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"She Did Not Come Out, But We've Come to Terms" -- Family Reconciliation of Challenged Expectations When a Young Adult Child is Gender and Sexual Minority/Tongzhi: Multiple Perspectives

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by

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Dedication

To my family, by blood and by choice.

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Abstract

"She Did Not Come Out, But We've Come to Terms" -- Family Reconciliation of Challenged Expectations When a Young Adult Child is Gender and Sexual Minority/Tongzhi: Multiple Perspectives

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This dissertation investigated adult child-parent relationship where the child is a gender/sexual minority, or *tongzhi* (同志). Building on Jhang's (2018) model of scaffolding in family, this dissertation theorized the process of *chugui* (出櫃, exit-closet) for Taiwanese tongzhi and their family. Chugui is a direct translation of *coming out of the closet,* but it entails a rather different process than disclosure. Thus, this dissertation challenged the conventional coming out as disclosure conceptualization by delineating the coming to terms process. As a Westernized-Confucius society, Taiwan has recently experienced drastic legal changes regarding gender/sexual minority, including legalizing same-sex marriage in 2019, making it a suitable context to examine chugui/coming out in the family.

Using grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006), interview and field observation data are analyzed to find categories to substantiate the coming to terms model. 40 tongzhi young adult (age 20-38) and 17 parents (age 45-69) were included.

The findings built the model of coming to terms/chugui in the family as scaffolding. It shows the onset of chugui/coming out is the awareness of difference rather than disclosure. The process of coming to terms is characterized by the psychological *constant comparison of relating,* a way for people to make sense of relationships by comparing various micro and macro discourses. The process is also influenced by the intersectional identity of the offspring (biological sex, gender performance, and direction of sexual attraction) and the parent (father/mother, and social class). People then make individual behavioral scaffolding efforts to move forward. Finally, the parents may compartmentalize their acceptance behaviorally, emotionally, attitudinally, and cognitively, while the offspring might accept or reject the discounted acceptance, making the process indefinite.

Theoretical implications include establishing the processual and relational nature of coming to terms, legitimizing parental agency, and underscoring the utility of functional ambivalence, the notion of relational selfhood, and intersectional identity. Practical implications include making the idea of polysemy and the constant comparison process explicit and helping people building schemas while avoiding cruel optimism. The transferability of the model is discussed, and this dissertation invites researchers to look beyond “disclosure” in studying LGBTQ+ family relationship.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

"When did your daughter come out to you?"

"Do you mean 'when did she tell me' or 'when did I accept her'?"

This exchange between a new member and a returning one at a small gathering of parents of LGBTQ+/tongzhi offspring took place soon after Taiwan's Constitutional Court ruled the ban on same-sex marriage unconstitutional on May 24, 2017. The answer-with-an-answer was not a rhetorical device, but a genuine inquiry.

"*I guess…both? When did she tell you* and *when did you accept her?"*

"I found out she liked girls when I saw her diary during her middle school years, and now she's 33. I was never able to accept her until the Constitutional Court's ruling. Now that I could finally see hopes in her future, I want to catch up and learn as much as I can to support her."

The short answer is packed with the long years this mother spent since learning her daughter is a lesbian to accepting it, a milestone in their mother-daughter relationship. This story is emblematic of "chugui/coming out" for Taiwanese families: it could be a complex and protracted undertaking for both the LGBTQ+/tongzhi offspring and their parents, it might be initiated in different ways with or without explicit disclosures (that is, one could chugui/come out without any disclosure, and one may still be closeted after disclosures), and it is influenced by external factors, such as the constitutional court ruling in this mother's case.

These elements paint a rather different picture of "coming out" for Taiwanese LGBTQ+/tongzhi as opposed to the dominant "coming out" conceptualization in the US-centric studies, in which coming out is conceptualized as a discrete verbal disclosure event that serves as a turning point in the family life (e.g., Grafsky, 2014). In Taiwan, however, the elements found in the mother's story at the beginning of the paper are present in many Taiwanese's LGBTQ+/tongzhi "coming out" stories, as evidenced by anecdotes in support group meetings held by LGBTQ+/tongzhi right associations (e.g., Taiwan Tongzhi Hotline Association, n.d.; Loving Parents of LGBT Taiwan, n.d.), narratives found in news articles or commentaries (e.g., Chen, Z. J., 2017; Chen, H. T., 2011), and data found in published journal articles (e.g., Wang, Bih, & Brennan, 2009) and unpublished master theses from various universities in Taiwan (e.g., Lin, Y. J., 2010; Tsai, J. C., 2015). Abundant as these stories may be, what is urgently and markedly lacking is a systemic and theoretical-based examination that formalizes and thus legitimizes the unique "coming out/chugui" process for Taiwanese LGBTQ+/tongzhi and their families, and that is where my dissertation comes in.

Terminology

In this dissertation, I will the term *tongzhi* (同志), instead of LGBTQ+ (or other combinations of abbreviated letters) when referring to people and culture in Taiwan, such as tongzhi issues, parents of tongzhi offspring, or Taiwanese tongzhi. Even though "tongzhi" has been mutually-translated with LGBTQ+ to mean homosexuality and other non-conforming sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender performance, the two phrases have inherently different meaning and relational implications (Lin & Hudley,

2009; Martin, 2000). The dominant identity-based framework of LGBTQ+ is internationally recognizable and providing an accessible first step to make sense of the complex nature of identity formation and categorization in political advocation, but its applicability to non-U.S./West European cultural contexts has been questioned (Brainer, 2018; Chou, 2000, 2001; Engebretsen & Schroeder, 2015; Lau, Yeung, Stotzer, Lau, & Loper, 2016). When discussing the extant literature, I will use LGBTQ+ or other terminology used in specific studies, while using tongzhi when referring to Taiwanese individuals and culture.

Similarly, I will use *chugui* (exit-closet, 出櫃, the literal translation of *coming out of the closet* borrowed from the US-West European concept of coming out) instead of coming out when talking about this process of "exit-closet" in Taiwan. Differentiating the definition, practices, processes, and implications in coming out and chugui is the very purpose of this dissertation. Since Taiwan's tongzhi culture borrows heavily from that of the U.S. (Chou, 2000), it is understandable that coming out/chugui becomes a part of the prominent discourse in Taiwanese tongzhi movement scenery. However, when Taiwanese uses the phrase chugui in the family context, it means something rather different from coming out in the UW-West European contexts. To recap, and LGBTQ+ and coming out will be used to reference existing literature, while *tongzhi* and *chugui* will be used to talk about people and culture of Taiwan.

Dissertation Overview

This dissertation problematizes the "coming out" process in Taiwan. The imported term *chugui* (exit-closet, coming out of the closet) is commonly and

conveniently used by Taiwanese tongzhi, their family, and in public discourses. However, this term is used by Taiwanese LGBTQ+ and their family in such a way that renders the US-centric conceptualization insufficient and even misinforming in understanding the Taiwanese family communicative relational work. I argue that for Taiwanese tongzhi and their family, family communicative relational work is a "*coming to terms*" rather than a "*coming out*" process. I theorize the "coming to terms" process by examining the family communication from the perspective of both the tongzhi people and parents of tongzhi offspring. Different from most of the studies on tongzhi's relationship with their family of origin that rely on only the tongzhi people's accounts, my dissertation used interview and observational data from both the tongzhi people and parents of tongzhi offspring, in order to provide a more complete picture of what the family work of "coming to terms" is like. Also, most studies on LGBTQ's relationship with their family or origin focus on adolescents and their parents, which might be a result of the dominant idea in the U.S. that once a person turns 18, this person is an adult and is on their own. However, the parent-offspring relationship continues for a lifetime and being a legal adult does not warrant knowing how to maintain desired parent-offspring relationship better (Alford, 2016; Brainer, 2019); thus, the lack of research on the adult offspring-parent relationship should be addressed, and my dissertation is one small part in this nascent field.

When an offspring turns out to be tongzhi and is breaking the heteronormative expectation, the family relationship has to undergo certain remaking. The relational work of the family remaking does not happen in a vacuum; instead, it relies on the cultural,

social, historical, legal and political discourses to take shape, and it in turn shapes the discourses. Taiwan's unique cultural, social, historical, legal and political background makes it the most LGBTQ+ friendly country in Asia (Jennings, 2017), compared to neighboring countries with similar Confucius patriarchal and collectivist cultural roots, or with similar democratic polity, including China, Singapore, South Korea, Japan, and Vietnam (Adamczyk & Cheng, 2015; Raymo, Park, Xie, & Yeung, 2015). Therefore, in this dissertation, I drew the discourses referenced to in the interviews and field observation to paint a more thorough picture of how family relational work is situated in the larger cultural context (see Chapter 4). Even though there has been significant legal progress in terms of tongzhi rights in Taiwan, research has found that legal progress does not necessarily translate into social or familial acceptance, but could bring about social conflicts that exacerbate LGBTQ+ individuals' pressure (Hildebrandt, 2011; Kenneady & Oswalt, 2014), therefore calling for research that looks at how the socio-legal changes intersect and interfere with family relational work.

Besides responding to numerous calling to redress the dearth of research exploring family communication in populations outside the U.S. European American middle class (e.g., Bilodeau & Renn, 2005; Laurent, 2005; Soliz & Phillips, 2018; Turner & West, 2003; Wong & Tang; 2004), my dissertation highlights Taiwan's potential to be a theoretical foundation on which new concepts, phenomena, and models would be built and tested. Its influence is not geographically bounded; instead, its utilities are abundant. The mainstream US family contexts could also benefit from examining assumptions within it. Cultures around the world that share similarities with Taiwan could also benefit

from this research, as could cultures within the U.S. borders, such as the family-oriented Mexican American cultures, South European and East European American cultures, and the more obvious Asian American cultures. All these cultures are in themselves complicated, multifarious, and should not be reduced as a singularity, but findings from this study should be able to contribute to the trend to study family in cultures other than the mainstream US-West European contexts.

As drastic legal changes regarding the LGBTQ+/tongzhi are taking place across the globe and in Taiwan in the past decade, such as the U.S. Supreme Court declaring Section 3 of DOMA unconstitutional in 2015, the May 24, 2017 Taiwan's Constitutional Court ruling in favor of same-sex marriage (Jeffreys & Wang, 2018), there still lack studies addressing the fundamental family processes of Taiwanese tongzhi. Such research is pressingly needed to analyze what is and has been happening and in turn provides guidance and prediction in dealing with what is to come, especially when the lives and welfare of oppressed and marginalized groups are at stake, and this dissertation is an endeavor toward that direction.

Setting the Stage: A Brief History of Same-Sex Marriage in Taiwan

When Taiwan's Constitutional Court ruled that the ban on same-sex marriage as unconstitutional on May 24, 2017, mandating the legislature to amend or create laws that protect same-sex marriage within two years (thus, before May 24, 2019), the tongzhi rights movement in Taiwan reached a new peak, bringing waves of excitements and relief mixed with unfamiliar anxiety and uncertainty: Do tongzhi talk about getting married now that marriage is *really* becoming an option? What does it entail actually to get

married and even start a family *legally*? How do they deal with their family relationship in this new frontier? How do parents of tongzhi offspring adjust their expectations now that their offspring could actually get married and even have offspring of their own? How should they position themselves in this new form of an extended family should their offspring really marry their same-sex partner and have offspring? These are among the many questions that tongzhi individuals and parents of tongzhi offspring are faced with in light of the new legal advances.

Even though the fight for marriage equality was not new in Taiwan, decades of lost battles had been mourned by tongzhi people quietly, without disturbing the heteronormative flow of life too significantly. In 1986, Mr. Chi Chia-Wei, the first openly gay person in Taiwan, applied for, and was subsequently denied, the marriage license from Taipei District Court notary office; this highly publicized civic resistance was subdued when Mr. Chi's appeal to the Legislative Yuan was rejected, with the ruling calling homosexuals to be "sexually deviant and abnormal" (Lee, P. H., 2016). His second attempt in 2000 was met with a similar fate, resulting in yet another expected rejection. In 2001, 2003, and 2006, the Ministry of Justice, Office of the President, and a legislator (Miss Hsiao Bi-Khim, from the Democratic Progressive Party) proposed respective bills granting protection and recognition of same-sex marriage but none made any substantial progress (Hsu, V. H. W., 2015). During this time, LGBTQ+ people had similarly lived a relatively low-profile life (Brainer, 2014).

It was not until 2013 that the issue of same-sex marriage started to receive constant mainstream media coverage and pushed the topic of sexual orientation and

same-sex marriage to not only the legislative desks but also the dinner table in many tongzhi people's family life. The increased visibility was the result of the marriage equality amendment bill introduced by 23 lawmakers from the Democratic Progressive Party in the Legislative Yuan, which was then immediately referred to the Legislative Yuan's Judicial Committee for review and for possible first reading. It was the furthest progress any marriage equality bill had ever made to in Taiwan, with a higher than ever possibility to actually pass the readings and legalize same-sex marriage. This prospect prompted the conservative churches to rally a 150,000-people anti-same-sex marriage demonstration where several physical conflicts broke out between the proponents and opponents, making headlines in the major newspapers and news channels (e.g., Wang, J. J., 2013; Yan, S. Q., 2013).

The momentum continued to 2016 when two draft amendments to Taiwan's Civil Code which would legalize same-sex marriage and same-sex couple adoption passed the first reading under President Tsai Ying-Wen (the Democratic Progressive Party) administration, who campaigned heavily on her support of marriage equality and tongzhi rights. The newly reached milestone of marriage equality was quickly countered by thousands of opponents organized by the conservative churches who demonstrated in major cities around Taiwan, which then was outnumbered by a historical record of 250,000 supporters of marriage equality merely one week later in front of the Presidential Office in Taipei. The amendment bills were stalled due to severe conflicts both in the Legislature Yuan and among people, until Mr. Chi Chia-Wei's appeal for marriage license was referred to the Constitutional court, resulting in historic Constitution

Interpretation No. 748 that ruled Civil Code's restriction of marriage to be unconstitutional, and that same-sex couples will be allowed to marry no later than May 24, 2019.

The road to marriage equality took a sharp yet not all that surprising turn in late 2018 when the result of the 2018 referendums had a landslide of opposition to marriage quality and even gender equality education (Huang, A., 2018; Reuters, 2018). The Taiwan Family Organization, which is organized and sponsored by conservative Christian churches, utilized the family and offspring protection narratives to campaign against same-sex marriage and gender equality education to appeal to the conservative nature of the general public who are not necessarily informed on the topics even on the voting day. The referendums results have dimmed the "beacon for human rights issues across Asia" (Jacobs, 2014, para. 10). It is not just a policy defeat but also has significant real-life consequences.

Even though the government had later said that the referendums would not affect the Constitutional Court ruling No. 748, it is speculated that the authorities would pass a special law with weaker protections rather than amending the Civil Code (Reuters, 2018). As expected, in February 2019, Taiwan Judicial Branch proposed a bill titled "The Taiwan Judicial Branch Constitution Interpretation No. 748 Act," a bill virtually granting same-sex couple rights to marriage without using the name "marriage" in the title of the bill, a compromise to appease both the proponents and opponents of same-sex marriage (Lee, Y., 2019).

Unsurprisingly, in a couple weeks, the opponents (The Taiwan Family Organization) and several conversation legislators proposed another version of the bill titled "The Referendum No. 12 Act" that strips most of the rights away and only allows same-sex couples to be in a unionship with very limited rights (Li, B. F., 2019). Another Democratic Progressive Party Legislature, Miss Lin Tai-Hua later proposed another version of the same-sex marriage bill that restricted the rights of same-sex couple even more, and shortly before May 25, 2019, there were three versions of the same-sex unionship/marriage bill to be voted on, and the legislature took a vote on May 17, 2019, which happened to be the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia, and the most friendly and inclusive version of the bill won the vote, legalizing same-sex marriage in Taiwan[1]. As people are excited and relieved, it is also excocted that more upheavals, battles, and conflicts would continue to occur on this battleground; in fact, the opposition party has taunted to reverse the same-sex marriage bill and other tongzhi protection if they took back the office in next year's presidential election (Tan, 2019).

With marriage equality at the forefront of policy debate, street protests, and media coverage, many tongzhi people found the attention to be a double-edged sword—it is good that the government has really started to move things along, and yet it also makes avoiding talking about tongzhi related issues at home that much harder. Research has found that legal progress does not necessarily translate into social or familial acceptance,

[1] There are still rights inaccessible to same-sex couples, so the "same-sex marriage" bill is in fact a same-sex unionship bill using the name of marriage.

but could bring about social conflicts that exacerbate LGBTQ+/tongzhi individuals' pressure (Hildebrandt, 2011; Kenneady & Oswalt, 2014); similarly, debates and negative campaign messages following policy changes often bring about detrimental psychological impact on LGBTQ+ people (Frost & Fingerhut, 2016; Gonzalez, Ramirez, & Galupo, 2018; Liu, L., 2018; Marzullo & Herdt, 2011; Maisel & Fingerhut, 2011), and sociopolitical changes have similar significant influences on same-sex couples' relational quality (e.g., Fingerhut & Maisel, 2010; Lannutti, 2007, 2018; MaCintosh, Reissing, & Andruff, 2010; Ramos, Goldberg, Badgett, 2009; Shulman, Gotta, Green, 2012; Stiers, 1999).

Though compared to those investigating same-sex couples' romantic relationship, less work has been done on how sociopolitical changes influenced LGBTQ+/tongzhi people's relationship with their family of origin, and some crucial results have provided insights into this realm of LGBTQ+ people's life. For example, Lannutti (2013) found that legally recognized same-sex marriage triggered family discussions on the topic that forced same-sex couples to renegotiate their communication privacy boundaries; Gonzalez, Ramirez, and Galupo (2018) described how the 2016 US presidential election had led to certain disturbance and conflicts between the LGBTQ+ people and their family of origin, and Horne, Rostosky, and Riggle (2011) found the LGB individuals and family members of LGB individuals both reported heightened stress in states that passed a constitutional amendment to restrict marriage recognition in 2006. Along the same line, Riggle, Drabble, Veldhuis, Wootton, and Hughes (2018) found the legalization of same-sex marriage in the U.S. in 2015 impacted the way sexual minority women perceived and

received support from their family of origin. How family communicative and relational work unfolds during major the sociopolitical changes is still a relatively unexplored territory, given that most drastic changes have taken place only in the past decade. Even scanter is such research in Taiwan, even though the family plays a central role in most people's life in Taiwan, and substantial changes are taking place right at this moment.

Besides serving the needs for Taiwanese tongzhi and their family, research on LGBTQ+/tongzhi family relationship will provide useful insights that benefit cultures beyond the geographical boundary of Taiwan, due to its unique historical, social, political and economic background (Brainer, 2014; Liu, W., 2015). The changes in the last half-century in Taiwan were remarkable in pace and scale. While Taiwan was going through a repressive era of Martial Law from 1949 to 1987, economic developments were booming, nonetheless, pushing Taiwan into an urban, advanced capitalist society (Thornton & Lin, 1994). The culture of dissent was incubating under the surface toward the end of the martial law era, and came into full bloom after the Order of Martial Law was lifted in 1987, bringing waves of social movements and modern ideologies that blended together to make Taiwan a Westernized-Confucian society that bears a blend of collectivist and individualist values (Adamczyk & Cheng, 2015; Lee, P. H., 2016). Most parents whose tongzhi adult offspring that are currently in normative marriageable age range spent their formative years during this politically repressive, ecumenically booming, and culturally contradictory era (i.e., between 1949-1987); however, their offspring grew up in a much different time where exchange of information and ideas became a norm, individuality is idealized, while conformity to tradition is still expected. These changes in policies,

practices, and cultural discourses deeply influence family relational work (Hareven, 2000; Trask, 2010), especially for tongzhi individuals given the need for them to negotiate space in the heteronormative families (Brainer, 2017). The heteronormativity that organizes many aspects of Taiwanese life is not exclusive to Taiwan, as it is also found to have strong organizing power in many other cultures, the U.S. being one of them. In fact, Taiwan is in many ways comparable to the U.S. and yet differs in significant manners, making the study of Taiwanese tongzhi family relationship an important step in expanding U.S.-centered literature.

Situating the Study of Taiwan Tongzhi Family

Same-sex marriage made major headway in the U.S. when the U.S. Supreme Court required all states to grant and recognize same-sex marriages on June 26, 2015, a victory celebrated by 26 million Facebook users worldwide who applied the rainbow flag filter over their Facebook profile picture. Taiwan is among the highest usage areas of Facebook, with 18 million users out of 23.6 million total population (Internet World Stats, 2019), and when the rainbow flag filter function became available after same-sex marriage was legalized in the US, innumerable Taiwanese Facebook users applied the filter and were overjoyed by the news that it created an illusion Taiwan had become the 51st state of the U.S. (Winnie, 2015).

Taiwan is of course not a state of the U.S., but the cultural and political connection between Taiwan and the U.S. is evident, tracing back to the U.S. aid to Taiwan (R.O.C.) of US$1.5 billion during 1951–1965 and the various forms of financial assistance from the U.S. state agencies and private foundations after that (Lan, 2014).

During that time, the most prominent US-sponsored policy was birth control, for which a cultural campaign was launched to promote "the social imaginary of the 'modern family' as the nuclear household with a limited number of offspring and an ample amount of parental love" (Lan, 2014, p. 538). The cultural campaign was extremely successful (Chow, L. P., 1970) with its impact lingering on long after the financial aids ended and the image of the modern family becoming the template of expectations that both the parents of tongzhi offspring and the tongzhi people hold now. Another major US impact was the importation of queer theories during the 1990s (Chao, 2001). The imported critical and queer perspective was swiftly infused into the academic and social activism scene to critique heteronormativity and its oppressive power over the sexual minorities (Ding & Liu, 2011). However, though Taiwan's tongzhi movement is inevitably influenced by the global gender politics considering the much shorter history and much less resource, it is premature to draw a parallel timeline between same-sex marriage development in the U.S. and in Taiwan (Liu, W., 2015).

The discourses between Taiwan and the U.S. surrounding LGBTQ+/tongzhi issues are further complicated by research that investigated cultural influences. For example, in Adamczyk and Cheng's (2015) analysis of attitudes about homosexuality using the World Value Survey, they found that Confucian countries (e.g., China, Japan, and Taiwan) and non-Confucian countries are actually not significantly different in terms of concerns about obedience, behaving properly, or making their family proud as claimed by many prominent scholars and politicians; however, people in Confucian countries are indeed more concerned about keeping the family intact. This finding is in line with

previous research that found keeping family intact, keeping a united and positive family front, and family lineage to be the priority (e.g., Chuang, 2005; Tu, W. M., 1988). Similarly, Cheng, Wu, and Adamczyk (2016) found Taiwan has made the most process in tolerance toward homosexuality among four Confucian countries (China, Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea) from 1995 to 2012, due to cohort succession effect, intra-cohort change, improvement in education, and adoption of liberal values. Taken together, these studies show how Taiwan shares some cultural discourse with neighboring countries and countries geographically distant while its uniqueness distinguishes it from others. Thus, it serves as a great research site for exploring how the cultural discourse and political changes influence family relational work, manifested in the tongzhi person's communicative behaviors and in parents of tongzhi offspring's communicative behaviors when dealing with conflicts resulting from the tongzhi offspring's non-conforming identities.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The fact that LGBTQ+/tongzhi identity is still largely viewed as abnormal, undesired, and stigmatized necessitates concealing and revealing and anything in between for LGBTQ+ individuals. Intuitively, research on "coming out" has been one of the most prolific areas in LGBTQ+ studies. Early works on LGBTQ+ people, such as Gagnon and Simon (1968), Dank (1971), de Monteflores and Schultz (1978), Cass (1979, 1984), McDonald (1982), and Chapman and Brannock (1987) had focused scholarly and practical attention on the *intrapersonal* process of self-acceptance (although disclosing to others was also included in early theories and models, such disclosure was theorized as one of the many steps of self-acceptance). Operationalization of coming out as an intrapersonal process dominated the field for roughly two decades, but after Troiden's (1989) work on homosexual identity development, research focus has shifted toward almost exclusively on *verbal disclosure as coming out*, the "actual declarative statement" made by LGBTQ+ people (Orne, 2011). In this line of research, coming out is conceptualized as discrete verbal disclosure incidents that serve as a turning point for the LGBTQ+ people, evidenced by how the terms *coming out* and *disclosure* are used interchangeably and are thought to be mutually defining for the past few decades since the topic the homosexuality started gaining visibility in its contemporary sense (e.g., Baiocco et al., 2015; Balsam & Mohr, 2007; Charbonnier, Dumas, Chesterman, & Graziani, 2018; Coleman, 1982; D'Augelli, Hershberger, & Pilkington, 1998; Grafsky, 2014; Gattamorta, Salerno, & Quidley-Rodrigue, 2019; Griffith & Hebl, 2002; Goodrich, 2009; Goodrich & Gilbride, 2010; Jordan & Deluty, 1998; LaSala, 2010; Legate, Ryan,

& Weinstein, 2012; Merighi & Grimes, 2000; Morrow, 2006a; Rhoads, 1995; Savin-William & Dubé, 1998; Scherrer, Kazyak, Schmitz, 2015; Valentine, Skelton, & Butler, 2003; Vaughan & Waehler, 2010; Waldner & Magruder, 1999). The typical story goes with an LGBTQ+ person contemplating and planning to disclose their sexual identity to their family, finally sitting the family member(s) down, verbally disclosing their LGBTQ+ status (Striepe & Tolman, 2003), which is then followed by an array of reactions such as anger, sadness, and disbelief, and finally, major changes in family relation ensue after the disclosure, be it positive or negative changes.

This conceptualization that LGBTQ+ people "sit down with their parents and confide what they have come to realize about their sexual identity" (Striepe & Tolman, 2003, p. 523) to tell them "mom, dad, I'm gay" has proven useful in understanding middle-class west European Americans (Savin-William, 2001) and has been corroborated by personal accounts produced in the US-European cultural contexts. In fact, this conceptualization is so popular that it has become a trope, regardless of how representative it is to the lived experiences. For example, the variation on the trope of "Mom, Day, I'm straight" is seen not only in academic publications for LGBTQ's disclosure or disclosure of other similarly stigmatized or taboo topics (e.g., Chan, M., 2001, "Mom, Dad, I'm living with a white girl"; Striepe & Tolman, 2003, "Mom, Dad, I'm straight"; Schooler, 2004, "Mom, Dad ... I'm Pregnant"), in news (e.g., Rozek, 2016, "Mom, dad... I'm straight"), in numerous YouTube videos (e.g., Michael Billy, 2013, "REALLY FUNNY! STRAIGHT KID comes out to Gay Parents; wickedawesomefilems, 2013, "Dads, I'm Straight") or even coming out pranks (e.g., Kelvin Santana, 20

wickedawesomefilems 18, "*I'M GAY PRANK ON MOM!!"*). Similarly, automobile brand Chevron played on this trope for their 2012 hybrid car campaign "Mom, Dad, I'm electric" (Stamper, 2012) and comedian Wanda Sykes in her 2009 special also used this trope in her "Mom, Dad, I'm black" bit (HBO, 2010).

The familiar "Mom, Dad, I'm ___" syntax is usually used in young LGBTQ+ seeking acceptance and support from their parents, and this is indeed true in the research population in most of the US-European based literature about LGBTQ+ people coming out to parents. When dealing with the topic of LGBTQ+ and their parents, most of the western literature tackles young offspring and adolescent, and occasionally including young adult (age 25 approximately) (e.g., Baptist & Allen, 2008; D'amico, Julien, Tremblay, & Chartrand, 2015; LaSala, 2010; Merighi & Grimes; 2000; Rossi, 2010; Savin-Williams, 2001; 2003; Savin-Williams & Dube, 1998; Valentine et al., 2003; Waldner & Magruder, 1999) but rarely exceeds that. It is understandable because young offspring and adolescents are the most dependent on their parents financially, psychologically, and developmentally; young adults who are only starting to experimenting with their autonomy and exploring the world would be dependent on their parents as well (Morris, 1997; Savin-Williams,1994). Especially true in the U.S. and west European culture where offspring are expected to move out of their parents' house and start their own life and be independent once they turn 18. As can be seen by law that use age 26 as a cut-off point for offspring to be on their parents' health insurance in the U.S. (Rice, 2010), and 25 is the age where people start to pay for "adult" social security benefits in the UK (Coles, 2005; Jones, G., 1995). In this social context, focusing on

LGBTQ+ offspring and young adults' relationship with their parents make sense, but in many other cultures, Taiwan as one of it, parent-offspring relationship and interdependency are an essential part of one's identity and life, regardless of age. Therefore, the relationship between parents and their LGBTQ+ offspring who are above the age of 25 merit research attention as well. Regardless of the age group, extant US-West European literature on coming out to parents are influenced by the assumptions briefly mentioned in the previous paragraphs, and these underlying assumptions may not render applicable in different cultural contexts.

Thus, I will first expound the assumptions underlying the "coming out as disclosure" conceptualization before delving into the cultural context of Taiwan, in which the "coming out as discrete verbal disclosures" is to be challenged in this dissertation, and the dramatic event-like "coming out" will be redefined as incremental and iterative process of "coming to terms" for Taiwanese tongzhi and their family. Before delving into dissecting the assumptions underlying coming out as disclosure conceptualization, it is important to note that this dissertation is not to dismiss the importance of coming out disclosure, nor is it arguing that verbal disclosure does not play a role in Taiwanese tongzhi family relationship. It is, however, to question the centrality of verbal disclosure in theorizing Taiwanese tongzhi family relational maintenance work and to put verbal disclosure in a place that reflects the lived experienced of LGBTQ+ family relationship—it is not the end goal, but rather one of the many possible endeavors that LGBTQ+ people might make to move their family relationship along.

Assumptions Underlying Coming Out as Disclosure

In this section, I will use *coming out* to mean the discrete verbal disclosure as used in the dominant and conventional manner, even though this term is to be redefined in the remainder of my dissertation. Despite the intuitive appeal, conceptualizing coming out as disclosure comes with several assumptions that might not stand scrutiny. Precisely, as responding to the call to avoid doing research with unexamined assumptions (Lannamann, 1991; Parks, 1995), I would first detail the assumptions underlying the dominant conceptualization that equates coming out to disclosure and then to bring lights to other communicative behaviors integral to the family relational work surrounding an offspring's tongzhi status in Taiwan.

Overemphasis on the agency of the LGBTQ+ individuals. In my previous study (Jhang, 2018), I critiqued two assumptions of the "coming out as disclosures" conceptualization, and the first is namely the overemphasis on the agency of the LGBTQ+ individuals (p. 163). With the agency of the LGBTQ+ individuals overemphasized in the coming out event, changes (desired, undesired, expected or unexpected) in family relation is thus predicated on the LGBTQ+ individuals' willful and planned actions, while the agency of family members is overlooked and trivialized. Therefore, other forms of family communicative behaviors such as inadvertent discoveries, the breach of privacy boundary/involuntary outing (i.e., the secret being shared albeit the wish to have it kept, as seen in movie *Prayers for Bobby*, 2009), information relay, hints, tests, hunches, accidental confessions, behaviors without talk (e.g., bringing the same-sex partner home as is, without revealing the LGBTQ+ verbally beforehand) have not received enough scholarly attention despite their common

occurrences and relational implications, , despite being reported anecdotally (e.g., Gattamorta et al., 2019; Grafsky, 2014). Narrowing the focus on the LGBTQ+ individuals' willful and planned communicative behaviors leaves out major relational dynamics that are central to understanding LGBTQ+ family relationship, as scholars have argued that coming out should be viewed as a family business rather than an individualistic one (Valentine et al., 2003).

Meanwhile, research built upon this assumption usually examines coming out in an individualistic manner that is independent of the broader social, historical, cultural, legal contexts (Diamond & Savin-Williams, 2000; Lannamann, 1991; Morris, 1997; Sophie, 1986). It is important to note, though, the recent turn in the academia to attend to intersectional identities, such as ethnicity/culture, age, class and disability (e.g., Bennett & Coyle, 2001; Chan, C. S., 1989; Coyle & Rafalin, 2000; Greene, 1997, 1998, 2000; Phellas, 2001). These studies have examined the intersection of LGBTQ+ identity with identities such as religion and race in US/European context, and my dissertation will be an attempt at expanding this direction research by looking at coming out and identity formation and negotiation in an Asian context, namely, Taiwan.

The turning-point assumption. The second assumption critiqued is the turning-point assumption, which posits that the coming out disclosure "marks the rite of passage to a lesbian, gay, or bisexual identity" (Herdt, 1992, as cited in Rhoads, 1995, p. 67) that initiates the identity formation process (Cass, 1979, 1984; Troiden, 1988, 1989). Similarly, coming out disclosure is argued to be "undoubtedly an important *turning point* in many GLBQ individuals' lives" (Denes & Afifi, 2014, p. 23) that "has the potential to

dramatically affect not only the gay or lesbian individual, but it also may profoundly affect family members as well" (Beeler & DiProva, 1999, p. 433). Undeniably, the knowledge of having an LGBTQ+ offspring can be shocking, but the shock may not entail tangible changes in the LGBTQ+ individuals' and the family's life. Besides being conceptually limiting, this assumption also has methodological ramification, since study participants who are eligible to be recruited are normally those who have "come out," (e.g., Baptist & Allen, 2008; D'Augelli et al., 1998; Diamond & Savin-Williams, 2000), meaning those who have made verbal disclosures and their disclosures have caused certain changes in their family lives, leaving out many people whose stories unfold in different manners.

Continuing the critiques I made in Jhang (2018), other assumptions underlying the coming out as disclosure conceptualization will be detailed below. First, I would like to further unpack the turning-point assumption to make explicit the different elements in it.

The known/unknown dichotomy. The first element is that the information (to be) disclosed is previously unknown; when the unknown information (the LGBTQ+ person's sexual orientation or gender identity) is made known through the disclosure, drastic changes in family relationships follow. However, the secret that is being concealed (i.e., the LGBTQ+ status) might very well be a known but unspoken about secret to the family, described as "sweeping things under the carpet" and "tacit agreements not to mention their sexuality" in sexual minorities' family interactions (Nordqvist & Smart, 2014, p. 20–21), the *I know you know strategy* (Brown, L. S.,1988), or the "counterfeit secrecy" (Ponse, 1976, p. 323).

Indeed, such a phenomenon is not exclusive to LGBTQ+ people's family interaction. Caughlin, Scott, Miller, and Hefner (2009) described the putative secrets, in which "unbeknownst to a secret keeper, a relational partner learns a secret but allows the keeper to believe that the secret is still unknown" (p. 713). To further complicate the matter, Vangelisti (1994) differentiates family secret into three types: WHOLE family secret, which is a secret that the family hide from non-family, INTRA-family secret, which is a secret that *some* members know but not others, and finally INDIVIDUAL family secret, which is a secret that one member keeps from other family members. Vangelisti (1994) argues the type of secret, along with the content of the secret, matter in understanding the relationship between secret-keeping and relational outcomes. For LGBTQ+/tongzhi family relationship, the "secret" can be kept on an individual level, an intra-level, or a whole family-level, and it could be a known secret or a putative secret, which only further indicates the insufficiency in assuming that coming out disclosure is an act that turns the unknown to known and that there is a known/unknown dichotomy. It is possible that the piece of information being disclosed has already been known, and therefore, the act of disclosing it (thus the act of *confirming* the knowledge) does not result in significant behavioral changes. For example, parents might pretend not knowing the tongzhi status of their offspring despite multiple disclosures and still urge their offspring to enter heterosexual relationships, resulting in little or no behavioral changes after the disclosure (Bih, 2003; Jhang, 2018; Tsai, J. C. 2015).

The out/closeted dichotomy. The second element embedded in the turning-point assumption is that an LGBTQ+ person is "out" once disclosure is made. That is, an

LGBTQ+ person is either out of closeted, and the disclosure makes the difference (e.g., Morris, Waldo, & Rothblum, 2001). This either-or thinking leaves little room for situations where the communicative behaviors (e.g., disclosure) do not align with psychological status (e.g., being closeted), or when a communicative behavior (e.g., disclosure) does not change relational outcome (e.g., parents acting as if their offspring are straight), a limbo many LBGTQ people find themselves in yet not well researched nor understood. Though "known secret" is not a newly discovered communicative phenomenon, it has nevertheless received insufficient and systematic research attention, especially in LGBTQ+ family relationship. The third and final element to review in the turning-point assumption is that coming out disclosure is a discrete event which clear onset and termination, leading to the "I came out" results (Manning, 2016, p. 99). This conceptualization is true in some cases (LaSala, 2010; Manning, 2016), and is a simpler unit of operation for research, but it is limiting in how scholars investigate communicative and relational issues of LGBTQ+ people with their family. Research in Taiwan has shown how disclosure can be forced, interrupted, sidetracked, trails off with an ambiguous or nonexistent conclusion, overlapping with other disclosures, or done in other manners that create a fuzzy disclosure (Liu, Y. T., 2015; Tsai, J. C., 2015; Lu, C.R., 2013). It is in the fuzzy edges that creative and survival acts of relational maintenance are done, and more focused research attention is called for.

Coming out as the end goal. The third assumption to be examined in the coming out as disclosure conceptualization is that coming out is thought to be the end goal of LGBTQ's identity formation and their family relationship work. In this assumption, it is

conceptualized that a secret is kept, and it is causing troubles psychologically and interpersonally; when the secret is revealed, much of the trouble is solved accordingly. This assumption can be seen in research topics that are receiving the most attention, such as the predictors of disclosure (Bih, 2003; Heatherington & Lavner; 2008; Kahn, 1991; Legate et al., 2012; Waldner & Magruder, 1999), the actual disclosures themselves (Manning, 2015, 2016; Rossi, 2010; Scherrer et al., 2015), initial parental reactions to disclosure (Cramer & Roach, 1988; D'amico, Julien, Tremblay, & Chartrand, 2015; Johnson & Colucci, 1999; LaSala, 2000; Merighi & Grimes, 2000; Robinson, Walters, & Skeen, 1989; Rossi, 2010; Savin-Williams & Dube, 1998; Saltzburg, 2004; Scherrer et al., 2015; Strommen, 1989), and psychological, interpersonal, social, and health implications of disclosure (Carroll, 2018; D'Amico, Julien, Tremblay, & Chartrand, 2015; Hershberger, Pilkington, & D'Augelli, 1997; Meyer, 2003; Needham & Austin, 2010). The amount of scholarly attention on coming out disclosure signals its importance in how researcher view disclosure in LGBTQ+ people's family relationship. Especially telling is the number of research focusing on initial parental reactions. However, LGBTQ+ people's lives go on after disclosure, but much is left unexplored as of how their lives are like beyond the initial parental reactions to their coming out disclosures (Heatherington & Lavner, 2008).

