

## **UC Berkeley**

### **Cross-Currents: East Asian History and Culture Review**

#### **Title**

Examining Cultural Discourses in Taiwanese Gender and Sexual Minority/Tongzhi Family-of-Origin Relationships

#### **Permalink**

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/4mj439jk>

#### **Journal**

Cross-Currents: East Asian History and Culture Review, 1(33)

#### **Author**

Jhang, JhuCin

#### **Publication Date**

2019-12-01

**Examining Cultural Discourses in Taiwanese Gender and Sexual  
Minority/*Tongzhi* Family-of-Origin Relationships**

JhuCin Jhang, University of Texas, Austin

Jhang, JhuCin. 2019. "Examining Cultural Discourses in Taiwanese Gender and Sexual Minority/*Tongzhi* Family-of-Origin Relationships." *Cross-Currents: East Asian History and Culture Review* 33: 115–142. <https://cross-currents.berkeley.edu/e-journal/issue-33/jhang>.

**Abstract**

With Taiwan's same-sex marriage bill advancing, LGBTQ/*tongzhi* Taiwanese are rejoicing in the progress being made but have become exhausted in combating protests from their opponents. They also must reconcile conflicts with their families of origin stemming from discrepant expectations regarding life, family, marriage, and so on. To understand this reconciliation process, scholars must investigate how the discrepant expectations are formed. Using critical discourse analysis to analyze interview data, field observation, and cultural texts, this article identifies three sets of discourses: heteronormativity/homonormativity, patriarchy, and compulsory marriage. In Taiwan, heteronormativity manifests in the term *zhengchang* (正常, normal, sane, regular), which stipulates that human beings are heterosexual; homonormativity is an assimilation of heteronormative ideals into *tongzhi* culture and identity. Patriarchy includes a patrilineal and patrilocal system that organizes Taiwanese daily life. Compulsory marriage accentuates how marriage operates as an imperative, unavoidable, and prescribed force in Taiwanese culture that banishes and punishes *tongzhi* for their unsuitability for the heteronormative/homonormative patriarchal marriage. Responding to the call for more studies outside the U.S.-Western European contexts, the author of this article sheds light on cultural discourses that help shape the discrepant expectations, and the findings help LGBTQ/*tongzhi* studies in other cultures to develop contextualized theorization.

**Keywords:** Taiwan, LGBTQ family communication, heteronormativity, homonormativity, patriarchy, compulsory marriage, *tongzhi*

"Just be normal; be like everyone else; just don't be different. Is that so hard?"

"Love is overrated. Find a man who's got money and is *guai* [乖, well-behaved, upright] and marry him, because when you get old, even if there were love, love would die, but financial security will remain."

"I must show my true self to my family; otherwise, my life is just a lie."

"If my parents really love me, they will accept me regardless of my sexuality."

Taken from interviews with Taiwanese LGBTQ+/*tongzhi* 同志<sup>1</sup> and Taiwanese parents with LGBTQ+/*tongzhi* offspring, these quotes provide a glimpse of the expectations behind LGBTQ+/*tongzhi* family relational work—what parents want from their children, and what children want from their parents. When these expectations, wants, and needs are mismatched, they become land mine in LGBTQ+/*tongzhi* family relationships, causing conflict, tension, and even estrangement (Jhang 2018). Thus, it is imperative for researchers to understand how these expectations, wants, and needs are formed and how they inform the family reconciliation process when an adult child is a gender and sexual minority, or *tongzhi*. Are these expectations specific to Taiwanese culture, or are they shared by other neighboring cultures or even geographically and historically distant societies? What are the implications of these discourses in understanding gender and sexual minorities/*tongzhi* in Taiwanese, and, by extension, in understanding the culture in which they are situated?

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

On May 24, 2017, Taiwan's Constitutional Court ruled the nonrecognition of same-sex marriage unconstitutional, and it mandated that the legislature amend or create laws, within two years, that recognize same-sex marriage. This ruling pushed the *tongzhi* rights movement in Taiwan to a new peak, bringing waves of excitement 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 to get married and even start a family *legally*? How do *tongzhi* deal with their family relationships in light of the new legal advances? How do parents of *tongzhi* adjust their expectations now that their offspring can get married and even have children of their own? How should parents position themselves in this new form of an extended family if their offspring marry their same-sex partner and have children?

To understand the road to marriage equality in Taiwan, it is necessary to go back a few decades. In 1986, Mr. Chi Chia-Wei, the first openly gay person in Taiwan, applied

---

<sup>1</sup> In this article, the term *tongzhi* is used instead of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, or questioning, or other (LGBTQ+), or related acronyms, when referring to people and culture of Taiwan, as in *tongzhi* issues, parents of *tongzhi* offspring, or Taiwanese *tongzhi*. Even though "*tongzhi*" has been equated with LGBTQ+ to mean homosexuality or other nonconforming sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender performance, the two phrases have inherently different meanings and relational implications (Lin and Hudley 2009; Martin 2000). The dominant identity-based framework of LGBTQ+ is internationally recognizable and provides an accessible first step to make sense of the complex nature of identity formation and categorization in political advocacy, but its applicability to non-U.S./Western European cultural contexts has been questioned (Brainer 2018; Chou 2000, 2001; Engebretsen and Schroeder 2015; Lau et al. 2017). When discussing the extant literature, I use LGBTQ+ or other terms used in specific studies. I use *tongzhi* when referring to Taiwanese individuals and culture.

for, and was subsequently denied, a marriage license from the Taipei District Court notary office. This highly publicized act of civic resistance was subdued when Chi's appeal to the Legislative Yuan was rejected, with the ruling calling homosexuals "sexually deviant and abnormal" (Lee 2016). His second attempt, in 2000, met a similar fate. In 2001, 2003, and 2006, the Ministry of Justice, Office of the President, and a legislator (Ms. Hsiao Bi-Khim from the Democratic Progressive Party; hereafter, DPP) proposed bills granting protection and recognition of same-sex marriage, but none made substantial progress (V. Hsu 2015). During this time, *tongzhi* lived relatively low-profile lives (Brainer 2019).

It was not until 2013 that the issue of same-sex marriage started to receive constant mainstream media coverage, which pushed the topic of sexual orientation and same-sex marriage not only to legislative desks but also to the dinner table in many *tongzhi* homes. The increased visibility was the result of the marriage-equality amendment bill introduced in the Legislative Yuan by twenty-three lawmakers from the DPP, a proposal that was immediately referred to the Legislative Yuan's Judicial Committee for review and possible first reading. It was the furthest any marriage-equality bill in Taiwan had ever progressed, prompting conservative churches to rally 150,000 opponents of same-sex marriage, a demonstration in which several physical conflicts broke out and made headlines in the major media (see, for example, Wang 2013; Yan 2013).

