the fundamental question why individuals take part in politics (Brady, Verba, and Schlozman 1995; Milbrath 1965; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Verba, Nie, and Kim 1978; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). For political elites, this question is further complicated by the fact that they must devote substantial resources to gaining elected office. For the sake of greater generalizability, most analyses of electoral competition assume indiscriminately that a candidate’s utmost concern is

to win an election by maximizing his/her potential vote share (Ansolabehere and Snyder 2000; Coates 1998; Dow 2001; Milyo 2001; Patty 2007). Winning elections is a way of achieving goals that include gaining reputation, participating in policymaking, or even earning a living. Therefore, candidates weigh up the different factors that may influence their chance of winning.⁸

One way for a candidate to increase his/her chance of winning an election is position taking. Why do politicians adopt certain policy stances? In electoral campaigns, candidates present their stances on issues to inform voters and persuade them to vote for them, thus increasing the politician's chance of winning (Rosenberg, Bohan, McCafferty, and Harris 1986). Since political parties are vital throughout the whole electoral process starting from nomination, the party platform places constraints on party members' stances (Wittman 1983). Once elected, legislators' attitudes toward policies are the product not only of constituents' influence but also decision-making institutions such as party discipline, vote trading, and persuasion by the president (Kernell 2006; Kingdon 1977; McKelvey and Ordeshook 1980). However, in this paper, I will narrow my focus to taking stances on issues in the electoral period.

In order to ensure electoral success, candidates are attentive to the policy demands of their constituents. Once a candidate is elected, voters will hold her or him accountable by voting for a competitor if the candidate fails to stick to their campaign promises or to follow their constituents' policy preferences. Furthermore, candidates are not able to move freely on issue positions as earlier spatial models suggest, and they face constraints from activists who act as main suppliers of campaign resources (Adams 1996; Burden 2001; Moon 2004). They can utilize position-taking strategies to show support for values which their social groups or constituencies are concerned about (Cox and McCubbins 1986).

Another line of argument about position taking emphasizes the importance of political parties. Since parties are seen as a brand, candidates are more likely to stick to their party platforms when expressing their policy preferences (Müller 2000). In a two-party system, the major parties tend to diverge in their stances on most non-valence issues (Dow 2001). By doing so, they can effectively maximize their vote share while minimizing the probability of electoral success for a third party.⁹ Once a political party cultivates a specific opinion on an issue, this

⁸ Common determinants of the odds of electoral victory are the party identification of the candidate, constituency composition, candidate quality relative to competitors, prior political experience, and issue positions (Abramowitz 1988).

⁹ The weak campaign strength of minor parties is also apparent in the lack of media attention their manifestos receive (Rosenstone, Behr, and Lazarus 1984; Xenos and Foot 2005).

stance tends to be stable over time and resistant to short-term noises (Adams 1997; Stimson 2004). Therefore, political elites do not always turn to voters for cues about which position to take; they can take the initiative to express their own opinions in the process of issue evolution. The top-down influence of elite opinion is one factor in political realignment (Carmines and Wagner 2006; Fiorina, Abrams, and Pope 2005).

Furthermore, in addition to the above-mentioned external forces, such as party platform and constituents' policy demands, individual political elites may also choose a stance on a specific issue based on the socializing cues they receive through their life experience (Jennings and Niemi 1968). Studies on socialization among political elites also suggest that they tend to learn and adopt political values from colleagues and senior members of the same party (Hazan 2003; Owens 2003).

IV. The Influence of the Electoral Rule

Municipal councilors in Taiwan are elected using the single nontransferable vote (SNTV) system. The previous literature points out the drawbacks of this system based on the experience of Taiwan (Wang 1996; Wu 2002). In particular, the multi-member districts weaken the degree of inter-party competition while intensifying conflict between candidates nominated by the same party (Wu 2002). Candidates need to join factions and run individual-centered campaigns in order to have a better chance of defeating competitors from the same party (Wang 2008). Since the threshold of exclusion in this system is relatively low in comparison to a system of single-member districts, the primary goal for each candidate is not to maximize their vote share but rather to attract enough votes to exceed the exclusion threshold (Wang 2011). Given that parties find it difficult to ensure that votes are distributed among their candidates in such a way as to ensure that all of them are elected, it is reasonable for candidates to express extreme policy stances in order to satisfy certain groups. Therefore, with this institutional incentive, I expect both constituency and interest groups to have a strong effect on candidates' decisions to support gay rights.