Discourses found in popular media have also contributed to the idealization of coming out disclosure as an end goal to achieve and to the misconception that disclosure brings desired family relationship outcomes. Several popular TV shows or movie contain a finale-style coming out disclosure that leads to either the happily-ever-after or the

drastic negative responses. For instance, influential popular media such as TV shows *Glee* (2009-2015), *Ugly Betty* (2006-2010), or movies such as *Love, Simon* (2018) and *Alex Strangelove* (2018) all include scenes where the coming out disclosure is planned, executed, and followed by drastic relational changes. These coming out disclosures are depicted in a rosy, simplistic, or even lighthearted manner (Ryan, 2018) for necessary and noble reasons — to bring optimism to young LGBTQ's life. However, such rosy and simplistic depiction of coming out disclosure, as well as the decisive role the popular media has given to coming out disclosures, has only further limited the scholarly and popular imagination of LGBTQ+ family relationships. Similarly, the coming out movements, rooted in the American LGBTQ+ movement beginning in the 1980s, encourage coming out disclosure for they believe that "personal is political." The movement believes that when more people living out and proud (i.e., coming out), ignorance will decrease and so will homophobia. Albeit well-intended and bringing positive outcomes in some aspects, coming out movement has only solidified this idealization and is potentially harmful to the minorities (Mitchum, 2013; MacLachlan, 2012). Research has also shown how idealized coming out disclosure has been for LGBTQ+/tongzhi people. Many LGBTQ+/tongzhi who have not made any disclosure attempts or whose parents are not yet suspicious of their LGBTQ+/tongzhi status (thus, those who consider themselves as closeted) imagine coming out to be a "mom, dad, I have something to tell you" finale-style disclosure, and they fantasize that the disclosure is going to be the ultimate solution to their problems with their parents (Taiwan Tongzhi Hotline Association, n.d.).

Some research published in recent years has started to point to the fact that coming out disclosure may not be the turning point of an LGBTQ+ person's life, and that coming out disclosure does not serve as an end goal of concealing one's LGBTQ+ identity as previously theorized. For example, Denes and Afifi (2014) documented the phenomenon of "coming out again," in which one disclosure does not entail desired changed in family relationship and thus calls for a second one. Dziengel (2015) proposed a be/coming-out model to distinguish the behavioral action of disclosure and the physiological status of being "out," indicating that disclosure (an action) does not necessarily entail being out (a state of mind), a note that has been similarly made in Davies (1992) and Harry (1993). Nevertheless, research that delineates the nuances are slow to change the entrenched belief about coming out, which is rooted in the ideology of openness.

The Ideology of Openness

The ideology of openness, very roughly defined, is the societal belief that disclosure and information sharing is a moral good, while nondisclosure and closedness is bad (Bochner, 1982; Caughlin, 2003; Baxter & Montgomery, 1996; Gibbs, Rozaidi, & Eisenberg, 2013; Katriel & Philipsen, 1981; Parks, 1982). Complementary with the ideology openness is the ideology of intimacy, which Sennett (1977b) summarized (as cited in Parks, 1982) to be:

> The reigning belief today is that closeness between persons is a moral good. The reigning aspiration is to develop individual personality through experiences of closeness and warmth with others. The reigning myth today is that the evils of

> society can all be understood as evils of impersonality, alienation, and coldness. The sum of these three is an ideology of intimacy: social relationships of all kinds are real, believable, and authentic the closer they approach the inner psychological concerns of each person. (p. 259)

The ideology of openness/intimacy has made disclosure the cornerstone of interpersonal communication research, even the synonym of it, as evidenced by the sheer volume of research on the topic of disclosure (Berger, 2005; Buchanan, Maccoby, & Dornbusch, 1991; Monsour, 1992). Berger (2005) observed the formation of the ideology of openness in the U.S. comes partially from the rise of the encounter group movement of the late 1960s, which embraces "authentic self-presentation and self-disclosure in social intercourse and its distinct aversion to interpersonal manipulation and deception" (p. 415), and this brief informs early work on disclosure in interpersonal communication studies.

Empirical evidence to corroborate the ideology of openness can be seen in works such as Parks and Floyd (1996), which found that *self-disclosure* is the most often mentioned quality of closeness among their participants; Monsour (1992) also found the core element of the construct "intimacy" is self-disclosure which is interpreted broadly to include any revelation of information one participants was unlikely to know about the other as well as general references to "sharing" thoughts or feelings. Beside self-disclosure, the amount, frequency, and depth of talk are often essential in the definition of "closeness" in relationships. For example, Buchanan, Maccoby, and Dornbusch's (1991) closeness scale has five items which revolve around "talk" (e.g., *How openly do you talk*

with your [mother/father] and *How interested is your [mother/father]in talking to you when you want to talk*). Oswald and Clark (2003) also argued a key element in maintaining relationships is frequent communication. Furthermore, the benefit of self-disclosure and the harm of topic-avoidance (the opposite of self-disclosure) is documented in many studies. For example, Donovan-Kicken and Caughlin (2011) found that topic avoidance correlated with higher psychological stress, Donovan, Thompson, LeFebvre, and Tollison (2017) found parental openness correlated with higher relational closeness.

Interpersonal relationship undoubtedly benefits from openness and self-disclosure, and this study is not to argue with the importance of openness and self-disclosure. And yet, it is equally worth noting the complex nature of openness and self-disclosure and its effects, as well as the cautionary tales that come with the importance of it. Baxter and Montgomery (1996) proposed in their relational dialectic theory that openness and closedness exist in interpersonal relationships in a dialectal manner; the pull and push between privacy and disclosure is similarity explained in the communication privacy management theory Petronio (2000a, 2002). Research has also documented that openness takes on many shapes, each influencing and influenced by factors in a relationship.

Kirkman, Rosenthal, and Feldman (2005) studied how parents and children talked about sexuality and found a phenomenon that became the title of their paper—*being open with your mouth shut*. They found many meanings of openness, such as "openness means answering questions," (p. 54) in which the participants do not claim

agency in the openness, but rather adopt a passive position in case there is a need for openness. They also found "openness can mean having an open-minded attitude" (p.55), a strategy that segment *attitude* from *action*, and "openness does not mean keeping a spotlight on the topic" (p.56). Their findings highlight the multifarious nature of openness and how people are able to adapt the meaning to their need. Along the same line of re-conceptualizing openness, Caughlin, Mikucki-Enyart, Middleton, Stone, and Brown (2011) examined topic avoidance in people who have lost family members due to lung cancer and found similar strategies people used to negotiate openness and topic avoidance. They identified two areas of topic avoidance—informational and emotional topic avoidance, and they also found their participants used denial, segmentation, and being open while avoiding as strategies to deal with avoidance and openness. One of their most intriguing finding, *being open while avoiding*, is when people provided contradictory accounts in their narrative about their family communication; they stated that their family had open communication but also provided examples of how they avoided certain topics or failed to discuss certain topics even when they felt the need.

Caughlin, Mikucki-Enyart, Middleton, Stone, and Brown (2011) argued that these participants were not confused or lying, but rather, they were able to maneuver the seemingly contradictory accounts by resorting to "functional inattention" (p. 428). It allows these participants not to frame the contradiction in attitude and behavior as conflict. In their study, participants who frame the contradiction as two pulling forces that create conflicts expressed more frustration than those who thought of themselves as open, regardless of their actual behaviors. Similarly, Goldsmith and Domann-Scholz (2013)

furthered the inquiry of openness and topic avoidance contradiction by using dyadic interview data to understand how couples dealing with cardiac event communicate. They created a pattern of open communication based on their participants' narratives and found four patterns of contradictory openness accounts. For participants who said they were open but reported examples that indicated otherwise, they dealt with the surface contradiction by resorting to polysemy— when multiple meanings are derived from various elements within one text (Ceccarelli, 1998). For example, by openness, participants may refer to having "one big talk," "understanding and nothing to hide," "lack of perceived constraints," and "focus on facts rather than feelings" (Goldsmith & Domann-Scholz, 2013, p. 274). The "strategic ambiguity" (ibid, p. 268) helps participants navigate their contradictions.

These studies shed light on the usefulness of topic avoidance and secrets, countering the ideology of openness. They caution against overly simplified scholarly conceptualization based on assumptions, manifesting to us the deficiency in conceptualizing openness as simply talking, a conceptualization that may not account for the people's heterogeneous lived experiences. Being a part of the society, the LGBTQ+ people are also deeply influenced by the ideology of openness: coming out is viewed an agentic and desirable act while closeted is marked as inertia, a lack of action. Coming out is argued to be one of the most important events in the life of an LGBTQ+ person (Morris, 1997), especially coming out to one's family (Cramer & Roach, 1988; Troiden, 1989). Coming out disclosure is purported to be beneficial for the LGBTQ+ individuals, their families, and even the society at large (Corrigan, Kosyluk, & Rüsch, 2013), because

"all lesbians and gay men must come out of the closet if any of us is to be free (Jay & Young, 1992, p. xxxiii) and "those who do not come out might be labeled as self-hating, immature, secretive, or foolish" (Manning, 2016, p. 98). It is critical to reiterate that this dissertation is *not* to invalidate the importance of openness and self-disclosure and is by no means the first to comment on the complexity of disclosure/openness. This study, rather, is to continue the critique on the academia's over-reliance and the public's uncritical embrace and prescription of the ideology of openness (Afifi, Shahnazi, Coveleski, Davis, & Merrill, 2017). It does so by moving the spotlight away from the coming out discourse to other elements in their family relational work for LGBTQ+ people. This is especially important in cultural contexts that have been in the margin of the academic quest, as having a realistic standard for understanding and judging interpersonal relationship (including family relationship) is integral in sustaining relationships, and research should help paint the pictures that are realistic, contextualized, localized, and indigenized to different culture (Guerrero & Afifi, 1995; Wang, H. Z., 2007).

A Realistic and Contextualized Picture: Taiwan, Tongzhi, Family Relationship

With the turn of attention to a contextualized, localized, and indigenized of Taiwan, in this section I will first review Taiwanese culture in general, and then move closer to tongzhi in Taiwan in terms of the discursive, political, and cultural making of it, and finally zoom in to tongzhi family relationship in Taiwan. The broad-to-specific delineation should help make sense of the topic at hand, namely, tongzhi family

relationship, against the backdrop of the Western discourse of sexuality and identity and on the ground of Taiwan.

Taiwan in General. The very first thing to address when discussing a culture outside the US-West European context, especially one that geographically locates in the "East," is to not fall under the reductionist view of West-East binary. (Adamczyk & Cheng, 2015; Lee, W., 2003; Wang, H. Z., 2007). Rather than viewing the Western and the non-Western as binary opposites, Wong, D. (2007) and Berry (2001) argue that they should be understood as permeable constructs. Described as a Westernized-Confucian society (Lee, P. H., 2016, p. 979) that is influenced by America and China's neoliberal ideologies and policies (Liu, W., 2015), Taiwan is a prime locale to examine how the Western and non-western forces interlace for substantiated experiences. The interwoven impact is documented in various studies. For example, Lan P. C. (2014) described how Taiwan's contemporary parenting and family discourses and policies are significantly shaped by American influences during the American Aid in the 1960s; meanwhile, Taiwan still maintained a stable Confucian and Chinese tradition in family practices (Damm, 2005). Also, the discourse of human rights is adopted in Taiwan as Taiwan "has voluntarily and unilaterally internalized both International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and other multilateral human rights treaties" since 2009 (Lee, P. H., 2016, p. 982). Though the ratification is invalid since Taiwan is not a UN member, the attempt still shows how Western ideologies inform Taiwanese's policies and discourses.

To further counter the reductionist view of West-East Binary, Adamczyk and Cheng (2015) found that the often-claimed Asia uniqueness is not a factor in explaining attitude toward homosexuality in Taiwan in their analysis of the World Value Survey. However, interestingly, what they found to have explaining power is the Confucius values and, to a lesser extent, a Buddhist context effect. Confucius values are a code of conduct (Liu, S. E., 2012) that has organizing power in people's lives, and they include a greater acceptance of hierarchical authority, paternalism, patriarchal power, stronger community orientation, and a heavy emphasis on family and filial piety (Chen, C. K., 1944; Liu, Y. H., 1995; Tsai, C. T. L., 2006; Tu, W. M.,1988) (cited in Adamczyk and Cheng, 2015). In order to achieve and maintain stability, human interactions are based on protocol in Confucianism in the five categories: emperor and minister (the powerful and the subordinates), father and son, older brother and younger brothers, husband and wife, friend and friend (Hong, Yamamoto, Chang, & Lee, 1993). Buddhist effect stems from a tolerant Buddhist-inspired culture, where the Buddhist interpretation of homosexuality is liberal and flexible (Bao, 2012; Cabezón, 2003). However, it is crucial to avoid blurring the countries that share the Confucian values (such as China, Taiwan, South Korea, Japan) into an uncritical "Chineseness" that is absolute and homogeneous; researchers have urged parsing out social and geopolitical specificities in each context (Chin, T. F., 2018; Chun, 1996).

Meanwhile, the precarious political status of Taiwan has also made it an interesting case to study from many perspectives. Taiwan is one of "the most economically developed, cosmopolitan, and Confucian Chinese-majority societies"

(Cheo, 2014, p. 1) whose *de facto* independent state is challenged by China (The People's Republic of China) at every turn since Oct. 25, 1971, when "the United Nations General Assembly voted to admit the People's Republic of China (mainland China) and to expel the Republic of China (Taiwan)" and thus "the Communist P.R.C. therefore assumed the R.O.C.'s place in the General Assembly as well as its place as one of the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council" (Learning Network, 2011, para. 1). Simply put, the Chinese Communist Party defeated the Nationalist Party, who had control of the government, in the Chinese Civil War after WWII, resulting in the Nationalist Party retreating to Taiwan in 1949 (later becomes the Republic of China) while the Communist Party took control over China (later become the People's Republic of China). Both have been contending to be legitimate China ever since, but as China replaced Taiwan at the UN, Taiwan has been fighting an upward battle.

What comes out of the constant fight for legitimacy and independence, especially in recent years, is the prominence put on the tongzhi movement in Taiwan as a strategic move to increase international visibility and acceptance and to differentiate itself from China (Jeffreys & Wang, 2018; Lee, P. H., 2016; Martin, 2003). The discourse of Taiwan's seeking international recognition for their existence and independence has even been likened to Taiwan LGBTQ's journey to seek recognition for their existence and equality (WatchoutTW, 2016). Inwardly, the two major political parties in Taiwan, Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) and the Nationalist Party (the one that retreated from China to Taiwan in 1949) are also vying for political power. DPP was formed shortly before the Martial Law was lifted, and had only won the presidential election for

the first time in the year 2000, and have they since then taken a strong pro-independence stance and a pro-tongzhi stance in order to counter the pro-China/pro-unification Nationalist Party, who are also anti-tongzhi. In short, DPP is pro-independence and pro-tongzhi, while the Nationalist Party is anti-independence and anti-tongzhi. Same-sex marriage law has thus been viewed as a test to whether Taiwan is capable of declaring independence as a "human-rights nation" (Huang, A., 2018) under the current DPP leadership, further entangling tongzhi movement/rights with Taiwan's nation-state building undertaking.

Tongzhi movement and treatment in Taiwan. As discussed above, Taiwanese tongzhi movement and treatment are informed and influenced by various players and factors, resulting in a rather unique landscape, especially the debate over same-sex marriage since 2013. Chou W. S. (2000) points out that:

> Among all the contemporary Chinese societies, the discursive practices of Taiwan *tongzhi*[2] activism has the most substantial spectrum ranging from active intellectual theorization to addressee political activism, strategic media manipulation, strong women's voices, prolific university activism, and a substantial variety of socializing venues and commercial commodities. (p. 141)

The *tongzhi* discourses are drawn from the LGBTQ+ discourses from the West, so is the tongzhi identity practices that are adopted from Western culture but manifest in a

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[2] In Chinese speaking countries and regions, such as China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, LGBTQ+ are called tongzhi, a term adopted from the communist party with the literal meaning of "comrade." The term has been adopted to draw a parallel of the revolution and the fights and to hint on the closeness that people feel in a movement.

hybridized form in the local Taiwanese culture (Altman, 1997). For instance, the collective coming out as a political move that stated in the U.S. has been adopted in Taiwan's tongzhi movement as well (Chou, 2000).

Meanwhile, scholars have attempted to explain the "success case of LGBTQ+ movement in Taiwan," with some attributing the success to the rapid economic development and higher income level, increases in education, and strengthened democracy in Taiwan in the past few decades (Cheng, Wu, & Adamczyk, 2016; Saroglou, Delpeirre, & Dernelle, 2004; Inglehart, 2006), and some commenting on the cohort effect where the younger generation that is better educated would more likely adopt new and more liberal value, leading the entire society to become more liberal and tolerant (Inglehart & Baker, 2000). Meanwhile, the fact that Taiwan is a highly digitized and less religious society (The Buddhist and Taoist beliefs are usually viewed as cultural rather and religious practices) also are key factors (Adamczyk & Hayes, 2012; Bao, 2012). Ho (2019) argues that a "political process" has the strongest explanation force in understanding Taiwan's tongzhi movement, concluding that "the electoral system reform in 2008, the eruption of the Sunflower Movement in 2014[3], and the electoral victory of the Democratic Progressive Party in 2016, stimulated Taiwan's LGBT mobilization, allowing it to eventually overcome opposition from the church-based countermovement" (p. 1). On the same line, Rich T. S. (2017) also attribute the success of same-sex marriage

[3] The Sunflower movement is a student-led major scale protest against the free-trade deal with China that broke out on March 18, 2014. It has led to an unprecedented occupation of Taiwan's parliament and last almost one month with students sleeping inside or on the street outside the parliament, and this movement is the awakening of the young generation's pro-independence ideology and for a new political climate to be possible in Taiwan (Cole, 2014).

bill progress in Taiwan to the electoral institutions, arguing that "legislators elected under proportional representation (PR) are consistently more likely to support same-sex marriage laws than their counterparts elected in single-member districts (SMDs), even after controlling for partisanship (p. 563). Taken together, what results is a highly vibrant and visible tongzhi movement, whose focus has been on same-sex marriage since 2013 (see Setting the Stage: A Brief History of Same-Sex Marriage in Taiwan in the previous section for a more detailed introduction of the same-sex marriage battles in Taiwan), and it is during times of changes, like a pond that has been stirred, that interpersonal relationships are put to test.

Tongzhi family relationship in Taiwan. The interpersonal relationship that is put to test the most for tongzhi Taiwanese in the time of change is their relationship with their family of origin. Berry (2001) befittingly describes that in East Asia, gayness as a family problem. All the liberal discursive practices, all the political advancement, all the lobbying victories, and all the marches walked, and the rainbow flags waved cannot outweigh the defeat of family's rejection and alienation, and "it is inappropriate to treat a tongzhi (LGBTQ+) merely as an isolated self seeking personal liberation" (Chou, 2001, p. 34). Despite the Western discourses that tongzhi movement in Taiwan does adopt, traditional values, such as filial piety, still exert extreme power in defining a person, including tongzhi Taiwanese. Thus, tongzhi movement in Taiwan should be understood in its larger context of familism (Hsu, T. F., 2015), which has rendered the dominant identity-based frameworks inadequate in understanding Taiwan's unique cultural

discourse surrounding the LGBTQ+ issues (Brainer, 2017). In Taiwan, identity development is as much an individual undertaking as a familial one.

Evidence can be found in the Taiwan Social Change Survey (TSCS), a government-initiated project since 1983 that is supported financially by the National Science Council, with every survey repeated every five-year period for detecting changes of the Taiwanese society, have been released to public use. By the end of 2017, the TSCS series has accumulated 60 survey data sets covering behaviors, attitudes, and values of 125,254 respondents, and all data is open to public use (Fu, Chang, Liao, & Hsieh, 2017). From the survey data, it is clear that there are a meshed identity formation and blurred boundaries in a Taiwanese family.

For example, the 2016 survey found 86.7% respondents believe it is the adult offspring's responsibility to support and take care of their elderly parents; the 2011 survey found 90.5% of respondents said it is extremely important to show gratitude toward your parents for raising you up, and 69.5% rated it is extremely important, and 20.4% important, to treat your parents well even if they did not treat you well (thus, a total of 89.9% rated this as important or above), while 73.8% and 19.9% rated extremely important or important respectively (93.7% in total) to support your parents financially and emotionally so they have a good life. Similarly, the 2015 survey found 74% of the respondents rated "filial piety" as important for their personal life. Even more tellingly, 18.9% rated extremely important and 23.7% important (total of 42.6%) to give up your own goals to achieve what your parents want you to do, and 34.1% rated extremely important and 30.5% important (total of 64.6%) to do something to honor the kinship

(i.e., not only the nuclear family but also the extended family and the heritage), while 33% rated extremely important and 22.4% important (total of 55.4) to live with your own parents or your spouse's parents after you get married.

From the parents' perspective, the 2015 survey found that 19.5% expressed extreme belief and 32.9% belief (total of 52.4%) that all the efforts and sacrifice you made for your offspring are a result of indebtedness to the offspring from the previous life, while 37.6% expressed extreme belief and 51% belief (total of 88.6%) that what one does will become karma that influences their offspring. And in terms of the kinship and religious belief, the 2015 survey found 19% expressed extreme belief and 40.6% belief (total of 59.6%) that when one passes away, if this person does not have a place in the family worship ritual, then this person's ghost will be stuck in the limbo, unable to reincarnate, and 31% expressed extreme belief and 38.5% belief (total of 69.6%) that it is important for someone to have their offspring put them up on the family shrine. On the other hand, as there is a growing emphasis on monogamous heteroromantic love in Taiwan (Davis & Friedman, 2014; Poston, Yang, & Farris, 2014), Taiwanese also started to desire and expect that their parent-offspring relationship to be based on not only normative obligation but also love, affection, and care (Lin, Chang, & Hunag, 2011; Yi & Lin, 2009).

Another aspect of family dynamics important for understanding Taiwanese LGBTQ+ family relationship is the role of marriage. Since family is considered a basic unit of social interaction (Chou, 2001), unmarried offspring, regardless of age, will be expected to live with the parents (TSCS, 2016) because in a sense they have not "grown

up," and offspring who have married are expected to assume the responsibility as an adult, as 86.5% of the respondents in the 2011 TSCS survey believed married sons have the responsibility to support the parents financially, and 61.5% believe married daughters have this responsibility. This operation has important gender implication, since women cannot be the head of a household in the folk belief, a woman has to be married so after she passes away, she will be put up in the husband's family shrine; if she is never married, then she will not be remembered or worshiped by anyone, not even in her own family of origin (Lee & Tang, 2010; Dai, 2013)

The results indicate that in Taiwan, one's life and behaviors are linked to that of their family, making an independent identity not an entirely feasible lens to apply in understanding Taiwanese tongzhi family relationship. In a culture where family functions as a basic social unit, the Western-informed tongzhi Taiwanese needs to deal with the intersection of their tongzhi identity and family relationship with delicacy. Therefore, coming out disclosure in the western cultural contexts might be a remedy to create space for the tongzhi individuals develop their identity, but in Taiwan, the disclosure might further complicate the entangled and meshed family-oriented identity formation. The trace of the Western-informed coming out disclosure in Taiwanese tongzhi life could be seen in Brainer's (2017) ethnography of Taiwanese gender and sexually non-conforming people across age groups and their families of origin bear some striking results. She reveals that she did not intend to study "coming out" in her ethnography, and she actually purposefully left out *chugui (out of closet)* in her research materials hoping not to lead her participants in any particular direction, she nonetheless found the theme of coming

out so prevalent in her younger informants, "even those who were not politically active or familiar with the relatively new language of *chugui* shared deep concerns about whether and how to disclose their sexuality to their families of origin" (p. 2).

What is striking is the generational differences Brainer (2019) found: of the Taiwanese tongzhi of different generations that she interviewed, she found that only the youngest generation, aged less than 35, are concerned with coming out in a manner that is agentic, definitive and discrete (i.e., it is their own decision to disclose their identity to their parents on their own terms). Meanwhile, the older generations Taiwanese tongzhi do not have coming out (*chugui*) on their minds either because they deem it as unnecessary in living the lives they want or unnecessary because the family and their parents would not even begin to understand what it means to be *tongzhi*. Also, for older Taiwanese tongzhi, many still enter heterosexual marriage and even have offspring, and those are obligations they believe every offspring needs to shoulder and could be separated by their tongzhi identities. And yet, for the younger generation whose formative years take place shortly before or mostly after the Martial Law was lifted in 1989 and Western ideas such as queerness, women's liberation, gender equality, individualism, democracy started to become prevalent in people's everyday life, their ideal in terms of love, marriage, self, and family show drastic differences from those of the previous generations. Not only do tongzhi offspring who grew up during this time believe coming out is necessary, but younger parents also display the same beliefs. As mutual understanding and love become the principles that guide social movements supporting parents of tongzhi offspring, many parents who are involved in the tongzhi movement often advise young tongzhi Taiwanese

to "let mom and dad get to know you" (Brainer, 2017, p. 5) as they believe disclosure would lead to love and acceptance. This discourse is partially a result of their constant exposure to current tongzhi issues, and partially because of the contemporary parenting discourses that emphasize parents' responsibility to be attentive to their offspring's needs, emotions, health, body, and behavior (Brainer, 2017; Faircloth & Murray, 2015; Lan, 2014) which become a "a thinly veiled mechanism of parental surveillance and control" (Brainer, 2017, p. 5). The result is a generation of tongzhi people living by the coming out imperative, and parents who make this imperative almost inescapable.

It is not to say that disclosing one's tongzhi identity to their parents is always a result of discursive oppression, nor does it always led to negative results; the problem comes from the disproportional importance put on one single action that has not been realistically understood and practiced. Thus, in my previous study, I proposed a *Coming out in family as scaffolding model* (Jhang, 2018, p. 167).

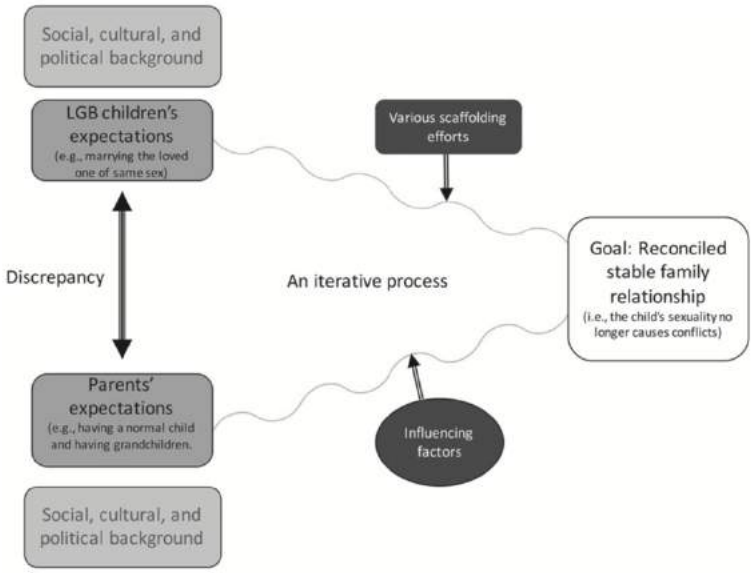

Figure 1. *Coming out in family as scaffolding model*

In this model, coming out disclosure is no longer the end goal of tongzhi people's relationship with their family of origin, and instead, is it but one of the many scaffolding efforts that could be made in order for them to reach the goal of reconciled family relationship where the offspring's tongzhi identity is no longer a source of conflict. This model starts with the discrepancy between the expectations that the offspring hold and the parents hold, such as wanting to have a love-based marriage for the offspring and wanting to honor the ancestor by raising "good" offspring for the parents, respectively, and their expectations are formed and informed by social, cultural, and political discusses. The discrepancy would cause tension in their family relationship, and prompt them to reconcile the discrepancy. In the process of reconciliation, different scaffolding efforts are made by both sides in the hope that the family relationship would lean toward their own ideals, and these scaffolding efforts include overt attempts and tacit maneuvers, such as the tongzhi offspring bringing their same-sex partner home for dinner, leaving out tongzhi information on their desk or shelf in hope that their parents would read and understand (note that it is not abnormal for parents to go in their offspring, even adult offspring room and look at their personal belonging), parents setting up blind dates for their tongzhi offspring (even after learning about their tongzhi identity) or parents overtly scolding their offspring for being non-heterosexual. Each scaffolding efforts could have different effects in their process of reconciliation, which could take years and even decades, while various factors influence the process, including family's financial situation, family member's health problem, siblings and other relative's opinions or interventions.

However, this model is made only with data from Taiwanese tongzhi adult offspring who I interviewed in early 2014 and early 2016 (two waves of interview with the same group of participants), but many drastic changes regarding tongzhi rights (especially same-sex marriage) has taken place after the interviews, warranting more data collection to reflect how the recent major changes have affected this scaffolding process. Moreover, parents' voices are absent from this model. However, to have a more thorough and balanced understanding of this two-way process, it is crucial to include parents' voice as well to expand and edit this model. Finally, "social, cultural, and political background" is included in the model for its intuitive importance, but more data is necessary to flesh out the picture and substantive the claims.

Therefore, my dissertation aims to address the research question:

How do families reconcile challenged expectations when a young adult offspring is tongzhi?

And I am answering this question with the following perspectives:

1. The tongzhi adult offspring

2. The parents of tongzhi adult offspring

In the next section, I will discuss how I plan to collect and analyze data to achieve the goals of understanding the topic at hand.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Reflective Statement

Before laying out the mythological details, I would try to examine my own ideological and experiential positionality to make apparent (to my best ability) my own values and beliefs about the world and how they inform the way I do research, because "ideological influences cannot and should not be banished from the study of interpersonal communication," and our quest for understanding human interaction and interpersonal communication should always refer to "human values, that is, to ideology" (Parks, 1995, p. 484). I am a cisgender queer/pansexual woman in my early thirties, and I was born and raised in Taiwan, in the same age group as my tongzhi participants. I am a Han Taiwanese, and my ancestor migrated to Taiwan from China around 400 years ago, as opposed to the Taiwan indigenous people who have been living on the archipelago for thousands of years, who are of different ethnicities and have experienced multiple oppressions and exploitations ever since the Age of Discovery from the 15th to the 17th century to Chinese dynasties ruling, to Japanese colonization, to post WWII Han Chinese domination. However, under the Han Taiwanese ethnicity label are further sub-categories. As a Han Taiwanese, my upbringing is of the localized Hakka Taiwanese, as opposed to the "Mainlanders" who moved to Taiwan from China after WWII along with the then-Chinese government that lost the civil war to the Chinese Communist Party. The ethnic and historical differences are critical to how I experience my queerness and how my queerness is understood by people around me, and they also inform my ideological

and political views which in turn inform my research design, data collection, and data analysis.

I have been involved heavily in the tongzhi movement in Taiwan for more than a decade, and I take a critical approach to social scientific research. I believe that individual behaviors are influenced by macro-level factors and have macro-level consequences and vice versa, and that ideological influences and empirical data are equally important. Thus, my dissertation aims to create a theoretical model that details tongzhi individuals and their family navigate their relationship in the ambiguous uncertainties, challenged expectations, and new possibilities.

Data Collection

The main source of data for this dissertation comes from in-depth interviews with Taiwanese tongzhi and parents of tongzhi offspring, supplemented by field observations.

Tongzhi participants. Recruitment of interview participants. Upon obtaining the University of Texas at Austin Institutional Review Board Approval (IRB: # 2018-02-0090), I started the recruitment of participants. I posted the participant recruitment information in Mandarin Chinese on the Facebook Group for Taiwan Tongzhi Hotline Association volunteers, a tongzhi overseas scholars' Facebook group, as well as on my own Facebook page, with the privacy of the post set to be public so the post could be shared to reach more people. For tongzhi participants, the recruitment message states:

> My name is Rita Jhang and I am looking for participants for my research on tongzhi and their relationship with their family of origin. As long as you are a Taiwanese tongzhi who is older than 18 years old, you are eligible to participate, regardless of your chugui status. The interview will be approximately one hour long and will be conducted through phone or other smartphone chat application

(e.g., Facebook messenger or Line[4]). The study has been approved by the University of Texas at Austin Institutional Review Board (# 2018-02-0090), and all data will be confidential. Please share the post to those who might be interested. Please contact me by email ritajhang@utexas, Facebook messenger: Zukkim Zong[5], or Line: ritajhang.

At first, people responding to my post were mostly people who were also volunteers at the Taiwan Tongzhi Hotline Association, but with more people sharing my post, I started to recruit people of varying degree of participation in the tongzhi movement, with some that had no connection at all. Finally, I interviewed 38 Taiwanese tongzhi (age 20-38, average= 29.71, SD = 4.95), and 13 of them are recruited through the volunteer group. The reason for purposefully recruiting people who are not heavily involved in the tongzhi movement is because involvement in the tongzhi movement could have relational implications (e.g., more able to articulate one's identity, more "out," have more potential causes for conflict with family). To maintain confidentiality, I did not specify what participants are from the volunteer group and what participants are not. Participants are given Americanized pseudonyms using an online random name generator system (.https://www.fakenamegenerator.com/). Americanized pseudonyms are used rather than Taiwanese (Mandarin) pseudonyms for the sake of the ease of reading for my readers, who are mostly American or non-Americans who are fluent in English. If the research is to be published in Mandarin Chinese, then Taiwanese pseudonyms will be assigned instead. People who are mentioned by the participants but not interviewed will

[4] Line is a chat application that can be used on both smartphones or computers and is the most used chat application in Taiwan, and Taiwan has the highest user density of all countries where Line is available. There are in total 21 million Line accounts among 23 million total population (Tang, Z. Q., 2018)

[5] Zukkim Zong is my name spelled in Hakka Chinese, while JhuCin Jhang is Mandarin Chinses.

be given two letters that are randomly assigned in place of a pseudonyms, or simply be referred to by their relationship, such as Mary's mother, depending on the need of storytelling.

Two participants' stories from my previous research (IRB: #2014-02-0040) were also included due to the high relevance to phenomena discussed, and thus I included them in the participant table (table 1) just to have a comprehensive view, bringing the total number of participants to 40:

Table 1

Tongzhi Participants

Pseudonym	People mentioned in story	Age	Location	Assigned Sex	Gender Identification	Sexual Orientation
Emma	Mother: MS Sister: WL	34	South Taiwan	Female	Genderqueer	Homosexual
Lynda	Mother: DH	29	South Taiwan	Female	Woman	Homosexual
Becca	Mother: HG	24	South Taiwan	Female	Woman	Homosexual
Leticia	Mother: UY Wife: DE	33	America	Female	Woman	Homosexual
Tiffany	Mother: FE	36	North Taiwan	Female	Woman	Bisexual
Jeffrey	Mother: LH Father: LB	25	North Taiwan	Male	Man	Homosexual
Nicole	Sister: CB	38	North Taiwan	Female	Woman	Bisexual

(Table 1 continued)

Donna	--	35	North Taiwan	Female	Woman	Homosexual
Lester	Mother: ZN	27	North Taiwan	Male	Man	Homosexual
Frank	--	30	North Taiwan	Male	Man	Homosexual
Joseph	--	32	North Taiwan	Male	Man	Bisexual
Patrick	--	31	America	Male	Man	Homosexual
Natalia	Girlfriend: NG	37	East Taiwan	Female	Woman	Homosexual
Catherine	Mother: AE	36	North Taiwan	Female	Woman	Homosexual
Wendy	--	28	North Taiwan	Female	Woman	Bisexual
Owen	Mother: BD	36	North Taiwan	Male	Man	Homosexual
Nellie	--	20	North Taiwan	Female	Woman	Bisexual
Diana	--	33	South Taiwan	Female	Woman	Bisexual
Richard	Mother: GH Father: OC	35	North Taiwan	Male	Man	Homosexual
Erica	--	27	North Taiwan	Female	Woman	Bisexual
Xavier	--	26	North Taiwan	Male	Man	Homosexual

(Table 1 continued)

Joyce	--	34	North Taiwan	Female	Woman	Bisexual
Melvin	--	24	North Taiwan	Male	Man	Homosexual
Gina	A famous tongzhi rights activist: JD	21	North Taiwan	Female	Woman	Pansexual
Samantha	Mother: EP Father: SW	27	North Taiwan	Female	Woman	Homosexual
Norma	Mother: KS	34	Central Taiwan	Female	Woman	Homosexual
Doris	Mother: ER Father: KJ	29	South Taiwan	Female	Woman	Homosexual
Lisa	Mother: CG Father: DT	22	North Taiwan	Female	Woman	Bisexual
Celia	Mother: TR Father: EW	23	Central Taiwan	Female	Woman	Pansexual
Pauline	Girlfriend: XC	30	North Taiwan	Female	Woman	Homosexual
Karen	--	22	North Taiwan	Female	Woman	Bisexual
Tommy	--	26	America	Male	Man	Homosexual
Milton	Mother: TL	27	North Taiwan	Male	Genderqueer	Homosexual
Charlie	Father: JB	28	North Taiwan	Female	Genderqueer	Pansexual

(Table 1 continued)

Yuna	Mother: AT Sister: GL Wife: KE	34	North Taiwan	Female	Woman	Homosexual
Abbie	Mother: IU Wife: TK	32	North Taiwan	Female	Woman	Bisexual
Robyn	Mother: ZB	30	North Taiwan	Female	Woman	Homosexual
Meadow	Mother: YH Ex-girlfriend: CV	34	North Taiwan	Female	Woman	Pansexual
Lily*	--	36	North Taiwan	Female	Woman	Homosexual
Olivia*	Mother: KA	36	North Taiwan	Female	Woman	Homosexual

* = interview data from my previous research

Table 2

Tongzhi Participants Gender and Sexual Identity

	Female	Male	Intersex	Total
Assigned Sex	29	11	0	40
Gender Identification	Woman 26	Man 10	Genderqueer* 4	40
Sexual Orientation	Homosexual 25	Bisexual 11	Pansexual* 4	40

* Participants who identify as genderqueer are not necessarily those whose sexual orientation is pansexual.

After reading the consent form and providing verbal consent to participate, participants responded to an online demographic questionnaire that asks for their preferred name (different from the assigned pseudonyms), age, location, assigned sex,

gender identity, and sexual orientation, and then the interview was scheduled. All participants used Line for the interview, and all interviews are audio recorded using QuickTime Player and stored in a password protected cloud database with all identifying information stored in a separate cloud database. The interviews last 1.5 hours on average, and all interviews are transcribed, with only the parts included in this dissertation translated from Mandarin to English.

The semi-structured interview contains the main questions:

1. What do you think is the most ideal life for you? Why?
2. What do you think are the most important things that a person needs to do in life? Why?
3. Can you describe your family relationship for me?
4. What do you think is a good family relationship?
5. Describe whether or how much your parents know about your tongzhi status.
6. How much do you think your tongzhi status influence your family relationships?
7. Can you talk about whether you would want to change how much your tongzhi status influence your family relationships?
8. How have the recent legal changes in Taiwan influenced your family relationship, if at all? Why/Why not?

The two participants (marked by * in table 1) whose stories are included in this dissertation are from my previous research on the topic of how closeted Taiwanese tongzhi negotiated forced conversation (i.e., other-initiated difficult conversation) with

their family while maintaining their closeted status. The semi-structured interview in those studies followed the guide:

1. Can you talk about how close you are with your family?
2. Do you currently live with your family?
3. If you're not living with your family, how often do you talk to them?
4. What are some common topics that you and your family talk about?
5. Can you talk about why you haven't or do not want to come out to your family?
6. When did you become aware of your own non-heterosexual identity? Can you briefly talk about how you became aware?
7. Do you think your family is aware of your non-heterosexual identity? How?
8. What are some sensitive topics or questions that your family ask that may expose your non-heterosexual identity?
9. When and with who are you usually involved in these sensitive topics?
10. How do you respond to these questions or topic?
11. What emotions did you go through when you had these conversations?
12. How has your relationship with your family been affected by not coming out?
13. How do you think your family would react if you come out to them? How do you predict?
14. What are the advantages and disadvantages of coming out and not coming out to you now?