The momentum continued until 2016, when two draft amendments to Taiwan's Civil Code proposing to legalize marriages and adoptions by same-sex couples passed the first reading under President Tsai Ying-Wen's DPP administration. Once again, the newly attained milestone in the search for marriage equality was quickly countered by thousands of opponents, organized by Christian conservative churches, who demonstrated in major cities of Taiwan. However, they were outnumbered one week later by a record-setting rally of 250,000 supporters of marriage equality in front of the Presidential Office in Taipei. The amendment bills were stalled due to severe conflicts both in the Legislature Yuan and among the people, until Chi's appeal was referred to the Constitutional Court, resulting in the historic "Taiwan Judicial Branch Constitution Interpretation No. 748 Act," which ruled the Civil Code's restriction of marriage unconstitutional and required that same-sex couples 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 that year's referendums showed a landslide of opposition to marriage-equality and even gender-equality education (Huang 2018; "Taiwan Voters Reject Same-Sex Marriage in Referendums" 2018). Funded by Christian churches, the Taiwan Family Organization utilized 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. The referendums' results dimmed the "beacon for human rights issues across Asia" (Jacobs 2014, para. 10).

Encouragingly, in February 2019, the Taiwan Judicial Branch proposed “Interpretation No. 748,” which virtually granted same-sex couples the right to marriage without using the word “marriage” in its title, a compromise made to appease both proponents and opponents of same-sex marriage (Lee 2019). A couple of weeks later, opponents and several conservative legislators proposed another version of the bill, titled “The Referendum No. 12 Act,” which stripped away most of the rights and only allowed same-sex couples to be in a union with very limited rights (Li 2019). Another DPP legislator, Lin Tai-Hua, later proposed yet another version of the bill that further restricted the rights of same-sex couples. The legislature took a vote on the three versions on May 17, 2019. Finally, the most friendly and inclusive version of the bill won the vote, thus legalizing same-sex marriage in Taiwan.<sup>2</sup> Although many Taiwanese are excited and relieved by this development, more upheavals, battles, and conflicts are expected on this battleground; in fact, the opposition party has threatened to reverse the same-sex marriage bill and other *tongzhi* protection if its candidate wins the 2020 presidential election (“Fan tong hun dao di” 2019).

With marriage equality at the forefront of policy debates, street protests, and media coverage, many *tongzhi* found the attention to be a double-edged sword; although it is good that the government has started to take action, the publicity also makes avoiding talking about *tongzhi*-related issues at home much harder. Research has found that legal progress does not necessarily translate into social or familial acceptance; rather, it can bring about social conflicts that exacerbate stress on LGBTQ+/*tongzhi* individuals (Hildebrandt 2011; Kenneady and Oswalt 2014). Similarly, debates and negative campaign messages following policy changes often have detrimental psychological impact on LGBTQ+ people (Frost and Fingerhut 2016; Gonzalez, Ramirez, and Galupo 2018; Liu 2018; Marzullo and Herdt 2011; Maisel and Fingerhut 2011), and sociopolitical changes have similar significant effects on same-sex couples’ relational quality (see Lannutti 2013; Macintosh, Reissing, and Andruff 2010; Ramos, Goldberg, and Badgett 2009; Shulman, Gotta, and Green 2012; Stiers 1999), and on LGBTQ+/*tongzhi* people’s relationships with their families of origin (Gonzalez, Ramirez, and Galupo 2018; Horne, Rostosky, and Riggle 2011; Lannutti 2013). However, how family communicative and relational work unfolds during major sociopolitical changes is still relatively unexplored territory, given that most dramatic changes in same-sex marriage legislation have taken place only during the past decade. Even scantier is such research in Taiwan, even though the family plays a central role in most people’s lives and substantial changes are taking place right now.

Besides serving the needs of Taiwanese *tongzhi* and their families, research on LGBTQ+/*tongzhi* family relationships provides useful comparative insights that benefit cultures beyond the geographical boundary of Taiwan due to the island’s unique

---

<sup>2</sup> Some rights are still inaccessible to same-sex couples, so the “same-sex marriage” bill is, in fact, a same-sex union bill using the word “marriage.”

historical, social, political, and economic background (Brainer 2019; Liu 2015). The changes during the last half-century in Taiwan have been remarkable in pace and scale. While Taiwan was going through a repressive era of martial law from 1949 to 1987, economic developments were nonetheless booming, turning Taiwan into an urban, advanced capitalist society (Thornton and 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 and Cheng 2015; Lee 2016). Most parents whose *tongzhi* adult offspring are currently in a normative marriageable age range spent their formative years during this politically repressive, economically booming, and culturally contradictory era; however, their offspring grew up in a much different time when the exchange of information and ideas became a norm and individuality was idealized, though conformity to tradition was still expected. These changes in policies, practices, and cultural discourses deeply influence family relational work (Hareven 2018; Trask 2010), especially for *tongzhi* individuals, given the need for them to negotiate space in their heteronormative families (Brainer 2017). The heteronormativity that organizes many aspects of Taiwanese life is not exclusive to Taiwan; it has strong organizing power in many other cultures, including the United States. In fact, Taiwan is in many ways comparable to the United States and yet it differs in significant ways, making the study of *tongzhi* family relationships an important step in expanding the U.S.-centered literature.

### Methodology

This article uses critical discourse analysis (CDA) as its framework. Instead of a discrete research method, CDA is an interdisciplinary research movement with an array of theoretical models and research methods (Fairclough, Mulderrig, and Wodak 2011). In CDA, discourse is a form of social practice couched in situations, institutions, and social structures; CDA, therefore, posits that the discursive event and its situations, institutions, and social structures inform and shape each other (Fairclough, Mulderrig, and Wodak 2011, 357). CDA allows for “multiple points of analytic entry” and enables researchers to “focus on the signifiers that make up the text, the specific linguistic selections, their juxtaposition, their sequencing, their layout and so on” (Janks 1997, 329).

Based on Fairclough and Wodak’s (1997) overview, social linguists Marianne Jørgensen and Louise Phillips discuss five common features of different approaches to CDA: (1) the character of social and cultural processes and structures is partly linguistic-discursive; (2) discourse is both socially constitutive and constituted; (3) language use should be empirically analyzed within its social context; (4) discourse functions ideologically; and (5) CDA is “politically committed to social change” (2002, 61–64).

Specifically, this article employs Fairclough and Wodak’s three-dimensional model of CDA as its theoretical and methodological foundation. Discourse, in Fairclough’s CDA, is conceptualized as “language use as social practice,” and it contributes to the construction of “social identities,” “social relations,” and “systems of knowledge and meaning” (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, 66–67). Fairclough and Wodak believe that “discourse is an important form of social practice which both reproduces and changes knowledge, identities and social relations including power relations, and at the same time is also shaped by other social practices and structures.” Unlike poststructuralist discourse analysis, Fairclough puts great emphasis on performing a systematic, text-oriented analysis of spoken and written language (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, 65).