V. Critiques of the Previous Literature

Although previous models of spatial voting identify dynamic interactions between

candidates and voters, they do not explain how candidates position themselves on issues in the first place (Downs 1957; Enelow and Hinich 1984). In these formal models, policy preferences are treated as independent variables and are commonly presumed to be exogenous. However, this assumption is found to be invalid by studies suggesting that issue preferences are endogenous and subject to the influence of policy outcomes (Bar-Gill and Fershtman 2005; Carsey and Layman 2006; Dunleavy and Ward 1981). Therefore, I need to explore what factors shape candidates' attitudes toward LGBT equality.

LGBT politics can be looked at in at least three ways. First, we can examine how issues affecting the lives of the LGBT population have gained salience in surveys and polls, especially in advanced industrialized democracies (Brewer 2003; Campbell and Monson 2008). Second, we can analyze how organizations advocating gay rights use campaign resources to increase the likelihood that like-minded candidates will win elections (Haider-Markel and Meier 1996).¹⁰ Third, we can look at how LGBT people can gain representation not only by voting but also by standing for political office. The previous literature suggests that LGBT politicians, once elected, are more likely to have favorable attitudes to gay rights than their heterosexual counterparts (Haider-Markel 2010; Haider-Markel, Joslyn, and Kniss 2000). However, this topic has not been widely and systematically discussed with regard to Asian countries. Therefore, I will take the 2014 Taiwanese municipal councilor elections as an example to gain a better understanding of LGBT politics in a relatively liberal and newly democratized Asian regime.

Another main goal of this paper is to examine the conflicting dynamics between the two major factors that may shape a candidate's decision to show support for LGBT rights. First, given the centrifugal incentive embedded in the SNTV system, it is expected that candidates will differentiate themselves in order to win more votes (Cox 1997). However, the effect of political socialization also suggests that members of the same party are more likely to adopt similar issue positions and to internalize the political values of senior colleagues regardless of whether that stance has been formally incorporated into the party platform. Since the two main parties

¹⁰ There are several common strategies used by interest groups, such as voter mobilization, endorsement, campaign contributions, and election advertisements or messages. Although single-issue groups are found to be small in terms of their number and organization, they are still influential in shaping politicians' issue stances, especially under SNTV, where candidates do not need to be as moderate as they do in a system of single-member districts (Cox 1997). However, same-sex partnership rights are still controversial in Taiwanese society, and religious groups, for example, have voiced their opposition—most notably during a rally on November 30, 2013, in Taipei.

do not differ much on most issues other than cross-Strait relations, and neither of them has formally adopted pro-gay policies, LGBT issues serve as a good case for comparing the relative strengths of these two theoretical approaches. These two frameworks of explanation, namely the electoral institution and partisan socializing agents, further complicate our understanding of local politicians' support for gay rights. In order to figure out the relative strengths of these two factors on position taking on LGBT issues in municipal councilor elections, it is necessary to construct a model that takes both of them into consideration.

VI. Hypotheses and Research Design

This paper will examine political attitudes on gay rights among local politicians in Taiwan. The independent variables are coded at three different levels, namely "candidate," "district," and "city." I also include several demographic variables to control for the effect of political socialization other than partisanship (Jennings and Niemi 1968).¹¹ There are two additional control variables to account for the influence of electoral competition. Although both of these are irrelevant to the two main theoretical perspectives under discussion, they may affect the likelihood that candidates will adopt a pro-gay stance.¹²

The dependent variable, *Support for Gay Rights*, is coded based on data provided by the

¹¹ In morality politics, people belonging to different social groups tend to hold different views on moral issues. For example, when compared with males, women are more likely to support LGBT equality (Brewer 2003). Age and educational attainment are also found to affect how people perceive minority rights (Bobo and Licari 1989; Campbell and Monson 2008).