Parent participants. Parents' voices have rarely been included in tongzhi research for many reasons, including the difficulty in recruiting parents of tongzhi offspring who are willing to talk to researchers. However, parents' experiences are extremely important to understand because coming out (or not) impact the parents just as much as it does the tongzhi offspring, and the coming out to family theory would be incomplete without parents' voice (Baptist & Allen, 2008; Savin-Williams & Dube, 1998; LaSala, 2011). For parent participants, I posted the participant recruitment information in Mandarin Chinese on the Facebook Group for Taiwan Tongzhi Hotline Association volunteers, a tongzhi overseas scholars' Facebook group, a Line chat group of the parents who are members of a support group hosted by Taiwan Tongzhi Hotline Association, as well as my own Facebook page, with the privacy of the post set to be public so the post could be shared to reach more people. For tongzhi participants, the recruitment message states:

> My name is Rita Jhang and I am looking for participants for my research on tongzhi and their relationship with their family of origin. As long as you are a Taiwanese parent who has a tongzhi offspring, or you suspect that your offspring is tongzhi, you are eligible to participate. The interview will be approximately one hour long and will be conducted through phone or other smartphone chat application (e.g., Facebook messenger or Line). The study has been approved by the University of Texas at Austin Institutional Review Board (# 2018-02-0090), and all data will be confidential. Please share the post to those who might be interested. Please contact me by email ritajhang@utexas, Facebook messenger: Zukkim Zong, or Line: ritajhang.

Due to the sensitivity of the topic, of all 14 parents (age 45-69, average = 59.5, SD = 6.9) that participates in my research, nine of them are members of the support group, and five are referred to me by my tongzhi participants. I included three stories

from three different participants at the parents' support group that I attended during my field trip in Taiwan Tongzhi Hotline Association; thus, there are 17 parents whose stories are included in this study:

Table 3

Parent Participants

Pseudonym	People mentioned in story	Age	Location
Jenny	Son: Patrick	58	North Taiwan
Grace	Daughter: Pauline	56	Central Taiwan
Ethal	Son: JL (26, heterosexual), JL's girlfriend MZ (28, heterosexual) Son: PQ (19, gay) Mother: SP	57	North Taiwan
Fenny	Son: Xavier, 26, gay	53	North Taiwan
Ruth	Husband: RH	68	North Taiwan
Candice	Daughter: RS (25, lesbian)	53	North Taiwan
Ingrid	Daughter: DA (35, lesbian) Husband: HQ Mother: LD Father: BK	64	America
Ken	Daughter: Donna	62	North Taiwan
Adelia	Son: OE (19, gay)	45	North Taiwan

(Table 3 continued)

Dorothy	Daughter: KW (38, lesbian) Husband: KF	65	North Taiwan
Miriam	Son: CL (30, gay) Husband: UF	55	North Taiwan
Hugo	Son: GS (38, gay)	68	North Taiwan
William	Daughter: EJ (37, lesbian) Wife: VD	69	America
Bessie	Nephew: Xavier	60	North Taiwan
Helen*	Daughter: IB (lesbian)	Late fifties	--
Queenie*	Son: EM, EN (mid to late twenties, gay) Husband: LS	Late fifties	--
Dana*	Son: YR (bisexual)	Early sixties	--

* = Participants at tongzhi parents' support group meeting

Table 4

Parents role

	Mother	Father	Other	Total
Role	14	3	0	17

After reading the consent form and providing verbal consent to participate, participants schedule an interview, and all participants used Line for the interview, and all interviews are audio recorded using QuickTime Player, and stored in a password protected cloud database with all identifying information stored in a separate cloud

database. The interviews last two hours on average, and all interviews are transcribed, with only the parts included in this dissertation translated from Mandarin to English.

The semi-structured interview contains the main questions:

1. How did you grow up?
2. What do you think is the most ideal life for you? Why?
3. How much do you think your current life matches your ideal version of life?
4. What do you think are the most important things that a person needs to do in life? Why?
5. Can you describe your family relationship for me?
6. What do you think is a good family relationship?
7. Describe how you learned about your offspring's tongzhi status, and how sure you are about it?
8. How much do you think your offspring's tongzhi status influence your family relationships?
9. Do you talk about your offspring's tongzhi status with your offspring or other family members?
10. How have the recent legal changes in Taiwan influenced your family relationship, if at all? Why/Why not?

Field observation. Supplementary data comes from field observation in a major Taiwanese tongzhi organization (Taiwan Tongzhi Hotline Association) where tongzhi people and parents of tongzhi offspring come to seek information and help and to socialize. The field observation will supplement the interview to avoid self-report bias. I

have conducted 14-month long fieldwork in Taiwan from June 2016 to August 2017, mostly in Taiwan Tongzhi Hotline Association, the biggest tongzhi rights groups in Taiwan and in East Asia. The observational data were collected from multiple gatherings held for parents/families of tongzhi individuals in Taiwan Tongzhi Hotline Association, where I have been a senior volunteer. The association had consented to my dual-purpose presence—as a volunteer and as a researcher, and the observational data is supplemented by the association's archival database, which I have been granted access to both as a volunteer and as a researcher.

During each meeting, I took notes of what is said by tongzhi individuals and parents of tongzhi offspring, such as what caused them to seek help with us, what their family relationship/conflict was like, how they had dealt with such conflicts, how they were feeling, what they wished to learn from meeting with us. These notes were entered into the association's service log and also were kept as my own research notes. I was granted access to the complete service log where I can see service records kept by other volunteers for my research purpose.

Data Analysis

Grounded theory (GT) methods (Charmaz, 1995, 2006) will guide the data collection and analysis in this study. GT provides a set of inductive data collection and analytic procedures aimed at building theories of patterned relationships and psychosocial processes. In the grounded theory analysis, both an inductive and deductive reasoning together provide a thorough understanding of the process. It has the distinguishing characteristics of simultaneous data collection and analysis, data-driven analytic codes

(as opposed to codes from preconceived hypotheses), emerging middle-range theories during data collection and analysis, and theoretical sampling, where sampling aims at theory construction rather than the representativeness of a certain population. Charmaz's GT approach is built on a constructivist view; the research process is created through "researchers' theoretical and disciplinary lenses as well as the interactional products of the researchers and participants" (Charmaz, 1995, p. 30). Charmaz's grounded theory differs from Glaser and Strauss's (1967) original conception of grounded theory, and the later version proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998) in that Charmaz's GT takes a constructionist while Glaser, Strauss, and Corbin adhered to an objective/post-positivist view, despite similar data collection and analytic methods. Charmaz's constructionist grounded theory four assumptions:

(1) Reality is multiple, processual, and constructed—but constructed under particular conditions; (2) the research process emerges from interaction; (3) it takes into account the researcher's positionality, as well as that of the research participants; (4) the researcher and researched co-construct the data—data are a product of the research process, not simply observed objects of it.

Therefore, researcher's own positions in the subject matter, her privileges, perspectives, and her interactions in the process of data collection should not be explained away, but rather should be recognized and scrutinized (Charmaz, 2006; Clarke, 2005, 2006). Charmaz also urges research to "improvise methodological and analytic strategies throughout the research process" in the process of collecting sufficient data to

"discern and document how research participants construct their lives and worlds" (2008, p. 403).

Grounded theory is appropriate for this subject matter because coming out has not been formally theorized thus far; even though there is an abundance of narrative accounts, they do not synthesize to construct a theory themselves. Much of the coming out to family research is based on western theories, which may leave much of interactional nuances unaddressed given cultural differences. Grounded theory can address the *what* and the *how* questions of Taiwanese tongzhi individual's coming out to family; namely, what does it mean to *come out* to family, and how coming out is acted and reacted to. These questions are asked with the hope to eventually answer the *why* question: why do they do what they do in that particular manner? Because, after all, the theory is *grounded* in the data collected locally.

Coding. Following Charmaz (2006) and Charmaz and Henwood (2017), the coding of data contains the following levels: initial coding, focused coding, axial coding, memo-writing, theoretical sampling, theoretical coding, saturating theoretical concepts, and theoretical sorting and integrating. In the initial coding stage, researchers ask the questions, "What is happening in the data?" "In which major process(es) are participants engaged?" "What is this data a study of?" "What theoretical category does this specific datum indicate?" (Glaser, 1978, p. 57), and "What does the data suggest? Pronounce? From whose point of view?" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 116). In the focused coding stage, tentative categories are formed by sort, compare, and synthesize initial codes. In focused coding, the codes are "more directed, selective, and conceptual" compared to the initial

codes (Charmaz, 2006, p. 57). In this stage, researchers ask, “what seems to be happening a lot?” “how do they combine to tell us something?” In the axial coding stage, categories are related to sub-categories, and the properties and dimension of a category are specified in this stage. After data is being cut and separated into smaller unit in the early stages of coding, a researcher brings the data back together “in a coherent whole” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 60) and asks the question of “when, where, why, who, and with that consequences” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 125)

The memo-writing is occurring throughout the entire data collection and analysis, and it contains analytic notes to the researcher, reminding herself what is still missing, what is emerging from the data, how are they related to one another, and by doing so, helps researchers identify tentative categories and their properties and to remain a level of self-reflexivity. As analysis proceeds, memos also become increasingly theoretical. Theoretical sampling does not aim for representativeness; rather, in the process of developing categories and theory, it seeks specific data to do so. When the data and codes reveal no new properties of a theoretical category, then the theory has been saturated. Finally, the theoretical sorting and integrating stage urges the researcher to attentively articulate the grounded theory she has developed examining her memo “to show how the theory fits together, (2) to explicate relationships between theoretical categories or between the properties of one theoretical category, (3) to specify the conditions under which the category(ies) arises and (4) to state the implications of the theorized relationships” (Charmaz & Henwood, 2017, p. 5)

I started writing on my research memo with the beginning of the participant recruitment and kept track of all who responded to my recruitment message to make sure I have a balanced pool of participants in terms of gender, sex, age, experiences with the tongzhi movement, etc. The audio-recorded interviewed that were conducted in Mandarin Chinese were transcribed in Mandarin Chinese, and I used font size 10 rather than 12 so I can view more data at once, and collated all interview transcripts for tongzhi participants chronologically into one document with consecutive page number but reset the line numbering for each interview, and I did the same for all the parents interviews, and then I went through the transcription line-by-line for the open-coding stage. The reason for compiling all interview data into one document (for tongzhi participants and parent participants respectively) is for the ease of tracking data and have a clear sense of when a code first emerges and how the code evolves throughout the data collection and analysis. Even though the transcriptions are in Mandarin Chinese, all the codes were in English for the sake of developing theories. Memo writing was constantly taking place throughout the coding process. I will include an example of the line-by-line initial coding stage in the following. In this example, English translation is included for the sake of comprehensibility for my readers, but I did not translate all my transcript for coding; only the quotes included (in chapter 4) are translated to English.

Table 5

Example of Line-by-line Initial Coding

1. 大學的時候就出櫃 I chugui in college	describing chugui
2. 因為失戀難過被看到 Because my dad saw I was sad after I was dumped	Explaining the reason for chugui
3. 爸爸就問我 他就說 He asked me what happened so I told him	Parental agency in chugui
4. 我沒有跟他說是女生 But I didn't say it was for a girl	Hedging
5. 但是講到後面爸爸問我他有沒有欺負你 It wasn't until he asked whether he took advantage of me	Applying traditional gender role
6. 我就說那個人不是男生 That I said it was not a boy	Using a negative sentence to reveal the sex
7. 爸爸就蛤了一下 然後就沉思 My dad was like "huh?" and then he started thinking	Father's reaction
8. 哪時候跟大學的時候一個老師是男同性戀 I had a teacher in college who was gay	Cutting out of the scene, referring to another tongzhi (an authority figure)
9. 哪時候我有跟那個老師說我跟爸爸說 I told the teacher that I told my father	Sharing one's chugui story with another tongzhi
10. 他說我爸爸算是很理性 And the teacher said my dad was quite calm and reasonable	Other's evaluating of her father's reaction
11. 因為他個老師他家裡面狀況比較不適合出櫃 Because his own family situation did not allow him to chugui	Comparing to own family Evaluation of her father's reaction after comparison
12. 他就覺得我爸爸是算很理性 So he thought my dad was reasonable	Comparing her own evaluation to the other tongzhi's evaluation
13. 但那時候我是很難過的狀態不知道爸爸的反應算是怎樣 at that moment I was too sad to gauge my dad's reaction	Father's agency in dealing with the chugui
14. 但是後來覺得爸爸是自己消化這件事情 My dad took some time to digest the information himself	Father being the comm broker
15. 媽媽的話是爸爸跟他說的 As for my mom, my dad told her	Mother's reaction (in comparison with that of the father)
16. 媽媽的反應很激烈 And she reacted really dramatically	setting communication privacy management boundary
17. 我跟爸爸說的時候爸爸是說不要跟媽媽講 When I told my dad, my dad said we should not tell mom	practicing the CPM boundary
18. 到前女友在一起的時候就是用比較好朋友的方式呈現他 So when I was with my ex-girlfriend, I introduced her as my good friend	father breaking the CPM boundary
19. 三年前結果爸爸要跟媽媽說也沒有先跟我說 3 years ago, my dad told my mom without telling me first	mother's reaction; she started crying when talking about her mom
20. 結果媽媽半夜就跑到房間抱著我(哭) And my mom came to my room in the middle of the night and hugged me (crying)	mother's self-blame
21. 媽媽跟我說對不起	

(Table 5 continued)	(Table 5 continued)
And she said sorry to me	mother attributing to daughter's tongzhi identity to her neglect
22. 媽媽說他沒有關心我　他工作忙 She said that she didn't pay enough attention to me because she was busy with work	her comforting the mother by disagreeing with the attribution
23. 我就說不是你的問題啊 我說就算你有關心我說不定我還是這樣 I told her it is not your problem, even if you did pay more attention to me I might still be like this	her trying to find an attribution
24. 這不是天生會這樣但我國小是喜歡男生的但我不知道那個 Maybe I was not born this way because I still liked boys when I was in elementary school but I did not know	attempting to figure out herself
25. 喜歡是什麼 what that "liking" was	explaining her display of emotion
26. 其實已經很久了 但是講到還是會很難過 It's actually been a while but I'm still sad talking about it	comparing emotional reaction at that moment
27. 當下我沒有什麼感覺 At that moment I didn't have much emotion	referring to other tongzhi in the family
28. 其實親戚也有是同志的 只是媽媽不知道而且 There are actually tongzhi among our relatives just that my mom didn't know	examples of other tongzhi in the family
29. 我就說表姐也是啊 堂妹也是啊 Like this cousin, and that cousin	chugui's influence on family relationship
30. 但那陣子家裡氣氛很不好 After that, the family atmosphere was really bad	evaluating her father's attempt to intervene
31. 我爸爸也很好笑 My dad was really funny	describing her father's attempt to intervene
32. 把我們兩個叫來客廳 說你們兩個有什麼事情要講的 He asked me and my mom to the living room and asked "do you have anything to say to each other?"	describing her inability and unwillingness to justify herself
33. 我想說有什麼要講的 我就是喜歡女生嘛 And I thought "what's there to say? I like girls; that's it."	testing her mother's attitude
34. 我就問媽媽說 你是要我不要跟他在一起嗎 I asked mom, "do you want me to not be together with her?"	acknowledging her fear for mother's objection
35. 我是很怕他反對 I was afraid she would object	mother acknowledging her powerlessness in changing her daughter
36. 媽媽說就算我反對又不能改變什麼 But she said "even if I object, I can't change anything"	her attitude on her father breaking the CPM boundary
37. 但是我也是很不爽我爸爸問什麼要說沒有先告訴我 I was mad that dad told mom without letting me know first	later changing her attitude about her father breaking the CPM boundary
38. 但是後來會覺得還好爸爸有說 But after a while I was glad my dad did that	appreciating father's mediating role in her chugui to her mother
39. 爸爸有安撫我媽媽 And he also comforted my mom	

After the initial coding stage, I filled the codebook using the categories that become salient in the focused coding stage. For example, *comparison* and *parental agency* quickly became salient categories due to their common occurrence in the data. These categories are further explored, compared, substantiated, and revised in the axial coding stage because I wanted to make sure the categories are helping establish the chugui process as a coherent whole. I will include a small section of the codebook to demonstrate the focused and axial coding stage.

Table 6

Example of Focused Coding

Doris interview transcript, page 163-164 106.大學的時候就出櫃 I chugui in college 107.因為失戀難過被看到 Because my dad saw I was sad after I was dumped 108.爸爸就問我 他就說 He asked me what happened so I told him 109.我沒有跟他說是女生 But I didn't say it was for a girl 110.但是講到後面爸爸問我他有沒有欺負你 It wasn't until he asked whether he took advantage of me 111.我就說那個人不是男生 That I said it was not a boy 112.爸爸就蛤了一下 然後就沉思 My dad was like "huh?" and then he started thinking 113.哪時候跟大學的時候一個老師是男同性戀 I had a teacher in college who was gay 114.哪時候我有跟那個老師說我跟爸爸說 I told the teacher that I told my father 115.他說我爸爸算是很理性 And the teacher said my dad was quite calm and reasonable 116.因為他個老師他家裡面狀況比較不適合出櫃 Because his own family situation did not allow him to chugui 117.他就覺得我爸爸是算很理性 So he thought my dad was reasonable	Use of *chugui* Father's agency in initiating the chugui Detailing the onset and process of "chugui" to father Comparing to other's chugui

(Table 6 continued)	(Table 6 continued)
118.但那時候我是很難過的狀態不知道爸爸的反應算是怎麼樣 Because at that moment I was too sad to gauge my dad's reaction	Father's agency in dealing with the chugui
119.但是後來覺得爸爸是自己消化這件事情 My dad took some time to digest the information himself	Mother's reaction in comparison
120.媽媽的話是爸爸跟他說的 As for my mom, my dad told her	
121.媽媽的反應很激烈 And she reacted really dramatically	Father and offspring agreeing on communication privacy management boundary
122.我跟爸爸說的時候爸爸是說不要跟媽媽講 When I told my dad, my dad said we should not tell mom	
123.到前女友在一起的時候就是用比較好的朋友的方式呈現他 So when I was with my ex-girlfriend, I introduced her as my good friend	father breaking the CPM boundary
124.三年前結果爸爸要跟媽媽說也沒有先跟我說 Three years ago, my dad told my mom without telling me first	
125.結果媽媽半夜就跑到房間抱著我(哭) And my mom came to my room in the middle of the night and hugged me (crying)	Mother's self-blame (internal attribution)
126.媽媽跟我說對不起 And she said sorry to me	
127.媽媽說他沒有關心我　他工作忙 She said that she didn't pay enough attention to me because she was busy with work	
128.我就說不是你的問題啊 我說就算你有關心我說不定我還是這樣 這不是天生會這樣 但我國小是喜歡男生的但我不知道那個喜歡是什麼 I told her it is not your problem, even if you did pay more attention to me I might still be like this Maybe I was not born this way because I still liked boys when I was in elementary school but I did not know what that "liking" was	Attribution of the tongzhi identity
129.其實已經很久了 但是講到還是會很難過 It has actually been a long time but I'm still sad talking about it	
130.當下我沒有什麼感覺 At that moment I didn't have much emotion	
131.其實親戚也有是同志的 只是媽媽不知道而且 There are actually tongzhi among out relatives just that my mom didn't know	Comparing to other tongzhi
132.我就說表姐也是啊 堂妹也是啊 Like this cousin, and that cousin	
133.但那陣子家裡氣氛很不好 After that, the family atmosphere was really bad	chugui influencing family relationship

(Table 6 continued)	(Table 6 continued)
134.我爸爸也很好笑 My dad was really funny	father's agency in dealing with the aftermath of chugui
135.把我們兩個叫來客廳 說你們兩個有什麼事情要講的 He asked me and my mom to the living room and asked "do you have anything to say to each other?"	
136.我想說有什麼要講的 我就是喜歡女生嘛 And I thought "what's there to say? I like girls; that's it."	
137.我就問媽媽說 你是要我不要跟他在一起嗎 I asked my mom, "do you want me to not be together with her?"	
138.我是很怕他反對 I was afraid she would object	
139.媽媽說就算我反對又不能改變什麼 But she said "even if I object, I can't change anything"	Mother's compartmentalizing attitude from behavior
140.但是我也是很不爽我爸爸問什麼要說沒有先告訴我 I was rather mad that dad told mom without letting me know first	
141.但是後來會覺得還好爸爸有說 But after a while I was glad my dad did that	
142.爸爸有安撫我媽媽 And he also comforted my mom	Father's agency in taking on the role as a communication broker

Table 7

Example of Axial Coding in the Codebook

Category	Sub-category	Definition	When to Apply	Don't Apply	Examples	Memo
Comparison	Downward comparison	When someone compares to others and feel good about oneself	When a participant mentions any type of comparison and the result in positive evaluation (of self or other)	When the comparison does not result in positive evaluation of the self or other	p. 163 113.I had a teacher in college who was gay 114. I told the teacher that I told my father 115. And the teacher said my dad was quite calm and reasonable	Doris's teacher did the comparison for her to help her understand her father's reaction

Table 7, cont.

					116. Because his own family situation did not allow him to chugui 117.So he thought my dad was reasonable 118. Because at that moment I was too sad to gauge my dad's reaction	
	Upward comparison	When someone compares to others and feel bad about oneself	When a participant mentions any type of comparison and the result in negative evaluation (of self or other)	When the comparison does not result in negative evaluation of the self or other	p. 167, Line 253.Why don't heterosexuals need people's vote to get married 254. while tongxinglian (homosexuals) do?	Doris's brother is supportive of her tongzhi identity so she could complain about the unfair treatment of tongzhi to him
	Measuring to the society	When someone draws from the macro social and cultural discourses to make sense of one's own situation	When a participant refers to the "society" "everyone" or what is "normal"	When a participant is comparing to a specific person	p. 173, Lisa 173. If you want to be a tongzhi, you have to behave like a good kid 174. You have to have one partner and you are stable and happy 175. Then people will accept you	Lisa is fully aware of the homonormative pressure on tongzhi
	Measuring to authority	When a form of authority becomes a point of	When a participant refers to an authority	When the point of comparison is done on some	p. 212, Yuna 12. When she lived with me, she even	Yuna described how her girlfriend

Table 7, cont.

		comparison to make sense of one's own situation	figure such as celebrity, deity, people with prestigious vocations, or higher/supernatural power	that is not conventionally considered an authority figure	prayed at the ancestral tablet 13. we might have gotten married but I had some reservations	was considered accepted by the ancestor, but she had reservation about getting married
	Putting things in perspective	When a dramatic event happens in someone's life that make other things seem insignificant	When a participant mentions a dramatic event that leads to feeling their conflicts and worries are not as important	When a participant changes how he viewed his conflicts, worries, or the like without the occurrence of a dramatic event	p. 37 Lester 62. She always tried to control me and I detested that 63. but when she was diagnosed with cancer, I realized how much I feared losing her	The cancer diagnosis changes Lester's attitude about his own tongzhi identity and his view on his mother's discounted acceptance

The codebook excerpt shows how one category is built in the axial coding stage and with other categories, such as parental agency, feminist intersectionality of identity, a theoretical coding of chugui is developed (see chapter 4). Stories included to illustrate a category and sub-category in chapter 4 do not necessarily carry generalizable ability, and some category and sub-category have multiple stories to substantiate its content, while others have fewer stories to exemplify; however, these stories, together, create the model of chugui that provides a framework to re-think the study of LGBTQ+/tongzhi family communication, a new angle to investigate this topic.

In the "example" section of the codebook, I listed all the relevant examples from the data for each sub-category, but I pick stories that demonstrate essential elements of each sub-category, and I also attempt to include at least one story from each participant's

interview. There is only one tongzhi participant, Melvin (24, gay man) whose story is not included in this dissertation because his answers to my questions pivoted toward his intrapersonal processes rather than interpersonal family dynamics.

CHAPTER 4: THE STORY OF CHUGUI (出櫃, EXIT-CLOSET)

Terminology

Before I start answering the research question, I will clarify the choices of terminology based on my findings for the remainder of the dissertation. First of all, participants are given Americanized pseudonyms using an online random name generator system (.https://www.fakenamegenerator.com/). Americanized pseudonyms are used rather than Taiwanese (Mandarin) pseudonyms for the sake of the ease of reading for my readers, who are mostly American or non-Americans who are fluent in English. If the research is to be published in Mandarin Chinese, then Taiwanese pseudonyms will be assigned instead. People who are mentioned by the participants but not interviewed will be given two letters that are randomly assigned in place of a pseudonym, or simply be referred to by their relationship, such as Mary's mother, depending on the need of storytelling.

As discussed in the introduction, research has argued that the term tongzhi has greater inclusivity to discuss gender and sexual nonconformity in Taiwan than LGBTQ+, and my data supported this observation. My findings indicated the incompatibility of this abbreviation identity-based model to Taiwanese context. For Taiwanese parents, this identity-framework could be incomprehensible and more importantly, irrelevant to how they relate to their offspring; for Taiwanese adult-offspring who are tongzhi, the relevance of this framework may increase, but only to a certain extent. It is by no means saying that the concept tongzhi and LGBTQ+ have nothing in common; in fact, they do, but they should not be treated as two interchangeable phrases when discussing Taiwanese

family relationship. Therefore; in this section, I will continue using tongzhi in discussing my findings and LGBTQ+ when referencing existing literature, and when designating the identity label when introducing participants or people they talk about (e.g., Joseph, 32, bisexual man; KW, 38, lesbian woman) for the sake of accessible categorization. (For a detailed discussion, please see section "Feminist intersectionality within Taiwan tongzhi family communication.")

Fleshing out the Model of Scaffolding in Family

The research question "how do families reconcile challenged expectations when a young adult offspring is tongzhi?" is consciously designed to study family relationships of tongzhi that transcends coming out disclosure—it aimed to study tongzhi family relationships in which disclosures do not occur or disclosures do not bring about drastic changes, and it aimed to look at other communicative phenomena in tongzhi family closely. Even though in Taiwan, chugui is so commonly used to describe the relationship of tongzhi and their family, chugui in Taiwan and coming out in US-West European mean really different things and they entail really different communicative processes. Therefore, by theorizing chugui, this dissertation would also redefine the term "coming out" and expand its applicability.

So, what is chugui, after all? I could try to answer it in a pithy, headline-manner, saying something like "chugui is not about disclosure, but about acceptance," or in a cheesy heartfelt manner "acceptance and love conquers all," but my data indicates something more nuanced. Even if I were to condense chugui to be acceptance (thus, to chugui successfully, or to "have come out," means to have been accepted), the answer

still is complicated, varied, ambiguous and even contradictory. Therefore, if for Taiwanese tongzhi coming out means acceptance, then it is crucial to ask how coming out and acceptance are managed and negotiated.

After I started to recruit research participants, an old friend from school referred a friend, Frank, to me, because Frank said his father could join my research. Frank gave me his father's contact information on a smartphone chat application (Line), telling me, "my dad is really talkative, really easy going and he's totally ok with me being gay. Just message him or call him directly, I've told him about you, so you just talk to him." My messages, however, were read but ignored. When I asked Frank whether he could let his father know that I had sent him messages, he frantically apologized because it turned out that his father did NOT want to be interviewed. Frank thought since his father is fine with his sexuality, he would definitely be willing to be interviewed and talk about how he accepts Frank and how open he is. However, his father refused, and Frank was shocked.

I recruited Frank instead because I was curious about this misjudgment, which, by the time I interviewed him, had become a recurring theme in my data. The misjudgment oftentimes goes one direction, where the tongzhi offspring mistakenly believe their parents have accepted them and thus everything is good until something comes up and catches them off guard. The misjudgment sometimes goes the other direction, where the tongzhi offspring believe their parents to be unaccepting of their tongzhi identity, but their parents turn out to be fine with it. This misjudgment is reported by many participants of mine, and it also leads me to refine and modify the model of scaffolding to reconciliation (Jhang, 2018). In this model, the starting point of the scaffolding to reach

the goal of reconciled stable family relationship is the fact that an offspring is tongzhi, and there are thus discrepant expectations to reconcile. The data of this dissertation show that the original model is intuitively representative of the young adult Taiwanese tongzhi and their family, but it is like a low definition TV picture which misses much nuances, gradations, and tinges that become present and vivid when one switches to a High Definition TV (and thus, there will be ultra-high High Definition and even more advanced echoing available later to show us more, much like more research will tell us more.)

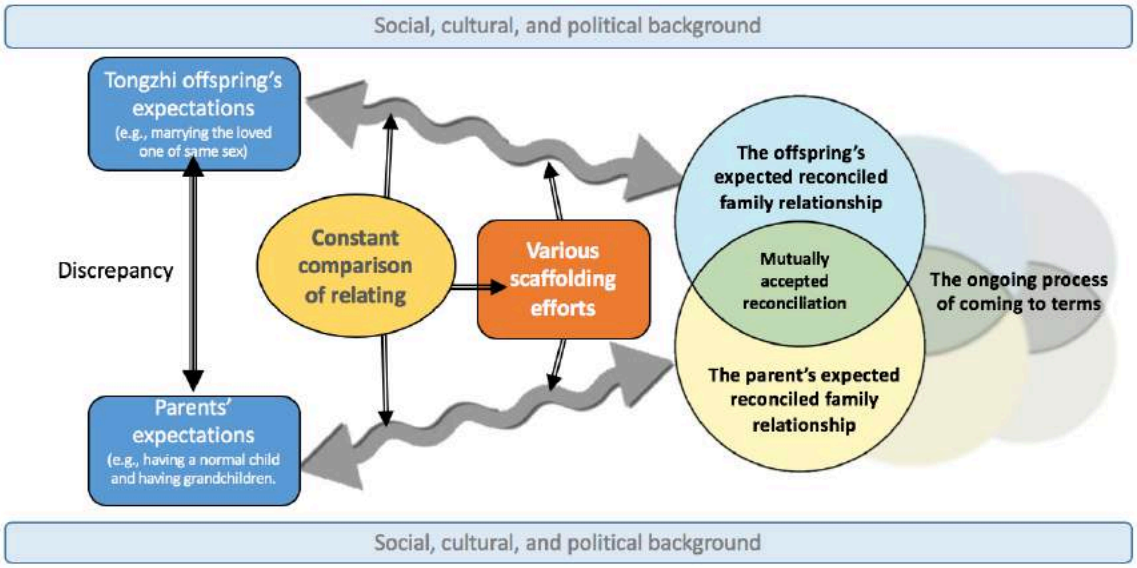

Figure 2: *Coming to terms/chugui in family as scaffolding model*

In figure 2, *coming to terms/chugui in family as scaffolding model*, several important revisions are made to reflect the changes (detailed in the rest of the chapter.) First of all, the social, cultural, and political background is conceptualized to be influential throughout the scaffolding process, not just at the beginning to form the expectations. Second, when the tongzhi offspring and the parent realize there are

discrepancies in their expectations because the offspring is tongzhi, they try to reconcile the discrepancy. They do so by engaging in an intrapersonal level of constant comparison of relating— they may compare their expectations and experiences to their lived moments, compare to micro discourses and macro discourses, or compare to the other person's expectations— in order to make sense of the situation they are in. They may engage in the psychological constant comparison consciously or subconsciously, which is repetitive and ongoing and probably never stops. From their comparison, they decide how to scaffold to move toward reconciliation. That is, after the **individual psychological process of constant comparison**, they engage in the **individual behavioral process of scaffolding** (e.g., a father asking his tongzhi daughter whether her "friend" is coming over to the family dinner this weekend, or a tongzhi offspring talking about some tongzhi celebrities with his mother). In the figure, there are two wavy double-headed arrows between "discrepancy" and "attempted reconciliation of family relationship" and the wavy double-headed arrows the signify that the process is iterative, full of ups and downs, and participants may even need to "restart" or "regress" after reaching a certain level of reconciled family relationship/coming to terms. On the right-hand side of the figure is the "attempted reconciled family relationship," a stage that is mutually constructed. It is no longer an individual-level process, but rather how one's various scaffolding efforts are accumulated to effect "coming to terms" is a mutually understood manner. Importantly, what constitutes reconciled family relationship for the tongzhi offspring and the parent do not always overlap. In abstract, they may both want to reconcile the discrepant expectations, but how they enact their scaffolding efforts may

differ, what "feels like" having come to terms may differ, and acceptance could be compartmentalized. Therefore, the overlapped part (the mutually intelligible acceptance) differs in size and form for each family. Finally, it is possible that some parts of acceptance may be unfulfilled indefinitely, and thus the process of coming to terms may also last indefinitely, signaled by the shadow labeled "the ongoing process of coming to terms."

The rest of the chapter is divided into three sections, starting with adjustments of the scaffolding model from the beginning of the model (discrepancy), through the process (constant comparison of relating and various scaffolding efforts), and the end goal (attempted reconciled family relationship/coming to terms).

How Does It Start? Perceived Discrepancy in Expectations

The process of coming to terms starts with the knowledge of having something that is different from the "normal and heterosexual" like everyone else. For example, a tongzhi could feel that there is something different about herself from a young age without having words to describe it. And yet, once she starts to sense the differences, she could embark on the journey of reconciliation of her "differences" with the norms around her. Likewise, a parent could start sensing something is different about her offspring without knowing for sure, but that sense and suspicion is enough to send her on the journey, as well. Since the knowledge comes to each person at different times and in different manners, a parent-offspring dyad usually starts the process at different times respectively, one thing that the visual of the original low-definition model cannot show.

There are many different ways the two onset points diverge due to the nature of such discovery; thus, there is also room for misreading and misjudging the situation.

One such misreading is the offspring wrongfully believing that her parents would be accepting of her tongzhi identity, predicting a short journey to reconciliation (e.g., perhaps they would just be surprised, but they should be ok) or there might not be any reconciliation to undertake at all (e.g., I don't think they would care too much; they'd think that as long as I'm happy, that's the most important thing.) The following is some examples of such misreading.

Before Natalia's (37, lesbian) parents found out about her sexuality, Natalia "thought they [were] really liberal and would be accepting of my sexuality" because both of her parents are highly educated and work in cultural and creative industry. Their family relationship was stable, and they would even hold family meetings when deciding major decisions together (which is not common in Taiwan). Therefore, after years of suspicion due to Natalia's masculine appearance and behavior, when Natalia's mom, Ruth (68), asked Natalia whether she was tongzhi, Natalia simply said yes, thinking it would not be a big deal. It was a big deal. Ruth broke down and wailed, asking Natalia to break up with her girlfriend, and then tried to reason with Natalia that she might have been influenced by the liberal atmosphere of college that made her believe herself to be lesbian too. Ruth felt like her world had crumbled, and Natalia felt betrayed. After the initial conflict, Ruth and her husband tried to "correct" Natalia, even going as far as to contact Natalia's girlfriend's mother and the three of them teamed up to strategize how to break them up; Natalia's parents even requested a sit-down negotiation with the girl. In

the following years, Natalia's family did not talk about Natalia's sexuality at all, but they each would hide in their rooms and cry. "I didn't know what I could say to make them feel better, so I didn't say anything," Natalia said.

Meadow (34, pansexual woman) was outed by her teacher to her parents when she was in middle school, but her parents did not seem to react as badly to the fact that she had a girlfriend as to the fact that she was dating and thus not paying full attention to studying. Meadow took their lack of reaction to her having a girlfriend as that they are ok with her being different (of course at age 13, she had no lexicon to describe what she is; she only knew she is different and people didn't think it was right). Meadow had a boyfriend before middle school ended, and Meadow's mom was really open about it, which is really rare given how strict parents are about their offspring dating and that the school she went to was famous for their draconian rules against dating. She told Meadow "there's no way of stopping your offspring from falling in love anyway, so why bother? When I was a student, I fell in love with my classmates too, and if I were pretty enough I probably would have a boyfriend then, so what's the point trying to stop you? I'd rather you let me know and introduce the boy to me so I can know who he is." Since Meadow never thought of boys and girls to be different, she thought it makes perfect sense if she replaces "boyfriend" with "girlfriend" in her mom's sentences and thus, of course, her mom would be ok if she has a girlfriend, and she would want to meet her girlfriend as well. After Meadow entered high school, she had another girlfriend, DV, who checked all the "good kid" boxes—she was *guai* (乖, polite, rule-following), funny, had good grades, and always helped out with chores when she came to Meadow's house. When her

girlfriend came over to their house, Meadow's mom was nice to her, never showing any sign that she was not ok with Meadow having a girlfriend rather than a boyfriend. Two years later, Meadow broke up with her and had a new girlfriend, and Meadow would bring her home as well. One day when Meadow and her mom were driving home, Meadow's mom said, "Why are you not together with DV anymore? I like her better" and Meadow was exhilarated since it was the first time Meadow's mom took the initiative to talk about this matter with her and it furthered Meadow's belief that her mom was ok with her being a tongzhi; she even approved of her choice of girlfriend. But Meadow would have one of the biggest surprises of her life when she had a big fight with her mom about her being a "homosexual" after she entered college. She was taken aback and could not make sense of her mom's reaction, pondering "she has always been ok with me being tongzhi, hasn't she? How is she suddenly NOT ok with it? I was so confused and so sad to know that, ok, so I have a closet too, just like everyone else." For Meadow, her journey of reconciliation started years after she knows she is a tongzhi, but later she found out that for her mom, the journey started when she had that first girlfriend at age 13, just that her mom was hoping for her to "grow up and grow out of it" once she entered college. When that did not happen, conflict broke out, sending Meadow on the journey of reconciling discrepant expectations she had and her mom had, which she had thought were totally in agreement.

On the other end of the misreading and misjudgment is that a tongzhi offspring thought that her parents would not accept her for being a tongzhi, and thus they are worried, scared, and cautious not to let the information known. The tongzhi offspring

would be on the journey of reconciliation for a while and would anticipate a long road ahead, only to find that her parents were actually fine with it.

Hugo (68) talked about his son GS's chugui in a rather proud manner. It was about seven years ago when GS was in his early thirties. Hugo's family had a weekend family trip, but there's another girl that came with them on the trip. It was the daughter of a friend of Hugo, and of course, the reason the girl was there was that both sets of parents were hoping GS and the girl would start dating. GS was aware of why the girl was there too. After they went home, Hugo and his wife asked GS what he thought of the girl, and GS revealed to them that he actually likes boys:

> He was crying and crying, saying how sorry he was to disappoint us, and how he tried to hide it so he wouldn't hurt us, but I just told him it's ok, you don't need to apologize, you didn't do anything wrong. If anyone needs to apologize, it should be us, because it was us that brought you to the world. As long as you're living the life you want, sexual orientation isn't something people choose. Many homosexual offspring don't want to be homosexual because the environment is not too friendly to them, and no one would choose that; this is a part of nature, so you just do your best and live your life. I don't care about patrilineage. And he was still crying, so his mom hugged him and told him 'we accept you.' And 'you don't worry about what your relatives would say; I will tell them for you, and they were pretty fine with it too.' Compared to other tongzhi's chugui, his chugui went pretty smoothly.