In his three-dimensional model of CDA (figure 1), Fairclough argues that each communicative event, which refers to an instance of actual language use (such as a news article) is composed of three dimensions—text, discursive practice, and social practice—and each discourse analysis of a communicative event should include these three dimensions. Thus, a CDA should focus on the text (“the linguistic features of the text”), the discursive practice (“processes relating to the production and the consumption of the text”), and the social practice (“the wider social practice to which the communicative event belongs”) (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, 68).

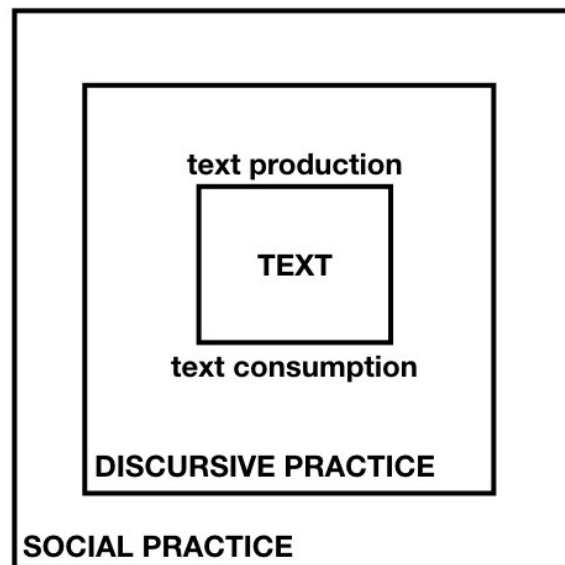


Figure 1. Three-dimensional model of critical discourse analysis (CDA). *Source: Jørgensen and Phillips (2002, 68).*

## Data

This article is based on a study that used data collected from interviews with 38 *tongzhi* participants and 14 parents of *tongzhi* children from March 2018 to May 2019.<sup>3</sup> The study also used field observation of *tongzhi* and parents of *tongzhi* children, and texts such as news articles, magazines, government policies, social media entries, and commentaries.

### Interview

Thirty-eight Taiwanese *tongzhi* (ages 20–38, average = 29.71, SD = 4.95) and fourteen parents (ages 45–69, average = 59.5, SD = 6.9) were interviewed. The semi-structured interview guide for *tongzhi* offspring and parents includes:

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

### Field Observation

To supplement the interviews and avoid self-report bias, I conducted fourteen months of fieldwork in Taiwan from June 2016 to August 2017, mostly with the Taiwan Tongzhi Hotline Association, the largest *tongzhi* rights group in Taiwan (and East Asia), where *tongzhi* and parents of *tongzhi* come to seek information and help and to socialize. Observational data were collected from multiple gatherings at the association, where I have worked as a senior volunteer since 2010. The association had consented to my dual-purpose presence—as a volunteer and as a researcher—and the observational data were supplemented by the association's archival database, to which I have been granted access as both a volunteer and a researcher.

---

<sup>3</sup> The interviews have been approved by the University of Texas at Austin Institutional Review Board (IRB: #2018-02-0090).



During each meeting, I took notes on what was said by *tongzhi* individuals and some of their parents, such as what caused them to seek help from the association, what their family relationships and conflicts were like, how they had dealt with such conflicts, how they were feeling, and what they wished to learn from meeting with us. These notes were both entered into the association's service log and kept as my own research notes. Because I was granted access to the complete service log for research purposes, I saw service records kept by other volunteers.

### *Cultural Texts*

The study also involved collecting news articles, magazines, government policies, social media entries, and commentaries about the issue of *tongzhi* rights. These sources were considered high-visibility texts (measured by the platform where the text was collected, view counts, the level of impact of the person or institution that creates the text, and so on).

Textual data were analyzed using the following guidelines: the researcher considered a piece of data, looking for how the author or creator's attitude and ideology toward the subject matter are revealed. For example, when an author used the word *qu* (娶, marry in)—a patriarchal lexicon that indicates how a woman is "taken into" a new family to fulfill her duty as a wife, mother, and daughter-in-law—the researcher noted the presence of patriarchal ideas. At the next level of analysis, the researcher looked at how the text was produced, distributed, and consumed. Thus, in the case of the word *qu*, the researcher considered the person using the term, where it was used, and how readers reacted to it. For example, in the romance of the TV characters Yao and Ting on the Facebook fan page (see figure 4), most people did not exhibit a strong reaction to the use of *qu* to describe the seemingly radical, first-ever lesbian couple on a popular soap opera, signifying their acceptance of the "norm." At a third level of analysis, the researcher looked at the power dynamics between the text's producer and consumer, the ideological and hegemonic discourse struggles, and the potential to challenge or restructure normative beliefs. In the case of Yao and Ting, the researcher noted that the popular daytime TV soap opera *Love* created the couple in a manner that is in line with patriarchal expectations—probably with profit, rather than social justice, in mind. The hegemonic heteronormative order is thus replicated through a lesbian couple, despite the possibility that the show may have tried to challenge the structure.

### **Results: The Discourses and the Expectations**

Drawing from the interviews, field observation, and cultural texts, I found several recurring and pervading discourses. These discourses help us gain a better understanding of how family conflict and reconciliation concerning an adult child's gender and sexual minority/*tongzhi* identity take place. The three sets of discourses

prominent in the stories told by my participants are heteronormativity and homonormativity, patriarchy, and compulsory marriage.

### *Heteronormativity and Homonormativity*

The first set of discourses that permeates the family conflict and reconciliation process concerns heteronormativity and homonormativity. Heteronormativity “points out the *expectations* of heterosexuality as it is written into our world” (Chambers 2003, 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, 309). Heteronormativity necessitates that *tongzhi* and their parents come to terms with sexual and gender nonconformity. Specifically, for LGBTQ+/tongzhi family relationships, sexuality studies scholar Gilbert Herdt and LGBTQ+ advocate and activist Bruce Koff argue that the “heterosexual family myth,” a set of beliefs built on heteronormativity, makes it harder for parents to accept an offspring’s sexual orientation (2000, 5).

In Taiwan, heteronormativity manifests in the term *zhengchang* (正常, normal, sane, regular), which has become part of the standard lexicon for parents, especially when mothers 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?” “Normal” here means the heteronormal—a gender performance that matches the assigned sex, and being attracted to (or 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 considered good citizens, whereas those who do not are deemed inappropriately queer (Jones 2018). Although homonormativity is critiqued as a tactic of conforming LGBTQ+ people to the neoliberal ideals and the oppressive heteronormative script (Duggan 2002), it has been a provisional compromise between the divergent sets of expectations held by LGBTQ+ people and their parents (Liu 2015).

Heteronormative and homonormative ideals are prevalent in the stories of the participants in my study. 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 wished for her offspring, and she said:

I hope my son will 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 for following pre-established, step-by-step

rules]. 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.

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." By "normal," VD means that she will "follow the rules, study well, marry well, find a government office job." Even though VD still holds onto the hope of "correcting" 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 finds a silver lining in the situation. Within heteronormativity, there is a "good gay" narrative, in which society has an accepting attitude toward 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* their gender and sexual orientation. This narrative is encountered in both the United States and Taiwan. Several parents I interviewed commented on how their attitude toward *tongzhi* shifted toward the positive after they visited the Taiwan Tongzhi Hotline Association and saw many *tongzhi* who are "outstanding" in terms of their mannerisms or education attainment, or are "so good looking." The homonormative ideal is also why Tiffany (36, bisexual woman)'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.