¹² First, winning elections is one of the top priorities for candidates. It is true that candidates also have other incentives when running for office. One underlying incentive is to make policies that are in line with their personal preferences or group interests (Wittman 1983). Since incumbents are more likely to win an election, they will be less likely than challengers to avoid risks such as supporting controversial policies. Therefore, I hypothesize that incumbents are more likely to express explicitly favorable stances on gay rights since they are more electorally secure in comparison to challengers. In addition to *Incumbency*, I also include *Magnitude* at the district level to account for the effect of electoral competition. The chance of winning depicted by this variable is operationalized as the quotient of dividing the number of seats available by the number of candidates who run in the election. This measurement takes the number of competitors into consideration. Based on the rules of SNTV, if there are more candidates in the race after the number of available seats is taken into consideration, it is more likely that candidates will adopt extreme stances since the threshold of exclusion is lower. Therefore, in districts where *Magnitude* is lower, candidates are more likely to show support for LGBT issues.

Taiwan International Association for Gay Rights (2014). This project aims to reflect what candidates' positions on LGBT rights are in the 2014 Taiwanese municipal councilor elections.¹³ The data source for the individual-level variables is Central Election Commission's collection of election bulletins (Central Election Commission 2014), and the bulletins list candidates' personal background and their platform. I use the Geographic Information Database of Socio-Economic Statistics to code population variables at districts. The database includes statistical information of disaster prevention, religion and education, in addition to demographics. The density of churches is coded based on data of the Chinese Church and Organization Directory (Chinese Christian Network Development Association 2013), and it provides basic organizational information for churches in an area. Please refer to Appendix A for a detailed description of the coding rules for each variable.

The first research question asks what factor makes it more likely that a candidate will support issues favorable to LGBT individuals. Based on candidates' desire for votes, I propose the following hypotheses. In districts in which there are more churches and Christian religious centers, candidates are less likely to exhibit an attitude or make a statement favorable to the LGBT community (Wald, Button, and Rienzo 1996). In line with findings on political socialization and public opinion at the individual level, I also hypothesize that in districts where young people or voters with a master's or doctoral degree account for a larger portion of the total voting population, it is more likely that candidates will exhibit more tolerance of LGBT equality in response to a higher density of liberal voters (Bobo and Licari 1989; Campbell and Monson 2008). Support groups and interpersonal networks are essential in reinforcing the identity of sexual minorities. The strength of these resources roughly indicates the potential for political mobilization among local LGBT communities. Therefore, my third hypothesis is that in cities where pride parades take place or where there are larger numbers of LGBT advocacy groups, candidates are more likely to adopt a stance favorable to LGBT issues (Wald, Button, and Rienzo 1996).

The second research question asks whether there is any difference in support for gay rights among candidates of different parties in municipal councilor elections. There are two arguments concerning the issue of whether partisanship plays a decisive role in candidates' positions. The first argument originates from the rules applying to city council elections in Taiwan. Since a

¹³ The six cities include Taipei City, New Taipei City, Taoyuan City, Taichung City, Tainan City and Kaohsiung City.

centrifugal force is embedded in the SNTV system, candidates are likely to win more votes if they differentiate themselves from competitors of the same party. This suggests that we are less likely to observe similar stances on LGBT issues among candidates of the same party. However, the other line of reasoning argues that candidates, or politicians in general, are involved in a constant process of socialization and learning, so local politicians may learn from more senior members of their own party, such as national legislators or party leaders. If this effect of political learning is present, we would expect DPP candidates to be more cohesively supportive of gay rights at the local level given what Rich (2015) has found in his analysis of national legislators.