Since I only interviewed Hugo but not his wife or son, I would not know whether Hugo's wife is as accepting as Hugo is, or at least what he appears to be, but based on the story Hugo told, GS anticipated a long journey to reconciliation with his parents, but that journey (at least with Hugo) was really short. Hugo had never suspected, and GS actually had a girlfriend before, so Hugo was indeed surprised to learn about GS, but he was not angry or sad.

Dorothy (65)'s daughter, KW (38, lesbian woman), was forced out of the closet when Dorothy confronted her about it when her daughter stayed out too late on her 25th birthday. Even though Dorothy was sad and shocked mostly because she felt she was oblivious of this important part of her daughter's life and how her daughter might have been lonely on this journey, she tried very hard to learn about "the missing part" of her daughter's life and to come to terms with the new set of circumstances of their relationship. It was during a heart-to-heart after her daughter came out that Dorothy learned how dreadful her daughter was about letting her mom know about her tongzhi identity, as she believed she would be kicked out of the house. Heartbroken, Dorothy asked why KW would think that given Dorothy has never been a strict mother, and KW recalled reading stories on the news and social media about tongzhi in Taiwan and LGBTQ+ in the U.S. being kicked out of the house. One specific sentence that KW remembers deeply, and now Dorothy remembers deeply, is a young lesbian Taiwanese's story, in which she says "when my mom kicked me out, I realized I am no longer her offspring, no matter how much she said she loved me. I lost my position in the house, in my mom's heart, and in this world, so suicide is the only reasonable option." Whose story it was, or where KW saw it had all faded in her memory, but KW pungently remembers this particular line. Dorothy knew that her daughter was working really hard to save money, and she thought she was just being a good kid that has a clear sense of responsibility, but only after she learned about KW's tongzhi status did she realize "she was saving up in case I kick her out of the house for being tongzhi; it just broke my heart thinking my daughter went through such emotional torment."

Leticia (33, lesbian woman) moved to the U.S. for graduate school and has lived in the U.S. since then, and she had married her long-time partner in the U.S. as well. Leticia and her partner have been together since they were 19, but they had kept their relationship a secret from their parents for more than a decade. Leticia thought that there was no way her parents would be ok with it, and due to her sexuality, she always felt there was a distance between her and her seemingly happy family. During one video call with her mom, her mom asked her whether she's homosexual, and Leticia fudged the answer and tried to change the topic, but her mom persisted, so Leticia admitted and then burst out crying because she thought her mother would not accept her and that was the end of the mother-daughter relationship. Her mother comforted her and said she was ok with it, and she was just worried that they would not have offspring and would be lonely when they are old. Her mother's reaction was not what Leticia had rehearsed time and again in her mind, and she had not been able to start the journey of reconciliation for a decade because she believed her parents would not accept her. Her mother had been suspicious and had asked her whether she was tongzhi a couple of times, but Leticia had dodged the question.

Miriam's (mother of a 30-year-old gay son) journey as a mother of a tongzhi son starts much earlier than her son himself (CL). CL has always been a bit different, a little girly, and he liked dolls when he was little. Miriam thought there might be something different about her son, but she chose to ignore it because it was something too scary to confirm. One time, Miriam and her husband, UF, went to a fortune-teller for matters not related to their son, but the fortune-teller told them that their son is gay, and CL was ten

at the time. Miriam and husband did not want to believe it, so they shrugged it off, even though the seed of suspicion was growing even stronger. When CL was in the middle school, UF found the web browsing history left behind by CL, and it contained some gay pornography, which further confirmed their suspicion, but they chose not to say anything. Miriam and her husband knew their son is tongzhi, but they did not let their son know about their knowledge and suspicion. Miriam decided to reach out to a support group for parents of tongzhi offspring to see what she could learn there. Several years later, when Miriam took her younger son to a pediatric clinic, she saw a poster saying that sexual orientation is a part of consultation this clinic offers, so she decided to ask the doctor whether CL was tongzhi, and the doctor told her it sounded like CL was indeed tongzhi, but the doctor also told her that it was his decision, and he had to decide how to live his life, and the parents should not decide for him. Since Miriam was already going to the support group and had been gaining knowledge about the subject, the doctor's word gave her even more strength to accept that her son was tongzhi. Miriam took brochures from the support group and left them everywhere in the house, hoping her son would pick up the hint that she was supportive of him; when the news was showing something about tongzhi, Miriam would ask CL whether he would chugui if he were tongzhi, and CL said no, because he would not want to hurt his parents. This saddened Miriam because "I saw so many offspring who long to chugui, but my son is so sensitive and considerate and would rather hold on to the secret himself than to hurt us. However, what is interesting about Miriam's story is that her son had no idea that his mother has been on this journey of reconciliation for so long and had really come to terms with his being tongzhi.

Miriam's story is the opposite of many stories of Taiwanese tongzhi where the tongzhi offspring would do the hinting and the tacit communication, hoping their parents would pick up the hint and accept them; Miriam has already come to terms with her son's sexuality, but she did not tell her son directly, and he thought he still had a long journey to reconciliation. After CL entered college, one day, Miriam brought him to an event that the support group hosted, and it was toward the end of the day CL finally told Miriam formally, and despite Miriam's endeavor to let CL know that she was supportive, CL still was so scared that his body was shaking. Miriam stated:

> I was so heartbroken for my son; even though we are so accepting of him, he was still so scared of letting us know…now that I think back, whether or not he chugui does not matter to me, because I have, and I will always love him like I do, but it matters to him because he needs to know, well, I need a chance to formally let him know that 'I have accepted you and I support you' and it is a like a rite of passage for him to be able to receive the love and support I have for him." Miriam is suspecting that her younger son might also be tongzhi, but "now I'm just going to observe and see how I can be there for him.

These stories show us how the starting points vary between parent-offspring, and they embark on the journey when they sense something is off. The two sides usually have a gap in information, and they may have guessed wrong about what the other knows or does not know. A formal announcement planned by the offspring that "mom, dad, I'm gay" is often absent from most of the stories my tongzhi offspring participants tell; then such disclosure does take place, it often does not serve the purpose of informing, nor does it bring about evident behavioral changes in family, showing that dominant U.S./West European discourse of coming out disclosure has its limit in understanding LGBTQ+ family relationship in culture that is more family-oriented culture. When Merighi and

Grimes (2000) studied coming out in multicultural family contexts in the U.S., they found that some Vietnamese American young LGBTQ+ felt pressured to have to come up with a formal announcement when they would have preferred something subtler or even avoided disclosure altogether because the parents have known anyway, and disclosure is rendered irrelevant to the family relationship they have to deal with . Furthermore, the stories included above show that an offspring can easily misjudge her parents' acceptance and reaction, and each misjudgment influences the length and the course of the journey of reconciliation. In the next section, I will discuss the factors that shape the course of the journey.

The Course of the Journey: A Long and Winding One

In the original model, I argued that social, cultural, and political discourses form the base of the expectations for the parents and the offspring. When those expectations diverge, they would try to reconcile it by initiating the reconciliation process. It became clear to me during my interviews that those discourses do more than informing the expectations at the onset of the process as shown in my original model. Rather, these macro discourses are present throughout the entire reconciliation process. Consistent with the critical theory perspective of Tucker (1998) and Pitre and Kushner (2015) where they argue the "social action and social structures presuppose and require one another" (Tucker, 1998, p. 69), here I have found that social, cultural, and political discourses and personal choices and actions require and inform one another, and family relating process is an example where people's decisions and actions are informed by, and continue to inform the larger social, cultural, and political discourses. I argue that the family relating

process is a constant comparison one, where people constantly compare different discourses they know of and make decisions based on, because of, or against the discourses.

The constant comparison of relating and resultant scaffolding efforts. Like the common technique used in analyzing qualitative data, relating is also done with constant comparison, but unlike the analytical approach, people make constant comparisons NOT to find themes, codes, or categories, but to decide what to do and how to feel about their relationships, constituting the scaffolding efforts they engage in.

When people are attending to their relationships, they sometimes rely on just one single data point, and emotion, personal experience, preferences often have power in what they do and feel; they continue their relationship repeating the process of comparison. This process of constant comparison may be done consciously or subconsciously. That is also why when competing discourses are available, people may vacillate emotionally or behaviorally. For example, a father might hesitate to punish his offspring when his offspring misbehaves because the father learned from a TV program that punishment leads to worse mental health outcomes in offspring, but he may also draw from his own childhood where punishment was common, and he turned out fine. He would then have to decide which discourse makes more sense to him in that particular instance.

Specifically, the grounded theory analysis revealed five themes under the focused coding stage, and I formed a mid-range theory that I call the constant comparing of relating. I will explain and illustrate each one in the following section: (1) personal

experience as the baseline for comparison, (2) social comparison, measuring against the norms, measuring against the authority, and putting things in perspective. *Personal experience as the case one for comparison* is when someone takes her own experience as the baseline of comparison or generalizes her experience to all others she encounters, and personal experience could become prescriptive (e.g., because I did it this way, this is how things should be done; I experienced it, and it was bad, so I don't want you to have to go through it too); *social comparison* could be the comparison of two other people (not including the self), with a specific person (e.g., I think what she's doing it good, so you should do it too) and upward/ downward comparison for the sake of self-evaluation (e.g., I feel bad because I think what they have is better than what I have) (Festinger, 1954; Wills, 1981); *measuring against the norms* is when the comparison is done with larger, more vague idea of "society" and "others" (e.g., everyone is doing it, so I should do it too; that's just how things are done); *measuring against the authority* is when the measuring is done against the powerful, such as deity, the law, doctors, etc.; and finally, *putting things in perspective* is when something really drastic happens and thus other things become insignificant by comparison. Constant comparison of relating is an individual, interpersonal level process and is done consciously or subconsciously, and as a result, people engage in various scaffolding effort to come to terms, which is an individual-level behavioral process. The following sections include stories demonstrating the constant comparison and the resultant scaffolding efforts.

Personal experience as the baseline for comparison. Among all the participants I interviewed, Fenny's (53, mother of a 26-year-old gay son, Xavier) story is one of the

stories that stuck with me. Fenny has worked an administrative job in the same office for more than 35 years; she is divorced and has a son. When her son Xavier told her that he is gay when he was in high school, it was surprising to Fenny as she had no idea about it at all, but it did not take her long to accept the news, and she thought it was not a big deal. One reason for her to think it is not a big deal was because of her experience when she was in high school. "I once wondered whether I am, too," omitting the terms that specify sexual orientation in her storytelling, a practice frequently used by Taiwanese parents of tongzhi offspring. "I had this girl friend, and we were so close. She was tiny and frail, and I wanted to protect her. I wanted to get closer than friends did. Of course, I later realized I wasn't, and I even introduced boys to her; in fact, her husband now was introduced to her by me!" Fenny talked about how it is not a big deal to feel "something different" for someone you are close to, but her own experience with this girl friend is not the only experience she used as the baseline for comparing the information that her son is gay:

> At my age now, the most important thing is to be happy. This was not how I viewed my life when I was younger. I used to bend over backward for a living and supporting my family. I gave up my own interests for other people, and now I keep on wondering what I would be like if I had chosen my dream; if I were brave enough to break free from the pressure of following the norms, what my life would be like. I couldn't do that when I was younger because I got married and I had an offspring to raise. I always wanted to dance, but I didn't even let my family know, because my family just didn't have that kind of money to send me to an art school. I knew that very well, and that's why I didn't even say a thing. Mom told me the money they had was just enough to send me to a public high school, so I decided to go to a vocational high school to learn something that prepared me for immediate employment. I got a part-time job at the same office I worked at my entire life after high school and worked to pay for junior college tuition, so I didn't need to burden my family. I know my place and my fate (我很認份).

Fenny emphasized many times how bravery was the key:

> When I was younger, the society says once a girl reaches a certain age, she will get married and have kids, and if you are not brave enough to ignore other people's opinions, you will conform and walk on the path that's set for you. If I were brave enough back then, I would not have gotten married and had a kid, but that also means I would have had my family breathing down my neck pressuring me to marry and my friends would have thought that I was weird. I just wasn't brave enough…If I were, I would have joined a dance group instead of working that desk job to support myself through college, get married and have kids…but now I'm too old to follow my dream anymore; my bones are stiff, and I'm weak, there's no way for me to dance. I wish I had followed my dream.

Fenny's dream to become a dancer has always been at the back of her mind, and the noise it makes gets louder the older she gets, and this regret fueled her acceptance of her son, "Xavier may not know how I feel or why I feel like this, but I just want him to do what makes him happy, follow his own heart, and it doesn't matter if he is tongzhi or if he makes a lot of money. I don't want to pressure him in any way; I just want him to do what makes him happy." Fenny's own experience becomes the baseline to assess her son's tongzhi identity—I once surrendered to the pressure to conform, and I regret it, so I am not going to pressure my son to conform now.

Helen (57, mother of a 30-year-old lesbian daughter, IB) came to one of the support group meetings at the tongzhi organization during my fieldwork year. She was very different from other parents who came to the support group because she was completely accepting of her daughter's tongzhi identity, but their mother-daughter relationship was going through a crisis due to her decision on child-rearing. Helen chose her rearing style based on her own experience growing up. Helen grew up with very strict parents who made decisions for her that she had to follow, including her grades, schools

she went to, friends she made, and where she lived after she graduated from college. Helen determined to raise her own daughter with maximum freedom; she would not interfere with her decision making at all. Helen believed how she grew up was so painful that she did not want her daughter to suffer as she did, so when she found out IB dated girls, she simply accepted it because she wanted IB to decide for herself. However, despite her good intention, the result is not what she had hoped for. After IB had to quit her job in her mid-twenties due to depression, Helen felt lost; she did not know why with all the freedom IB had, IB was still so unhappy. Later, Helen realized IB interpreted the space and freedom Helen gave as Helen's indifference, and Helen was heartbroken. IB wanted her mother to show her care, give her advice, and interfere once in a while so "she feels like someone's offspring." How they started to work on their parent-offspring relationship afterward is a story for another discussion, but Helen's story exemplifies a story of "I had it, and it sucked so I will give you the opposite of what I had."

It is not to say that Helen's Laissez-faire is a mistake, as there is a multitude of factors and variables in any parent-offspring relationship. William's (60, father of a 37-year-old lesbian daughter, EJ) story has a better outcome (at least from what William told me). William had a rather liberal childhood where his parents gave him ample liberty in deciding what he wanted to do. William knew that was how he would raise his daughters, giving them freedom and room to explore and decide for themselves, including when EJ let him know that she had a girlfriend.

> I'm very proud of how liberal I am with my daughters. When EJ was in high school, she got ten ear piercings, five each side, got a tongue ring, and dyed her hair entirely blond, and she would wear socks that didn't match. Her mom would

> say a girl can't behave like this, this is breaking social norms and unacceptable, and I told my wife it's not a big deal, it's not like she's breaking the law or doing something immoral; she's young, and she should experiment, and you can't blame her really, because she has my DNA. When I was in high school, I would wear my hair long and get in trouble for that; the school would shave my head every so often. I did things that other high school students dared not to do. I did so many crazy things that broke the rules, but I didn't think it was a problem; as long as I didn't hurt people, who are you to tell me what to do? That's why I didn't care if my daughter behaved like this.

For William, if it was ok for him to break the rules, so it is ok for his daughter to, as well, including dating women rather than men.

Meadow' story illustrates another form of using one's own experience as the baseline of comparison. Meadow (34, pansexual woman) and her mom, YH, chat about all sorts of social and political issues all the time, and most of the time their stance is congruent, while marriage is one of the few topics on which they always diverge. YH met her husband (Meadow's father) at work and got married a year after they fell in love and started dating. She believed that marriage is one of the important things in life that one has to do, so she was thrilled when she found someone she loved to fulfill this obligation and realize her dream with. However, soon after they got married, they started to have a lot of fights over financial troubles, family conflicts, and now, YH felt no passionate love toward her husband anymore as she did when she was 20. Despite all the hardship she went through in this marriage, she remained married, and now her romantic love has disappeared, and her bitterness has vaporized, but she does not think of the marriage as something negative; for her, one gets married and stays married. Therefore, when Meadow would argue that she cannot just "find someone to marry" because how could she marry someone she does not love, YH would say "love is overrated, and it's just

bogus; would you still love that person after 30 years? No! Just find a boy that is guai (rule-following, polite) and is financially stable to marry, because when you're old, whatever love that was there would be gone, but you would have financial stability and some kids, and that's what matters." YH cannot accept Meadow's argument because her experience tells her that love would eventually become irrelevant to a stable or even a happy life.

Using personal experience as the baseline for comparison is a common human phenomenon that has been studied in different disciplines, such as cognitive bias (Haselton, Nettle & Andrews, 2005), where it is argued that people use their own perception of the world to create their own subjective social reality; the same phenomenon is also known as a type of informal fallacy in logic (McMurtry, 1990), where one person uses an anecdote as the reason why their argument is valid. For Fanny, Helen, and Meadow's mother YH, they resort to their own experiences, which create their subjective social reality, for them to feel justified in how they deal with their family relationship.

Social comparison. Social comparison theory proposes that people compare themselves to others either upward or downward to evaluate themselves; when comparing upward, people look at others in similar situation but considered socially better, resulting in feeling bad about themselves, and when comparing downward, people look at others in a worse situation, resulting in having a more positive self-evaluation (Arroyo & Anderson, 2016). This classic psychological theory proposed by Festinger (1954) is seen in my participants' stories, but I would expand the use of social

comparison to form "self" evaluation to include comparison for two other people, also in the upward or downward direction

Before the 2018 referendum took place, there was much social turmoil because five referendum questions out of ten were pertinent to same-sex marriage and gender equity education, and many tongzhi would talk to their family to seek support from them and to explain to them the referendum questions (more discussion on how this referendum becomes a key factor in tongzhi family relationship, see "Challenging the compartmentalization"). Tiffany (36, bisexual woman), for example, would send infographics and messages about the referendum questions to her family chat group, but only a few of the members would respond, and others would just switch topics. After a few attempts, Tiffany's mother, FE sent a message to Tiffany in the family chat group, "I'll introduce you to PO, he's also tongzhi, but he won't push people to vote in a certain way like you do, and he said he doesn't have to get married like you and those tongzhi do." Tiffany was mad because her mother chugui for her in the family group by comparing her to "another tongzhi" and also because her mother later said, "I don't understand why you have to be so militant; why can't you just be like those tongzhi that live a quiet life?" For FE, she has accepted Tiffany to be tongzhi, but she wants her to be a certain type of tongzhi, one that does not make a scene. This upward comparison (Tiffany's mother comparing Tiffany to a "better" version of tongzhi) pushes Tiffany away from her mother, despite having gotten closer earlier due to FE's acceptance of her tongzhi identity.

Candice's (53, mother of a 25-year-old lesbian daughter) daughter (RS) has her own YouTube channel where she talks about different issues concerning human rights and tongzhi rights and sometimes chats about her personal life, including Candice. Candice was uncomfortable with her daughter's "flaunting her sexual identity" but since she wants to be a supportive mother, she always "likes" RS's Facebook posts about tongzhi issues and her sharing of videos from her YouTube channel.

> I felt torn; I don't want her to feel that I don't support her, but I really don't like it when she makes those videos. Until my friends told me that they follow my daughter's Facebook and they think my daughter is very outstanding, and some of my old classmates encourage me to chugui (as a parent of a tongzhi offspring), and I saw other parents who are so supportive of their tongzhi offspring, it was then I realized I am a failing mother.

Candice's upward comparison leads to her concluding that she is a failing mother.

When an upward comparison is done to the extreme, it could become "cruel optimism" (Berlant, 2011). Cruel optimism happens when there is a specific target in mind for comparison, and people form such attachment to this target that it actually impedes their progress toward the goal. For example, "with personal relationships, or with our broad aspirations in relation to achieving the good life for ourselves and for our loved ones – but it may also affect our working lives, where, rather than moving us forward in an ongoing process of professional 'becoming'" (Moore & Clark, 2016, p. 668). Even though Berlant's (2011) argument is born out of the critical tradition where she argues for the impossible personal endeavors against the backdrop of liberal-capitalist societies, her idea has been applied to other fields of study, including policy studies (Edwards, Gillies, & Horsley, 2015; Moore & Clark, 2016), disability studies (Runswick-

Cole & Goodley, 2015), gender and media studies (Wilson & Yochim, 2017), and critical advertising (Orgad & Meng, 2017), and I argue that family communication is a research milieu where the notion of cruel optimism could yield important findings.

A story that hints at cruel optimism is that of Olivia (37, bisexual woman). Olivia and her mother, KA, are both highly educated, and they have a close relationship. Even though Olivia has not let her mother know of her tongzhi identity, they talk about tongzhi issues from time to time due to Olivia's job as a human rights lawyer, and KA has expressed empathy to minorities who suffer under unfair social systems. Olivia, however, feels strongly against chugui, and the reason is that she knows her mother "would never be as supportive as those activist moms who go to pride parades and speak up for their tongzhi offspring." The mothers that she talks about are a few mothers who become iconic due to their frequent appearance on public platforms to show their support for tongzhi, including Guo Mama and Yeh Mama. Guo Mama founded the "Loving Parents of LGBT, Taiwan" in November 2011 after her daughter chugui. She struggled for a short period of time after the chugui but quickly came to terms with it and decided to help others like her. Her organization provides consultation to tongzhi offspring on chugui and to parents of tongzhi offspring on how to deal with their offspring's tongzhi identity. She has become known as Guo mama[6] an ideal of ultimate acceptance and love by her active participation in tongzhi rights and by her "bravery" of making public appearances. Yeh mama is another iconic figure, especially in recent years amongst the debate on same-sex

[6] Mother Guo, with no religious reference, but a common term of endearment in Taiwan.

marriage. When the opponents of same-sex marriage lost their momentum to stop the legalization of same-sex marriage, they turned their attack on smearing the Gender Equality Education Act by accusing it of "turning offspring tongzhi" and to "teach them how to do drugs and then do orgy" (Yeh, 2019).

The effort to counter the smear brought Yeh mama further to the center of attention because the gender equity education act in Taiwan was created as a response to the death of her son, a feminine boy, who died at age 14 in an accident which might have been an escalated bullying case in 2000. Yeh mama, a farmer from south Taiwan, has since been active in advocating for "offspring like my own," and made a historic appearance in the first Southern Taiwan Pride Parade in 2010. The two famous mothers have been referred to as "mama," and this label, along with their speech and actions, forms a strong image of good mothers. Such mother figures can be helpful for tongzhi individuals and for the advancement of tongzhi rights., as a news anchor commented on Yeh Mama's appearance, "her strength comforted all the tongzhi people there, they were crying, as if it was their own mother that was standing in front of them" (Civimediatw, 2015). For many tongzhi, acceptance and support from their parents and especially mother is greatly yearned for yet beyond their reach. Therefore, the mother figure provides them warmth, comfort, and hope, and yet it becomes cruel optimism for tongzhi offspring who seek a reconciled relationship with their parents, if comparing one's own parents against mothers like Guo mama and Yeh mama, in many cases, is like people pursuing the perfect body of models on magazine covers. Olivia's hope to become closer

to her mother is impeded by the realization her mother would never be as committed as these famous mothers.

In contrast, some of my participants resort to downward comparison to form better self-evolution. Abbie (32, bisexual woman) talked with pride about her family relationship. “We’re not like other families, and I have been able to bring my girlfriend home from the very beginning of our relationship, not like others who feel the need to wait until the relationship has stabled; my brother brings home his girlfriend too. I think my family is strong enough to deal with truth so we don’t have to lie.” There are other downward comparisons as well, such as “I’m very close to my uncle; most people are not close to their uncles, but I am” or “my mom is very different from other moms, because she has her own hobbies, and she spends time on them rather than spending all her time on her family like other moms.” For Abbie, she created a better self-evaluation through downward comparison, and she indeed has a good relationship with her family based on stories she told.

For some parents, downward comparisons have also been useful in their coming to terms. Ingrid (64, mother of a 35-year-old daughter, DA) is struggling to come to terms with her daughter’s tongzhi identity, but her husband HQ seems to be rather at ease, and when Ingrid asked HQ how he came to accept DA’s tongzhi identity, he explained “well, if we give birth to a disabled offspring, we will also try our best to take care of her, won’t we? It’s not like she commits a crime, or she’s disabled, at least she didn’t add more burden to our lives, so we should stick to our roles as parents to support her and take care of her.” Ethal’s (54, mother of an 18-year-old gay son) comparison is a mixture of

upward and downward, reflecting her uncertainty in how she feels about the issue of same-sex couples raising offspring. "As a mother of a tongzhi offspring, I should support them having offspring, because even though their offspring may receive unfair treatment for having two moms or two dads, it's not like heterosexual families are all problem-free…like in military dependents' villages[7], not all offspring can accept that their parents have such huge age difference, and even among my colleagues there are many offspring whose parents are unmarried, some of them turn out good and some don't." Here it seems that Ethal is trying to justify supporting same-sex couples raising offspring using a series of downward comparisons, but she compares upward too because she is still worried about it, "but a same-sex couple's family would be different, people will judge them, and it's unfair to their offspring; why can't they be born in or be adopted by normal families? I just can't justify subjecting offspring to such problems." Ethal has such mixed feeling about this issue, but since her son is still young, she feels fortunate that she still has time to figure this out, and she feels probably more comparison will be done in the future.

Measuring against the norms. In this theme, tongzhi and parents of tongzhi compare their situation to broader cultural and social discourses, seen in sentences such as "this is what's normal," "the society is…," or "everyone is like…, everyone is doing…." In my line-to-line initial coding, I used the initial code "society" when the participants talked about how they see the society is like, what others are doing, and in

[7] After the Chinese Civil War in 1949, about 1.5 million veterans retreated to Taiwan with the defeated Kuomingtang (The National Party), and the National Party government built housing for the veterans and their dependents, and these housing projects are called the military dependents' villages. For more discussion, see the next section of *measuring against the norms-patriarchy*.

the focused coding stage, I saw how referring to the "society" was a way for the participants to situate themselves in what they see others are doing, and thus the code became *measuring against the norm*, In the following section, I will delineate discourses that serve as norms that permeate the stories my participants tell explicitly or implicitly.

Heteronormativity and homonormativity. At the end of my interview with Dorothy (65, mother of a 38-year-old lesbian daughter and a 32-year-old heterosexual son), I asked what she wishes for her offspring, and she said "I hope my son would be normal and healthy, get married, work on his marriage to make sure it lasts; just follow the normal steps (an bu jiu ban 按部就班, an idiom meaning following rules that are pre-established, step-by-step). As for my daughter, I want her to have a suitable partner, and if the laws allow, then go have a baby." Dorothy's hopes for her offspring are apposite in the discussion of heteronormativity and homonormativity.

Heteronormativity "points out the expectations of heterosexuality as it is written into our world" (Chambers, 2003, p. 26, emphasis in original), and it is "the institutions, structures of understanding, and practical orientations that make heterosexuality seem not only coherent–that is, organized as a sexuality–but also privileged" (Warner, 2002, p. 309). Heteronormativity necessitates tongzhi people and their parents to come to terms with sexual and gender nonconformity. Specifically, for LGBTQ+ family relationship, Herdt and Koff (2000) argued that the "heterosexual family myth," a set of beliefs built on heteronormativity makes it harder for parents to accept an offspring's sexual orientation.

In Taiwan, heteronormativity manifests in the term zhengchang (正常, normal, sane, regular), which becomes part of the standard lexicon for parents, especially mothers, when they talk about their tongzhi offspring. In 2016, the Taiwan TongZhi Hotline Association tallied the top five questions asked by parents who contacted the association for help since it started the service in 1998, and the very first question was "can my kid return to normal?" The normal here means the heteronormal— with a gender performance that matches the assigned sex, and be attracted (or at least be in a relationship) with a person of the opposite sex. In relation to heteronormativity, homonormativity is commonly used to describe the assimilation of heteronormative ideals and constructs into LGBTQ+ culture and individual identity. It depoliticizes LGBTQ+ culture and reproduces and enables the damaging and restrictive dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions (Duggan, 2002). Therefore, LGBTQ+ people who perform gender-normative identities and compulsory marriage practices are being good citizens, while those who do not are being inappropriately queer (Jones, L., 2018). Homonormativity, though critiqued as a tactic of conforming LGBTQ+ people to the neoliberal ideals and to the oppressive heteronormative script (Duggan, 2002), has been a provisional compromise between the divergent sets of expectations of the LGBTQ+ people and their parents (Liu, W., 2015). In my participants' stories, heteronormative and homonormative ideals are prevalent.

William (69, father of a 37-year-old lesbian daughter, EJ) talks about how his wife, VD, is still struggling to accept their daughter being lesbian, because "she thinks that as long as we can give our daughter some guidance, she will return to normal," and

what VD means by normal is “she would follow the rules, study well, marry well, find a government office job.” Even though VD still holds onto the hope to “correct her daughter,” she is fine with her daughter’s wife, because “she is a really great kid, with a graduate degree, has a good job and is just very guai.” VD has trouble accepting that her daughter does not meet the heteronormative standard, but she found a silver lining in the situation, and the silver lining is made of homonormativity. Under heteronormativity lies a “good gay narrative,” where people have an accepting attitude toward the LGBTQ+ people because they are good, law-abiding, upstanding citizens, or because they are talented, artistic, smart kind, polite, sweet, and other positive adjectives, despite being LGBTQ. This is seen in the U.S. and also in Taiwan. Several parents that I interviewed commented on how their attitude toward tongzhi shifted toward the positive because after they come to the Tongzhi hotline association and see many tongzhi who are “outstanding” in terms of their mannerism, education attainment, or they are “so good looking.” The homonormative ideal is also why Tiffany’s mother wanted her to “live a quiet life” like those other better tongzhi who do not go on the streets to ask for rights to marriage and cause a scene (see the previous section, social comparison.)

Even though having all these good qualities is by no means “normal” in terms of majority, it is normal in terms of normative, meaning it is what people aspire to be and hope their offspring to be. In Brainer’s (2017) analysis of the discourses of mothering gender and sexually nonconforming offspring, several poignant narratives from mothers of tongzhi offspring center on the idea of being normal. One of her informants, Tan Mama, expressed her feeling of guilt for having secretly hoped her offspring was a boy

during her pregnancy, which she believed had somehow contributed to her daughter's lesbian identity. Tan Mama's reasoning stems from the idea of prenatal education, where parents, especially mother, would start the education process when the baby is just a fetus in her womb, by playing music, reading stories, to "having thoughts about the baby" as in Tan Mama's case. Prenatal education puts the mothers in a "gendered accountability" since only mothers can bear offspring, and it extends her sense of responsibility when the offspring fails the heteronormative standards (Brainer, 2017, p. 935). A mother's expectations for her offspring to follow the heteronormative standards speak not only of how she hopes for the best for her offspring (though the offspring's idea of the best would differ) but also of how she needs to fulfill her role in the patriarchal system.

Patriarchy. Another discourse commonly referenced and indexed to in my participants' stories is patriarchy. Patriarchal kinship system is a long-standing and complicated system that is "patrilineal and patrilocal, organized around a male descent line and spatially oriented around the husband's family" (Friedman, 2017, p. 1244), and its norms "define marriage as a social and spatial act that is experienced differently by men and women" (ibid, p. 1248) or more specifically, a system that works on the premise of exclusion of women's participation (Ma, T. C, 2011). In the two major types of patriarchal structures in Kandiyoti (1988) seminal work on patriarchal bargain, Taiwan falls under "classic Asian patriarchy," in which "young daughter-in-law has to serve her husband, deliver a son, and serve the husband's family" (Tang & Wang, 2011, p. 435). Gendered kinship linguistic tools were designed to describe and sustain the system in its respective locales. For instance, in Mandarin-speaking countries such as Taiwan, men

“marry in” (娶進來 qu jin lai), literally meaning obtain a woman to join his family while women “marry out” (嫁出去 jia chu qu), literally meaning being given out from her natal family to her husband’s family where she works to honor and sustain her husband’s patriline through her care and reproductive labor (Friedman, 2017; Sandel, 2004). Furthermore, each person in the patriarchal kinship system has a position and corresponding address terms of which the kinship terminology is composed (Wierzbicka, 2016). The kinship terminology for Mandarin-speaking Han Taiwanese (who have a Chinses ancestry) can be rather complicated with axes of sex, age, maternal or paternal, and in-law or by-blood. There are even smartphone applications that calculate the correct address term for people because of how complicated and yet how crucial it is to address someone properly.

Proper address terms are not just a sign of respect but also symbolize the structure that puts everyone in their place; without the proper address terms to signal the proper relations, it could feel as though the system and the cultural scripts that go with it would collapse. Even after people pass away, they have a proper position and address term (different from the kinship terminology) in the Taiwanese folk belief (a combination of Taoism and Buddhism) patrilineal ancestor memorial tablet (祖先牌位), which is put on the family shrine and family gravesite, and writing a person’s kin position and address terms wrong is believed to incur bad fortune on the decedents, including health issues, wealth issue, familial issues, among others (Chuang, 1990; Freedman, 2017).

The importance of proper address terms and their symbolic and practical power are seen in the resistance of same-sex marriage legalization. In November 2016, after the same-sex marriage bill was scheduled to go through its first reading in the Legislature, the major opponent group, Taiwan Family Organization (a religious group) created a series of TV commercials to air during prime time shows centering the catchphrase that if same-sex marriage is legalized, then "fathers and mothers are missing, and grandfathers and grandmothers are vanishing" (Liang, 2016) to rally support for their cause against the bill. Though considered containing misinformation and mischaracterization and thus was sent to the National Communication Commission for a penalty, the TV commercial successfully used these scare tactics to invoke people's fear of the dismantlement of the patriarchal social order they know, partially contributing to the postponement of the reading. After the reading was postponed due to extreme social turmoil, Mr. Chi Chia-Wei's appeal case to obtain a marriage license for his partner and him was scheduled to have a Constitutional Court hearing March 24, 2017 (two months before the final interpretation that the ban on same-sex marriage is unconstitutional). In the Constitutional Court hearing, the then Minister of Justice (Mr. Chiu Tai-San), who opposed same-sex marriage by arguing "heterosexual monogamy is a thousand-year old Chinese tradition, if same-sex couples are allowed to get married, what are we going to write on their tombstone? Kao-kao-bi-bi (考考妣妣)?" (Du, 2017). *Kao* is the term for a husband on a tombstone and the patrilineal ancestor memorial tablet and while *bi* is for his wife, as a wife is supposed to be buried next to her husband, so the phrase kao-bi is common on the tombstone for traditional folk-belief following patriarchal Han Taiwanese. The Minister

of Justice's concern that same-sex marriage would disrupt the patriarchal kinship system through the proper use of address terms, though mocked by some, was shared by many others.

Several mothers of tongzhi offspring whom I interviewed, or those described by my tongzhi participants, sometimes spoke of expectations for their offspring that are in line with the patriarchal system, or at least in line with the gendered kinship language. Many of such mothers are highly educated and of high SES and have spoken out about the unfair treatments of women in the patriarchal kinship system, but some of them still follow the patriarchal script, perhaps because "patriarchal customs and attitudes in the family, the workplace, and the political domain are deeply engrained…changing the patriarchal social environment will require special focus on policies to increase male involvement in the household and in the upbringing of women" (Frejka, Jones, & Sardon, 2010, p. 603). Those mothers might be wage earners, but research has found that female wage laborers who worked to raise the living standard of the family might actually be "preserving the traditional family system and are not able to challenge this traditional patriarchal structure" (Espiritu, 1999, p. 640), and their enhanced financial status might reinforce their role as family housekeeper (Menjivar & Salcido, 2002). Spending most of their lives in a patriarchal kinship system, the script provided by this system is the most familiar to these mothers, and research has found that if a person lives in a society that upholds a certain moral or cultural belief, even if this person does not hold such belief to her heart, her attitude and behaviors are likely to be influenced by the moral or cultural belief (Finke & Adamczyk, 2008).

These stories told by the participants give us a glimpse of how patriarchal expectations work in the tongzhi family relationship. Lester (27, gay man) admitted that he was tongzhi when his mother, ZN, asked him two years ago. ZN had been suspicious of Lester's sexual orientation, and her worry grew exponentially after a rather sensational crime of passion between two gay men made the national headlines; she was worried that her son would get involved in such crimes. According to Lester, ZN did not have drastic reactions when he admitted being tongzhi and was rather supportive for the following year or so, but in the past several months, it is almost as if "she only accepted me back then because she didn't want to hurt me, and she was suppressing her feelings until she couldn't anymore; her expectations were slowly taking shape and gaining power in her mind, and she started to want to me get married and have kids and pass down our patrilineage (chuan zong jie dai, 傳宗接代)."

Patriarchal ideals may be imposed by parents of tongzhi offspring, but they may have been internalized by tongzhi themselves. Joyce's (34, pansexual woman) speaks of her fear of marrying a man because she would have to "follow the heterosexual sexual patriarchal script. Her hear of falling into the patriarchal system manifested in another manner as well. Joyce has not yet chugui to her parents as "having dated women," and she has just ended a relationship with a man. Therefore, for her parents, she is just a heterosexual woman. When the father would sometimes ask when she is going to get married, she feels sad, instead of feeling annoyed or worried as my other tongzhi participants would feel. She is sad because it is "as if my father wants to banish me from my own family and wants me to become someone else's daughter." Joyce has a really

close relationship with her father, and she wishes always to be her dad's little girl, and this desire to never grow up is confounded with her fear of following the patriarchal kinship script where a married woman becomes a member of her husband's family, a member at the bottom of the hierarchy. Rationally, she knew her father would not "banish" her nor would he want her to suffer in any manner, yet emotionally, she was not able to see past the patriarchal kinship script and cannot help but feel she is going to lose her position in her own natal family when her father asks about her plan to marry. Similarly, Emma (34, lesbian woman) has the same worry of falling into the patriarchal kinship script.

Emma and her girlfriend Lynda (29, lesbian woman) have been together for eight years. They live and own a small coffee shop together, and are the subject of many people's envy due to their love, mutual support, and their lifestyle. They are certain they want to spend the rest of their lives together, but they are hesitant to get married. Both Emma and Lynda are not involved in any tongzhi movement, and they are not familiar with the identity-based system (namely, the LGBTQIA+ abbreviation) or the more nuanced role-identifying system (e.g., the femme, the butch for). They do not call themselves using any part of the system, nor do they even call themselves lesbian (nv tongzhi 女同志), but Emma does have more masculine qualities while Lynda more feminine, and they sometimes use the heterosexual patriarchal language to talk about themselves and their relationship; for example, Lynda would call her ex-girlfriend her "girl boyfriend" (女的男朋友). Emma said she does not want to get married because she is worried once they are married, Lynda would become a daughter-in-law and sink to the

bottom of the patriarchal kinship and Lynda would be bound by kinship duties as daughters-in-law would. Lynda expressed similar concern for herself in her interview as well. Interestingly, they do not have the same worry for Emma, given she is the masculine one that does not fit in the role of a daughter-in-law in the patriarchal kinship script.

Pauline's (30, lesbian woman) worry for her girlfriend, XC, in a similar manner. Pauline is masculine while XC is a feminine, Pauline hesitated to introduce XC to her extended family because the way they treat the "outsiders," including a daughter-in-law. "No matter what, the partner of an offspring is still an outsider, and my aunts are really mean to who they think as outsiders, like they would nitpick all the things they do in order to criticize them for making them feel bad, like my cousin has been married to his wife for so long, my aunts still treat her that way, and I don't want XC to have to go through that.