Even though having all these good qualities is by no means "normal" in terms of the majority, it is normal in terms of normative, meaning that it is what people aspire to be and hope their offspring to be. In sociologist Amy Brainer's (2017) analysis of the discourses of mothering gender and sexually nonconforming children, several poignant narratives from mothers of *tongzhi* center on the idea of being normal. One of Brainer's informants, Tan Mama, expresses feelings of guilt for having secretly hoped for 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, in which parents, especially the mother, start the education process when the baby is just a fetus, from playing music and reading stories to "having thoughts about the baby" as in her case. Prenatal education creates "gendered accountability," because only women can bear offspring, and extends a mother's sense of responsibility when the offspring fails to meet heteronormative standards (Brainer 2017, 935). A mother's expectations for her offspring to follow heteronormative standards speak to not only how she hopes for the best for her offspring (though the offspring's idea of the best would differ) but also how she needs to fulfill her role in the patriarchal system.

In 2012, the Taiwan Alliance to Promote Civil Partnership Rights (TAPCPR) drafted three bills for diversified family formation. These bills received mixed reactions from the

public. The first bill called for marriage equality, giving same-sex couples the equal right to get married using the current Civil Code, which falls within the homonormative script. This was the bill that received the most positive feedback and was the only one due to go under review by the Judiciary Committee in December 2014. The other two bills, civil-partnership system and multiple-person family system, challenged the heteronormative and the homonormative scripts and met very different fates.

Even though civil partnership resembles marriage equality in certain ways, such as allowing “two adults of any gender and sexual orientation to negotiate and enter into agreements with respect to their share of assets, inheritance, domiciles, among other things, and to apply with the government to register themselves as civil partners” (TAPCPR “About Us” n.d.), its core values differ from marriage in significant ways that defy the hetero/homonormative script. For example, in a civil partnership, the partners are free from the relationship of in-laws, and any two people can agree to enter such partnership without the foundation of romantic love. Further, “when a relationship comes to an end, the civil partnership system also allows either party to terminate the partnership, so that the relationship may end in a more amicable manner” (TAPCPR “About Us” n.d.). This aspect of the bill was misinterpreted by opponents to be legalizing adultery and encouraging irresponsibility (TNL editors 2014). Despite its good intention, the general public considered it to be too radical.

The third bill, multiple-person family system, aimed to allow more than two people to form a “family of choice” (Weston 1997) and was designed for those who choose their own family and agree to enter a legally binding family relationship due to shared religious faith, severed relationship with family of origin, shared illness or disabilities, shared life experiences, trauma, wars, or natural disasters. Although well-intentioned, this bill was nonetheless attacked by its opponents as attempting to legalize and thus incentivize cheating and to dismantle the institution of marriage and family.

As harmful as it can be to the LGBTQ+ movement, on the flip side, homonormativity does provide a certain sense of comfort and familiarity through its similarity to heteronormativity; it converges the expectations of some parents of LGBTQ+ children and LGBTQ+ people to some extent and clears a path for legal advancement in the crossfire for or against LGBTQ+ rights (Liu 2015). Although homonormativity, like heteronormativity and compulsory marriage, is by no means specific to Taiwan (Budgeon 2016), the sociocultural development that makes such discourses dominant in Taiwan, as well as how those discourses influence family relational work, is worth investigating.

### *Patriarchy*

Another discourse commonly referenced and indexed in my participants’ stories is patriarchy. Patriarchal kinship 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”; its norms “define marriage as a social and spatial act that

is experienced differently by men and women” (Friedman 2017, 1244, 1248), or more specifically, a system that works on the premise of exclusion of women’s participation (Ma 2011). In the two major types of patriarchal structures in Deniz Kandiyoti’s (1988) seminal work on the 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 and Wang 2011, 435). Gendered kinship linguistic tools were designed to describe and sustain the system in its respective locales. For example, in Mandarin-speaking countries such as Taiwan, men “marry in” (*qu jin lai* 娶進來), meaning the man obtains a woman to join his family, whereas women “marry out” (*jia chu qu* 嫁出去), meaning that the woman is given out from her family of origin to her husband’s family where she works to honor and sustain his patriline through her care and reproductive labor (Friedman 2017; Sandel 2004). Furthermore, each person in the patriarchal kinship system has a position and corresponding terms of address that compose the kinship terminology (Wierzbicka 2016). The kinship terminology for Mandarin-speaking Han Taiwanese (who have a Chinese ancestry) can be rather complicated with axes of gender, age, mother or father, and in-law or by-blood. There are even smartphone applications that calculate the correct address term for people due to how complicated, and how crucial, it is to address someone properly.

Proper address terms not only are a sign of respect but also symbolize the structure that puts everyone in their place; without the proper address terms to signal proper relations, it could seem as if the system and the cultural scripts that go with it would collapse. Even after people pass away, a proper position and address term (different from the kinship terminology) is inscribed on the *zu xian pai wei* (祖先牌位, patrilineal ancestor memorial tablet), which is put on the family shrine and family grave site, according to Taiwanese folk beliefs (a combination of Taoism and Buddhism). Incorrectly writing a person’s kin position and address terms is believed to bring bad fortune—such as health, wealth, and familial issues—to the descendants (Chuang 2005; Friedman 2017).

The importance of proper address terms and their symbolic and practical power are seen in the resistance to 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, created a series of TV commercials centering the catchphrase that if same-sex marriage is legalized, then “fathers and mothers are missing, and grandfathers and grandmothers are vanishing” (Liang 2016). These commercials were to air during prime time shows to rally support for the group’s cause against the bill. The National Communication Commission considered the commercials to contain misinformation and mischaracterization and thus were subject to a penalty review. Regardless of the result of the review, the commercials were nevertheless successful as scare tactics to invoke people’s fear of the dismantlement of their familiar patriarchal social order, partially contributing to the postponement of the reading. After the reading was postponed due to extreme social turmoil, Chi Chia-Wei’s appeal to obtain a marriage license was scheduled for a

Constitutional Court hearing on March 24, 2017 (two months before the final decision that the ban on same-sex marriage was unconstitutional). In the hearing, then-Minister of Justice Chiu Tai-San opposed same-sex marriage by arguing that “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 his tombstone and *zu xian pai wei*, and *bi* is the term for his wife. A wife is supposed to be buried next to her husband, so *kao-bi* is a common phrase on traditional Han Taiwanese tombstones. Though mocked by some, the Minister of Justice’s concern that same-sex marriage would disrupt the patriarchal kinship system through the improper use of address terms was shared by many others.