VII. Results

In the following analysis, I will construct multilevel logistic models to explain candidates' likelihood of showing support for issues favorable to LGBT equality.¹⁴ In order to explore whether there is any difference among cities or districts, I present multilevel analyses to assess not only the fixed effects of the independent variables but also variance components which exhibit residuals at different levels.¹⁵

In Table 1, the first and second models focus on whether there is a clear linkage between the policy preferences of candidates, voters, and interest groups. The number of Christian churches and religious establishments in a district has a negative influence on support for gay rights by candidates running in municipal councilor elections. In contrast, the size of the population of young adults and that of people with post-graduate degrees are found to encourage candidates to provide a more liberal response to inquiries on their stances on LGBT equality. The effect of *Magnitude* is in line with our theoretical expectation. In districts where there are more competitors in the race, given the lower threshold of exclusion, candidates are more likely

¹⁴ I code the dependent variable as a binary variable, *Issue Support*. Although the data allow us to calculate how many LGBT issues the candidate supports and to code it as an ordinal variable, *Level of Support*, I find that there is no difference between the model results of the two coding rules. Therefore, for the sake of interpretative simplicity, I will use *Issue Support* instead.

¹⁵ In Table 2, the scores of intra-class correlation (ICC) suggest that city-level and district-level differences account for roughly 1% and 7%, respectively, of the dependent variable's total variance, while a large proportion of variance (around 90%) is explained by individual-level differences. However, the confidence intervals of ICC estimates for city and district levels lead us to conclude that the observations within clusters do not share similarities with those in different clusters. Therefore, it is necessary to use a three-level mixed model.

to express support for LGBT issues. *Higher Education* is the only variable that is statistically significant at the district level.

The second model deals exclusively with city-level variables. None of the variables is statistically significant. The coefficient sign of *Gay Pride* runs counter to that stated in the relevant research hypothesis.¹⁶ However, unlike the conflicting result of *Gay Pride*, the more LGBT interest groups advocating sexual rights there are at the city level, the higher the likelihood that candidates will support issues concerning the legal status and rights of LGBT individuals. When all other variables are held constant, a one-unit increase in *LGBT Groups* will increase the log-odds of supporting gay rights by 4.734 units. The results in Model 1 and Model 2 indicate that our first argument is not strongly supported by the evidence. Since *Higher Education* is the only constituency variable that reaches statistical significance, candidates are to some extent attentive to the policy demands of constituents and interest groups. Therefore, there may be other factors apart from the desire to win votes that better explain candidates' positions on gay rights.

¹⁶ This result indicates that this variable may not be a good indicator of the social atmosphere LGBT people are facing in the cities. Although a city may have annual social events that are supportive of the LGBT community, these activities are not a powerful force for political mobilization that would put pressure on local legislative candidates.

Table 1 Multilevel Models on Support for Gay Rights

| Parameter | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 | Model 4 |
|-----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Fixed Effects | | | | |
| Individual Level | | | | |
| Gender | - | - | .0020(.0252) | .0005(.0251) |
| Age | - | - | -.0035(.0013)** | -.0034(.0013)** |
| Incumbency | - | - | .0170(.0267) | .0126(.0269) |
| DPP | - | - | .0814(.0293)** | .0802(.0293)** |
| Liberal Parties | - | - | .7381(.0713)*** | .7230(.0714)*** |
| Other Minor Parties | - | - | .0713(.0414) | .0622(.0415) |
| Independents | - | - | .0500(.0332) | .0488(.0332) |
| Junior High | - | - | -.0468(.0564) | -.0329(.0564) |
| High School | - | - | -.0749(.0368)* | -.0644(.0371) |
| College | - | - | -.0370(.0258) | -.0325(.0258) |
| District Level | | | | |
| Density of Churches | -.0008(.0025) | - | - | .0005(.0024) |
| Youth Population | .0274(.4504) | - | - | -.0521(.4273) |
| Magnitude | -.0508(.1324) | - | - | .0327(.1248) |
| Higher Education | 2.3347(.6899)** | - | - | 1.5952(.7400)* |
| City Level | | | | |
| Gay Pride | - | -.0621(.0786) | - | -.0132(.0513) |
| LGBT Groups | - | 4.734(2.875) | - | .1056(2.2346) |
| Constant | .0064(.2181) | .0709(.0416) | .2575(.0733)*** | .1645(.2230) |
| Random Effects | | | | |
| City (residual) | .0422(.0234)** | .0486(.0232)*** | .0377(.0232) | .0151(.0380) |
| District (residual) | .0708(.0172)*** | .0791(.0173)*** | .0825(.0154)*** | .0810(.0156)*** |
| Individual (residual) | .3208(.0089)*** | .3224(.0090)*** | .2917(.0081)*** | .2909(.0081)*** |
| -2 x Log Likelihood | 420.036 | 432.472 | 301.346 | 293.362 |
| N | 688 | 688 | 688 | 688 |