The same concern is shared by Donna (35, lesbian woman). Donna has been out to her entire family, and they are generally very supportive of her, and she has had several committed and long-term relationships. Donna is very masculine and is treated like a son by her family. In her last relationship, she and her then-girlfriend went to the Household Registration office and registered as a same-sex couple. The registration has been available in several cities and counties in Taiwan since 2015 as a way to show some kind of legal relationship between a same-sex couple without much of any actual rights. The registration is an official record in the Household Registration system accessible for only the officials and the two people who register but will not show up in the Household

Certificate (each household has one such certificate that shows who is a member of this household) of which the persons are members of. It was the closest thing to same-sex marriage before same-sex marriage was legalized on May 24, 2019. Even though Donna and her ex-girlfriend registered as a same-sex couple using the old same-sex couple registration system rather than same-sex marriage, she now refers to her ex-girlfriend as her ex-wife. Interestingly, when asked whether Donna will marry her girlfriend legally now that same-sex marriage has passed, she said no. She sees same-sex marriage as the "legitimate" kind of legal relationship and getting married using same-sex marriage law means one of them will be registered in the other's Household Registration Booklet. Since Donna is the masculine one, she is afraid her girlfriend will have to become the daughter-in-law if they get married and she does not want that for her girlfriend because "we're not like a heterosexual couple who has to have the mother-and-daughter-in-law problem (婆媳問題)." Donna had no problem registering with her ex-girlfriend as a same-sex couple and call her "wife" but she feels differently about "actually getting married" using the newly passed same-sex marriage law because for her, that come with the patriarchal kinship norms and regulations, and she does not want her girlfriend to have to actually become her wife and become a daughter-in-law in her family.

The mother-and-daughter-in-law conflict is so common that it has its own idiom in Taiwan. It has been found to be one of "the most tenuous and most vulnerable to interpersonal conflict" (Sandel, 2004, p. 371), and is the most problematic family relationship in Taiwan (Strom, Strom, Shen, Li, & Sun, 1996; Wolf, A. P., 1987). Because the daughter-in-law has, through law, becomes a family member where the

bond, mutual understanding, respect, shared memory, habits, language has not yet developed while "jealousy, competition, transference, displacement, poor distance/boundary regulation, and discrepant role expectations are present" (Silverstein, 1992, as cited in Song & Zhang, 2012, p. 57). Even if no interpersonal conflict is present, daughters-in-law still assume most of the caretaking responsibility for other members of the family. In the Ministry of Health and Welfare national census on elderly care (2017), it shows that when offspring-in-law are the caregiver (which is combined as one option in the survey), 98.7% of the time the caregiver is the daughter-in-law, only 1.3% of the time a son-in-law would have to care for his wife's family. Similarly, Whyte and Ikels (2004) found that daughter-in-law is the key role in providing care to her parents-in-law (compared to sons, daughters, sons-in-law, siblings, or spouses of said parents-in-law).

Such sentiment against mother-and-daughter-in-law conflict is shared by some parents of tongzhi offspring as well. Ethel's story (54, mother of an 18-year-old gay son) echoes the story of Grace's. Ethal has divorced his husband after incidents of domestic violence and after suffering being a daughter-in-law. "When I met my husband, I was head over heels in love, and he promised he would take care of me, but of course, that's just a lie. He has really thin-skinned, and he was afraid people would gossip so he always told people he was really good to me and his family treated me like their own daughter, but that's all a lie!...his mother would tell people she treated me like her own daughter too, but I remember one time I was running a fever and I was really sick, so I went to sleep in my room, and she came and knocked on my door to wake me up to cook for her. Would you treat your own daughter that way? … I got really mad after one fight, and I

told my husband ‘tell your mom to stop telling people she treats me like her own daughter, just stop!’ because it is hypocritical.”

Not only are women suffering in the patriarchy as daughters-in-law, but many women also shoulder the responsibility to support their husbands even after divorce. Such gendered divergent sense of obligation is reported by my participants. Joseph’s (32, bisexual man) mother spent almost two decades to pay the debt that her ex-husband left behind, and Norma’s (34, lesbian woman) mother stayed in the house shared by her deceased husband’s parents and siblings for a decade and a half after her husband passed away, and even returned to care for her sick mother-in-law years after she had moved out.

These stories show us how the patriarchal kinship system is prominent in tongzhi and parents of tongzhi’s understanding of their relationship, and if being legally married is confounded with having the burden of the in-laws and the pressure of patriarchal kinship system, it makes sense that some tongzhi people would choose to stay out of it: those who have been excluded from the patriarchal kinship system are also exempted from it. The legitimacy that some tongzhi seek through a state-recognized marriage is what some other people stay away from so they do not have to follow the patriarchal kinship script. It is important to note, however, even though news all over the world is lauding Taiwan to be the first Asian country to legalize same-sex marriage, what Taiwan has legalized is actually a civil unionship using the name of marriage, as there are significant differences in heterosexual marriage and same-sex marriage in Taiwan. Since the constitutional court ruled that same-sex marriage should be legalized but did not stipulate whether it has to follow the extant civil code or new laws should be created for

it, the results of the referendum in 2018 showed that more people prefer for same-sex couples to be married under a separate law, the legislature's compromise it a newly created law (thus following the result of the referendum) that uses the name of "marriage" (thus following the result of the constitutional interpretation). Both heterosexual and same-sex couples use the same household registration system to be married, and they have the same rights except that adoption, cross-adoption, artificial insemination are only accessible for heterosexual couples, marriage-based citizenship application is also only applicable for heterosexual couples (Ministry of Justice, R.O.C. Taiwan, 2019). However, as Abbie argued:

> It doesn't matter to the parents; they won't know or won't care if the law says you are actually not family members by law; they will treat you like family or they won't as they wish, whether that means good things or very bad things.

For parents who want their tongzhi offspring to get married, it does not matter that the same-sex marriage law passed in Taiwan is a conditional and compromised one since the meaning of marriage transcend the legality, which leads us to the next discourse prominent in the stories my participants told—compulsory marriage.

Compulsory marriage. The conflict in the society and in the family about marriage speaks to the importance of it – its existence, its sanctity, its access, its form, its symbolic meaning, and its practical concerns. Borrowing the concept of compulsory heterosexuality by Adrienne Rich (1980), I argue that there is also compulsory marriage. In 1980, Adrienne Rich put forth the idea of compulsory heterosexuality to critique the heteronormative patriarchal ideology that illustrated lesbian experience "on a scale ranging from deviant to abhorrent, or simply rendered invisible" (p. 632). Rich argues

that the heteronormative patriarchal ideology is the gold standard for comparison and thus lesbians, and by extension, other tongzhi, are inferior as the result of the comparison. Here I am borrowing the term and extend it to compulsory marriage, in a way to pay homage to Rich (1980), and in another way to accentuate how marriage operates as an imperative, unavoidable, and prescribed force in Taiwanese culture that banishes and punishes tongzhi for their unsuitability for the heteronormative patriarchal marriage. In fact, in Sang (2003), she examined the woman-woman relationship and its relation to the social and family organization in China and Taiwan, and argued for the power of not only compulsory marriage, but also "compulsory sexual service, compulsory reproduction, and compulsory chastity" (Sang, 2003, p. 92).

In this context, not only are tongzhi unsuitable for the heteronormative marriage, they are equally unable to perform a heteronormative wedding, the event that is symbolic on many levels. One such symbol is "success as parents." Weddings in Taiwan have been dubbed "the parents' achievements presentation" (Zhi Di You Sheng, 2019) because, other than celebrating the union of two people in love (ideally), a successful wedding also celebrates parents passing their final test with flying colors—marrying their offspring off in a heteronormative manner. The importance of wedding and marriage to parents also explains the rise of *xinghun* (型婚, formality marriage) in China (Liu, M., 2013), a country with which Taiwan shares cultural discourses. Formality marriage is a marriage between a gay man and a lesbian, who get married and perform a wedding and, in some cases, even have offspring to fulfill their filial duty. Some parents might be aware of such an arrangement and permit it, and some even urge their tongzhi offspring into a formality

marriage. Even though it is a more prominent phenomenon in China than in Taiwan, such formality marriage is not unheard of. More commonly seen in Taiwan is tongzhi entering and staying in a heterosexual marriage without the partners' and parents' knowledge of their tongzhi identity. No matter what the arrangement is, these marriages attest the tongzhi people's awareness of their parents' expectations, and the compromise they make to meet those expectations.

On the other end of the spectrum are people, especially women, who stay outside the heterosexual marriage. For unmarried women who have passed the normative marriageable age range in Taiwan, their singlehood is stigmatized, pathologized, and even deemed a "national security crisis" (Qiu, 2015). Those women are nicknamed "leftover women" (Fincher, 2016) or "loser dogs" (Martin, 2013), terms commodifying women while connoting the privileged status of heterosexual marriage to which the less competitive and less desirable women are denied access. The failure status of leftover daughters bring disgrace, or at least gossip and prying into the family, and thus parents would expect their daughters to enter a heterosexual marriage within a normatively reasonable age range.

Another reason daughters are expected to get married and thus enter their husbands' family is the belief that only through marriage can a woman earn her place in her husband's ancestral hall in the afterlife (Ahern, 1971; Harrell, 1986); women who pass away before they get married will become wandering spirits stuck in between worlds, and will not be prayed to properly. This belief of previous life and next life is on the wane but still holding, evidenced by 2014 Taiwan Social Change Survey 2014 survey

(Fu, Chang, Tu, & Liao, 2015) which found a total of 52.4% of respondents believing all the efforts and sacrifice one made for one's offspring are a result of indebtedness to the offspring from the previous lives, while 88.6% believe that what one does will become karma that influences their offspring. One solution for deceased unmarried daughters' spirit to have a place to go is building temples called *guniangmiao* (姑娘廟, maiden temple) for such female ghosts so they can be properly prayed to despite their unmarried status (Lee & Tang, 2010; Shih, 2007). Another solution is *minghun* (冥婚, spirit marriage) a kind of arranged marriage between an unmarried female ghost and a living man, even if the man is already married (Harrell, 1986). One of my participants, Yuna (34, lesbian woman), told the story about the ghost marriage her family held for her deceased sister, GL. GL committed suicide five years ago after breaking up with her boyfriend, leaving Yuna's family, especially her mother (AT), anguished and grief-stricken. According to Yuna, GL sent message to her ex-boyfriend through a medium, and later his family proposed that they get spirit-married and Yuna's family agreed. It was a way to honor her wishes and to make sure she entered her husband's ancestral hall. Legally, the man is not married to Yuna's sister, but in terms of compulsory marriage, such wedding sufficed. Another way of spirit marriage, which was popularized by the mass media into Taiwanese's collective memory, is for the family of the deceased unmarried daughter to leave out red envelope with money, valuables, or the daughter's belonging for male passersby to pick up, and the man that picks it up and fits the family's criteria will have to accept the marriage proposal (Religion and Culture, National Museum of Taiwan History, n.d.) Even though spirit marriage has become extremely rare

in contemporary Taiwan, it is still common knowledge for Taiwanese (Bao-Bi, 2019). The practice of spirit marriage signifies the importance of marriage not only for its symbolic value for parents but also for spiritual beliefs.

Still another tradition still practiced today that solidifies the importance of marriage is the concept of *quanfuren* (全福人, a fully lucky person) or *haomingren* (好命人, a person with a good fortune.) A quanfuren has to be an older woman whose parents and husband are still alive, have at least one daughter and one son, and has never been divorced, and quanfuren is a key character in a normative heterosexual wedding. She will perform several key customs during the wedding, such as distributing food to the bride and the groom while reciting some lucky phrases (Liu 2012; Marriage customs, National Museum of Taiwan History, n.d.). The criteria for a woman to become a quanfuren signifies how being in a marriage and having offspring are key to women's status in Taiwan. Meadow's mother has been invited to be the quanfuren for others' wedding for a couple of times because she checks the boxes for being "fully lucky"— she is married, she has kids, and all of them have prestigious or good-paying jobs, but Meadow found it funny, and she argued:

> She [YH] fights with my dad all the time, like all the time! And we have our financial struggles, not to mention her in-laws are a pain in the butt. How do you call this person fully lucky? But to serve as a *quanfuren*, she does meet the criteria, just that the criteria are a bit ridiculous.

Aside from the traditions, customs, and beliefs passed down generation after generation, the compulsory marriage has taken a romanticized and homonormative contemporary turn, as evidenced in the following narratives and imagery. In August

2012, the world's first-ever Buddhist lesbian wedding took place in Taiwan and was performed by an influential Buddhist nun, Ven. Shih Chao-Hwei who is a key figure in supporting tongzhi rights (Taiwan's First Same-Sex Wedding, 2012). Since 35% of Taiwanese are Buddhist followers (approximately 8 million people) and since religion has traditionally been considered the opposite force of non-heterosexual union, this historical event became the landmark of Taiwan's LGBTQ+ rights advancement, while the powerful image from the wedding of the lesbian couple standing in front of the Buddhist nun before a giant Buddhist statue fortified the compulsory marriage.

Figure 3: *The first-ever Buddhist lesbian wedding (Huffington Post, 2012)*

In December, 2014, one of the most popular pop singers in Taiwan, Jolin Tsai, who has a wide fan base in Asia and worldwide, made a music video for her song "*We are different, yet the same*" from an adaptation of a true story of a lesbian couple, who have been together for 36 years yet still faced legal and medical discrimination. The music video starts with an elderly woman (A) lying on a hospital bed about to receive an emergency surgery while another elderly woman (B) anxiously stands beside her. When the hospital staff comes to obtain a signature for the consent form and asks about B's relationship with A, she could only say they are friends. The hospital has to get the A's nephew to come and sign on the consent form. A does not survive the surgery and passes away. Heartbroken, B finally tells the hospital staff that "she is my wife" when she comes to pick up her lover's belongings, and this is when the story goes into an imaginary flashback of the two women, young again, getting married in the white wedding dress.

Figure 4: *Jolin kisses an actress in her music video (Jolin Tsai's Official Channel, 2014)*

The official music video has accumulated 15 million views on YouTube as of June 2019. No artist of this level of fame has ever made such explicit attempt to support marriage equality (except another super Diva A-Mei, who has been extremely supportive of LGBTQ+ population, but not marriage equality in particular). The most iconic image from this music video is Jolin kissing another Taiwanese actress, both donned in a white dress, in a wedding.

These two images were widely circulated but may not have been as influential as the next example to parents of LGBTQ+ offspring who are in, or have passed, the marriageable age range. In early 2014, while the marriage equality bills were under heated debate, a groundbreaking move was taken by a TV soap opera, Love, produced and aired by Sanlih E-Television Inc (SET). This show had an average 3.85% rating, roughly two million viewership per episode (the top second of more than 40 TV dramas of the year 2014). SETN is a media group that owns eight channels that uses Taiwanese (as opposed to Mandarin) as its language, and their viewership is made up mostly by middle-aged women and the elderly Taiwanese-speaking people, who have shown to be less receptive of radical ideas such as same-sex marriage (Hsu, T. F., 2015). The plot-line started out and developed just like all other TV dramas in the same genre, with one typical storyline including a love triangle between a married couple and the husband's mistress. The wife and the mistress hate each other at the beginning of the storyline fighting over a man, but the more contacts they have, the more they learn about each other, and they gradually fall in love while trying to untangle the complicated relationship. They hide their feelings for each other for a long time (for the sake of

enticing storytelling and also for keeping the audience watching), and when they finally confess their feelings, they become a couple. The lesbian couple's love story was dubbed Yao-Ting Lian (the love between Yao and Ting) and became the most sought-after storyline by fans in SETN's interactive plotline survey (Hsu, T. F., 2015). After a series of hardship and obstacles, the two women get married in the show's finale (see figure. 4).

Figure 5: *Yao and Ting finally have their wedding (CC Channel, 2015)*

The three images are emblematic of the importance of compulsory marriage in Taiwan's cultural narrative. These pictures and the accompanying stories show the power of compulsory marriage in a romanticized manner with two beautiful women in white wedding dresses, declaring their love to one another and to the world, promising each other a lifetime of love and care. However, the romanticized idea of marriage becomes another point of conflict in some tongzhi-parent relationships. As seen in Meadow's

conflict with her mom, YH, about marriage (see “Personal experience as the baseline for comparison”). For Meadow, marriage is built on love, and that is why she cannot marry just any man who YH deems qualified, while for YH, marriage could contain love, but love is *not* an integral for a marriage to exist. Similarly, Jenny (58, mother of a 30-year-old gay son, Patrick) and her ex-husband met at work, started dating, and got married within a year because "in my generation we are traditional, and we don't fight or resist, it's just like that; we're filial." Jenny did not deny having passionate and romantic love toward her ex-husband, but she also does not see love as being the integral element to sustain their marriage. Jenny argued:

> Love alone isn’t enough; when small things and big things in life keep falling on your shoulders, it takes commitment and maturity to keep the marriage going. It’s about responsibility. Being a single mom is about responsibility, too; I don’t have time to think about love, because that’s just childish. I have love toward my son, and that’s the only thing that matters.

Passionate love is there for both YH's and Jenny's marriage, but in YH's case, the love fades yet the marriage stands, while in Jenny's case, love is rendered irrelevant after she got divorced and had to raise her son by herself and survival took the priority in her life. For Bessie (60, aunt of a 26-year-old gay nephew, Xavier), “when I was younger I thought I had to get married, because that’s what my parents and the entire society taught me, we need to continue and pass on the responsibility of sustaining the society, moving forward generation by generation.”

To put marriage in further historical perspective, the story of Jenny's parents would help. In 1911, The Republic of China, the first democracy in today's China, was built by the political party Kuomingtang (KMT), led by Dr. Sun Yat-Sen. Soon after this

new and unstable country went through two World Wars, and toward the end of World War II, it underwent a civil war between KMT and the newly risen Chinese Communist Party (CPP). In 1949, after KMT lost the civil war, they retreated to Taiwan with approximately 1.5 million Chinese political migrants composed of army personnel and refugees, while CPP built a new regime named the People's Republic of China (Chang, B. Y., 2011; Yang & Chang, 2010). When Jenny's father, a KMT soldier, was leaving his hometown to join the retreat, a neighbor asked him to marry his daughter, who was 20 years younger, so that he could bring her to escape war-torn China, and he could secure a wife in a precarious future they were venturing into. For Jenny's parents, the main function of marriage is survival, and for many of such veteran migrants and refugees, another form of marriage was even more common. Since many of the migrants that came with KMT were male military personnel, there was a significant sex imbalance with a male to female ratio of 1.56 to 1 (Directorate-General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics, 1956), and many females who retreated to Taiwan with the KMT were in situation like Jenny's mother, namely, married, leaving male immigrants to look for wives from the local Taiwanese. Most of the KMT military personnel were provided with government welfare, such as free housing (called the military dependents' villages) and monthly food ration (Hillenbrand, 2006) for their participation in the civil war and their loyalty to the KMT government during the war; therefore, they had more resources compared to the general local Taiwanese at the time, and a trend of an older veteran marrying a much younger local Taiwanese woman was formed, and the younger women

were usually of lower social-economic class and were in great need of financial support (Hu, T. L.,1993).

Ethal's (54, mother of an 18-year-old gay son) parents are an example of this trend. Ethal's mother, SP, was 30 years younger than her husband, and they got married so they could form a family, secure financial resources, pass down the lineage. Ethal recounted her parents' story, commenting on how difficult life was when they were little, but, she recalled:

> Compared to my classmates, my family at least never went to bed hungry, and we did not need to worry about losing our house; a small and shabby one it was, but we knew it is safe because it is given by the government. My parents do not have love for one another, but we are a happy family; at least they didn't fight like other parents I know.

For the local Taiwanese in the early 20th century, another form of arranged marriage is more common, namely, adopted daughter-in-law (tong-yang-xi 童養媳). A girl at a young age, even as young as an infant, could be given away to another family to be raised as the future wife a son of that family. During the period of 1906-1920, there were 1462 boys aged between zero and five years old, and 42.8% of them had a wife-to-be adopted by their parents (Sheu, 1999). Since in the Taiwanese patriarchal system, a girl is meant to be married out and become a member of her husband's family, it makes more sense financially to have the husband's family raise the daughter-in-law; furthermore, an adopted daughter-in-law that is raised in the family from a young age would be socialized in the manner that would preserve domestic harmony as opposed to marrying in a young woman who would then need to be re-socialized in her husband's family (Wolf, A. P., 1968).

Meadow's maternal grandmother is an adopted daughter-in-law. Meadow's grandmother was given to her grandfather's family when she was two years old and was raised as a daughter-in-law-to-be. Her grandparents got married shortly before they turned 20 and her grandmother later gave birth to 10 children, spanning from her 20s to her 40s. Meadow's grandmother understands the idea of romantic love, but she thought of marriage as purely functional while romantic love is something that is immaterial to marriage. Interestingly, even her grandmother went through changes in her attitude toward Meadow's seeming singlehood over the years. When Meadow graduated college, her grandmother would tell her "it's time to marry out" (好嫁人了), and continued to urge her for years; before Meadow reached her mid-twenties, her grandmother started to say "you're too old to marry out." One day, when she was spending time with her grandmother, and they were watching TV and chatting, her grandmother told her, "it's ok if you don't marry out. Who needs marriage? You just do whatever you want; it's ok." Meadow has just turned 30 by that time. About a year after that, her grandmother passed away, at almost 100 years of age. Meadow wonders whether her grandmother told her it was ok *not* to get married and do whatever she wants because her grandmother had given up on her, or whether it was because, after spending practically her entire life as a daughter-in-law, she saw Meadow's ability to exercise her agency and her luxury to choose for herself as emancipating, rather than rule-breaking, abnormal or immoral.

Such luxury is perhaps the subject of envy for Ingrid's (64, mother of a 35-year-old lesbian daughter) mother, LD. LD married her husband, BK at a very young age, because, despite the fact that BK is disabled, his family is of prestige and wealth. LD's

parents thought it was good that LD married someone with money and who lives in the urban area, because it meant she would have a chance for a better life; on the other hand, BK's family also thought it was a good idea for BK to marry in LD because a healthy girl from a wealthy family would not want to marry their disabled son. So LD and BK got married, and LD had to keep giving birth until she had two sons. Ingrid recalled:

> My mom is 86 now, and she still hasn't fully recovered from suffering her fate—being forced into a marriage and forced to keep having babies to fulfill her job as a daughter-in-law. It was so hard for her that she spends her entire life looking for emancipation.

In about three generations, the idea of marriage changed, and incompatible beliefs of marriages are found coexisting in society. Even though there are only a few stories included, a transition seems to take place across generations: three generations ago, marriage is predominantly a functional practice, and it exists as a requisite, not an option; in the next generation (the parent participants in my study's generation), marriage becomes a mixture of function and romantic love, and opting out started to become a choice. In the current marriageable generation (the young adult tongzhi offspring in my study), marriage becomes equivalent and the manifestation of love, and it is a personal choice, something people have control over.

How the definition of marriage evolves in Taiwan is similar to how the definition of family evolves in the U.S. When someone talks about *family*, she could refer to it in the sense of structure, as a psychosocial task, or as a transactional process (Caughlin, Koerner, Schrodt, & Fitzpatrick, 2011). The three ways of understanding family constitute a polysemy, which becomes a common source of conflict. For example, when a

group of people says “we need to protect families” in the structural sense (i.e., each family should be structurally intact), another group of people may think that it is the transactional process of a family (the exchange of love and care) that matters.

From the stories included thus far, it is seen that marriage is also a polysemy. That is why when a parent urges her tongzhi offspring to "just get married," she might be referring to marriage in a structural and pragmatic manner like seen in stories of Jenny, Meadow's parents, Meadow’s grandparents, Ethal's parents, and Ingrid’s parents. However, if the offspring thinks about marriage as a continuation of romantic love, that something people "just do,” then “marriage” becomes illegible and inexplicable, causing conflict between the parents and the offspring.

Just as the function of *family* and definition of *marriage* could evolve over time and vary across households, the manifestation of *love* is another case of polysemy that could cause conflicts in the relationship between tongzhi offspring and their parents. The dominant discourse of parental love is acceptance and attention, but in the previous generation (those who are 60 or older,) "love means making sure you survive, and you learn enough to make a living for yourself" without the verbal expression of love, open communication, and articulated closeness, (Brainer, 2019, p. 48). As Miriam (55, mother of a 30-year-old gay son) puts it when she talks about her parents, “when I was growing up, parental love means make sure you survive, and help you learn something to support yourself when you grow up, rather than saying ‘I love you’ or talk about feelings or stuff like that.” Therefore, when a young adult Taiwanese tongzhi rely on the discourse of love in which "if my parents love me, they will accept me for who I am," this definition of

love becomes illegible and even confrontational to the parents because, for parents, the love they have in mind might indicate very different things. When polysemy such as family, marriage, and love exist, using the same vocabulary to communication would result in talking past each other, rather than actually communicating.

Measuring against the authority. The change in how much control one has about marriage speaks to one important discourse in the next theme in the constant comparison of relating, which is measuring against the authority, which includes fate/fatalism, deity, law, and regulation. Appeal to the authority (Goodwin, 2011) is a common argumentation and persuasive technique, and it is seen in the constant comparative of relating.

For instance, when someone believes in fatalism, fate has power over how she makes sense of her relationships. As Hugo (68, father of a gay son) aptly put it, "we human beings cannot compete against the gods," his sentiment is built upon fatalism: using messages from high above to make sense of earthly problems. Grace (56, mother of a 30-year-old lesbian daughter, Pauline) talked about the most important factor in accepting her daughter's tongzhi identity:

> It was before Pauline's chugui, and even though I had been suspicious and was not able to accept it, I didn't let anyone know about it. I was at work one day, and a colleague of mine, she has psychic ability, she just told me that god wants me to know that my offspring is a boy's spirit inside a girl's body, and god wants me to accept it. So when Pauline actually told me, I just accept it because god has told me to. I think it is a promise I made to god.

The god that her colleague claimed has spoken to her is Xuan Tian Shang Di, one of the highest gods in Taoism (Grootaers, 2006). She is not a religious person, but she goes to temples when needed, like most of Taiwanese. She found it really surprising that

her colleague would say that to her, given the colleague had never met Grace's daughter before and Pauline did not talk about her daughter to her colleagues either, but Grace firmly believes that it is god's order and guidance, so she is happy to accept it and accept her daughter.

Professionalism is another form of authority to compare and make sense of one's situation. Ethal (54, mother of an 18-year-old gay son) attributed her comings to terms with her son's tongzhi identity with relatively few obstacles to two forms of authority: the Taiwan Tongzhi Hotline Association and her son's psychiatrist. For her, the association has authority because "tongzhi issues are their expertise and they know what they're doing" so the knowledge and support she received, along with the highly achieving tongzhi she met there made her feel at ease in the same way the psychiatrist did. Ethal said, "I would have probably struggled for a long time if it weren't for Hotline and the doctor." William (60, father of a 37-year-old lesbian daughter) also consulted the authority to understand what he is dealing with. William recalled:

> I read many books and I talked to different doctors, and they all told me the same thing, this is not a personality disorder or disability, and it's not a choice. Just like someone is born left-handed or has a cleft lip, so we deal with it, that's what I told my wife too. If the doctors and the books all say the same things, who are we laymen to say otherwise?

Another form of authority influencing the family relationship process is the law. As Ruth (68, mother of a 37-year-old lesbian daughter) puts it:

> I think when same-sex marriage law passes, parents would be more likely to accept their offspring because it gives a sense of legitimacy and I won't be ashamed to let others know. Law has the power to give my tongzhi offspring a better future.

Candice (53, mother of a 25-year-old lesbian daughter, RS) was holding the expectations she had for her daughter and did not want to accept her tongzhi identity. It was not until the Constitutional Court ruled that the ban on same-sex marriage is unconstitutional on May 24, 2017 did she come to terms with RS's tongzhi identity.

> If the country is willing to acknowledge her and give her protection, I feel empowered that I can, too; I didn't want her to have to fight the system, and that's why I wanted her to become normal again, but not we don't have to fight the system anymore.

The authority of law does not only show discursive power in the relationship of tongzhi and parents of tongzhi, but also in a parent and her spouse. Given it is common for one parent (usually the mother) to know of the offspring's tongzhi identity, she needs to manage the information to make sure her spouse does not find out (Petronio, 2002), and she would be the communication broker between the spouse and the offspring If need be. Communication broker traditionally refers to people who are a member or are similar to the social practices of two different community of practices, a group of people with shared ideas, values, social practices, and are able to translation, coordination and align between different perspectives (Cohen, 2014; Swallow, Clarke, Campell, & Lambert, 2009). In the tongzhi family relationship, it is common to see how a parent or a sibling serves as the broker to negotiate the communication between the tongzhi and the rest of the family.

Adelia (mother of a 19-year-old gay son) found out about her son's tongzhi identity when she read his diary two years ago. She was devastated and vowed to keep her husband in the dark for now because she thinks her husband would be angry at their

son and would probably beat him up or kick him out. After two years, she herself has come to terms with her son's identity, but she still does not want her husband to know, not until her son graduates college and is independent financially. She said, however, "if he finds out on his own, and he's not ok with it, I would tell him that even the law says it's ok and gives them rights, that means they are normal, and the law would back them up, so we as parents should back him up, too." Of course, there are people who fight against the law as the authority. After the constitutional court's ruling to lift the ban on same-sex marriage, Meadow's mom told her, "this is such nonsense. Why does the law need to be changed for something that's not right?" Commenting on the fact that the same-sex "marriage" that has been legalized in Taiwan is in fact not entirely the same as the marriage defined by the current civil code, because same-sex marriage does not create a base for in-law relationships. Charlie (28, pansexual genderqueer) expresses worry that "even if you are married, parents of your spouse can use the law to justify not accepting you as a family member; if they don't want to accept a same-sex partner of their offspring, the fact that the law says 'no, you are actually not in-laws thus not family' can become a powerful weapon for them to use. These different examples show that law as an authority could be used in the constant comparison of relating in various ways: it provides people means to come to terms with something that did not bargain for, becomes resource for them to persuade others, but it can also be resisted against to buttress one's stance on the issue and can be used to justify one's decision to exclude.

Putting things in perspective. The last theme in constant comparison of relating is "putting things in perspective," and it is the case where something drastic (and usually

negative happens) and help people realize the conflict and the trouble that they thought they have are insignificant or not worth costing a relationship. In the previous section (compulsory marriage), the story of GL's suicide was included to exemplify that spirit marriage is still a practice in Taiwan, but GL suicide plays a key role in the changes in the mother-daughter relationship between Yuna and her mother AT. AT was not expressively opposing Yuna dating girls, but she would from time to time tell Yuna that she should get married and have kids, and would nag about her masculine appearance. After GL passed away, AT became overly protective of her offspring, and all she wanted was for her offspring to be happy in love, and this tragic change in their life is illuminating. AT told Yuna, "mama can see how KE makes you happy, and you being happy is the most important. Mama wants you to be happy." Yuna explains that in the past couple of months, another sister of hers has been going through marital problems and has been depressed, and it worries AT extremely because "she can't take losing another kid; she hasn't recovered from losing my second sister, and now she just wants all of us to be happy and alive. She pushed me and my third sister and my younger brother to keep an eye on big sister and do whatever she needs. She didn't say explicitly to make sure she doesn't commit suicide too, because that word is too much for her."

Meadow's (34, pansexual women) story involves suicide attempts as well. Meadow had a depression episode in her early twenties, and it went untreated and unnoticed by her family for years, until she finally attempted suicide. Her family was going through a lot of trouble, and her relationship with her then-girlfriend was rocky as well. After her suicide attempt, while recovering in the hospital, she called her girlfriend

while her mom YH was in the ward, and by letting YH hear her phone call, she was hoping YH would understand this is her chugui and would accept her. YH indeed understood why Meadow made that phone call and came to accept that Meadow had a girlfriend because, as she puts it "she just wanted me to know that she cares about whether I am happy because I was so unhappy I tried to kill myself. I don't think I was threatening her to accept me; no, my suicide attempt was not a threat even though it may seem like it, but I was just genuinely depressed, and I needed some support."

For Ken (62, father of a 35-year-old lesbian daughter, Donna), it was his own sickness and the passing of his wife that help him put things in perspective.

> After my wife died, I was too grief-stricken that I got sick myself, and I almost died. After I recovered, I started to view my life differently; I shouldn't be selfish and want things to revolve around me, but rather I should contribute to the society and make the world a better place. Escaping death makes me realize everything is a result of karma, and I can't force my offspring to be something she isn't. Live and let live. That's my life philosophy now.

Drastic and negative events also help tongzhi offspring to put things in perspective. Lester (27, gay man) was angry that his mother was not supportive of him being a tongzhi, and he had hoped she would be, but after her mother was diagnosed with cancer, he regretted his anger and started to feel sorry that he ever hurt his mom with his tongzhi identity, "I know I can't change who I am, but I'm sorry I was hurt her by my chugui, and I'm sorry that I was ever mad at her." After the cancer diagnosis, Lester softens his attitude toward his mother and would spend more time with her, because "it doesn't matter whether she accepts me as a tongzhi or now, not I just want to be her son who makes her happy." For Abbie (32, bisexual woman), her father's passing ten years

ago was also a turning point in her family relationship. “If we can recover from losing him, there’s nothing we can’t do as a family; that’s why I think my mom should be ok with me dating girls.” For Joseph (32, bisexual man), her mother’s cancer diagnosis put things in perspective for him as well. “I used to think it’s ok if I die young and I really didn’t care if my mom knows who my true self is, but ever since she got sick, I realized I was really scared of losing her I even dreamed about it and woke up crying. Maybe I’m not as indifferent as I thought I was, or I wanted to be, and now I want to get closer to her, and I want to chugui to her.”

To recap, the five themes found in stories my participants told include using personal experience as the baseline for comparison, social comparison theory, measuring against the norms, measuring against the authority and putting things in perspective. In tongzhi family relationship where an offspring’s tongzhi identity would a source of contention, both the tongzhi offspring and parents of tongzhi offspring would resort to different discourses to make sense of and make decisions for what they are to do in the process. However, to assume people to be complete rational beings would be oversimplifying human relationships. What I found in my data is vacillation between feelings, emotions, decisions, and behaviors, and I argue such vacillation reflects competing discourses.

Competing discourses and vacillation. The five themes in the constant comparison of relating show a multitude of relevant discourses, and when there are competing discourses, people may vacillate among them. How Becca (24, lesbian woman) talks about her mother, HG, is a prime example of such vacillation. “I asked her

if she could choose again, would she get married? She said no. She doesn't want me to get married to a man either because it's just too hard to be a daughter-in-law, but sometimes when her expectation overrides her rationality, she would tell me she wants to me marry out. It's understandable because it's hard not to have expectations on your offspring; I would if I were to have offspring. I'm not sure why she switches back sometimes, maybe because she sees people around her having grandchildren and having fun being grandparents, and it seems to her an ideal way to spend her older years. All her sisters' daughters are married with offspring, so when she sees that, she forgets that being a daughter-in-law is hard, and she forgets that her being a grandmother and me being a daughter-in-law come as a package, and she can't pick and choose just what she wants."

Competing discourses and vacillation is seen not only in parents but also tongzhi themselves. In Joyce's (34, pansexual woman) story, she recounted how she struggled with "new and old ideas fighting in my head." Joyce had a girlfriend for seven years, but they broke up eventually because she did not know how they could have a future she wanted if she could not even let her parents know about their relationship. Growing up in a wealthy, high SES, tight-knit family that is well embedded in the patriarchal kinship system (which means they have a close relationship with all the extended family and follow the hierarchy within the kinship system tightly), Joyce knew she had internalized the patriarchal ideas despite detesting how unfair and "backward" she thought they were. Joyce wanted to have a family with her girlfriend in a queer and emancipating manner, but she also deeply desired "having a normal family with a husband and baby and my parents and all the relatives would come to visit us and give us blessings." The competing

discourses tormented Joyce even long after she broke up with her girlfriend of 7 years. Joyce dated a man afterward, and she loved him, but she panicked whenever he talked about getting married. “It’s not that I don’t love him; it’s just…I’m so frightened to enter a heterosexual system where I will have a role that is assigned for me, and I will have to follow the rules written for people in my role. I would become a daughter-in-law, and I can’t spend the New Year with my own family, and I have to go to his family’s tomb in the Tomb Sweeping Festival. I don’t want that.” Joyce laughed, knowing how silly it might sound to care so much about a festival, but the fear is tangible for her, if not feasible. Joyce’ boyfriend has a Western-educated background and does not wish Joyce to be just a daughter-in-law, and Joyce knows it well, too, but “I know he probably doesn’t care, and we are probably not even going to live with his parents, and he won’t care if I spend the New Year and Tomb Sweeping Festival[8] with my own family, well, he doesn't even celebrate the Tomb Sweeping Festival for all I know, but I’m still scared. I don’t want to take that role.” And yet, when she was dating her ex-girlfriend, she would picture an egalitarian picture where she and her ex-girlfriend would be freed from following scripts written for someone else, and they would be able to love and support each other without the worries of the extended family. But as she expressed again and again, she also fears “living outside the law” and how that would sound to her like she would have to cut ties with her own family.

[8] A day for families to visit the tombs of their ancestors to clean the gravesites and make ritual offerings.

Both stories of HG and Joyce illustrate vacillating in the process of reconciliation, but they also show another factor that needs addressing in understanding Taiwanese tongzhi family communication, namely, their identity as women, an important intersection of identity that the next section is devoted to detailing.

Feminist intersectionality. Intersectionality is a concept first put forth by Kimberle Crenshaw (1989, 1991) and Patricia Collins (2000, 2002) to explain the unique sociohistorical, structural, and political contexts of black women whose situation in inequality and marginalization is insufficiently understood by seeing them only as black, or only as women; the intersection of their race and sex becomes a new milieu for systematic oppression and omission. Taking on Crenshaw's original concept, Few-Demo (2014) argues that intersectionality and intersectional analysis were "the future of family science" (p. 169), and that "feminist family studies bring a framework of power and intersectional analysis to unpack the issue of gender in families" (Few-Demo, Llyod, & Allen, 2014, p. 85). Intersectionality as a theoretical framework view social identities as complex, inclusive, and connected; they are ideologically and symbolically grounded, historically and contextually situated, and "embodied within individuals but operate within and are affected by structures of power" (Few-Demo, 2014, p. 170).

Led by feminist intersectionality and substantiated by stories of my participants, I argue that the dominant LGBTQ+ intrapersonal identity-based framework is inadequate in understanding tongzhi family relationship in Taiwan. It is useful for tongzhi to identify themselves (though not all tongzhi use this framework for their identification) and important for political purposes, but for tongzhi's parent-offspring relationship, this

framework does not completely match the local context. Instead, I propose three intersections of tongzhi identity in a relational context: biological sex, gender performance, and directional sexual orientation. That is, it matters whether a tongzhi offspring is a son or a daughter, it matters whether a tongzhi offspring is performing gender that is aligned with the assigned sex at birth (cis-performing, "behaving normally") or performing gender that is misaligned with assigned sex at birth (trans-performing, "behaving abnormally"), and it matters whether this tongzhi offspring is only attracted to, and only is in relationship with, people of the one sex or people of both sexes. In this categorization, there are eight possible identity forms, such as a son that behaves normal and dates both men and women and a daughter who behaves abnormal and only dates other women. I argue that this three-aspect categorization has better explanatory power than the LGBTQ+ framework in Taiwanese tongzhi family communication, and Charlie's (28, pansexual genderqueer) should illustrate it.