Patriarchal ideals may be imposed by parents of *tongzhi*, but they have been internalized by many *tongzhi* themselves. Joyce (34, pansexual woman) speaks of her fear of marrying a man because she would have to “follow the heterosexual sexual patriarchal script.” Her fear of falling into the patriarchal system manifests in another manner as well. Joyce has not yet *chugui* 出櫃 (“come out”) to her parents as “having dated women,” and she has just ended a relationship with a man. Therefore, her parents believe that she is simply a heterosexual woman. When Joyce’s father asks when she is going to get married, she feels sad, instead of feeling annoyed or worried as expressed by my other *tongzhi* participants. 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 very close relationship with her father, and she wishes to remain her dad’s little girl. This desire to never grow up is compounded by her fear of following the patriarchal kinship script in which a married woman becomes a member of her husband’s family, at the bottom of the hierarchy. Rationally, she knows her father would not “banish” her nor would he want her to suffer in any manner, yet emotionally, she is not able to see past the patriarchal kinship script and cannot help but feel that she is going to lose her position in her family of origin when her father asks about her plan to marry.

Donna (35, lesbian) has come out to her entire family, 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 many actual rights. The registration is an official record in the Household Registration system accessible only to officials and the two people who register; it does not show up in the individuals’ Household Certificate (each household has one such certificate showing who is a member of that household). This registration was the closest thing to same-sex marriage before same-sex marriage was legalized on May 24, 2019. Even though Donna and her then-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

would marry her current girlfriend legally now that the same-sex marriage bill 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 that one partner will be registered in the other’s Household Registration Booklet. Because Donna is the masculine partner, she is afraid that her girlfriend would have to become the daughter-in-law. She does not want that for her girlfriend, because “we’re not like a heterosexual couple who has to have the *po xi wen ti* [婆媳問題, mother-and-daughter-in-law problem].” Donna had no problem registering with her ex-girlfriend as a same-sex couple and calling her “wife,” but she feels differently about “actually getting married” using the new same-sex marriage law because for her, that law comes with the patriarchal kinship norms and regulations.

In Taiwan, the *po xi wen ti* is so common that it has its own idiom. This relationship has been found to be one of “the most tenuous and most vulnerable to interpersonal conflict” (Sandel 2004, 371), and is the most problematic family relationship in Taiwan (Strom et al. 1996; Wolf 1987). The daughter-in-law legally becomes a family member, but the bond, mutual understanding, respect, shared memory, habits, and language have not yet developed, while “jealousy, competition, transference, displacement, poor distance/boundary regulation, and discrepant role expectations are present” (Silverstein 1992, cited in Song and Zhang 2012, 57). Even if there is no interpersonal conflict, daughters-in-law still assume most of the caregiving responsibility for the family. The 2017 Ministry of Health and Welfare national census on elderly care shows that when an offspring-in-law (presented as one option in the survey) is the caregiver, 98.7 percent of the time the caregiver is the daughter-in-law; a son-in-law cares for his wife’s family only 1.3 percent of the time. Similarly, Whyte and Ikels (2004) found that a daughter-in-law plays the key role in caring for her parents-in-law (in contrast to sons, daughters, sons-in-law, siblings, and the spouses of said parents-in-law).

Such sentiment against mother-and-daughter-in-law conflict is shared by some parents of *tongzhi* as well. Ethel (54, mother of an 18-year-old gay son) divorced her husband after incidents of domestic violence and after suffering as 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 was really thin-skinned and 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. 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.

These stories highlight the prominence of the patriarchal kinship system as a factor in how *tongzhi* and their parents understand their relationship. If being legally married is compounded by having the burden of in-laws and the pressure of the patriarchal kinship system, it makes sense that some *tongzhi* would choose to opt out: 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 precisely what others stay away from to avoid having to follow the patriarchal kinship script. It is important to note, however, that although news outlets all over the world are lauding Taiwan as the first Asian country to legalize same-sex marriage, what Taiwan has legalized is actually a civil union using the word “marriage” in its title. There are significant differences between heterosexual marriage and same-sex marriage in Taiwan, such as restricted access to adoption, cross-adoption, artificial insemination, and marriage-based citizenship application (Ministry of Justice, ROC Taiwan 2019). However, as Abbie (32, bisexual woman) 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 in Taiwan is conditional and compromised, because the meaning of marriage transcends its legality. This issue leads us to the next discourse prominent in the stories my participants told—compulsory marriage.

### *Compulsory Marriage*

The conflict in society and in the family about marriage speaks to its importance—its existence, sanctity, access, form, symbolic meaning, and practical concerns. In 1980, the feminist writer 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” (1980, 632). Rich argued that the heteronormative patriarchal ideology is the gold standard for comparison, and thus lesbians and, by extension, other *tongzhi*, are deemed inferior. Borrowing the concept of “compulsory heterosexuality” (Rich 1980), I argue that there is also compulsory marriage, an imperative, unavoidable, and prescribed force in Taiwanese culture that banishes and punishes *tongzhi* for their unsuitability for the heteronormative patriarchal marriage. In fact, Tze-lan D. Sang 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” (2003, 92). Similarly, scholars such as Afsaneh Najmabadi (2006), Leila J. Rupp (2012), and Aoife Neary (2016) have discussed the “marriage imperative” to critique how marriage serves as the central organizing force for modern U.S. society.



In this context, *tongzhi* are not only unsuitable for heteronormative marriage; they are equally unable to participate in a heteronormative wedding, an event that has many levels of symbolic meaning. One such meaning is “success as parents.” Weddings in Taiwan have been dubbed “the parents’ achievements presentation” (Lei 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 that parents place on weddings and marriage also explains the rise of *xinghun* (型婚, formality marriage) in China (Liu 2013), a country with which Taiwan shares many cultural discourses. Formality marriage take place between a gay man and a lesbian, who get married with a wedding and, in some cases, even have offspring to fulfill their filial duty. Some parents might be aware of such an arrangement, permit it, or even urge their *tongzhi* offspring into a formality marriage. Even though it is a more prominent phenomenon in China, such formality marriage is not unheard of in Taiwan. More commonly in Taiwan, *tongzhi* enter a heterosexual marriage without the partners’ and parents’ knowledge of their *tongzhi* identity. These marriages attest to the *tongzhi* individuals’ awareness of their parents’ expectations of compulsory marriage, and the compromise they are willing to make to meet those expectations.

At the other end of the spectrum are people, especially women, who stay outside heterosexual marriages. For unmarried women who have passed the normative marriageable age range in Taiwan, their singlehood is stigmatized, pathologized, and deemed a problem (Budgeon 2016) or even a “national security crisis” (Qiu 2015). These women are nicknamed “leftover women” (Fincher 2016) or “loser dogs” (Martin 2013), terms that commodify 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 brings disgrace, or at least gossip and prying into the family; thus, parents expect their daughters to enter a heterosexual marriage within a normative age range.