Source: Taiwan International Association for Gay Rights (2014); Central Election Commission (2014); Ministry of the Interior (2014); Chinese Christian Network Development Association (2013).

Notes: 1. The entries are estimated by maximum likelihood estimation (IGLS) with estimated standard errors placed in parentheses.

2. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Table 2 Intra-class Correlation Scores for Models

| Level | ICC | 95% Upper Bound | 95% Lower Bound |
|----------------|----------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Model 1 | | | |
| City | .0162421 | .0018406 | .1287861 |
| District | .0619463 | .0288351 | .1280649 |
| Model 2 | | | |
| City | .0210253 | .0032435 | .1241501 |
| District | .0765966 | .0376290 | .1496432 |
| Model 3 | | | |
| City | .0152791 | .0013644 | .1498081 |
| District | .0883136 | .0474595 | .1584844 |
| Model 4 | | | |
| City | .0025073 | .0011763 | .9799652 |
| District | .0743230 | .0389454 | .1372480 |

Source: Taiwan International Association for Gay Rights (2014); Central Election Commission (2014); Ministry of the Interior (2014); Chinese Christian Network Development Association (2013).

In the third model, I explore the second research question: whether there is a partisan bias in support for LGBT issues. All of the variables exhibit the expected coefficient direction. Females are more likely to be empathetic where issues affecting sexual minorities are concerned. Older candidates are more likely to be opposed to gay rights, although we cannot draw any conclusions about the root of this age effect. Incumbents tend to adopt favorable attitudes to LGBT issues compared to challengers. There is a clear partisan divide in terms of stances on pro-LGBT policies. Taking the KMT as the reference group, I find that members of other parties or independents on average express higher degrees of support for LGBT equality, with effects of liberal parties¹⁷ and the DPP being statistically significant.¹⁸ Candidates with a master's or doctoral degree tend to be more supportive of pro-LGBT issues. Among these variables, only *Age*, *High School* and two of the partisan variables, *DPP* and *Liberal Parties*, reach statistical

¹⁷ Since there is no clear left-right structure in Taiwanese party politics, I choose to describe these parties such as Wing of Radical Politics as liberal parties rather than left-wing parties.

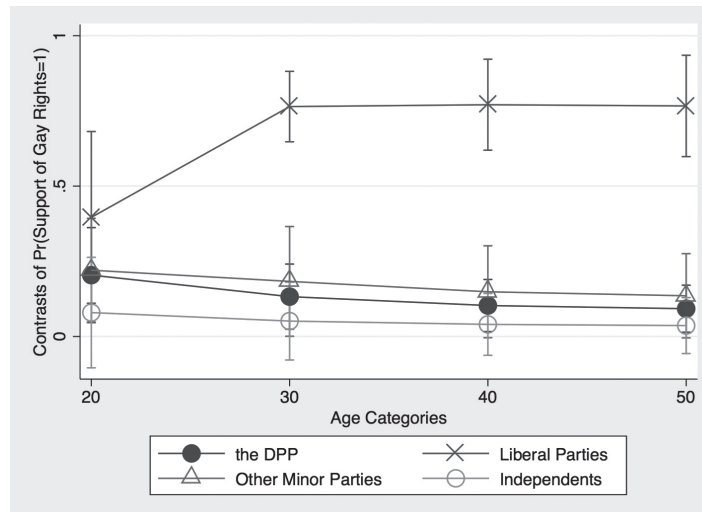
¹⁸ The KMT has not explicitly stated its stance on LGBT issues. However, I observe that it leans toward opposition, since most of the counteractions, whether within or outside the national legislature, have been co-sponsored by KMT legislators and officials. See Lii Wen, 2014, "Divisive Same-Sex Marriage Bill Stalls in Legislative Yuan," *Taipei Times*, December 23, <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/front/archives/2014/12/23/2003607386> (accessed April 10, 2016).