Charlie's assigned sex at birth is female and identifies as genderqueer (the absence of gender) who is attracted to people of any sex (pansexual). Given there is no gendered pronoun in spoken mandarin Chinese, when I asked Charlie what gender pronoun is preferred in my dissertation, Charlie chooses male pronouns they, them, theirs. Charlie has been volunteered in Taiwan Tongzhi Hotline Association, and has learned about the LGBTQ+ framework along with other knowledge concerning the LGBTQ, which they think of as "equipping myself for chugui." Before the 2018 referendum, it seemed as though the anti-tongzhi movement was gaining momentum and the public was leaning toward voting against same-sex marriage and gender equity

education, so Charlie decided to chugui for the sake of influencing their father's vote (their mother has passed away). Among all the tongzhi participants and tongzhi offspring of my parent participant, Charlie's chugui is the most prepared—with a clear purpose, time, location, and data. Charlie is also the only genderqueer/pansexual participant, which is one of the rarer combinations, and they felt it was necessary for them to explain themselves clearly to their father, JB. Charlie sat their father down "in a formal dad-I-have-something-to-tell-you manner and showed him the gender spectrum and explained to him their gender and sexual identity—that they do not feel like they have a gender, and their sexual attraction could be anyone. However, much to Charlie's surprise, JB gave a lackluster reaction. "I was like, what's going on now? Did he accept it? So I asked him, 'do you understand what I just said?' and he said 'yes, you're abnormal and you are a tongxinglian (同性戀, homosexual).' I explained some more, and he just kept saying 'you're abnormal because it's against nature's law and against ying-yang.'" Charlie was surprised by the absence of a dramatic reaction. In the end, Charlie's dad agreed to vote yes to both the referenda to uphold AND overturn and the decision to legalized same-sex marriage, and to both yes to both the referenda to continue and discontinue gender equity education instead of his original plan to vote against tongzhi. JB's votes are just as contradictory and ambiguous as his understanding of Charlie's chugui because it does not matter what Charlie are; it only matters that they are not normal.

Charlie's explanation is beyond JB's comprehension or concern, and he does not have the schema to interpret it. Charlie said, "it's like no matter what I said, he could only understand it the way he understands it…it is indeed true that chugui is not a time-one

thing; I have to chugui to him many times." In an intrapersonal level, it matters to Charlie to have a clear understanding of their own gender and sexual identity, but in an interpersonal, family relationship level, something else matters. In the following section. I will discuss how intersectionality provides a new way to conceptualize identity categories that are relevant to Taiwanese tongzhi family communication, focusing first on the offspring's identity, followed by a section on the parents' identity.

Feminist intersectionality of a tongzhi offspring.

Biological sex: son or daughter? The first thing that matters in a tongzhi parent-offspring relationship is whether the offspring is a son or a daughter. For sons, the most important thing would be continuing the patrilineage. Just as parents push their heterosexual sons to marry, for parents who have not yet learned about, or not yet come to terms with their tongzhi son's identity, they would push for him to marry heterosexually. Jeffery (25, gay man) have not yet chugui, and he said, "my dad would call from time to time, and no matter why he calls, the conversation would end with urging me to get married." Along the same line, Milton (27, gay genderqueer) said his family would always tell him he has to pass down the patrilineage (傳宗接代, chuan zong jie dai). Gina (21, pansexual woman) also talks about her brother being the only son in her generation in the family, and as the first (and only) son and first grandson, definitely has to get married and have kids "because he's the only legitimate person to pass down the xianghuo (香火). Xianghuo means the incense and fire in the ancestral hall, meaning that the family has sons to continue patrilineage and light the incense and burn the spirit money) and all the grownups are counting on him. In fact, some would

refer to sons as “the incense holder” (na xiang de,拿香的). When Becca (24, lesbian woman) talks about her converting to Christianity, which is opposed to burning and holding the incense as it signals pagan worshipping, she said her mom told her “thank god you’re not a son, otherwise your father would never let you become a Christian because that way you cannot hold the incense.”

For tongzhi son, one solution is proposed: marrying in a foreign bride. Foreign bride is a derogatory term in Taiwan to refer to women from mostly Southeast Asian countries or China who marry lower social and economic class men in exchange for a better life in Taiwan than they would have in their home country, similar to “mail order bride” in the US. For such marital immigrants, childbearing is their main purpose (Chen, Y. H., 2008; Lan, 2019; Lu, M. C. W. 2012), forming something called “a uterine family” (Wolf, M., 1972). Wang, H. Z. (2001) found that within averagely six months upon arrival in Taiwan, Vietnamese spouses become pregnant, and Chen Y. H. (2008) found that lower-educated Southeast Asian immigrant mothers would continue her birth-giving duty until their husband’s families are satisfied with the number of offspring or the sex of the offspring (son). Lester’s mother ZN urges him to get married even after she has known about his tongzhi identity, and suggested marrying a foreign spouse serval times. When Lester rejects, ZN would say “it’s just for the sake of passing down the patrilineage, and it doesn’t matter if you don’t love her; she doesn’t love you either anyway.” The oppression and commodification of such marital immigrant become a solution to a fundamental problem that parents see in their tongzhi son, who, just like men who usually marry in such foreign spouse, are low on the marriage market ranking.

Catherine's (36, lesbian woman) older brother, who is in his early forties, has never had a girlfriend, and Catherine has suspected that he might be tongzhi, but for Catherine's mom, what concerns her is that the only son in the family is unmarried, so she would ask him whether he wants to marry in a Vietnamese bride, but he rejected. Under the patriarchal system, the oppression of male tongzhi and the oppression of women intersect and could become mutual oppressors while victims simultaneously.

For daughters, the story is rather different. In the previous section discussing patriarchy, and throughout the dissertation thus far, there are many studies about how married women suffer in her husband's family. Mothers who suffer as a daughters-in-law would urge their tongzhi daughters not to get heterosexually married (while they might still urge their tongzhi sons to get heterosexually married) because they know how bad it could be, and if their daughters have a choice, they should choose to not become a daughter-in-law in the manner they did. Emma's sister, WL, even went as far as to say "I hope my three daughters are all lesbians, because relationship with girls would be so much better than marrying a man" because her own marriage and her role as a wife and daughter-in-law are so negative and yet due to the stigma of divorce, she is still stuck in that marriage and that identity. Ethal (54, mother of an 18-year-old gay son) also said that "if I daughter is also tongzhi, she's so young now, so we don't know, but if she is, I would tell her not to get married, so she doesn't have to become someone's free servant." Grace (56, mother of a 30-year-old lesbian daughter, Pauline) got divorced after suffering as a wife whose husband cheated and as a daughter-in-law whose sisters-in-law and mother-in-law treated her with little respect but much mental torture. Grace concluded

that "I don't want Pauline to marry a man, because same-sex marriage would be happier than heterosexual marriage because heterosexuals have to join someone else's family, which might look all good and shiny on the outside but empty on the inside. It's good that Pauline has such a good girlfriend."

For parents, the first category that factors in how they see their tongzhi offspring is whether the offspring is a son or a daughter, creating the intersection of tongzhi identity and son/daughter division that illustrates the relational process of reconciliation.

Gender performance: normal or abnormal? The second category that influences the relational process of reconciliation between parents and their tongzhi offspring is whether the tongzhi offspring is "behaving normally" or not. Parents who have tongzhi offspring whose gender performance is misaligned with their assigned sex at birth (i.e., behaving abnormally) would usually have sensed that something is "off" about their offspring and suspected they might be tongzhi (D'Augelli, Grossman, & Starks, 2005, called this childhood gender typicality v atypicality). The suspicion usually is the starting point on the journey of reconciliation for the parents. Grace's daughter, Pauline (30, lesbian woman) has a masculine appearance and mannerism, which planted a seed of suspicion in Grace's heart. Grace recalled how vigorously Pauline resisted wearing skirts when she was little, so vigorously that Grace thought to herself that something must be wrong because "normal girl would not resist that much." Natalia (37, lesbian woman) also has a masculine mannerism which tipped her mother, Ruth, off. Ruth recalled "when she was in high school, one time we went shopping together, and as a mother, I would dream about dressing up my girl so pretty, but the entire time she was shopping at men's

section. I didn't say anything, but after we got home, I rushed to my room and cry. I know something is wrong."

When Candice (53, mother of a 25-year-old lesbian daughter) talks about her nephew, she says "he's so feminine, he's a student in art and design, and he wears earrings as girls do, and it's so obvious that he's tongzhi. My sister knows too, we all know because you can tell by his demeanor, but my sister was in denial." Of course, there are parents who have no suspicion for their trans-performing offspring, such as Ingrid (64, mother of a 35-year-old daughter, DA), whose daughter has a masculine appearance and demeanor and others around her have suspected whether DA is tongzhi, but Ingrid just thought of her daughter as being young, experimental, and rebellious. "I didn't sense something it wrong from how she dressed, but rather how she interacted with a girl she brought home; she told me their friends, but I can tell something is different, and it was years after she chugui that her aunts told me they had known because how she dressed."

On the contrary, the cis-performing normal behaving offspring might catch their parents by surprise when the parents learn about their tongzhi identity, or they might have a hard time understanding it since their offspring looks so normal. After Ethal's (54, mother of an 18-year-old gay son) PQ attempted suicide and was committed in a psychiatric hospital, Ethal was trying to figure out what was going on with PQ. People around her, including PQ's teacher and Ethal's friends, suggested he might be tongzhi, and a friend who studied psychology told her most young boys who attempted suicide due to problems with sexual orientation, but "I still don't think that's the problem, because he's not a feminine boy, not a sissy; if he were, I probably would have guessed,

but he just isn't, that's why I never thought about it and never thought something like this would happen to me. Only when a kid that behaves like another gender would make parents suspicious, so I was really shocked when I knew, and it took me some time to come to terms with it."

For Meadow (34, pansexual woman), her "normal behaving" feminine look exacerbates her mother's opposition, because she thought "a girl that looks like Meadow still has a chance to be normal." To make matters worse, Meadow's ex-girlfriend who she dated for seven years was also a normal behaving feminine looking girl. It is difficult enough for a parent to believe her normal-looking daughter would be tongzhi, and it is even less convincing when the girl she dated is also feminine. Two feminine girls dating is simply not in the schema of most Taiwanese, not even among the tongzhi circle. Adelia (mother of a 19-year-old gay son) also was surprised to find that her son is tongzhi because "he looks so normal, just like any other boy, and I couldn't wrap my head around it: how can such a normal-looking boy be tongzhi? Aren't they all dressed up in a flamboyant manner and act like girls?" Diana (33, bisexual woman) has always behaved gender-normally, except for a short period of time during college when she played basketball, "I cut my hair short because it's just more convenient, but that's the only time my parents ever asked me about my sexuality. After I grow my hair long up until today, they have never asked because I look safe so they wouldn't suspect."

For parents, an offspring behaving normally or abnormally is one of the key moments for them to start on the journey of reconciliation and on how they make sense of their offspring's identity. However, tongzhi offspring's gender performance is important

for another reason—stigma. Stigma against the illegitimate trans-performing bodies is unforgiving, especially against a male-bodied person performing women's gender (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2013). A trans-performing person may or may not be transgender (who identify as the gender different from the sex assigned at birth), but a trans-performing body is nevertheless the target of stigma, and parents would inherit associative stigma (Halter, 2002; Goffman, 1963) defined as "stigma that persons experience not because of their own (attributed) characteristics but because they are associated with persons who belong to a stigmatized category in society (Verhaeghe & Bracke, 2012, p. 17). Other abnormal behaviors that challenge the normative boundaries would be subject to stigma and gossip as well.

Xavier (26, gay man) is a cis-performing tongzhi, but he also is passionate about nudism. He is a part of a nudist commune, and he often posts half-nude pictures of himself on social media, where he also talks about his same-sex desires openly; he has even been arrested for nudism or public hazard, and has been shown on the news for the nudist commune's social experiment. Xavier's mom, Fenny, is supportive of his tongzhi identity and is trying to be supportive of his passion for nudism, but "sometimes people would gossip, including our relatives, and they would ask me 'why is Xavier like that? Why can't he be normal, fully dressed like a normal person?' And I would feel pressured like I should tell him not to do that or I'm a bad mother, but if I did intervene, he would think I'm a bad mother. I don't know how I feel. I'll just put it in the back burner for now."

Sexual orientation: single-sex or both-sex? Another key intersection is whether a tongzhi offspring is attracted to and/or only date, one sex or whether a tongzhi offspring is attracted to and/or date both (again, for most parents only know of the binary thinking of gender and sex, I would follow this tradition to highlight parental understanding of their tongzhi offspring). It matters whether their attraction is unidirectional bidirectional because of the discourse of choice.

When sexual orientation and gender identity are viewed as "pre-determined" "born this way" "cannot be changed" "something they didn't choose," it could become a reason for parents to accept their offspring's tongzhi identity, because, as "there really is no hope, so you just have to let go" (Ruth, mother of a 37-year-old lesbian daughter, Natalia). When people view tongzhi identity with an external locus of control (Rotter, 1990), it could help them let go of the guilt: tongzhi offspring may think that they did not "do" anything wrong for being tongzhi, and parents of tongzhi offspring may feel less guilty of not continue pushing their offspring to "change back to normal." The parents' acceptance is based upon the belief that "it was not my offspring's fault," and the acceptance is provided because "I have no choice," or that it was their own fault to create an offspring like this and they have to accept the fate.

In fact, one of the questions most frequently asked by parents when they learn about their offspring's tongzhi identity is "are you sure?" because if they are unsure, maybe there is still a chance for them to return to normal. After Milton's (27, gay genderqueer) mother TL discovered her son's tongzhi identity when Milton was in college by using her daughter phone to check Milton's Facebook page (Milton did not

accept TL's friend request), she went to her son and let him know that she knew, and Milton said "even though she had been suspicious, really knowing for sure still makes her sad because it's like there's no room for ambiguity or hope anymore, but she still tried to change me and kept asking me whether I'm sure, and she even said she will accept me for being tongzhi if I am still one after I turn 30."

When Dorothy (65, mother of a 38-year-old lesbian daughter, KW) learned about her daughter's tongzhi identity, she wanted to make sure KW was really sure of this. Dorothy recalled, "there was a boy who was pursuing my daughter when she was in college, and I was thinking maybe if he had succeeded, my daughter would be normal, or maybe there would be other boys to pursue her; she just hasn't met the right man yet." Years after she learned about KW's tongzhi identity, there had never been any boys that KW ever showed interest in, and KW reassured her that she really is a lesbian, Dorothy had to let go. When I asked Dorothy how she would feel if her daughter is bisexual, Dorothy replied: "then it will be even more difficult because I would think there is hope and if she can choose to like boys, she should choose to like boys." It was the case for

Meadow (34, pansexual woman). Meadow's mom YH knows that her daughter likes men and women, and she holds onto the hope that Meadow can be normal. For 20 years, Meadow has been in several long committed relationships with women and has only dated two boys for a very short period of time, but that is reason enough for YH to insist. "I think I made a huge mistake," Meadow said "in the past, she was so mad at me having girlfriends, so when I dated boys, I made sure she knew because I wanted her to be happy. What I didn't tell her is I was never serious about any of the boys the way I

was with girls…the shortest serious relationship I had with a girl is 1.5 year, but the longest dating relationship with a boy is like three months. I don't know how to explain myself to my mom. Being a pansexual is an important part of my identity, but and all my mom knows and cares is that there's a chance for me to be normal. Therefore, she got even angrier because she thought that I chose girls just to make her angry."

Aware of the power that the discourse of choice has on parents, some bisexual participants report to only let their parents know of them as heterosexual or homosexual. For example, Wendy (28, bisexual women) has had girlfriends and boyfriends, but she always let her parents know when she dates boys but never when she dates girls. Since Wendy lives with her parents in a small apartment, there really is not much personal space, and Wendy would prefer not to let her parents know whether she is dating at all, but she would if she is dating a man because "it's more convenient for me to go out on a date or to talk to him on the phone, because our house is so small my parents could hear what I said. I let them know, so I don't have to make excuses all the time." However, she never lets her happens know when she dates women and she would rather find excuses to go out or hide under her blanket and whisper when she talked phone with her girlfriend because "I will never hear the end of it if they know I have a girlfriend; they would question everything I do and never trust me and never leave me be; they would not understand what bisexual mean, and they would only think that I'm abnormal and they need to control me even more."

On the opposite end, Nicole (38, bisexual woman) has only let their parents know that they date women despite their bisexual identification. Nicole said "even though I'm

so masculine looking, I have dated men too, and I find them attractive, but I think it will be too hard for my mom to understand (Nicole's dad has passed away) after she spent years to come to terms with me being a lesbian, now I tell her I'm actually not? I don't want to confuse her or even worse create false hope for her. Even though I could date men, I have a stable girlfriend now, and I'm not planning on ending that relationship." Karen (22, bisexual woman) has not yet let her parents know about her tongzhi identity, and she said "if I were to chugui, I would only let them know I'm lesbian, not bisexual; I think it's easier for them to deal with me being lesbian because it's simpler."

For Nellie (20), his complicated identity is too difficult for his parents to comprehend. Nellie's sex assigned at birth is female, but he identifies as a man but only in the sense of Japanese BL (boy-love) manga, a virtual world that has a gender order very different and not entirely reflective of real-life gay experiences and it has an overwhelmingly female fandom (Pagliassotti, Nagaike & McHarry, 2013; McLelland, 2000). Nellie has no desire to change his body nor identify himself in the LGBTQ+ framework, but he strongly identifies with the "penetrating partner in boy-love manga," but in real life, he likes girls and would call himself a lesbian. He said, "for my parents, they only see me as abnormal and weird. They said they couldn't even begin to know what I'm talking about and they don't care. All they know is I choose to be this weird person, and they want me to choose better, become a normal person."

Another way bi-directional attraction becomes a problem for tongzhi parent-offspring relationship is when the person that the offspring dates is bisexual. Due to the stigma against bisexual people that they are confused and untrustworthy (Ka'ahumanu &

Hutchins, 2015) when someone's own offspring is dating a person that is bisexual, parents might disapprove of the relationship, causing parent-offspring conflict. Ruth (68, mother of a 37-year-old lesbian daughter, Natalia) has come to terms with her daughter's lesbian tongzhi identity after almost two decades after she found out but later started to have fights with Natalia because of the new girlfriend NG. "When NG came to our house with a group of friends the first time, she was just a friend of Natalia, and NG's boyfriend was among those who came to visit. I really like NG and other kids because they are polite and nice. Who would have thought that Natalia started dating NG later? I'm worried because NG is heterosexual, and I don't' think she's serious about Natalia. Natalia was mad when I told her that, but wouldn't you worry?"

As these stories show, the discourse of choice poses different challenges for tongzhi whose attraction or dating behavior is no unidirectional. For those tongzhi, it seems that they do have choices to not stray from heteronormative practices; if they can be attracted to both men and women, or anyone regardless of gender identity, expression, or sexual orientation, why don't they just choose someone of the opposite sex and be normal? This is one biggest misconception of people who are attracted to more than one gender, and this misconception is prevalent because of the discourse of choice. The subjectivity and uniqueness of these people are erased from the discourse, their stories untold and unheard. The various possibilities are condemned in the discourse of choice. These finding are congruent with the literature on bi-erasure, which is a practice to count bisexual out of tongzhi/LGTQ+ experience in order to "stabilize sexual orientation, reinforce sex as a mechanism for understanding sexual identity differences, and

normalize monogamy" (Gonzalez, Ramirez, & Galupo, 2017, p. 494). Gina (21, pansexual woman) talked about how she felt out of place in the LGBTQ+/tongzhi movement for being a pansexual, which is subject to bi-erasure too, if not more. "I remember hearing JD (one of the most prominent and oldest tongzhi activists in Taiwan, a cisgender gay man) said bisexuality is not real; you either like men or you like women and in-betweens are fake too, and that just made it even harder for me to feel at ease with myself, not to mention letting others know."

Even without deliberate erasure, bisexual people could simply be ignored due to the fact that most bisexual people only have one partner at the time, so they either appear homosexual or heterosexual (Goldberg, Allen, Ellawala, & Ross, 2018). Bi-erasure could be done by bisexual people themselves due to fear of stigma, or in the stories included above, to avoid giving false hope for their parents. Even in 2019, bisexual people in the U.S. are still the least like to be "out" to people in their life, with "only 19% of those who identify as bisexual say all or most of the important people in their lives are aware of their sexual orientation. In contrast, 75% of gay and lesbian adults say the same. About one-quarter of bisexual adults (26%) are not "out" to any of the important people in their lives, compared with 4% of gay and lesbian adults" (Brown, A., 2019, para. 2).

Feminist intersectionality of a parent. In understanding the scaffolding process of reconciliation for Taiwanese tongzhi family communication, it is crucial to see how parents' identities are also intersectional, with each intersection carrying its own oppression, power, and relational implications.

Father v mother. Being a parent comes with responsibilities and expectations, but being a father and being a mother can be two entirely different experience. As discussed earlier, Tan mother in Brainer's study of Taiwanese mothers of tongzhi offspring (2017) felt guilty for secretly wanting a boy while she was pregnant with her daughter, believing that thought was what caused her daughter to become a tongzhi, and this story exemplifies how prenatal education puts the mothers in a "gendered accountability." Similar findings are seen in this research. Meadow's mother YH had the exact same guilt as Tan mama— she believes the very first step that went wrong for her daughter to be a tongzhi was because she wanted a boy and believed that she was pregnant with a boy. Since YH had already had a daughter, she was under pressure to have a son due to the pressure of the patriarchal system. The same pressure was felt by Tiffany's (36, bisexual woman) mother and Yuna's (34, lesbian woman) mother. When Tiffany's mother was pregnant with her, she had a girl already. Because of the inaccessibility of fetal ultrasound technique at the time, Tiffany's mother believed that she was pregnant with a boy because "everyone thought that she was having very good luck during her pregnancy, like when she played mahjong she would win 18 rounds consecutively, and everyone told her it must be because she is having a boy. Due to the son preference (重男輕女 zhong nan qing nv), she was so disappointed when she had me, and my aunt told me my mom sighed and said 'it's a girl again." Yuna's mother has five offspring in total, much higher than the average number of offspring in the same generation because she had the pressure to have a boy, so she could not stop until her fifth offspring, which is a boy.

For Candice's (53, mother of a 25-year-old lesbian daughter, RS), it was not just the pressure of son preference that affects her; it was also her unstable pregnancy. She was experiencing heavy bleeding at the beginning of her pregnancy, so she had to be hospitalized and medicated to stable the fetus, but it was still very unstable, so she tried western medicine and traditional herbal medicine and finally carried the baby to term. However, Candice believed it was the medication that made her daughter tongzhi because the medication changes the hormone in the uterus.

Even after the baby is born, it is still a mother's responsibility to make sure the baby grows up well. Queenie (58, mother of two gay sons, EM and EN; Queenie came to a support group meeting at the tongzhi organization where I did my fieldwork) struggled for years to come to term with having two tongzhi sons, and not only did she blame herself, so did her husband LS, because they came to believe that it was the environmental hormone (endocrine disruptors) released from plastic containers and utensils that cause her sons to be tongzhi. She as the mother was the one who decided what containers and utensils to use in the house, and it was she who didn't cook enough, and thus the sons had to eat out where cheap plastic containers full of the environmental hormone are used. After news reports started to talk about the danger of the environmental hormone killing men's sperm count making them "more feminine" and barren (Everyday health, 2016), Queenie "found the cause" of her sons' tongzhi identity, but she cannot help but blame herself for not being a good mother and knowing earlier so she could avoid it. It is common to hear a husband blames his wife for failing to raise the offspring right, and the same notion is found in the US, too. As Grafsky (2014) argued,

"the quality of one's parenting is often assumed to be directly reflected in offspring's outcomes. Being the parent of a GLB offspring might be perceived as a moral failure" (p. 50). Such belief disproportionally affects mothers, due to the unequal labor division in families. As Lan P. C. (2014) found that in Taiwan starting in the late 1980s and early 1990s, new ideals for parent-offspring relation are forming, in which parent education becomes norms, in which parents are thought to have an obligation to learn how to parents who pay close attention to their offspring's need and emotion, who stay by the side of the offspring especially when they need company, and listen and understand their offspring's inner thoughts (Brainer, 2017; Lan, 2014). For my parent-participants (average age 59 years old), most of them become parents in the 80s and 90s, and the new parenting discourses become influential in how they do family, especially mothers who took on "disproportionate emotion work" (Brainer, 2017, p. 926).

Such emotion work includes being a communication broker between her tongzhi offspring and her spouse or her and other members of the family. Research has found that offspring disclosed more and earlier to their mothers than to their fathers in general (Buhrmester & Prager, 1995; Dindia & Allen, 1992; Finkenauer, Engels, Branje, & Meeus, 2004; Miller & Lane, 1991) and in tongzhi family (Grafsky, Hickey, Nguyen, & Wall, 2018; Toomey & Richardson, 2009). Mothers either find out earlier due to paying closer attention to the offspring or the offspring let their mothers know before father due to trust and closeness, but no matter how mothers come to know early, it means she has to deal with the secret by maintaining the privacy boundary and deal with privacy boundary turbulence (Petronio, 2002).

Adelia (45, mother of a 19-year-old gay son) has been doing privacy boundary maintenance work while dealing with finding out her son is tongzhi, which for her has been really difficult. Since Adelia found out about her son, she decided she will not let her husband know because she does not "have the mental capacity to deal with her husband's reaction on top of everything now," and she does not want to her husband to be sad or to get mad and disown their son. However, Adelia and her husband spend all their free time together, which makes it really difficult for her to deal with the emotions she has learning about her son. "If I want to come to the support group meeting, I have to lie to him, make stories up about why I'm going somewhere he can't go, but the problem is he knows all my friends and family, and it will be really weird if I go somewhere without him but not with my friends or family. If I need them to lie for me, that means I have to let them know as well." Adelia finds the privacy boundary maintenance taking a toll on her emotional health. "I can't even cry when he's around because he would want to know what's going on." She also reported being a communication broker between her husband and children for matters other than her son's tongzhi identity as well, because "kids are closer to mothers for sure, so is he wants to know something, he asks me to talk to the kids and then tell him." She used to tell her husband to talk to the kids herself because she did not want the extra emotional work, but since she found out about her son, "I would rather do the work myself, I'll talk and report back to my husband because it's safer that way, to minimize the chance that he finds out about our son." Dorothy (65, mother of a 38-year-old daughter) also went through years of such emotional labor of privacy boundary management:

> I was so scared that my husband would find out, and I tried so hard to make sure that doesn't happen. But the longer I wait, the harder it gets, and it really hurts me when he would criticize tongzhi people when he sees the news about tongzhi, because it's unfair to him too: he doesn't know her own daughter is tongzhi, and if he knew, he would be devastated that he ever criticized his own daughter. But I found it unfair to me, too: Why am I the only one suffering? Why can't I have my husband's support?

Even though not all participants I interviewed let their mothers know before their fathers, and some fathers that I interviewed played the role of communication broker, mothers in general still shoulder more emotional and communicative work along with pressure in a patriarchal society.

Jeffery's (25, gay man) mother, LH, plays the buffer and the broker between her alcoholic and abusive husband. LH is a traditional wife that tolerates a lousy husband in order to raise her offspring in a structurally intact family. Jesse talks about how his father, LB, would sometimes drink and beat LH and the kids. Jeffery recalled:

> One time my sister got in a fight with my father, and she ran away from home and came to my place, and it was my mom who mediated between them, taking the heat from my father and my sister just to make sure my sister comes home, and my father won't beat her. I wanted to help, but I didn't; my mom does all the work.

Finally, as discussed in previous sections, mothers who suffer in her role as a wife and daughter-in-law might be more likely accepting their daughters to be tongzhi or might even go as far as to urge their daughters to not enter a heterosexual marriage due to their own painful and intimate knowledge of what it costs to enter one, stay in one, or even leaving one. These stories show how being a parent of a tongzhi offspring is a gendered matter, and yet gender is not the only intersection of identity in tongzhi family communication.

Social class. As other researchers studying LGBTQ+/tongzhi family communication and relationship have found, studies on this topic using data from parents of LGBTQ+/tongzhi offspring are usually recruited from support group or through connection with major LGBTQ+/tongzhi organizations, and those parents are usually of higher social-economic status and/or are highly educated (Brainer, 2019; LaSala, 2010), my study shows the same. All my participants, and those who come to, or even start volunteering in the Taiwan Tongzhi Hotline Association and other parent support groups, are of high social-economic status or highly educate, or they are at least articulate and well-prepared because being able to talk to a researcher about one's own experience is a classed action in itself. One of my participants, Catherine (36, lesbian woman), saw my recruitment of research participants information and asked whether her mother, AE, would like to be interviewed, but her mother rejected, repeating "I'm not smart enough to be interviewed; I don't know what I can say and I don't know how to say it. I'm not smart enough." AE's response to an invitation to be interviewed show how she thinks "being interviewed" as something only smart people do, even though Catherine reassured her just to say whatever she wants to say, she still declined.

Social class is a location for a power struggle in a family as well. Nicole (38, bisexual woman) comes from a dysfunctional family where her parents struggled to stay together and put food on the table. Her siblings are all of lower SES as well. Nicole's second older sister, CB, works at a Taiwanese version strip club (girls who work they do not strip, but they do provide certain erotic-suggestive services and drink with the customers to earn tips) and has been addicted to drugs, and CB's second daughter is also

tongzhi. When I asked Nicole whether CB is fine with her daughter being tongzhi, Nicole said "she can't support herself; she takes allowance from her daughter who's not even 18, and she can't get clean; when a person stoops so low, she has no power to say she accepts something or not. She simply has to."

The same power dynamics are seen in Richard's (35, gay man) story too. Richard's parents had a small business went under and forced them into bankruptcy when Richard was still in high school. Richard and her older sister had to go live with different relatives while his parents took the two younger children when they went into hiding to avoid the debt collectors. Richard and his older sister had to work multiple part-time jobs to support themselves through college, and for years, they had no news from their parents. Several years later, they came out from hiding and the six of them reunited, and when Richard chugui to his dad, OC, "he did not say anything negative and did not try to intervene. I think it's because he feels sorry and ashamed because he wasn't able to provide, let alone protect us when we were younger. They had no money, and thus they could not control me, and there's no way for them not to accept me; though it did took my mom longer to come to terms emotionally, but due to the financial troubles they had, they really had no stance to object or intervene.

Social and economic status has another key influence in the scaffolding process of reconciliation, namely, can the tongzhi offspring afford a space apart from her parent? Natalia (37, lesbian woman) had always lived with her family (parents and older brother) all her life until three years ago, she decided to move out of her parents' house and move in with her girlfriend at a city neither of them is from, in one of the least accessible parts

of Taiwan. Natalia had only started dating this girlfriend for a month, so Ruth was angry at her decision to move out, especially when this new girlfriend is a bisexual woman Ruth dislikes because Ruth thinks she's just a confused heterosexual woman (see Feminist intersectionality of a tongzhi offspring. Sexual orientation: single-sex or both-sex?). On top of that, Natalia decided to quit her good-paying job to become an artist and the girlfriend is an artist, too, and Ruth thought "there's no way they can support themselves." However, after Natalia moved out, she decided to buy a house, and Ruth, with her desire to act like a supportive, good mother, paid the down payment so Natalia could buy the house. Natalia said "living apart from my parents is one important reason I can have the life I want with my girlfriend," and the reason it is possible is that they are of high social0economic status and Ruth has the financial means to play her "good mother" role and supports Natalia's moving out. Three years into this new living arrangement, Natalia has a chance (and space) to start a life as an adult with her girlfriend, and Ruth has slowly come to terms with their newly adjusted mother-daughter relationship.

Ingrid (64, mother of a 35-year-old daughter, DA) is also from a high social and economic status. Ingrid and DA's mother-daughter relationship has been estranged, and it hurts Ingrid deeply, as she recalled:

> Maybe I've hurt her in some way that's unrepairable, but I still want to do all I can to make it up to her. My husband and I bought her a house, and we are planning to leave most of our money to her because tongzhi's life will be more difficult, and we want to make sure her life is good despite her tongzhi identity.

Even though Ingrid is still struggling to get closer to DA, her endeavors including buying DA a house and leaving her their inheritance is a way to acknowledge her tongzhi identity.

Another way social and economic status comes in the way of tongzhi parent-offspring relationship is one that revolves around the boundary of "one of our own" or "an outsider." Samantha (27, lesbian woman) has a girlfriend for five years who she thought to marry one day, but not right now, in order to appease her mother, EP:

> How should I put it…well, my mom has prepared quite some money for each of us (three children) so we won't need to worry about money in the future, but she doesn't want me to get married because if I do, that means my girlfriend, well if we get married, my wife will be entitled to half of the money, and my mom doesn't want that to happen. It's her money, and she doesn't think it should be shared with my girlfriend.

However, EP does not feel Samantha's sisters' husbands are "wrongfully entitled to her money" because, explained Samantha, "heterosexual marriage is unavoidable and legitimate," and "my girlfriend's family is not that well-off and that makes my mom even less willing for me to marry her, because it seems as though she's marrying me for the money while she could marry any man." Note that such class differences are known to be the reason for parents to oppose their offspring's relationship, a social practice in Chinese societies called "marriage of the matching doors" (門當戶對, men dang hu dui, literally meaning the doors are proper and the windows are symmetrical) (Hu, Y., 2016; Liu, L., 2018, Yang, C. K., 1959). Such practice ensures that marriage takes places between households of similar social-economic background, and the persistence of such practice further signals that marriage in Chinese Confucius societies is "a family affair, rather than

a deinstitutionalized, privatized, or individualized practice" (Hu, Y., 2016, p. 557). One interesting example is Ethal (54, mother of a 19-year-old gay son, PQ), who has come to terms with her tongzhi son's identity but has such trouble with her oldest son's (JL, 26, heterosexual) girlfriend, MZ (28, heterosexual). Ethal did not like MZ at all, and she was furious because MZ wanted JL to marry her now, due to her own life plan to have a child before she turns 30. Ethal also really did not like the fact that the MZ's family seems rather dysfunctional, and is of the lower social and economic class. Ethal's worried that JL will sacrifice his own plan to study aboard for his master's degree just to marry MZ and that JL will have to support MZ's natal family financially. I was rather surprised by the emotion Ethal showed while talking about her oldest son compared to the casual composure she carried while talking about her second son, PQ. Even though tongzhi identity comes with its own stigma and specific social, cultural, and legal challenges, I speculate that Ethal and JL's conflict over JL's choice of partner would take a reconciliation process depicted in my model.

For participants from a lower social-economic background, how their SES comes in to play with the relationship is quite different. Doris (29, lesbian woman) is a factory worker that earns minimum wage and so are her parents, and Doris has longed to move out and have her own space, because living at home means she has no privacy and has no room to grow up, not to mention to maintain a relationship. Doris' parents had a tight curfew for Doris, and they would not stop calling if Doris was out with her friends until she picked up and come home, which is:

> Extremely difficult to date under these circumstances. Sometime I would stay too late at my girlfriends' place, and they would keep calling and ask me to come home, and to make the curfew I would ride my scooter really fast, and it's so unsafe but I had to…I really want to buy a house and move out, especially if I ever want to have a stable relationship, but every time I talk about buying a house, my dad would said jokingly 'there's no way you can afford it,' and its annoying but he's right. There's no way I could afford a house, and it's too weird to have my girlfriend move in because I still live with my parents, or I move in to my girlfriend's house with her parents.

From these stories, it is obvious how social and economic status influence the relationship between tongzhi offspring and parents. Ingrid uses her financial ability to make sure her tongzhi daughter knows her love and her daughter has a better life, EP's finance becomes an obstacle between Samantha and her girlfriend from a lower social-economic status, Natalia is allowed space for both her and her mother to work on their own issues and on their parent-offspring relationship, while Doris is still figuring out how she could work on a relationship with limited space as a result of financial constraints that are reflective of the bigger economic development of Taiwan where wealth gap has been widening (Ip & Cheung, 2014; Zheng, 2013). The end goal, however, seems to be more intricate than it was purported to be in my original model of scaffolding to reconciliation.

End Goal: Compartmentalized, Discounted, and Indefinite Reconciliation

In the original model, the end goal of the reconciling discrepant expectation between a tongzhi offspring and her parent is a stable relationship where an offspring's tongzhi identity no longer causes conflicts. After analyzing the data, it is necessary to refine and revise the end goal to show how it could be compartmentalized, discounted, sometimes making the reconciliation process indefinite. As shown in figure 2, what

constitutes as reconciliation/coming to terms could differ for the tongzhi offspring and the parent, and thus, the process could be never-ending. My analysis shows that parents give out what they believe is compartmentalized acceptance, and the offspring decide whether to accept what feels to them as discounted acceptance.

Compartmentalized acceptance. For parents who have heteronormative, patriarchal, or other discourse against tongzhi indelibly ingrained in their expectations, it may become more difficult for them to exercise their agency in accepting their offspring's tongzhi identity. It is possible, though, to compartmentalize the acceptance, contingently or categorically. There are four ways of compartmentalization derived from my data: emotion, attitude, behavior, and cognition. Importantly, emotional (un)acceptance, attitudinal (un)acceptance, behavioral (un)acceptance, and cognitive (un)acceptance are not correlational. For example, one can be emotionally against something but behaviorally allow it, someone can fail to comprehend something but still have strong emotional responses to it, or some could move from one state to another, or vacillate between different states in one compartment (for more discussion on vacillation, see Competing discourses and vacillation.)

Deep down, there's something missing. For Ruth (65, mother of a 37-year-old lesbian daughter, Natalia) her "seniority" status as a parent in the tongzhi rights support group is secured with her almost two decades of dedication to serving other parents of tongzhi offspring in need, and her warmth toward all tongzhi offspring she encounters, but even her acceptance toward her lesbian daughter is compartmentalized. "Me and other parents in the support group talk about how it's so funny that after almost two

decades in this field (of advocating for tongzhi offspring and parents), my mind still vacillates. Like every time I go to a wedding, my heart would hurt, and I would wonder whether maybe one day there will be a thunder strike on my daughter that changes her back to heterosexual. I think all parents still have that sorrow and hope deep in their heart that they won't let go of." When I asked her whether she would feel the sorrow is eased if her daughter gets married and have children, she lamented "Well, let me put it this way, of course, I want my kids to be happy and not be subject to people's stares and judgment, but you can always sense those stares and judgment as long as your kid is tongzhi."

For Ken (62, father of a 35-year-old, lesbian daughter, Donna), despite realizing the importance of live and let live and understanding how life is a result of karma after his wife died, and he got sick and almost died too, he admitted "I have come to terms with Donna's tongzhi identity, and I'm not ashamed of it. She is a good kid, and I'm very proud of her, but there is still something in my heart that I am sorrowful for, which is the fact that I won't have grandkids." Similarly, When William (60, father of a 37-year-old lesbian daughter, EJ) talks about his wife, VD, he explained how she "still has hope that EJ would be normal like other girls; she won't object behaviorally, but deep in her heart she wished our daughter follow the social pattern." For Ruth, Ken, and VD, they compartmentalized their acceptance: emotionally, there is a sadness that does not go away. The sadness, however, does not stop them from behaviorally supporting and accepting their tongzhi offspring.