Another reason daughters are expected to get married and enter their husbands’ family is the belief that only through marriage can a woman earn a place in her husband’s ancestral hall in the afterlife (Ahern 1971; Harrell 1986). According to Taiwanese folk beliefs, women who pass away before they get married will become wandering spirits stuck between worlds, and will not be properly prayed to. This belief in past and future lives is on the wane but still holding, as evidenced by the 2014 Taiwan Social Change Survey (Fu et al. 2015). The survey found that a total of 52.4 percent of respondents believed that all the efforts and sacrifice made for one’s offspring are a result of indebtedness to them from previous lives, while 88.6 percent believed that what one does will become karma that influences his or her offspring.

One solution for deceased unmarried daughters’ spirits is to build temples called *guniangmiao* (姑娘廟, maiden temple) where female ghosts can be properly prayed to despite their unmarried status (Lee and 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), told a story about the ghost marriage her family held for her deceased sister, GL. GL had committed suicide five years earlier after breaking up with her boyfriend. According to Yuna, GL sent a message to her ex-boyfriend through a medium; later, his family proposed that they get spirit-married, and Yuna's family agreed. This was a way to honor her wishes and make sure that she entered her husband's ancestral hall. Legally, the man was not married to Yuna's sister, but in terms of compulsory marriage, such a wedding sufficed.

Another form of spirit marriage, which was popularized by the mass media since the 1970s into Taiwanese collective memory, is for the family of the deceased unmarried daughter to leave out a red envelope with money, valuables, or the daughter's belongings for a man to pick up. The man who picks it up and fits the family's criteria must accept the marriage proposal (National Museum of Taiwan History "Feng su yu wen hua" n.d.). Even though spirit marriage has become extremely rare in contemporary Taiwan, it is still commonly known to Taiwanese (Bao-Bi 2019). The practice of spirit marriage signifies the importance of marriage not only for its symbolic value to parents but also for spiritual beliefs.

Another tradition still practiced today that solidifies the importance of marriage is the concept of *quanfuren* (全福人, fully lucky person) or *haomingren* (好命人, person with a good fortune). A *quanfuren* must be an older woman whose parents and husband are still alive, has at least one daughter and one son, and has never been divorced. The *quanfuren* is a key character in a normative heterosexual wedding. She performs several important functions during the ceremony, such as distributing food to the bride and groom while reciting lucky phrases (Liu 2012; National Museum of Taiwan History "Hun yin yu di wei" n.d.). The criteria for a woman to become a *quanfuren* show how being married and having offspring are key to women's status in Taiwan. YH, the mother of Meadow (34, pansexual woman) has been invited to be the *quanfuren* for weddings because she checks the boxes for being "fully lucky"—she is married, has kids, and all of them have prestigious or good-paying jobs—but Meadow finds it funny: "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; it's just that the criteria are a bit ridiculous."

Aside from the traditions, customs, and beliefs passed down generation after generation, compulsory marriage has taken a romanticized and homonormative contemporary turn, as evidenced in the following narratives and imagery. The most iconic images include the world's first-ever Buddhist lesbian wedding (figure 2), which took place in Taiwan in August 2012; Asian pop diva Jolin Tsai's music video, "We Are Different, Yet the Same" (figure 3); and the popular TV soap opera *Love's* finale in which the first-ever lesbian couple on the show, Yao and Ting, finally get married (figure 4).



Figure 2. The first-ever Buddhist lesbian wedding. *Source*: “Taiwan’s First Same-Sex Wedding Held at Buddhist Monastery” (2012).



Figure 3 (left). Pop diva Jolin Tsai kissing an actress in her music video. *Source*: Jolin Tsai’s Official Channel (2014).

Figure 4 (right). The TV series *Love*’s finale, in which Yao and Ting finally have their wedding. *Source*: “Shi jian qing yao ting hun li (quan ju zhong),” (2015).

These pictures and the stories behind them 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. 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 for her ex-husband, but she also does not see love as being an integral element to sustain their marriage. For Jenny, love is not enough, and marriage is a responsibility. Similarly, YH, Meadow’s mother, understood the idea of getting married because of love, but her marriage now is loveless despite remaining structurally intact and functional in terms of legal and financial needs. Passionate love was part of both YH’s and Jenny’s marriages at the beginning, but in YH’s case, the love faded yet the marriage stands, whereas in Jenny’s case, love was rendered irrelevant after she got divorced and had to raise her son by herself.

The story of Jenny’s parents helps put marriage in a further historical perspective. When Jenny’s father, a Kuomintang (KMT) soldier, was leaving his hometown to join the retreat from the Chinese Civil War between the KMT and the Chinese Communist Party (1945–1949), a neighbor asked him to marry his daughter (Jenny’s mother), who was twenty years younger, so that he could help her escape war-torn China and secure a wife at a precarious time in his life. Marriage, in this case, was for survival. However, another form of marriage was even more common. Many of the migrants who escaped to Taiwan with the KMT were male military personnel; thus, there was a significant gender imbalance with a male-to-female ratio of 1.56 to 1 (Directorate-General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics 1956). KMT military personnel were provided with government welfare, such as free housing (called military dependents’ villages) and monthly food rations (Hillenbrand 2006), thus starting a trend in which an older veteran married a much younger local Taiwanese of lower socioeconomic status (Hu 1993).

Ethel’s parents are an example of this trend. Ethel’s mother, SP, was thirty years younger than her husband, and they got married in order to form a family, secure financial resources, and continue the lineage. Ethel recounted the story of her parents’ difficult life, but recalled that

Compared to my classmates, my family at least never went to bed hungry, and we did not need to worry about losing our house.... 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 local Taiwanese in the early twentieth century, another form of arranged marriage known as *tong-yang-xi* (童養媳, adopted daughter-in-law) is more common. In this situation, a young girl, even as an infant, is given away to another family to be

raised as the future wife for a son of that family. During the period 1906–1920, there were 1,462 boys aged between zero and five years old, and 42.8 percent of them had a future wife adopted by their parents (Sheu 1999). Because a girl is meant to marry out and become a member of her husband's family in the Taiwanese patriarchal system, it makes financial sense for the husband's family to raise the future daughter-in-law; furthermore, a *tong-yang-xi* who is raised in the family from a young age would be socialized in the manner that would preserve domestic harmony, as opposed to a married-in young woman who would then need to be resocialized in her husband's family (Wolf 1968).

Meadow's maternal grandmother (RA) was given to her grandfather's family at the age of two and raised as a future daughter-in-law. Meadow's grandparents got married shortly before they turned twenty, and RA gave birth to ten children by the time she reached her mid-forties. RA understands the idea of romantic love, but she thinks of marriage as purely functional, whereas romantic love is something that is immaterial to marriage.

LD (grandmother of a 35-year-old lesbian) married BK at a very young age because, although BK was disabled, his family had prestige and wealth. LD's parents thought it was good for her to marry someone with money who lived in an urban area, as it meant that she would have a chance of a better life. BK's family also thought it was a good match, 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 give birth to eight children before having a son.