significance.¹⁹

The last model accounts for factors at different levels at the same time and it produces results that agree largely with the above findings, except for the statistical insignificance of *High School*. In the first three models, the confidence intervals of the residuals imply that the intercepts vary across units of analysis at these three different levels. The residuals increase with the collapsing of analytical level. However, in the third and fourth models, the residual of the city level is not statistically significant.

In Figure 1, I plot the margins of predicted probabilities by both partisanship and age. The values are the probability difference of favoring LGBT rights between local politicians in the specific partisan group and those in other categories. It shows that politicians who identify themselves with liberal parties have the largest margin of probabilities (from 0.4 to 0.7) and are more likely to be favorable across age groups. I observe that age has a mixed effect on support for gay rights in different groups of party identification. In the case of liberal parties, members who are older are far more likely to support gay rights than their same-age counterparts who have a different party identification. However, in other partisan groups, the probability gap shrinks between party identifiers and non-identifiers when age increases. Since all of the point estimates for the four categories are above zero, this indicates that KMT members (the reference group) on average are less likely to adopt a favorable stance on gay rights. The result of the multilevel models indicates that most of the leading effects on support for gay rights stem from candidates' experiences of political socialization in the party. It also suggests that there is little influence from the constituency and interest groups. It means that when it comes to gay rights, forces within the electorate do not play a major role in shaping candidates' issue positions.

¹⁹ Partisan influence on members' issue stances is three-fold. First, once a party has developed a solid platform, existing members may assimilate these ideas because of pressure from peers and leaders. Second, a member's decision to join a party may itself be issue driven (Owens 2003). Third, party leaders or senior members may adopt stances that are not yet part of the party platform and more junior party members may learn and internalize the leaders' values. Candidates of liberal parties are mainly constrained by the first and second effects while members of the DPP are influenced by the third one. See Xing-huei Pan, 2015, "Democratic Progressive Party Asserted Its Support for Gay Rights," (in Chinese) *China Times*, July 11, <http://www.chinatimes.com/realtimenews/20150711003411-260405> (accessed April 10, 2016).



Source: Taiwan International Association for Gay Rights (2014); Central Election Commission (2014); Ministry of the Interior (2014); Chinese Christian Network Development Association (2013).

Figure 1 Contrasts of Predictive Margins with 95% CIs

VIII. Conclusion

Legislators in Taiwan have discussed the issue of marriage equality for the LGBT community in recent years but there has been no corresponding policy output. Rich (2015) utilizes the data released by the Lobby Alliance for LGBT Human Rights and concludes that legislators who are placed on the party list for election by proportional representation are more likely to exhibit support for a law on same-sex marriage than their counterparts elected in districts. In addition to the effect of institutional arrangement, which does not matter in elections for municipal councilors since all of them are elected under SNTV, the other significant factor found in his paper is partisanship. However, in comparison to legislators, municipal councilors are expected to be less constrained by party discipline, especially in terms of gay rights, since most of the major parties have not incorporated this issue into their platforms and local politicians have lower visibility in the media. Using data collected by the Taiwan International Association for Gay Rights, I examine the following two research questions at the local level. First, is adoption of a pro-gay rights stance mainly driven by a need to represent constituents and interest groups in order to win additional votes? Second, is there a partisan difference in support for LGBT issues even among politicians running in municipal councilor elections?