I can accept this, but not that. In Ingrid's (64, mother of a 35-year-old daughter, DA) story, it is seen how she compartmentalized her emotion from her behavior. "I was

devastated when DA let me know about her tongzhi identity. I was so sad, but I told her everything would be fine, and I accept her, and I will tell her dad for her. And she just thought I was ok so she would be so intimate with that girl in front of me, like holding hands or put her arms around her waist, things so obvious only couples would do, and I couldn't bear witnessing it so I would rush to get off the car so I can walk in front of them so I won't have to see them do that, and they won't see the tear in my eyes." Emotionally, Ingrid is nowhere near acceptance and years after DA's chugui, but behaviorally, she feels strongly that she should show her acceptance. Ethal (54, mother of an 18-year-old gay son) empathized with parents she met at the support group, whose acceptance is compartmentalized in the manner that "I can accept my child to be tongzhi, but I don't want my child to have a same-sex partner." Ethal explained, "they are ok with the part out of the control of their offspring, namely, their sexual orientation, but they cannot accept their offspring 'choosing' to have a partner of the same-sex. It probably sounds ridiculous, but I can kind of empathize. My son is so young now, so I don't have to worry about him having a boyfriend for now, but I'm not sure if I would be ok when I really have to deal with him with another man."

I don't get you, but I support you anyway. An interesting pattern of compartmentalization found in the stories is when cognition comes into play. Lynda's (29, lesbian woman) mother, HD, accepts Lynda's tongzhi identity in a very passive manner, manifested as the absence of interference. HD is not happy about it, and would sometimes ask whether Lynda would get married, to which Lynda would jokingly say "yes, I'm marrying Emma." However, HD would repeat "it's different; it's different" but

is not able to articulate what is different? Different from what? Lynda interprets her mother's insistence on "it's different" to be her inability to mentally picture a sustainable relationship between two women since it does not fit in the schema she has pertinent to marriage and family-building. Comparably, Dorothy (65, mother of a 38-year-old lesbian daughter, KW) has "accepted" her daughter's tongzhi identity, but she still feels sorrow that her daughter will not get married. "Even if after same-sex marriage law passes and she gets married to her girlfriend, it's still different. I would feel a little better, but deep down, I don't know how to explain it, it's just different." The "it's different" in HD and Dorothy's sensemaking work is indicative of the lack of mental schema, or a cultural script, to guide them through the new reality they are placed in front of, one that may resemble their old and familiar reality, only that the new reality has parts that are incompatible with the instructions they have in hand, so the instructions are incomprehensible to them.

Lisa's (22, bisexual woman) parents, CG (mother) and DT (father) are two parents with the intimate knowledge of being lost with an instruction that does not help and a map that does not guide. After raising an able-bodied son for five years, CG and DT welcomed to the world a daughter with severe cerebral palsy. Most of what they had learned about being a parent became obsolete when raising a disabled daughter. Two decades of practice helped them do their jobs as parents, but when Lisa told them she is bisexual, it was "too much for them to even begin to process," Lisa recalled:

> Due to my condition, I need constant care to even just move from one place to another, it's really hard to have the so-called privacy or secret, so I told her directly when I realized I also liked girls. But just as how she always responded,

> ‘don’t overthink it’ or ‘don't think about that’ because for her, there’s no way anyone would like me back; it’s better I don’t raise my hope to even think about dating. It’s hard enough for her to picture me with a man, let alone a woman.

For CG, her daughter’s attraction is something she has no schema or script to make sense of, and a myth she would rather leave mythical. However, “she still told me she would support me no matter what I do, and so far, when I talk about my sexuality, she would be open to hearing what I have to say, but I know she still has no way of picturing of how I would ever be with someone, so her acceptance is more of a concept or a politically correct thing for her to say as a good mother.” Just like the story about Charlie I discussed in the “Feminist intersectionality within Taiwan tongzhi family communication,” Charlie’s identity as a genderqueer pansexual person is something their father, JB, has no way of comprehending, but JB and CG both still accept their tongzhi offspring without understanding it. In these cases, acceptance is compartmentalized to be behavioral without cognitive understanding.

I don’t know what this is; it’s too scary. Even though parents might compartmentalize cognition from behavior, so they accept their tongzhi even if they are unable to comprehend their offspring’s identity or the issue at hand, there are times where the lack of understanding leads to unacceptance, and thus the cognitive state is congruent with attitudinal, emotional, or behavioral state.

Catherine’s (36, lesbian woman) mother, AE, has only passively accepted Catherine’s tongzhi identity, but she rarely talks about it with Catherine, and she would rather Catherine does not talk about it with her either. Catherin volunteers at a tongzhi organization, and AE knows very vaguely about what the organization is or what

Catherine does there; she only knows that Catherine stays out late on a particular day every week because she is volunteering. A few months before the 2018 referendum, Catherine had to go out on a weekend to help out at an event where they explain the referendum to people, and before she took off, she said bye to AE and said she was going to the tongzhi organization, but AE burst out "you're going to go teach people how to become tongzhi, aren't you? Catherine did not know what to say, so she stormed out, crying on the way to the event. Since AE has a limited understanding of what tongzhi is, what the organization is for, or what Catarrhine does there, the void of understanding is then filled with wild imagination rushing directly to the worst-case scenario.

Richard's (35, gay man) parents were also overtaken by fear due to lack of understanding. When Richard chugui, he was single, and his parents were really worried,

> "because they have just learned that I'm tongzhi, which is shocking enough, me not having a boyfriend just further worries them because they start to imagine that I would date really weird guys, some monsters, or a cross-dresser, or that I'll definitely get AIDS. They have never seen two men together that are depicted in a positive light, or all the gays they see are like half-naked (in the pride parade news coverage), they just couldn't picture a normal-looking gay couple, so they were really having a hard time accepting it."

In Richard' story, it is seen how lacking mental representation could lead to difficulty accepting an offspring's tongzhi identity.

I can't let others know I accept you. Another way to compartmentalize acceptance is by managing where and to whom the acceptance is seen. For Celia (23, pansexual woman), the reason her mother TR to put up a veneer of not accepting her daughter is political. TR comes from a politician family where her own parents were important figures in the nascent democracy in Taiwan four decades ago, and many of

TR's family are still working in the political field. Due to complicated political concerns, TR's mother had to be careful not to express support for tongzhi publicly, even though she was fine with Celia's tongzhi identity. Celia did not find the compartmentalization of her mother's attitude to be problematic, because "it's political, you know." However, another mother's compartmentalization caused a fight between her and her tongzhi daughter. Tiffany's (36, bisexual woman) mother, FE, is from a Christian family, and FE's siblings have expressly opposed tongzhi. Tiffany was angered by how FE's inconsistency, where she would "like" Tiffany's Facebook posts regarding tongzhi rights, but she would put up an anti-tongzhi front when she is with other people. When Tiffany confronted her, asking whether she embarrassed her, and FE replied "no, it's not that. I'm not ashamed; I just can't let them know I support tongzhi." Tiffany knew FE was probably trying to avoid conflict between her and her siblings, and Tiffany only felt insignificant compared to her "face."

I'll accept you as long as. In a tongzhi parent-offspring reconciliation, not only could the offspring realize the goal she set was unrealistic and thus adjust her goal, but parents could also realize that, and thus a parent might compartmentalize her acceptance with conditions. Jenny (58, mother of a 30-year-old gay son, Patrick) came to terms with her only son to be tongzhi after years of struggle. "I absolutely opposed it when I first found out, because it's too weird and how would others see us? But later I was like, well, marriage is not that big of a deal, I got married, and I was miserable, and then I got divorced, so I thought as long as he has a good partner, I will accept it." Jenny elaborated

"good partner means this person does not mess around, and he only has one sex

> partner in a normal monogamous relationship. And this person has to be Chinese or Taiwanese (Jenny and her son live in the US) so I can talk to him, and he should have a normal job that's good-paying, and they can take care of each other."

Regardless of whether Patrick would indeed find a partner that meets all the criteria, Jenny set clear conditions she wants Patrick's partner to fulfill. "If he dates someone who's different from what I hope for? Well, it's going to be hard, but I believe my kid is guai, and he would listen to me."

Challenging the compartmentalization. The different manners of compartmentalization are set as contingencies for each relationship at a specific context, and thus they could be changes along with personal or relational change. The following are stories that show how an opportune situation presented itself to challenge the compartmentalization. At the end of 2018, the referendum presented an opportunity for such behavioral acceptance to be displayed and seen, regardless of whether they have come to terms emotionally or whether they fully grasp what they are dealing with. The reason the referendum became such a perfect milieu is because the May 2017 constitutional court ruling had given people hope, and yet the opposition of same-sex marriage successfully mobilized an incredible amount of funds and people in their attempt to overturn the constitutional ruling, and it was obvious the referendum to challenge the May 2017 constitutional court might actually win vote. On top of that, the opposition side proposed three referendum questions in April, and then the proponent proposed two in the following months, making it rather difficult to grasp to the full extent what was happening on the ballots.

Specifically, question 10-12 are proposed by the opposition side: question 10: do you agree marriage is only for one man and one woman? Question 11: do you agree that gender equity education for elementary school students and middle school students should not include tongzhi education? Question 12: do you agree to pass a special law for same-sex couples to be in a unionship? Question 13: Do you agree to extend the civil code to allow same-sex marriage, and Question 14: Do you agree in compulsory education (k-12), students should learn to the full extent the gender equity education, as mandated by the gender equity education act (Taiwan Central Election Committee, 2018). With the heightened visibility of the issues, the complicatedness of the referendum questions, and the sense of crisis, many parents of tongzhi offspring took actions to make sure tongzhi rights, or at least the rights of their own offspring, are protected.

A chance to show my support. Norma's (34, lesbian woman) mother, KS, has known about Norma's tongzhi identity for about a decade, and has passively accepted Norma without supporting it nor intervening. However, before the referendum in November 2018, KS did something that surprised Norma. "She chugui to all our relatives, and she would go visit all relatives with the pamphlet explaining how to vote in the referendum to support same-sex marriage. She even took me and my girlfriend to visit one of my grandfather's brothers, because he is an influential member in the community, and he has many connections and friends, and my mom thinks we needed to persuade him to vote for same-sex marriage and to talk to people he knew too. So we went there, chitchatted a little, and then my mom pulled out the pamphlet and started talking about the referendum, and then pointed to us, saying 'look at my daughter and her

girlfriend, they are really nice kids, and please let them get married.' I was so moved because she would do that for me, go visit all these people, and that really shows me how much she supports me, even though I know she still cries sometimes because I'm tongzhi."

Celia (23, pansexual woman) told the story about her father, EW, took the initiative to rally support for tongzhi as well. Opposite from her mother, TR, who had to be careful not to show her support for tongzhi issues due to political concerns, EW had no such baggage. Celia recalled:

> We were watching TV, and it shows something about tongzhi, and he turned to me as ask 'well, didn't you participate in the rainbow stuff a lot? Even an intellectual like myself don't understand the questions, who knows how to vote? Explain to them me.' And then he sent a group message including what I told him to our family chat group, and I was so very touched. This is the very first time he ever broached the topic of tongzhi to me."

For Lisa (22, bisexual woman), her parents took the initiative to rally support for her and tongzhi, but with a twist:

> My parents were indifferent to this topic initially, but my dad called my aunt, uncle, grandmother, and other relatives to tell them how to vote to support tongzhi, but he said it was because I was doing an internship at Tongzhi Hotline Association and they had to vote in this manner otherwise I'll fail my internship. It was funny, but he's smart to not expose himself or me by making up a stupid lie. I still felt supported even though he lied.

For Samantha (27, lesbian woman), her father's (SW) did not take the initiative as Norma's mother did, but he still did something that Samantha thought as supportive. SW's political stance is congruent with that of the political party that has always been opposing tongzhi rights, and SW himself is against tongzhi as well, so his voting plan was to vote against same-sex marriage and gender equity education. However, knowing

his own daughter is tongzhi, SW asked Samantha before the referendum how he should vote, and showed Samantha the anti-tongzhi campaign ads he received on his social media and said, "so I should just vote the opposite of what they said here, right?" To SW's gesture, Samantha said, "it totally took me by surprise, but I was so moved that he's willing to do that for me. But I know he had no idea what he was voting, or he actually thought about why he was going to vote the way he did, he just voted the way that would show he cared about me." Here we see another compartmentalized support – I support you by doing this even though I have no idea what this is.

In Doris' (29, lesbian woman) story, the acceptance she felt before the referendum was displayed in yet another manner. Doris's father (KJ) and mother (ER) both know about Doris's tongzhi identity, but ER has been vehemently opposing it while KJ tried to understand Doris and support her regardless of his inability to understand Doris's identity. The referendum, however, changed ER's attitude. She explained:

> The referendum helped us get closer. She [ER] told me to take some pamphlets and go talk to my aunts and uncles myself. In the past, she insisted that I don't let others know about me being tongzhi, but now, she wants me to have what I deserve, so even though she still can't bring herself to rally support for tongzhi herself, she wanted me and even urged me to do so. Their voting for same-sex marriage would mean so much to me as they have finally accepted me.

For Milton (27, gay genderqueer), he felt satisfied enough when his parents actually went to vote because of him, "because they did not plan to vote originally, but they went for me, and I think it was really sweet of them to do that for me."

Are you really going to get married? Not all challenges to compartmentalized acceptance end with positive results. One significant opportunity for compartmentalized

acceptance to be challenged is the legalization of same-sex marriage on May 24, 2019. On May 24, there were 526 same-sex couples that registered for marriage (Lu, J. C, 2019), but this seemingly happy ending for some is the beginning of new fronts of conflicts for others. Briefly mentioned in the "measuring against the norm" section, in Taiwan, marriage has to be registered in the Household Registration System, and the record will show on the Household Registration Booklet. For young adult tongzhi who live with their parents, accessing the Household Registration Booklet itself could cause trouble, let alone having their names appear on the Household Registration Booklets as a spouse for another same-sex person. Therefore, there is no way to get married without the parents knowing, as Abbie (32, bisexual woman) argued "if you want to bring your relationship to be formal status, you have to tell your family, because everything is going to be on the books; say you just take the Household Registration Booklet and go register, what are you going to do if they see it on the booklet?"

Similarly, Tiffany (36, bisexual woman) said "the passing of the same-sex marriage law is not a happily-ever-after because many tongzhi still haven't chugui, and it's almost impossible to get married without your family finding out, so for those who really want to get married, they will have to chugui successfully" Even though Tiffany is single now, her family's reaction to the possibility of the legalization of same-sex marriage was hurtful for Tiffany:

> My dad once said 'thankfully I have three daughters,' but he said it not because he prefers daughters, but that daughters are not entitled to inheritance. Before same-sex marriage was going to be legalized, my mom kept pushing me to change my insurance policy beneficiary to my sisters, because my parents are worried that if I get married, then my wife would be entitled to their money. They

> assume tongzhi won't have offspring, who they would consider their family but not my wife, so if I die, then my wife will get the insurance money; they don't want that. Since the passing of the same-sex marriage law, I haven't gone home at all, because I don't want to talk about it anymore; I know she will push me about the insurance. They don't do that to my sister's husband, so it's unfair.

Even though Tiffany's mother has accepted her tongzhi identity, same-sex marriage law exposes their unacceptance of Tiffany's potential wife, because same-sex marriage is not legitimate, and they are fine if Tiffany is tongzhi and has girlfriends, but they are not fine if their own money has to be inherited by an outsider.

Fortunately, some tongzhi's experiences with the legalization of same-sex marriage are positive. For Yuna (34, lesbian woman), same-sex marriage is a chance for her to ascertain her mother's attitude toward her tongzhi identity. "I sent her messages to tell her I like girls, and she read the message but did not respond. It was not until same-sex marriage law has passed that one day, she sent me a message asking whether I want to get married, because she wants to make sure I have someone with me in a relationship that's protected by law, and she even said, if you get married, then I'll have a "nv er xi fu" (女兒媳婦, daughter/daughter-in-law) who is not just a daughter-in-law but my own daughter. I was so moved that I hugged my wife and cried." The legalization of the same-sex marriage law and the referendum are two chances to examine the acceptance, pushing it toward reconciliation or away from it.

Discounted acceptance. For parents, they may think the acceptance they give, no matter how compartmentalized, is indeed acceptance; however, for tongzhi offspring, it may feel like it has been discounted from the 100% acceptance they had hoped for. Therefore, I use the term discounted acceptance to refer to how tongzhi offspring

understand their parents' compartmentalized acceptance. However, as long as the acceptance works for the relationship, for the time being, it could still feel like they have reached the end goal.

I accept your discounted acceptance. Some tongzhi offspring may come to terms with only receiving discounted acceptance, as Pauline (30, lesbian woman) said, "I used to really want them to accept me maybe because I've seen it in movies, but as I grow older, I realize what is shown in the movies isn't real, and now all I want is for them to leave me alone; as long as they don't intervene with my participation in the tongzhi movement or my relationship, I would be fine." Pauline had a goal she wanted to reach, but she adjusted her goal and shortened the journey. Erica (27, bisexual woman) also adjusted her goal after some struggles. "They're just really against the choices I made. They were furious when I broke up with my ex-boyfriend and started dating my girlfriend now, because they thought I was reckless, just trying to mess around, and they didn't believe that I'm bisexual. The biggest issue they had was me identifying myself as bisexual. But now they realized I'm serious about this relationship because it has been two years, so now they would at least acknowledge I'm indeed bisexual rather than confused or irresponsible, and my relationship is real. They may not like it or accept it, but as long as they know it's real, I'm fine. I'm tired of fighting for their acceptance." Erica settles for acknowledgment rather than acceptance, and that counts as a type of reconciliation.

Her acceptance is not important anymore. Meadow (34, pansexual woman) spent her late twenties trying very hard to push her mom YH to accept her tongzhi

identity and her choice of partner because she longed for a mother-daughter relationship where there is no secret and only love. But she tried so hard that it actually hurt their relationship, in a manner depicted by cruel optimism (Berlant, 2011) (for discussion on cruel optimism, see social comparison), because the more Meadow tried, the more YH pulled away from accepting her. Meadow explained:

> I think my mom would think that I'm selfish and I'm pushing too hard, like I would bring my partner home and I'd talk about having a baby and hoping my mom would help take care of the baby. She was nowhere near fine with my identity, but I was just so ready for everything to fall into place in the way I desired: my relationship with my partner would be perfect, and my mom would love me like she loved my sister and my brother-in-law and of course their babies. I've always wanted that, but I think the desire became stronger after seeing how my mom treated my sister, brother-in-law and their babies, so I pushed her, thinking 'if you can do it for her, you can do it for me because me and my sister are not that different; I'm getting married like you always wanted me to, and I'm trying to give you more grandkids like you always wanted me to.

However, after years of struggle and conflict, Meadow started to realize that the "acceptance" she dreamed of is probably simply infeasible and unfair for her mother; she adjusted her goal, explaining:

> Now I really don't care if she accepts me or not; what I care now is that she's happy, and she finds peace in having a daughter like me. It feels like…before, I didn't accept myself either, so I sought validation from her, I pushed and I hurt her. Now I've come to terms with whatever I have, and I just want her to come to terms with whatever she has. I feel I can be there for her to help her find peace, but of course, only if she needs me.

In Meadow's story, she found new ways to situate herself in her mother-daughter relationship after struggles, disappointments, and upward comparisons. In the newly anchored relationship, being accepted in the manner she dreamed about has proven

unattainable and even counterproductive and toxic, and she adjusted the goal, calling for new reconciliation endeavors.

I just need you to show me something. Some tongzhi offspring may set a very high goal but settle later, or some may not ask for more, and they would be satisfied with something symbolic of acceptance. Owen's (36, gay men) mom, BD, knows about Owen's tongzhi identity, and she has accepted him, but he explained:

> I don't know if she would give me her blessing or even be ok if I have a wedding; that might be pushing too hard. She has never confirmed with me that she knows nor has she ever said anything about she accepts me or something like that, but this new year, she gave me and my sister each a red envelope, and the amount of money inside is the same for both of us. Because the red envelope she gave my sister is for my sister and her husband, so if she gave me the same amount, that means the red envelope is for me and my partner, and she acknowledges our relationship. It means the world to me. She doesn't have to say anything, but I know this is her telling me she accepts me.

Abbie's (32, bisexual woman) mother, IU, did not accept Abbie's relationship with TK for the first year they are together. When Abbie asked TK to help out with the Tomb Sweeping Festival the first year they were together, IU was mad because "this is a family business, why did you invite an outsider to help?" But the second year, TK still came, and this time IU included TK in her prayers to the ancestors, "and this is something so ritually significant. if you don't mean it, you won't be able actually to say it out loud. This is not some lip service where someone says they respect you, but what they don't show respect at all." For Abbie, her mother's inclusion of TK in the family prayer has the symbolic importance that trumps other signs of unacceptance.

Xavier (26, gay men) talked about how he knew his extended family is accepting of tongzhi, "my cousin has been with his partner for about 20 years now. By the time

they have been together for about six or seven years, my aunt took my cousin's partner as her godson, and my grandma took him in as her own god grandson. They even officially entered my cousin's partner into our family pedigree, so after he dies, his spirit could stay in our family tomb." Even though Xavier was single at the time of our interview, he felt positive that his entire family accepts him because of how they treated his cousin's same-sex partner, despite the fact they sometimes expressed concerns about his "flaunting of his gayness."

Yuna's (34, lesbian woman) mother, AT, showed her symbolic acceptance by talking openly about their relationship at a temple. "We went to an Earth God Temple, and all of a sudden she took my wife's hand and asked her 'you are serious about Yuna, right?' and she took my hand too and said 'you need to take care of each other, ok?' For Yuna, AT's acknowledgment of their relationship in front of the Earth God has significant value because "praying to the Earth God is such a family thing, so now she thinks AT is a part of our family. It was so moving. She doesn't have to say anything more, because I know she has accepted me."

In these stories, the tongzhi offspring, their parents or family engaged in symbolic gestures that suffice as acceptance for them.

Indefinite coming to terms process. In the original model, there is a clear end goal: reconciled stable relationship, no matter how it is defined in each family relationship, but after listening to more stories, especially stories from parents, it becomes clear that sometimes, the process of reconciliation is indefinite, as if they are chasing the horizon. For example, parents who compartmentalize their acceptance, showing their

tongzhi offspring that they have accepted them, may be painfully aware that a part of their expectations for their offspring may never be realized. They may not be actively pursuing it, but it does not mean it is gone from their mind. It is something they have to ignore so that it does not interfere with their relationship with their tongzhi offspring.

Temporary success. Even if clearly set goals are met, it may only be temporary, no matter how definite it feels, but sometimes the temporariness is salient. Adelia (mother of a 19-year-old gay son) also said:

> I think my son can feel that I have accepted him, and it has been a long time since I found out about him and now everything is back to normal. He knows I accept him, and that should stop him from worry, but I don't know how the future would unfold. Like, what if his father finds out? That would be another thing we need to deal with, and I don't know if I would be able to do so if that happens.

Ethal (54, mother of an 18-year-old gay son) knew that even though her relationship with her son, PO has been stabilized, and she is supportive of her son, "maybe when he turns 30, I may change my mind and push him to marry a woman, too," and "thankfully he is single now, because when he really has a boyfriend, it will be a new challenge." For tongzhi offspring, the "stable reconciled relationship" can also be temporary, with one of the most common changes they foresee being the same as the Ethal is concerned with—when the relationship status changes. For example, Erica (27, bisexual woman) said "even though everything looks fine now, if I am to get married, I don't know if my parents would be ok with it or how I should even broach the topic to them. I'll think about it when it happens, but it will definitely change things.

Moving backward. The process of reconciliation sometimes moves backward, making the end goal seem out of reach. One reason for moving backward is when an

offspring misjudges her parent's acceptance. In the "Starting from the Beginning: How Does It Start?" I discussed how misjudgment influences the beginning of the process of reconciliation, but misjudgment also influences the ending or lack thereof. Norma (34, lesbian woman) had also misjudged her mom's reaction. Norma has always been masculine, which prompted her mom to suspect that she is "abnormal." One day during dinner, there was something on TV about the tongzhi, so Norma's mom asked, "are you tongzhi?" and Norma said yes. Norma's mother went on to say she had known all along, and she knew that girl Norma always brought home during high school was her girlfriend. The rest of the dinner continued normally, and Norma went back to school after the end of the weekend, thinking she has "successfully come out." Her mom did not say anything or act as if she was not ok with Norma being a tongzhi, so it is understandable why Norma would simply think she has indeed "come out successfully." It was not until a decade later that Norma learned that her mom would hide in her room and cried for years after that seemingly casual conversation. Norma's mother was perhaps trying to act as though she had everything in control, and she knew her child well, so there was nothing to surprise or upset her when she was truly heartbroken and lonely through this process. Since Norma's father had passed away about a decade before that dinner conversation, Norma's mother did not even have her husband to turn to in that situation (even though the spouse is a stressor in facing an offspring's nonconforming sexuality in some cases).

Leticia's (33, lesbian woman)'s mother, UY, has told Leticia that she accepted her, and she loves her no matter what. When Leticia and her now-wife were getting

married in the US, and UY was in Taiwan and was not able to come, she even gave Leticia her blessing, but

> sometimes she would say something that's totally heterosexual, like she would tell me 'this or that boy is not bad, do you want to date him?' and I was like 'I thought you had accepted me, no?' Her comments like that just leave me speechless. Even though she said she had accepted me, she still says things like that. There is still a long way to go for her to truly accept it, I guess.

Leticia's story shows her misjudgment of her mom's acceptance is fallacious; she mistook UY's compartmentalized acceptance as unconditional acceptance, and every time UY says something that's indicative of certain heteronormative hope that she is still holding on to, Leticia knows her journey on reconciliation is an on-going process, with no clear ending in sight.

Another case of moving backward is specific to bisexual or pansexual tongzhi. Abbie (32, bisexual woman) has been in relationships with both men and women and her mother, IU, is aware of all her relationships. She explained:

> When I had my first girlfriend, my mom was really angry, and she didn't accept it; she was worried I would go to hell; she wasn't trying to curse me like some Christian parents, she was genuinely worried because she's a pious Buddhist. But it really was just because homosexuality was something completely beyond her comprehension; it simply did not exist in her mind. She thought I was doing something really bad, so we fought a lot. By the time I had my second girlfriend, she had a better understanding of homosexuality and my second girlfriend was better, a normal person, nice to my mom, had a good job, so it was easier for my mom to accept it.

While Abbie was glad that things were working out better this time, her second girlfriend broke up with her, and she was devastated. IU even comforted her and tried to cheer her up, and Abbie thought even though the way IU showed her support was clumsy, it still meant IU had accepted her. However, when Abbie started a relationship

with a man, IU was elated, because Abbie has "finally got back on the right path of life." To Abbie's surprise, when she started dating a new girlfriend (her wife now), IU was enraged:

> Because, for her, I was messing around and lost again, it was almost as if I have to chugui all over again. I thought she understands I date both women and men, but I guess she thought I was just confused and a man 'salvaged' me from my confusion and then I relapsed. It was so annoying I had to start over again, and I wonder why she didn't get annoyed having to deal with the same problem twice.

Abbie did go through chugui again, and so far, has again reached a reconciled status where they do not fight about Abbie's bisexual identity. In Abbie's case, a bisexual person's dating choices set her back on the journey she had been on for long because the parent's lacking schema to process the idea of bisexual tongzhi, a common phenomenon seen in many parents' endeavors to reconcile. Lacking schema for sensemaking does not necessarily become an obstacle in this reconciling process, as can be seen in some stories in the "Compartmentalized acceptance" where parents might accept their tongzhi offspring and support them without understanding their offspring and their tongzhi identity, Abbie's story not only shows how the reconciliation process could be reset and they have to start over but also highlights the need for parents to build schemas in order to move on toward their goals.

Summary

In this chapter thus far, I described changes made to the original model of scaffolding to reconciliation (Jhang, 2018), and I substantiated the changes with stories from my interview participants and from discourses with which they do the relating. The original model is proposed to challenge the notion of "coming out disclosure" dominant

in the US-West European literature, a notion that assumes that an LGBTQ+ offspring plans the coming out in the form of formal disclosure, does the coming out (actual disclosure), and becomes out after the disclosure. My studies show, however, coming out is very differently understood and practiced in Taiwan, despite the term chugui (exit-closet) being shared and commonly used in Taiwanese tongzhi movement and tongzhi family relationship. Disclosure is often absent in Taiwan tongzhi's chugui, and the presence and absence of disclosure do not have a clear causal or correlational relationship with the status of being out. When a Taiwanese tongzhi says "I have come out," occasionally it means "I disclosed," but based on my data, it means something akin to "I've been accepted," the goal of the scaffolding to the reconciliation process. Consider the following statements:

> "A while after I chugui the first time to my dad, he got surprised when I talked about my tongzhi identity, and I was like, didn't I tell you already? It's true one person has to come out to his parents many times." (Charlie, 28, pansexual genderqueer)
>
> "I never told her directly, but she knows. She would sometimes ask me whether I have a girlfriend and sometimes tell me 'if you want to be with a man, that's ok too, as long as he treats you nicely.' I consider myself 2/3 chugui already." (Tommy, 26, gay man.)
>
> "When people ask me whether I have chugui, I don't really know how to answer.

Yes, I have disclosed, and my parents know for sure, and my mom still hasn't fully accepted me; she still wants me to marry a man. Does that mean I've chugui or not?" (Meadow, 34, pansexual woman)

These statements reveal that for Taiwanese tongzhi, chugui, exit-closet, the direct translation from coming out of the closet, does not mean only disclosure, but "chugui successfully" predicated on the status of "being accepted," and in this chapter, I have discussed now "being accepted" can manifest in different ways.

The original model (Jhang, 2018) argues that an offspring's tongzhi identity is problematic when there are discrepant expectations surrounding it, and the tongzhi offspring and parent would engage in a series of scaffolding endeavors to try to reconcile the discrepancy, hoping to pull the other side closer to themselves thus achieve their goal a reconciled stable family relationship where the offspring's tongzhi identity no longer causes conflicts: for parents, the ideal goal is that the offspring's tongzhi identity no longer causes conflicts because she is no longer tongzhi, or at least she behaves like a heterosexual; for the adult child, the ideal goal that her tongzhi identity no longer causes conflict because her parents have accepted her being tongzhi. This chapter details the adjustment made to the original model and proposed a revised model titled coming to terms/chugui in the family as scaffolding model.

Adjustments to the beginning of the scaffolding to reconciliation. Going back to the beginning of the process, the assumption for this model is that the parents' expectations for their offspring, and the expectation that offspring have for themselves should be congruent until proven otherwise, and an offspring's tongzhi identity is the

otherwise. In the first section in the chapter, I discussed how "proving otherwise" is how a person embarks on the journey of scaffolding to reconciliation, thus, starting the coming to terms process. Therefore, when a person senses something is "off" then this person starts the journey of reconciliation. This model formalizes parental suspicion or discovery as an integral part of chugui/coming out, and by formalizing it in the model, it legitimizes the parents' agency in this relationship. Once a parent starts to suspect their offspring to be different, or inadvertently found out something that indicates so, they start the long process of chugui. For an offspring, sensing something is different about herself compared to people around her is also when she embarks on the process of reconciliation as well. The importance of this finding is that it creates space for theorizing parents experience with or without a formal disclosure from the offspring, which is the common criterion for recruitment of parents of LGBTQ+ offspring in research studies. Even if the offspring turns out to be heterosexual, the parents' experience of potentially having a tongzhi offspring is still worth research attention.

Another important finding concerning the beginning of the journey if that, due to the asynchronous nature of their individual starting point, there is room for misreading and misjudging each other. For instance, an offspring might think that her father definitely knows about her tongzhi identity, and the fact that the father never explicitly says anything against tongzhi would be interpreted as this acceptance of her tongzhi identity. The offspring may thus assume there is no discrepancy to be reconciled, but later realized it is a misjudgment—the father might have never suspected her offspring to be tongzhi, or he actually is against tongzhi. On the contrary, an offspring may interpret the

parent's negative comment about tongzhi in general and interpret it as the parent's disapproval of herself and thus engage in unnecessary scaffolding endeavors, such as distancing herself from her parents out of the fear of exposure, while the parent might actually be fine with her own offspring being tongzhi. Stories included in the chapter show us that when suspicion and assumption take the place of actual communication, misjudgment is a common result, and yet the stigmatized tongzhi identity is a topic that cannot be casually talked about.

Adjustments to the course of the scaffolding to reconciliation. The second section in chapter four deals with the course of the journey of reconciliation, in which I argue that both parent and offspring engage in individual interpersonal process constant comparison of relating, consciously or subconsciously to make sense of their current situation. As a result of the comparison, they each engage in individual behavioral level scaffolding – *doing* something about the parent-offspring relationship to reconcile the discrepant expectations. The constant comparison of relating relies on personal, social, cultural, and political discourses. The five themes in constant comparison of relating include 1) personal experience as the baseline for comparison, 2) Social comparison, 3) measuring against the norms, 4) measuring against the authority and 5) putting things in perspective. I argue that people are constantly comparing, however, with no need to prove the validity or reliability; thus, people's constant comparison could be done with a single data point, confounded by emotions, and result in a fallacious decision. Also, since there may be multitude levels of comparison, people may be caught in competing discourses and thus vacillate in how they feel, what they want, and what they do.

In *personal experiences as the baseline for comparison*, a parent could push her tongzhi daughter to get married heterosexually because her own marriage is one that is purely practical but not based on love, or a mother could wish her tongzhi daughter not to get married heterosexually because her own experience in a heterosexual marriage is bad. In social comparison (Arroyo & Andersen, 2016; Festinger, 1954) people engage in upward or downward comparison to form evaluation of a situation. A mother may feel she has to accept her gay son because other people seem to be able to do that, and her failure to do so makes her feel like a failure. In measuring against the norm, dominant social-cultural discusses are used as a reference point for people to make sense of what they are dealing with. Such social-cultural discourses usually can be found when the participants say "everyone does this" "the society is like that." For example, compulsory marriage is an idea that marriage trumps obstacles and is the ultimate way to happiness, so a father might want his son to get married because that's just what do; what everyone else is doing has the normative power to make someone want to conform. In comparison against the authority, people may refer to the law, deity, or experts to decide what to do. And finally, in putting things in perspectives, something drastic and usually negative happens and help people let go of troubles they might have due to its insignificance in comparison to the dramatic event.

The third part of the course of the journey of reconciliation shifts the focus to identity intersectionality. Here I argue that the dominant LGBTQ+ identity-based framework is inadequate when examining Taiwanese tongzhi family relationship and the process of reconciliation. Rather, I propose three intersections of identity: biological sex

(son or daughter), Gender performance (normal or abnormal), and directional sexual orientation (monosexual or nonmonosexual). These three intersections provide a way to contextualize the process of reconciliation that the LGBTQ+ framework does not. For example, for parents with a tongzhi son, the pressure of patrilineage could prolong the process of reconciliation, and a gender-specific solution might be proposed: marring a foreign spouse. For a daughter, the negative experiences with the patriarchal system may make a mother come to terms with her daughter marrying a woman with more ease. The second intersection, gender performance, is key in how early a parent suspects his offspring's tongzhi identity. Thus, trans-performance complicates not only the beginning of the process of reconciliation, but it also influences how much a parent "polices" his offspring, or how much stigma they have to deal with. At yet, a cis-performance may also prolong the process of reconciliation because a parent may not comprehend how a cis-performing child could be tongzhi. Finally, whether a tongzhi only likes people of one sex or both has a significant impact on how the process of reconciliation unfolds. For example, an offspring who are attracted to both sexes may be pushed to "choose" a partner of the opposite sex while he is already in a relationship with a man. Parents' identities need to be viewed intersectionally, as well. Being a father and being a mother comes with different experiences and expectations, and thus has to be examined differently. Finally, the social class of the parents plays a role in shaping the course of the process. For example, a parent from low SES background and is struggling to support himself may not feel he has the power to intervene with his son's tongzhi identity, while

a parent from high SES background may want her daughter to not marry her same-sex partner in fear of the same-sex partner's entitlement to her inheritance.

Adjustments to the end goal of the scaffolding to reconciliation. Important adjustments to the original model are made concerning the "end goal" of the reconciliation/coming to terms. One of the most important findings is that the end goal of coming to terms may be an illusion, and the process may never end. The never-ending nature of coming to terms might be interpreted as "failure" in a tradition that values disclosure; however, this study refutes the notion of failure by highlighting how a functional family relationship could exist without full acceptance. Instead of understanding the lack of full acceptance as a failure, I argue that a compartmentalized or discounted acceptance could still be functional. Parents may compartmentalize their acceptance along the lines of emotion, attitude, behavior, and cognition, and thus, what the "acceptance" looks like vary case by case. For example, a parent might behaviorally accept his tongzhi offspring while holding onto the hope of having grandchildren like "normal" people, or a parent could support his tongzhi offspring without understanding the complexity of her identity. However, relationships change over time, and the compartmentalized acceptant takes on different forms as well. Two of the most prominent changes that took place lately are the November 2018 referendum and the May 2019 legalization of same-sex marriage. In this section, I detailed cases where the compartmentalized acceptance is challenged, some bringing the relationship closer to reconciliation, some pushing it further away. For parents, the acceptance may be compartmentalized, but it is acceptance, after all. On the other hand, for tongzhi

offspring, the acceptance may feel discounted, but some of them learn to adjust their goals and accept their parents' discounted acceptance.

Another reason the process may never end is because while one may feel she has reached the "end goal"— a reconciled stable relationship where her tongzhi identity does not cause trouble anymore, this status might be just temporary; when new challenges arise, including external challenges such as legal advances and internal challenges, such as moving on to the next stage of life by having an offspring, new process of reconciliation may be called for.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This dissertation is situated in a growing field of LGBTQ+ family communication studies, and by using data from Taiwan, it expands and challenges what we have known so far about LGBTQ+/tongzhi, family, and communication. It started with a simple question that resulted from the first research I did as a doctoral student. At that time, I wanted to study how Taiwanese tongzhi discursively negotiated forced conversations (other-initiated difficult conversations) with their family while attending to two goals: maintain their family relationship and maintain their closeted status. I recruited closeted tongzhi, I interviewed them, and I realized my naivete. Even though I am a tongzhi who grew up in Taiwan, and I had been volunteering in Taiwan Tongzhi Hotline Association for years, somehow, I applied the U.S. discourse of coming out to Taiwanese tongzhi uncritically, despite the incompatibility I always knew but never tried to articulate. In that study of closeted tongzhi, most of my participants had actually disclosed their tongzhi identity to their parents, their parents had found out on their own, or they had discussed or fought about it. They responded to my call for participants, nevertheless, and explained, "yes, I've told them, but I don't consider myself as 'out'."

What is coming out, then, if it is not disclosure?

The research question **How do families reconcile challenged expectations when a young adult offspring is tongzhi?** is deliberately worded to avoid using the phrase "coming out," and to hint at the fact that coming to terms is a process that involves expectations and reconciliation. And an extremely oversimplified answer to the research question can be found in very first story included at the beginning of the dissertation,

where a mother responded to the question "when did your daughter chugui to you?" with "Do you mean '**when did she tell me'** or '**when did I accept her'**?" This oversimplified answer is: chugui means *both* disclosure *and* acceptance. However, as chapter 4 has shown, the integral part of "having successfully chugui" (出櫃成功, chu gui cheng gong, exit-closet-success) is acceptance, while the disclosure is optional.