Even though only a few stories are included here, a transition appears to have taken place across the generations. Three generations ago, marriage was predominantly a functional practice, a requisite, not an option; in the next generation (the parent participants in my study's generation), marriage became 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 has become equivalent to a manifestation of, love, and it is a personal choice, something over which people have control. Thus, incompatible beliefs about marriage coexist in Taiwanese society today.

## Conclusion

This article delineates powerful discourses underlying the process of reconciliation for families in which a young adult son or daughter is a gender and sexual minority/*tongzhi*. Using interview data, field observation, and textual data, the article uncovers and discusses three such discourses, namely, heteronormativity/homonormativity, patriarchy, and compulsory marriage. The long process of reconciliation is made of a series of ebbs and flows, and the three discourses shape such ebbs and flows. Current research on gender and sexual minority/*tongzhi* family relationship mostly focuses on the intrapersonal and interpersonal aspects, but this article argues that cultural

elements are essential in the intrapersonal and interpersonal. This article highlights how parents of *tongzhi* offspring may rely on the idea of heteronormativity and homonormativity to decide at a certain moment how they are going to make sense of their child's "abnormality," or how a *tongzhi* offspring could believe in romantic love in marriage and thus refuse their parents' idea that they would just marry someone for the sake of forming a structurally intact family. Only when researchers consider the power of discourses can they achieve a deeper understanding of the relationships between *tongzhi* and their parents.

In contrast to the relatively fledgling analysis of compulsory marriage, commentary on the power struggles within the heteronormative/homonormative and patriarchal structure is not new. And yet, as Taiwan is facing a stronger reactionary conservative wave that packages itself in progressive language, furthering the discursive and ideological critique surrounding gender and sexual minorities becomes exceptionally crucial. On the one hand, the fallacy of progress, coupled with the global trend of right-leaning political attitudes, could hollow out the recent improvements in the treatment of gender and sexual minorities from within. On the other hand, as gender studies scholar Wen Liu (2015) has pointed out, in theorizing queer theories in Taiwan, special attention should be paid to the "temporality" of progress in order to avoid oversimplifying the concept of progress in Taiwan against the American experience. This article points out some similarities between Taiwan and the United States, and the experience of Taiwan examined in this article provides a new lens enabling scholars of established LGBTQ+ theories, as well as communication, relational, and social studies of gender and sexual minorities, to reflect on their own works. That reflection is mutually beneficial.

## References

- Adamczyk, Amy, and Yen-hsin Alice Cheng. 2015. "Explaining Attitudes about Homosexuality in Confucian and Non-Confucian Nations: Is there a 'Cultural' Influence?" *Social Science Research* 51: 276–289.
- Ahern, Emily Martin. 1971. *The Cult of the Dead in Ch'inan, Taiwan: A Study of Ancestral Worship in a Four-Lineage Community*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Bao-Bi. 2019. "Guonian daole zhezhong hongbao bie luanjian! Minghun SOP da jiemi" 過年到了這種紅包別亂撿！冥婚SOP大解密 [It's almost New Year! Don't take this kind of red envelope! Revealing the secrets of ghost marriages]. February 1. <https://www.nownews.com/news/20190201/3209628/>.
- Brainer, Amy. 2017. "Mothering Gender and Sexually Nonconforming Children in Taiwan." *Journal of Family Issues* 38 (7): 921–947. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X15598549>.
- . 2018. "New Identities or New Intimacies? Rethinking 'Coming Out' in Taiwan through Cross-Generational Ethnography." *Sexualities* 21 (5/6): 914–931.

- . 2019. *Queer Kinship and Family Change in Taiwan*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Budgeon, Shelley. 2016. "The 'Problem' with Single Women: Choice, Accountability and Social Change." *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* 33 (3): 401–418. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407515607647>.
- Chambers, Samuel A. 2003. "Telepistemology of the Closet; or, The Queer Politics of Six Feet Under." *Journal of American Culture* 26 (1): 24–41.
- Chou, Wah-Shan. 2000. *Tongzhi: Politics of Same-Sex Eroticism in Chinese Societies*. New York: Haworth Press.
- . 2001. "Homosexuality and the Cultural Politics of Tongzhi in Chinese Societies." *Journal of Homosexuality* 40 (3/4): 27–46.
- Chuang, Ying-chang. 2005. "A Comparison of Hokkien and Hakka Ancestor Worship." *Institute of Ethnology Academia Sinica Digital Archive* 69: 133–160.
- Directorate-General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics. 1956. *Republic of China Census Report*, Volume 2, Issue 1. Taiwan: Executive Yuan, ROC.
- Du Cheng-Han. 2017. "Zuxian paiwei 'kaokao haishi bibi'? Wanglu chuangyi da baofa Kuso Chiu Tai-San" 祖先牌位「考考還是妣妣」？網路創意大爆發KUSO邱太三 [Should the ancestor memorial tablet say "Kaokao or Bibi"? Netizens inspired to wildly mock Chiu Taisan]. *The Storm Media*, March 24. <https://www.storm.mg/article/238465>.
- Duggan, Lisa. 2002. "The New Homonormativity: The Sexual Politics of Neoliberalism." In *Materializing Democracy: Toward a Revitalized Cultural Politics*, edited by Russ Castonovo and Dana D. Nelson, 175–194. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Engelbrechtsen, E. L., and W. F. Schroeder, eds. 2015. *Queer/Tongzhi China: New Perspectives on Research, Activism and Media Cultures*. Copenhagen: NIAS Press.
- Fairclough, Norman, Jane Mulderrig, and Ruth Wodak. 2011. "Critical Discourse Analysis." In *Discourse Studies: A Multidisciplinary Introduction*, edited by Teun A. Van Dijk, 2nd ed., vol. 2, 358. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Fairclough, Norman, and Ruth Wodak. 1997. "Critical Discourse Analysis." In *Discourse as Social Interaction: Discourse Studies: A Multidisciplinary Introduction, Vol. 2*, edited by Teun A. Van Dijk, 258–284. London: SAGE Publications.
- "Fan tonghun daodi: Lai Shi Bao qiang: 2020 quanbu gai huilai 反同婚到底賴士葆嗆：2020以後，全部改回來！ [Opposing same-sex marriage to the end: Lai Shibao promises to "change it all back" after 2020]. 2019. *Setn News*. <https://www.setn.com/News.aspx?NewsID=542600>.
- Fincher, Leta Hong. 2016. *Leftover Women: The Resurgence of Gender Inequality in China*. London: Zed Books Ltd.
- Friedman, Sara L. 2017. "Men Who 'Marry Out': Unsettling Masculinity, Kinship, and Nation through Migration across the Taiwan Strait." *Gender, Place and Culture* 24 (9): 1243–1262.
- Frost, David M., and Adam W. Fingerhut. 2016. "Daily Exposure to Negative Campaign Messages Decreases Same-Sex Couple's Psychological and Relational Well-Being."