Variables at different levels have impacts on the likelihood that candidates in municipal

councilor elections will endorse issues such as same-sex marriage and the inclusion of LGBT rights in their platforms. Partisanship and age are significant factors shaping how a candidate approaches this issue and forms a policy stance. Members of the DPP and liberal parties are more likely to endorse gay rights while older candidates tend to show disapproval for LGBT equality. Furthermore, the presence of LGBT groups in a city boosts the likelihood of support for gay rights among candidates in that city, yet it fails to reach statistical significance. The result of multilevel models also suggests that there is variance in support for gay rights among candidates across districts and cities. However, I do not find strong evidence to support the argument that candidates look closely for cues from constituents or interest groups before choosing whether or not to support gay rights. The second argument, that there is no difference in support for LGBT rights among local politicians of different parties, is refuted.

I raise some points for further research on this topic. If interest groups advocating LGBT equality can keep track of politicians' attitudes toward gay rights periodically, this panel data will allow us not only to examine inter-temporal trends but also to analyze whether or not change over time among political elites is responsive to public opinion on relevant issues. Furthermore, because of the limited availability of information, there are several important independent variables that have not been included in the analysis. For example, candidates' religious beliefs and whether or not they have any relatives or friends who are LGBT are considered crucial to studies of opinions on gay rights in the previous literature (Haider-Markel 1999; Lewis 2011).

When it comes to partisan influence on position taking in the electoral process, there are two main lines of arguments regarding municipal councilor elections in Taiwan. On the one hand, under the SNTV system, candidates are more likely to try to differentiate themselves from each other, even from competitors from the same party, on a variety of political issues in order to win more electoral support. Therefore, in this case, we would not expect to observe clear division along party lines on the issue of gay rights. However, on the other hand, we argue that candidates tend to internalize the values of colleagues, especially senior colleagues, from the same party. Politicians are constantly reorienting themselves on a variety of political issues in order to adapt to changing political dynamics both within and outside of their parties. The result of the model suggests that this kind of political socialization is an important factor influencing the issue stances of DPP and KMT candidates on gay rights, and the strong centrifugal effect that would be expected in an SNTV system is absent.

* * *

Appendix A

| Variable Name | Values and Coding Rule |
|--|--|
| Dependent Variables | |
| Issue Support | 0/1: Whether the candidate explicitly endorsed any pro-gay stance in the platform or in the questionnaire provided by the Taiwan International Association for Gay Rights |
| Independent Variables, Individual Level | |
| Partisanship | Consists of a series of dummy variables entitled <i>KMT</i> , <i>DPP</i> , <i>Liberal Parties</i> (Green Party; Wing of Radical Politics; People's Democratic Front; Trees Party), <i>Other Minor Parties</i> (People First Party; Taiwan Solidarity Union; Non-Partisan Solidarity Union, and others), and <i>Independents</i> . KMT members are treated as the reference group |
| Gender | 0: male candidates; 1: female candidates |
| Age | Computed by subtracting the year of birth from 2014 |
| Education Level | Coded into four dummy variables (Junior High and Below, High School, College, and Graduate School) indicating the highest level of education a candidate received, with the last group serving as the reference |
| Incumbency | 0/1: Whether the candidate is an incumbent |
| Independent Variables, District Level | |
| Youth Population | Percentage of voters aged between twenty and thirty-nine among the total eligible population in the district |
| Higher Education | Percentage of voters with a master's or doctoral degree |
| Density of Churches | Number of churches per capita in each district |
| Magnitude | Computed by taking the number of available seats as the numerator and the number of candidates as the denominator |
| Independent Variables, City Level | |
| Gay Pride | 0/1: Whether any pride parades have taken place in the city |
| LGBT Groups | Number of organizations active in each city |