Using interviews from 40 Taiwanese tongzhi young adult and 13 Taiwanese parents of young adult tongzhi offspring, one-year field observation in Taiwan Tongzhi Hotline Association (2016-2017), as well as mass media texts collected from 2010-2019, this dissertation builds on the model of scaffolding in family (Jhang, 2018) to provide a yet necessarily elaborated delineation of chugui/exit-closet/coming out. It directly responds to the assumptions underlying the dominant coming out disclosure conceptualization: an overemphasis on the agency of the tongzhi individuals, the turning-point assumption, and coming out disclosure as the end goal. It also fills the gap in the literature about parent-offspring relationships that include parents' perspectives (Willoughby, Doty, & Malik, 2008). Additionally, it studies the relationship much later than any initial encounter (Merighi & Grimes, 2000), and adds to the much-needed diversity of family communication studies that researchers have called for (Brainer, 2017; Gattamorta et al., 2019).

Theoretical Implications

In the literature review section, I critiqued several persistent assumptions in current research on LGBTQ+/tongzhi operate with namely, and this dissertation addresses these assumptions directly. The assumptions include an overemphasis on the

agency of the LGBTQ+ individuals, the turning-point assumption (including the known/unknown dichotomy and the out/closeted dichotomy), as well as treating coming out as the end goal. Parent's agency, starting from their initial suspicion, their scaffolding efforts in trying to confirm, to intervene, to "correct" their tongzhi offspring, their taking actions to learn about tongzhi, to their unceasing adjusting of expectations, is an integral part in the reconciliation process. The results of this dissertation highlight the agency of the parents in the process of chugui/coming out, and they provide a new theoretical lens that conceptualizes chugui/coming out as a relational process. This relational process is what I call chugui, exit-closet, or coming out, a direct contrast from defining coming out with disclosure. By bringing to light the communicative and relational processes other than disclosure, this dissertation furthers the critique of the ideology of openness. Furthermore, this dissertation helps promoting the theoretical idea of relational selfhood, a concept that challenges yet complements the individual selfhood framework.

Legitimizing the agency of parents. In the study of LGBTQ+ relationships with their family of origin, research has disproportionally used data from the LGBTQ+ persons over that of the parents (Grafsky, 2014). Though research studies using data collected from parents have been increasing, and they provide important insights of how parents negotiate having a sexual and gender non-conforming offspring (e.g., Baiocco et al., 2015; Fields, 2001; LaSala, 2010), there are still significant theoretical biases that limit the understanding of parental experience in the process of coming out/chugui. The theoretical biases are founded on the conceptualization that disclosure is the key to LGBTQ+ youth identity formation and to healthy parent-LGBTQ+ offspring relationship

(Boxer, Cook, & Herdt, 1991; D'Augelli et al., 1998; Floyd, Stein, Harter, Allison, & Nye, 1999; Goldfried & Goldfried, 2001; Jordan & Deluty, 1998; LaSala, 2000; Savin-Williams & Dube, 1998; Waldner & Magruder, 1999). The problem with the theoretical biases is that since disclosure is an act done *by the offspring*, so without it, parents are not considered officially entering the realm of LGBTQ+/tongzhi family relationship.

However, it has been documented that parents had suspicions, inklings, had made inadvertent or purposeful discoveries, or was informed by a third party about their offspring's LGBTQ+ identity before disclosure actually takes place (Bailey, 1996, with participants from America cities unspecified; Ben-Ari, 1995, with participants from San Francisco; Hammersmith, 1987, with participants from unspecified America cities; Phillips & Ancis, 2008, with participants from southeastern United States; LaSala, 2010, with participants from northeastern region of the United States; Lee, M. M., & Lee, R. E., 2016, with participants from unspecified American city). Despite commonly reported, such suspicions, inadvertent or purposeful discoveries, and third-party informing have not been formally recognized as a part of coming out, but rather were reported anecdotally and given relatively minimal relevance in understanding the parent-offspring relationship.

I argue that the coming out/chugui process for parents actually starts with suspicions, inkling, inadvertent, or purposeful discoveries. With or without the offspring's disclosure, parents would have to deal with the possibility of having an offspring that is different from what they expect and hope for, one that breaks the rules made with heteronormative ideals. The emotions (fear, anger, sadness, shock, and worry)

are felt by parents and actions might be sought to "remedy" an offspring's tongzhi identity before or without the offspring's disclosure.

Therefore, by moving the start point of the LGBTQ+/tongzhi offspring-parent relationship from disclosure (initiated by the offspring) to suspicion and discovery (initiated by the parent), this dissertation creates a space for theoretical exploration surrounding parental agency in the chugui process. In fact, in other studies done with Taiwanese samples, disclosure has also been given a less central role while suspicion and discovery have been given more serious thoughts. Even though these studies may still use "coming out" to frame their study, they made it explicit that coming out in Taiwan has qualitative differences from coming out in US-Western Europe.

For example, In Lu C. R.'s (2013) study of chugui of Taiwanese tongzhi and parents, he aptly describes that "chugui is a process of indefinitely testing each other, and it is an iterative process that cannot be done with just one action (of disclosure)" (p. 20-21). Cheng M. L. (1997) and Bih (2003) also emphasized the processual nature of "chugui," arguing that when people think of coming out, they tend to picture a single event—disclosing one's tongzhi identity but chugui does not mean an event. Indefinitely testing could mean testing one's parents to gauge their attitude, and even if one does disclose verbally, there would still be indefinitely testing to see if the parents have become more accepting, or parents testing to see if their offspring could return to normal. Here, disclosure merely constitutes one part of chugui, while indefinitely testing plays a key role. It is important to make the distinction of describing chugui/coming out as a process. Some US-West European studies have similarly argued that coming out is an on-

going process and that coming out is a life-long work that never ends (e.g., Evans & Briodo, 1999; Mohler, 2000; Rhoads, 1995); however, the process they refer to is disclosing to *different people* across a lifetime, while the process and indefiniteness my research and other Taiwanese tongzhi chugui studies are arguing is *coming out/chugui to the same person* across a lifetime.

The parental agency is an important subject to study in LGBTQ+/tongzhi relationship because LGBTQ+/tongzhi identity affects not just the offspring, but it also poses great challenges for parents. My findings show that parents, once they started the suspicion or made discoveries, would start to question their assumptions about the world, the self, the offspring, and their relationship. They exercise their agency in dealing with the possibility of having a tongzhi offspring, be it seeking information to educate themselves or arranging blind-dates for their offspring. The tongzhi offspring may not actually disclose, but they nevertheless are dealing with chugui, such as testing one's parent's knowledge or bringing the same-sex partner home for dinner. Overall, my findings legitimize the agency of the parents, establish the processual and iterative nature of coming out/chugui, and relegate the importance of disclosure from the end goal to one of the many scaffolding endeavors that could be made in order to reconcile the discrepancy to reach the end goal of reconciliation.

Chugui: Coming to terms. On top of legitimizing suspicion and discovery made in early stages of chugui, the findings also formalize the processual nature of chugui/exit-closet, with the end goal of reconciliation that is understood as *coming to terms,* rather than *coming out*. This re-conceptualization contests the turning-point assumption and the

accompanying known/unknown dichotomy and the out/closeted dichotomy in this relational process. Outside the disclosure/nondisclosure axis exists a host of communicative phenomena that provide previous opportunities for researchers to understand interpersonal relationships. For example, the findings in this dissertation echo a new direction in studying interpersonal relationship manifested by the idea of functional ambivalence (Schrodt & Braithwaite, 2010), functional inattention (Caughlin, Mikucki-Enyart, Middleton, Stone, & Brown, 2011), strategic ambiguity (Goldsmith & Domann-Scholz, 2013), and theory of ambiguous loss (Boss, 1999, 2002, 2007) that centralize the reality of frayed in-betweens. This line of theorizing questions the normative idea of openness, closeness, and certainty, but my findings do not necessarily bolster the idea of the "dark side" of interpersonal relationship (Cupach & Spitzberg, 2010; Smith & Wilson, 2010; Spitzberg & Cupach, 1998). Rather, I argue that the ambiguity and ambivalence could be functional and are normative as well.

Coming back to chugui, in this dissertation, I established that chugui/exit-closet is a reconciliation process rather than a disclosure event. In this process, both parents and offspring seek reconciliation, though they may picture it differently in their mind. They each engage in various scaffolding efforts to try to pull the other closer to their goal in the process, with varying degree of success. They may move closer to the goal or further away based on the result of their scaffolding efforts. The end goal, a reconciled state means the parents have accepted that they have a tongzhi offspring and they are parents of a tongzhi offspring, and an offspring has accepted how their parents view her tongzhi identity, but such "acceptance" does not have one specific manifestation.

Rather, acceptance, as evidenced by stories included in chapter 4, takes on various shapes and forms, so what feels like acceptance for one person may seem like denial or rejection for the other. However, I argue that acceptance is compartmentalized, conditional, and discounted, hence the various shapes and forms. It is roughly overlapped but nonetheless two individual journeys that rely on each other. Also, reaching a reconciled state does not mean a person stops the process of chugui/exit-closet; they may come to terms with a reconciliation contingently and temporarily but will deal with future changes, whether it means more challenges or discrepancy to reconcile, or tackling the same obstacle yet again.

Relational selfhood. Another important contribution of this dissertation is to challenge the individualistic understanding of identity formation. Instead of understanding identity formation as an individualistic undertaking, an idea of relational selfhood (Bohan, 1996; Wang et al., 2009) is more apposite in understanding Taiwanese tongzhi and their family.

The findings show that both the parents and the offspring develop their sense of self with the other embedded in it. Parents' success is valued by how well their offspring turn out, such as whether their offspring marry well, how many their offspring procreate, whether they pass on the patrilineage, among other criteria such as job and income. As Meadow's (34, pansexual woman) mother (YH, 61) puts it "what's the point of money and personal achievement if you don't have children to pass it onto? That's not a success, that's pitiful." For offspring, their development of selfhood is also embedded in their family relationship. For example, stories discussed in the *social class* section show how

family finances are a lot of time co-owned by adult-offspring and their parents, and the co-ownership is made possible by mutually inclusive identity. Samantha (27, lesbian woman) holds off marrying her partner so as not to make her mother feel she is violating their shared family identity by inviting an outsider into this shared identity and shared the wealth. From stories included in the section "I just need you to show me something" it is also clearly seen how being embedded into the familial-kinship network is symbolically important to tongzhi offspring, such as Abbie's mother including Abbie's partner into prayer to the ancestor and Xavier's family included his cousin's partner into the family pedigree so his spirit could enter Xavier's family shrine after he dies. Moreover, the existence and the importance of the family registration system, and the symbolic (and legal) importance of being on the household registration booklet also supports the idea of relational selfhood

Just as researchers have cautioned us not to fall into the West/non-West binary when studying family, my arguing for viewing Taiwanese tongzhi family relationship through the lens of relational selfhood instead of the lens of individualist identity development is not an attempt of value judgment, nor is it an argument for forfeiting such individualistic identity development knowledge; there is still much to gain from applying that framework, but it has limited our understanding of the Taiwanese tongzhi family relationship. By lauding coming out disclosure as a milestone in an LGBTQ+ person's identify formation, the positive effects of coming out disclosure are" hinged upon notions of the individual as an independent, discrete unit segregated economically, socially, and geographically from the familial-kinship network" (Chou, 2001, p. 32).

Inviting conversation. So far, the discussion indicates to a cultural specificity of Taiwan and to the contribution to diversifying the family communication/LGBTQ+ studies; however, I argue that the findings do not only add to what we know but also challenge the existing framework. For example, parental suspicion and discovery have been found in U.S./West European literature; therefore, it is not a phenomenon specific to Taiwan. However, I argue that the centrality given to coming out disclosure is limiting not only our knowledge of LGBTQ+ family in different cultural contexts such as Taiwan but also in the U.S./West European. Evidence can be found in how studies are designed to exclude parents and LGBTQ+ offspring who have not yet made the verbal disclosure, skewing the cumulative data toward only those who experienced this precise communicative behavior.

For example, Rossi (2010)'s study of "coming out" stories of gay and lesbian youth recruited participants from an unspecified American city in the northeast, and among the 55 youth that responded, one was excluded because he/she "never came out to his/her parents" (p. 1179). In Ben-Ari (1995) seminal work of parental experience of their children's coming out, both parents and children were recruited, but on the premise that verbal disclosure has been made, and the recruitment criteria for parents specified "parents had to know (not just suspect) that they had a homosexual son or daughter" (p. 308). Baiocco et al. (2015) recruited gay and lesbian individuals who "have already revealed their sexual orientation to both parents" (p. 1492); Goodrich's (2009) study of the process of identifying as a heterosexual parent with a lesbian, gay, or bisexual child recruited parents "who had achieved success since their child's disclosure" (p. 40);

Grafsky's (2014) on become the parent of a GLB son or daughter studied parents who "had a child who was between the ages of 14 and 21 when the child disclosed their sexual orientation to them. This disclosure had to have occurred within the past five years" (p. 40); Goodrich and Gilbride's (2010) on the outcome for parental experience restricted to parents whose "child has come out to the parent" (p. 96). Even research specifically studying non-Caucasian American also relied on disclosure to decide eligibility, such as Gattamorta et al.'s (2019) study of Hispanic parental experiences of learning a child identifies as a sexual minority, their participants' "child's age at the time of disclosure ranged from 14 to 33" (p. 154.).

A few examples from Taiwan show different recruitment requirements that did not specify or require having made disclosure/come out by the time of research. Wang, Bih, and Brennan's (2009) study titled "have they really come out? Gay men and their parents in Taiwan" recruited 32 participants, and about half of them have not yet made any disclosure attempts. Even though they used the term "coming out," they accurately argued that "gay men and their parents engage in a never-ending battle, with coming out itself being a never-ending process" (p. 289). In Lin and Hudley's (2009) study of Taiwanese mothers' reactions to learning that their child is lesbian or gay, they did not specify the participation eligibility regarding the child having made disclosures, and among the eight mothers that participated in the study, only four of them knew about their child's tongzhi identity because the child made disclosure. An example from the neighboring country, Japan, saw a similar result. Tamagawa's (2018) study of coming out to parents in Japan also did not specify that the participants (LGBT young adult) need to

have already “come out” in order to participate, and among the 136 survey responses, only 60% have come out, even though what it meant to “come out” did not equate disclosure as my study found. Rather, the “having come out” described in Tamagawa (2018) leans more toward “having been accepted” For example, one participant, Mina “came out” to her mom in high school but was not accepted, so she tried it again later, “this time Mina did not give in to her mother’s unreasonable demands until her mother finally accepted *her second coming-out*” (p. 507, my emphasis).

Undoubtedly, there are significant counter-examples, such as Philips and Ancis (2008) in which they recruit parents whose children have not made disclosure, Denes and Afifi (2014), where they theorize about coming-out again, or “re-disclosure,” and Saltzburg (2004) who recruited parents whose children have made disclosure, but found that the very first theme of being a parent of a lesbian or gay child of the five themes she found was " awareness that their child was different” before the disclosure was ever made. However, the common recruitment of participants or US-West European studies on LGBTQ+ and their parents still favor those who have experienced disclosure. This phenomenon invites a question, then: Would it be possible that the suspicion and discovery formalized in my study, and the indefinite and iterative nature of the coming out process are actually experienced by U.S./West European families, only that their voices are marginalized, stories underrepresented, due to the dominant methodological design based on the coming out disclosure assumptions? I think the answer is quite possible.

Adding to the researchers that caution against the overemphasis on "coming out" thus flattening other complex family dynamics (Bertone & Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2014; Brainer, 2017; Green, 2000), this study invites researchers to examine their understanding of coming out and disclosure and explore voices at the margin that experience family relationship differently.

The feminist reading in family communication. One rather surprising finding in this dissertation regards the mother-tongzhi daughter relationship. In most studies on disclosure, including LGBTQ+ coming out/tongzhi chugui, it is repeatedly found that mothers are more likely than fathers to be disclosed to, and mothers usually are disclosed to earlier than fathers are, if at all. However, in LGBTQ+ coming out literature, it has been reported that mothers, contrary to common belief, could respond very negatively. For example, Savin-Williams and Dubé (1998) found that mothers are more likely to verbally abuse an offspring after the offspring disclose the sexual minority status, and mothers are particularly harshly negative to a lesbian daughter; similarly, Willoughby, Malik, and Lindahl (2006) and Conley (2011) have also found that mothers react more negatively than fathers when learning an offspring is a sexual minority, and Baiocco et al. (2015) found that mothers indeed reacted more negatively to having a sexual minority offspring, especially a lesbian daughter. Undeniably, there are of course studies that found the opposite, with mothers being the more accepting ones (Armesto & Weisman, 2001; Ben-Ari, 1995; Boxer et al., 1991; D'Augelli & Gasfsky, 1993; D'Augelli, Pilkington, & Hershberger, 2002; Maguen, Floyd, Bakeman, Arminstead, 2002), and

while my findings are adding to the contradictory findings, it has a significant cultural undertone.

Admittedly, parents that I interviewed are in later stages of their reconciliation process, and thus the finding has restricted comparability to the findings of initial parental reaction (but again, there is much more research on initial parental reaction than the parent-offspring relationship in a later stage), but it is worthy of discussion nonetheless. Several mothers in my study found their daughters' tongzhi identity (lesbian or bisexual) to be liberating because it means they have a well-justified reason not to enter a heterosexual marriage. As discussed in chapter 4, inside the patriarchal system in Taiwan, women's experiences are usually negative, because once they marry out (嫁出去 jia chu qu), they are no longer considered members in their natal family, and they have to shoulder most of the caretaking responsibility, serving their husbands, parents-in-law, siblings-in-law, on top of their ultimate responsibility to give birth to a son. Several mothers that I interviewed had such negative experience as a daughter-in-law, the lowest possible position in a patriarchal kinship system, that they would rather their daughters stay out of it. If a daughter is heterosexual, her singlehood or her delaying marrying a man she is in a relationship with would need to be justified, but a lesbian/bisexual daughter has a legitimate reason to circumvent a heterosexual marriage but not marriage altogether—they can marry their same-sex partner. For a mother that wants her daughter married, but not enter the patriarchal kinship system and follow the scripts written for her, same-sex marriage becomes a viable, and even preferred, option.

In Kandiyoti's (1988) canonical work "Bargaining with patriarchy," she argued that in classic patriarchy (found in North Africa, the Muslim Middle East, and South and East Asia), women's status increases with giving birth to a son and with age, so many of them engage in a passive resistance to this oppressive system waiting to become mothers-in-law, as expressed in a proverb Chinese proverb "A daughter-in-law must suffer to become a mother-in-law" (媳婦熬成婆 Hsi-Fu-Au-Cheng-Puo) (Lan, 2000, p. 13). My findings, however, show that mothers of tongzhi daughters are resisting the system with their daughters as a proxy – by not pushing their daughters to marry heterosexually, or even urging them not to, they are protesting a system they have suffered under. They disrupted the system through forfeiting their duty as mothers that should help sustain the patrilineage.

However, this resistance is gendered: mothers might still push their sons to marry heterosexually, sometimes through marrying in a foreign spouse that are usually from poorer neighboring countries. These women would seek marriage migration opportunities by marrying Taiwanese men who are of lower social-economic status, and such practiced has been criticized for being commodifying women (Sung, 2012; Wang, H. Z., 2007). Some mothers of my tongzhi participants, however, want their sons to fulfill their patriarchal obligations by marrying a foreign spouse. No such proposition is made or is available to women. Ironically, some mothers participate in the transnationally patriarchal oppression by urging their tongzhi sons to marry, while some mothers engage in patriarchal bargaining by "freeing" their daughters from entering the system.

Not only do tongzhi sons and daughters get different treatment, it is interesting to note that none of the dozen fathers I interviewed, observed, or talked about by the tongzhi participants made comments about not wanting the daughter to marry heterosexually because they do not want them to suffer as a subservient daughter-in-law, nor did any of them suggest that their tongzhi sons marry a foreign spouse so as to continue the patrilineage. It might be due to the very different lived experience in a patriarchal kinship system. In a patrilocal society like Taiwan, a woman moves to her husband's family, rarely the opposite. Even if the other family members treat a son's wife nicely, she still has to forgo her identity, position, connections with her natal family and enter a family as a stranger who performs the most intimate and laboring tasks. Maybe women in Taiwan still fulfilled her intergenerational family obligation by taking care of her parents-in-law and sometimes even care for in-laws after she gets divorced from her husband or after the husband passed away; some even paid the debt for the divorced or deceased husband, something that is rarely done by a man for his in-laws (Coleman, Ganong, & Cable, 1997).

Another explanation is child rearing is considered a mother's job, and mother usually takes on more emotional labor of paying close attention to the offspring's wellbeing and make sure the offspring follows the rule and have good achievement. A mother does the invisible work that is masked under the name of love (Daniels, 1987; Lan, 2000; Lorber, 1994). Therefore, she also shoulders the responsibility to make sure the son follows the rules and continue the patrilineage. While these findings do not apply

to all parents, they underline the importance of attending to the intersectionality of identity in studying tongzhi family communication.

Applying the model of coming to terms in family as scaffolding. Even though the phrase chugui/exit-closet/coming out has been, and will continue to be, used as part of the common lexicon regarding tongzhi, researchers and practitioners alike should be aware of the difference in coming out as disclosure and processual chugui. By using the model of coming to terms/chugui in family as scaffolding, tongzhi (especially of the younger generations) who believe disclosure could bring about positive and definitely changes could avoid the frustration that results from "not moving forward" "parents pretending I never made that disclosure" or even "moving backward." By putting disclosure as a part of the scaffolding endeavors, rather than the end goal, Taiwanese tongzhi and parents of tongzhi could have a more realistic and locally grounded way to understand their relationship.

This model may be used in other types of reconciling discrepant expectations a in parent-offspring relationship. For example, an offspring's decision to convert to a different religion or a parent's decision to remarry could be understood using this model, even a heterosexual offspring's choice of partner could lead to discrepant expectations that need reconciliation. For example, different kinds of intergenerational family conflict might be studied using the model of coming to terms/chugui in family as scaffolding, including religious change between parents and adult offspring (Colaner, Soliz, & Nelson, 2014; Lewis, 2012; Morgan, 2019b), political differences between parents and adult offspring (Jennings, Stoker, & Bowers, 2009; Terriquez & Kwon, 2015), an adult

offspring's career choice that the parents disapprove of (Ghosh & Fouad, 2016; Ma & Yeh, 2005; Ma, Desai, George, Filippo, & Varon, 2014; Rahman, 2014), parental disapproval of an adult offspring's heterosexual mate choice (Apostolou, 2009; Buunk, Park, & Dubbs, 2008; Dubbs & Buunk, 2010). In fact, these conflicts were discussed by my participants, as well. While more data is needed to examine the feasibility of the model of coming to terms/chugui in family as scaffolding in these different parent-adult offspring conflict, the heuristics of the model could provide a framework to investigate the conflict.

For example, Morgan (2019b) found that when an adult offspring and the parents have ideological dissimilarity in terms of different religious view, an adult offspring engaged in communicative behaviors and understanding similar to what I found in the chugui process; namely, they used incremental disclosure as part of their scaffolding efforts (Petronio, 2002), set the goal for acceptance while realizing some parts of their differences may never be reconciled. These difficult family process share similarities, such as the parents desire for control clashing with the offspring's desire for autonomy (Tannen, 1986), and they also show how family relationship extend beyond a lifetime—in family religious conflicts, the parents' may be concerned about whether their offspring are going to the same in the afterlife, in Taiwan tongzhi family relationship, the parents may be concerned their tongzhi offspring will not have a place in the family shrine after they die, resulting for their soul to be forever lost in the limbo. As intangible and they may seem, such concerns are nevertheless valid and consequential in how the family member maintain their relationship. Other family conflicts such as a heterosexual

offspring's mate choice could cause as much trouble as having an LGBTQ+/tongzhi offspring. For example, parents may object when a heterosexual offspring decides to marry someone from a lower social and economic status, someone who is orphaned, whose parents are incarcerated, or someone who is disabled due to the stigma attached to these different identities and circumstances. Even though all stigmas are not the same, there is similarity in stigma management (Roschelle & Kaufman, 2004) that are seen in the model of coming to terms/chugui in family as scaffolding. Overall, the potential transferability of the model to study other family problems and processes indicates the rigor of this model (Hoepfl, 1997; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Practical Implications

In chapter 4, I delineated the constant comparison of relating as part of the scaffolding process. Using the psychological comparing, one makes sense of a situation they are in, consciously or subconsciously, and then decide what to do about it (the scaffolding efforts). One can compare a situation against her own experience, upward or downward compare to make an evaluation of the situation at hand. Sometimes people compare against the norms, which include dominant cultural discourses, and sometimes people compare against the authority, and finally when something drastic happens, then the situation at hand becomes insignificant.

One way to help parents of tongzhi offspring and parents of tongzhi offspring to ease out the reconciliation process is to assist them in this constant comparison process, and there are several ways that practitioners do so. Practitioners could be therapists, counselors, mediators, tongzhi organization, and support group, among others.

Make the constant comparison process explicit. People might engage in constant comparison subconsciously, and when the result of the constant comparison is a dysfunctional (e.g., a mother envying her friend's son getting married thus she also wants her son to get married too; a tongzhi offspring engages in self-harm so that her parents would think being tongzhi is not a big deal), it could be helpful to help them see the comparison process: what are you comparing the situation with, why are you doing so, and is the scaffolding effort you made helping you move toward reconciliation or not?

Build schemas. Schemas are "a framework of familiar and pre-acquainted knowledge about various situations" (Nishida, 1999, p. 754) that "contains general knowledge about that domain, including specification of the relationships among its attributes, as well as specific examples or instances of the stimulus domain" (Taylor & Crocker, 1981, p. 91). Based on the schema theory, Honeycutt and Cantrill (2001) proposed the idea of relational schemata, which are "knowledge structures that help us remember, organize, and interpret information about relationships" (Honeycutt & Cantrill, 2001, as cited in Kellas, 2010). Schema helps people process information about their world, and thus lacking it might be problematic.

Throughout chapter 4, there are several stories that reflect the importance of building schema. For example, in the discussion of compartmentalized acceptance, Catherine's (36, lesbian woman) and Richard's (35, gay man) stories show how parents' lack of understanding could hamper acceptance and even incite fear, anger, and conflict; while lacking the schema does not necessarily lead to negative outcomes, such as in Dorothy's (65, mother of a 38 year-old lesbian daughter) story, where she does all she

can to support her daughter and other tongzhi offspring, her lacking schema to process her daughter's inability to marry normally is sorrow deep in her heart she always holds onto; in the discussion of the incompatibility of the LGBTQ+ identity-based framework in study Taiwan tongzhi family communication, Charlie's (28, pansexual genderqueer) story shows how their father's lack of schema to comprehend Charlie's well-planned chugui prolongs the reconciliation process; in the same section, how Meadow's (34, pansexual woman) mother, YH's lacking mental schema to understand two feminine woman as a couple fuel their conflicts because Meadow felt invalidated because her mom does not believe she was serious about her girlfriend who does not fit the masculine-feminine couple script.

Thus, helping parents build mental schema surrounding various issues they may or they have encountered should help them move along the reconciliation process. For example, practitioners, tongzhi organizations or support group could show the parents different kinds of tongzhi and tongzhi couple, even tongzhi couple with offspring, so they can start building mental pictures and storing knowledge to build their schema.

Not only should parents build new schemas on moving along the reconciliation process, so should tongzhi offspring. Offspring, in general, see their parents just as "their parents" rather than an individual that grows up in certain time and location with certain sets of conditions and limitation; they often fail to see their parents' individuality but only see them through the role of parents. Such narrow view, however, could hinder the reconciliation process, for example, if the offspring fails to see the parents as struggling to comprehend and only interpret the lack of acceptance as the lack of love. Therefore,

helping tongzhi offspring to see their parents as individuals should also help them build schemas about their parents as an individual who has their own passions, preferences, and baggage, so the offspring could engage in the process of reconciliation in a manner that is realistically grounded.

One caveat in helping parents and tongzhi offspring build schema, however, is to be cautious not to instead create cruel optimism (Berlant, 2011), which is a condition where one person chases an ideal without realizing the very act of chasing the idea impedes the desired improvement, and instead resulting in intense negative self-view. Catherine (36, lesbian woman) once showed her mother AE a video made by the tongzhi organization she volunteers in. The video features a mother of a lesbian daughter, and the mother talks about how she fully supports her daughter and invite all parents of tongzhi offspring to love and accept their offspring. Catherine was only showing it to her mother because it was a project she worked on, but after viewing the video, AE simply said: "come on, this is too idealistic." Catherine interpreted her mother's response as "real mothers can't do that" which really boils down to "I can't do that," and Catherine was worried that tongzhi and parents of tongzhi who are still early in the process of reconciliation would despair when they see this video.

In one of the support group meetings held by the tongzhi organization where I did my fieldwork, Dana (61, mother of a 33-year-old bisexual son) shared her story about her son showing her the film *Prayers for Bobby* (2009). Due to the story depicted in this movie (based on a true story, Prayer for Bobby tells the story of a gay youth who was outed by his brother to their extremely religious mother, and after he was outed, the

mother did all she could to "correct" him and "pray the gay away" and Bobby finally killed himself; after his suicide, his mother, devastated, started to learn about LGBTQ, and finally became an LGBTQ+ rights activist). Many tongzhi offspring show this movie to their parents in hopes that they would become accepting of their tongzhi identity; in fact, Milton (27, gay genderqueer) is one of many tongzhi offspring that showed this movie to their parents to "show them a good example." However, Dana's reaction to having the film shown to her was anger, "as if I was being blackmailed, like my son is telling me if I don't accept him, he's going to commit suicide." The two examples (AE and Dana) should serve as cautionary tales for practitioners to be wary of the possibility of cruel optimism.

Beware of polysemy. Polysemy, a rhetorical concept, examines how "'different elements of a single text' can develop 'two or more meanings for that text'" (Ceccarelli, 1998, p. 411, as cited in Goldsmith & Domann-Scholz, 2013, p. 268). As discussed in chapter 4, words such as marriage, family, love, openness can be polysemy, resulting in people using the same vocabulary but talking past each other and getting more frustrated with each other. The discussion of how acceptance is compartmentalized, conditional, and discounted illustrates the acceptance is a polysemy, where different elements of it created multiple meaning, with each person accessing only one part of the multiple meaning thus creates conflicts and misunderstanding. One way to use polysemy to the advantage of moving along in the process of reconciliation is to help people realize the existence of polysemy, to articulate what they mean when they say a certain word or what

they expect when they hear a certain word. In fact, even the phrase coming out is a polysemy and needs to be used with caution.

What drastic legal changes mean to families? The final contribution I would like to discuss is how this dissertation shows the family dynamics during legal and social upheavals. In *challenging the compartmentalization* section, I discussed how the major legal events could become opportunities for tongzhi offspring and their family members to seek and provide support and acceptance, or they could expose more discounted acceptance and thus curtail progress on the reconciliation journey (e.g., the constitutional decision on the unconstitutionality of the ban on same-sex marriage in May 24, 2017, the referendum in November, 24, 2018, the legislative decision among three bills for same-sex couples' legal rights on May 17, 2019 and the effective date of the new bill on May 24, 2019). Family relationship for tongzhi and their parents are thus tested and changing because of the legal changes, and more changes are predicted to follow due to the still strong opposition power in the society, and thus practitioners should be aware of these changes and explore what they mean for tongzhi and family of tongzhi, as well as devise plans to help them navigate the changes.

The findings also point out the mismatch: how the law defines a same-sex marriage and constitutes "family" might not be the same as how people understand and enact their family making. The fact that the "same-sex marriage" law actually does not cover all legal rights as it does heterosexual couples becomes a double-edged sword. For example, there are no legally defined in-laws for same-sex married couples, and it might be viewed as emancipating from the patriarchal kinship system, but it could also mean

same-sex married couple could be rejected by their extended family. Therefore, practitioner, tongzhi rights groups, and lawmakers should take into account the different meanings and ramification of such unequal legal protection.

Limitations

The average age of parents whose stories are included in this dissertation is 59.4 (SD = 6.3), and the average tongzhi offspring whose stories are included in this dissertation is 30 (SD = 5); thus, the results are based on two specific generations. Different cohorts would have very different experiences, and the dominant discourses of each generation vary, so the specifics or even the model itself might have limited feasibility. For example, Brainer's (2018) cross-generational ethnography of "coming out" in Taiwan found that older generation tongzhi (those who are 60 and older) view chugui very differently from younger generation tongzhi (those who are around 30 years old). For older tongzhi, they generally do not concern themselves with chugui. Many of them enter heterosexual marriage and fulfill their patriarchal obligation, and they do not see marriage and romantic relationship as an entity; thus, chugui is irrelevant to living their lives. Another reason is that their parents and family simply lack the schema to comprehend tongzhi; thus, chugui, for many of them, is something that simply is not necessary. Quite the opposite to that, the younger generation (the generation that my tongzhi participants are of) views chugui as a must, a necessary rite of passage, and an integral part to a healthy family relationship. While the older generation views tacit communication (not explicitly talking about their tongzhi identity and tongzhi

relationship as a sign of considerateness), younger generation views it as inauthentic, keeping distance, and thus needs to be addressed (Brainer, 2017, 2019).

Another limitation is that all of my participants are Han Taiwanese who are of Chinese descent, as opposed to the aboriginal Taiwanese. Their experiences should be qualitatively different from those of the Han Taiwanese. For example, some aboriginal tribes follow matriarchy, and they are collectively of lower social ecomania status due to multiple oppression spanning the past few centuries. They also have different belief systems for which being tongzhi would have different implications. Among the Han Taiwanese whose studies I included, there are local Taiwanese and the "Mainlanders"– those whose ancestor migrated to Taiwan prior to 1949 and those who migrated to Taiwan in and after the 1949 Chinese Civil War. Even among the local Taiwanese, there are several different ethnicities, including Hakka and Hoklo (Yang & Chang, 2010). Among my participants, there are people of the three Han ethnicities (Mainlander, Hakka, Hoklo), and they would refer to their ethnicity or someone's ethnicity in their storytelling, and yet, due to the limit of the study design, I did not pursue ethnicity in their storytelling. Future research could tackle the intersection of ethnicity and tongzhi identity in Taiwan.

Even though this dissertation is not claiming generalizability, the participants' makeup may skew the findings in certain ways. Among the 17 parents whose stories are included in this dissertation, only three are fathers. Two fathers are recruited through the tongzhi parents' support group, and all three of them are very accepting of their tongzhi offspring, so their experiences are mostly likely dissimilar to most fathers of Taiwanese

tongzhi offspring. Moreover, there is only one bisexual man as opposed to ten bisexual women in this study, so the bisexual experiences are mostly based on bisexual women's lived experiences while more data is needed from bisexual men to have a fuller understanding. Similarly, there are no intersex participants, so the intersectional identity of son or daughter does not fully capture the experience of an intersex person. Overall, the data in the dissertation rely heavily on stories of women and should be read with this caution in mind.

Future Directions

This dissertation focused on the chugui process for Taiwanese, but as discussed in *inviting conversation* in this section, the centrality of disclosure in studying LGBTQ+ family communication as well as other invisible stigmatized identities (Pachankis, 2007) should be challenged. Future research on invisible stigmatized identity, such as LGBTQ, HIV+ status, learning disability, past traumatic experiences, should be expanded outside the framework of disclosure/nondisclosure. Moving toward that direction, future research could focus on those who do not wish to disclose or do not view disclosure as a crucial step in their identity and relationship, or whose relational processes are complicated with or without disclosure. Some data from this study indicate the political and national identity are changing drastically between the two generations, and I would continue the study of intergenerational family conflict in that direction to see if the scaffolding process is applicable or whether there are specific processes, concerns, communicative strategies and behaviors in each type of conflict. Given cohort differences are salient in studying intergenerational family relationship, I would continue the study of chugui in the family

processes of younger tongzhi (e.g., adolescence) and younger parents (e.g., those under the age of 40). Overall, this dissertation invites more scholars in communication studies and other fields to continue the research on changing the family relationship, parents-adult offspring relationship, and families outside the US-West European cultural contexts.

Conclusion

This project redefines coming out to be coming to terms with a model of coming to terms/chugui in family as scaffolding. Using data from both parents and tongzhi offspring, the model provides a fuller picture of the parent-offspring relationship when an offspring is tongzhi, and the discourse analysis provides the background to contextualize the parent-offspring relationship. The findings denote Taiwan's specificity, and yet they also could be applied to U.S./West European contexts; indeed, I invite scholars to challenge their understanding of coming out and LGBTQ+ with the help of my findings.

GLOSSARY

Adopted daughter-in-law, *tong yang xi*, 童養媳, a young girl given away to be raised by her future husband's family

Chuan zong jie dai, 傳宗接代, passing down the patrilineage

Guai, 乖, polite, rule-following, tame

Chugui, 出櫃, exit-closet, the translated Mandarin term of *coming out of the closet*

Gu niang miao, 姑娘廟, maiden temple, a temple for female ghosts who die unmarried so their souls could be taken care of

Household Registration Booklet, 戶口名簿, a legal document recording members of each household; each family has one such booklet

Marry in, *qu jin lai*, 娶進來. In a patrilocal system, a man acquires a woman as a wife, so he married "in" a woman who moves to his house as a wife and daughter-in-law.

Marry out, *jia chu qu,* 嫁出去. In a patrilocal system, a woman is given away by marriage to live in her husband's house as a wife and daughter-in-law, so she is married "out."

Men dang hu dui, 門當戶對, marriage of the matching doors, a belief and practice that marriage should take place between two households of similar class and social-economic status

Minghun, 冥婚, spirit marriage, a kind of arranged marriage between an unmarried

female ghost and a living or deceased man so the unmarried female's soul could be taken care of in the man's family shrine, even if the man is already married

Na xiang de, 拿香的, the incense holder, a son that continues the patrilineage

Patrilineal ancestor memorial tablet, 神主牌, a tablet recording the patrilineage of a household put on the family shrine and gravesite for offspring to pray to

Tongzhi, 同志, same-goal, comrade, a generic terms for gender and sexual minority

Tong xing lian, 同性戀, same-sex romance, homosexual

Quan fu ren, 全福人, a fully lucky person (also *haomingren*, 好命人, a person with a good fortune), an older woman whose parents and husband are still alive, has at least one daughter and one son, and has never been divorced; she performs several key customs during a wedding, such as distributing food to the bride and the groom while reciting lucky phrases. A *quan fu ren* at a wedding is considered to bring good luck to the newly wed.

Hao ming ren, 好命人, a person with a good fortune. See *quan fu ren*.

Xianghuo, 香火, the incense and fire in the ancestral hall, a metonym to refer to "having offspring to keep lighting the incense and burning the spirit money the ancestral hall," which means that the family has sons to continue patrilineage

Xinghun, 型婚, formality marriage, a marriage between a gay man and a lesbian woman, who get married and perform a wedding and, in some cases, even have offspring to fulfill their filial duty

Zhong nan qing nv, 重男輕女, son preference

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