Source: The dependent variable is coded based on data provided by the Taiwan International Association for Gay Rights (2014) which can be accessed at <http://www.gvote.org/about> (accessed April 10, 2016). The data source for the individual-level variables is Central Election Commission's collection of election bulletins (Central Election Commission 2014), and it can be accessed at <http://web.cec.gov.tw/files/11-1000-5373.php> (accessed April 10, 2016). The data of population variables at districts is released by the Ministry of the Interior which can be accessed at <http://moisagis.moi.gov.tw/moiap/gis2010/Pro/Logged/MapPro/index.cfm?WORK=SP> (accessed April 10, 2016). The density of churches is coded based on data of the Chinese Church and Organization Directory (Chinese Christian Network Development Association 2013) and can be found at <http://church.oursweb.net/slocation.php?w=1and c =TW> (accessed April 10, 2016).

Appendix B

| | Value | Frequency | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|---------------|--------------------|
| Issue Support | 0 | 596 | 86.60 | 86.6 |
| | 1 | 92 | 13.37 | 100.0 |
| Partisanship | KMT | 213 | 31.00 | 31.0 |
| | DPP | 200 | 29.10 | 60.0 |
| | Liberal Parties | 21 | 3.10 | 63.1 |
| | Other Minor Parties | 80 | 11.60 | 74.7 |
| | Independents | 174 | 25.30 | 100.0 |
| Gender | Males | 477 | 69.30 | 69.3 |
| | Females | 211 | 30.70 | 100.0 |
| Education Level | Junior High and Below | 34 | 4.90 | 4.9 |
| | High School | 103 | 15.00 | 19.9 |
| | College | 276 | 40.10 | 60.0 |
| | Graduate School | 275 | 40.00 | 100.0 |
| Incumbency | 0 | 344 | 50.00 | 50.0 |
| | 1 | 344 | 50.00 | 100.0 |
| Gay Pride | 0 | 350 | 50.90 | 50.9 |
| | 1 | 338 | 49.10 | 100.0 |
| Summary Statistics | | | | |
| | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Standard Deviation |
| Age | 23 | 89 | 50.421 | 9.729 |
| Youth Population | .27 | .56 | .401 | .045 |
| Higher Education | .01 | .15 | .061 | .030 |
| Density of Churches | .21 | 72.86 | 3.085 | 6.624 |
| Magnitude | .17 | 1.00 | .545 | .129 |
| Density of LGBT Groups | .00 | .05 | .017 | .014 |

Source: Taiwan International Association for Gay Rights (2014); Central Election Commission (2014); Ministry of the Interior (2014); Chinese Christian Network Development Association (2013).

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同志議題與政治表態： 以臺灣 2014 年六都議員選舉為例

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《本文摘要》

儘管臺灣民眾近年來在民調中對於同志議題的接受度日益提升，然而保障同志基本權益的伴侶法規仍無重大進展。此一民意與政策制定的落差乃主要源自於政治菁英對於此一議題缺乏積極表態的動機。儘管如此，已有研究顯示不同政黨的立法委員在同志權益相關議題上抱持相異的立場；依據政治學習與社會化理論，我們將預期政黨對於候選人的議題取向具有決定性的影響，是故民進黨市議員候選人，相對於國民黨候選人而言將較支持同志權益。然而，由於直轄市議員的選制為複數選區單記不可讓渡投票制，因此在離心效應的影響下，同黨候選人則應抱持相異的議題立場，意味政黨在同志權益議題立場上將不產生影響力。本文以 2014 年臺灣六都議員選舉為例，探究此兩種理論對於候選人在同志議題立場表態支持與否的效果。研究結果顯示政黨內部的社會化過程顯著影響地方選舉候選人支持同志議題的機率，除此之外，在人口變項上，年齡較年長的候選人顯著地較不易支持同志權益。相對而言，選舉制度以及選民組成則非候選人在此一議題表態上的主要考量。

關鍵詞：同志權益、政治立場表態、政治社會化、離心效應、2014 年臺灣六都議員選舉

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