- Group Processes and Intergroup Relations* 19 (4): 477–492.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430216642028>.
- Fu, Yang-Chi, Ying-Wha Chang, Su Hao Tu, and Pei-Shan Liao. 2015. “2014 Taiwan Social Change Survey: Citizenship, Religion and Culture (TSCS14).” Round 6, year 5. Academia Sinica.
- Gonzalez, Kirsten A., Johanna L. Ramirez, and M. Paz Galupo. 2018. “Increase in GLBTQ Minority Stress Following the 2016 US Presidential Election.” *Journal of GLBT Family Studies* 14 (1/2): 130–151.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1550428X.2017.1420849>.
- Hareven, Tamara K. 2018. *Families, History and Social Change: Life Course and Cross-Cultural Perspectives*. New York: Routledge.
- Harrell, Stevan. 1986. “Men, Women, and Ghosts in Taiwanese Folk Religion.” In *Gender and Religions: Essays on the Complexity of Symbols*, edited by Caroline Walker Bynum, Stevan Harrell, and Paula Richman, 97–116. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Herdt, Gilbert H., and Bruce Koff. 2000. *Something to Tell You: The Road Families Travel When a Child is Gay*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Hildebrandt, Timothy. 2011. “Same-Sex Marriage in China? The Strategic Promulgation of a Progressive Policy and Its Impact on LGBT Activism.” *Review of International Studies* 37 (3): 1313–1333.
- Hillenbrand, Margaret. 2006. “The National Allegory Revisited: Writing Private and Public in Contemporary Taiwan.” *positions: east asia cultures critique* 14 (3): 633–662.
- Horne, Sharon. G., Sharon Scales Rostosky, and Ellen D. B. Riggle. 2011. “Impact of Marriage Restriction Amendments on Family Members of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Individuals: A Mixed-Method Approach.” *Journal of Social Issues* 67: 358–375. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.2011.01702.x>.
- Hsu Tzu-Fang. 2015. “Cong xiju kan xianshi rensheng—tan ‘Shi Jian Qing’ yao ting liang zhong de tongzhi quan yi” 從戲劇看現實人生—談《世間情》瑤婷戀中的同志權益 [Examining reality through drama—A discussion of LGBTQ rights from Yao and Ting’s relationship in the movie “Love”]. *Xingbie pingdeng jiaoyu jikan* [Gender equity education journal] 71: 129–135.
- Hsu, Victoria Hsiu-Wen. 2015. “Colors of Rainbow, Shades of Family.” *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs* 16: 154–164.
- Hu Tai-li. 1993. “Yutou yu fanshu—Taiwan ‘rongming’ de zuqun guanxi yu rentong” 芋仔與蕃薯—台灣「榮民」的族群關係與認同 [Taro and sweet potatoes—Ethnic relations and identities of Mainland Veterans (*rongmin*) in Taiwan]. In *Zuqun guanxi yu guojia rentong* 族群關係與國家認同 [Ethnic relations and national identity], edited by M. K. Chang, 302–308. Taipei: Ye Qiang Publishing.
- Huang, Annie. 2018. “Taiwan: Referendum Results Rejecting Marriage Equality a ‘Bitter Blow.’” *Amnesty International*, November 24.  
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/11/taiwan-referendum-lgbti/>.



- Jacobs, Andrew. 2014. "For Asia's Gays, Taiwan Stands Out as Beacon." *New York Times*, October 31. <https://cn.nytimes.com/china/20141031/c31taiwan/en-us/>.
- Janks, Hilary. 1997. "Critical discourse analysis as a research tool." *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* 18 (3): 329–342.
- Jhang, JhuCin. 2018. "Scaffolding in Family Relationships: A Grounded Theory of Coming Out to Family." *Family Relations* 67: 161–175. <https://doi.org/10.1111/fare.12302>.
- Jolin Tsai's Official Channel. 2014. "Jolin Tsai—We're All Different, Yet the Same." Video. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C7hHofDW2ts>.
- Jones, Lucy. 2018. "'I'm Not Proud, I'm Just Gay': Lesbian and Gay Youths' Discursive Negotiation of Otherness." *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 22 (1): 55–76. <https://doi.org/10.1111/josl.12271>.
- Jørgensen, Marianne W., and Louise J. Phillips. 2002. *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Kandiyoti, Deniz. 1988. "Bargaining with Patriarchy." *Gender and Society* 2 (3): 274–290.
- Kennedy, Donna Ann, and Sara B. Oswalt. 2014. "Is Cass's Model of Homosexual Identity Formation Relevant to Today's Society?" *American Journal of Sexuality Education* 9 (2): 229–246.
- Lannutti, Pamela J. 2013. "Same-Sex Marriage and Privacy Management: Examining Couples' Communication with Family Members." *Journal of Family Communication* 13 (1): 60–75. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15267431.2012.742088>.
- Lau, Holning, Geoffrey Yeung, Rebecca L. Stotzer, Charles Q. Lau, and Kelley Loper. 2017. "Assessing the *Tongzhi* Label: Self-Identification and Public Opinion." *Journal of Homosexuality* 64 (4): 509–522.
- Lee, Anru, and Wen-hui Anna Tang. 2010. "The Twenty-Five Maiden Ladies' Tomb and Predicaments of the Feminist Movement in Taiwan." *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs* 39 (3): 23–49. <https://doi.org/10.1177/186810261003900302>.
- Lee, Po-Han. 2016. "LGBT Rights Versus Asian Values: De/re-constructing the Universality of Human Rights." *International Journal of Human Rights* 20 (7): 978–992. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13642987.2016.1192537>.
- Lee, Yimou. 2019. "Taiwan Unveils Asia's First Draft Law on Same-Sex Marriage." *Reuters*, February 21. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-taiwan-lgbt-idUSKCN1QA0I2>.
- Lei Jia-Ru. 2019. "Hunli shi xinren de qingzhu haishi fumu de chengguo fabiaohui?" 婚禮是信任的慶祝，還是父母的成果發表會？[Is a wedding a celebration of trust, or is it a presentation of the parents' achievements?]. <https://womany.net/read/article/17877>.
- Li Bing-Fang. 2019. "Xingfu meng caoan" jingfu erdu: 19 wei liwei lianshu ba "tongxing hunyin" huancheng "jiashu" 「幸福盟草案」逕付二讀：19位立委連署把「同性婚姻」換成「家屬」["Happiness Coalition Bill" scheduled to pass the second reading: Nineteen lawmakers signed the petition to change "same-sex marriage" to "family members"]. *The News Lens*, March 15.

- [https://www.thenewslens.com/article/115260?fbclid=IwAR3njAEupAgUcO8Pbs3Ga4-UX0WDOE\\_Zbotfjhch\\_k0kAyPOvq87rVbH2Qs](https://www.thenewslens.com/article/115260?fbclid=IwAR3njAEupAgUcO8Pbs3Ga4-UX0WDOE_Zbotfjhch_k0kAyPOvq87rVbH2Qs).
- Liang Wan-Yu. 2016. "Tonghun fa'an tongguo bama hui bujian? Fantong tuanti da guanggao, tingtong tuanti dalian pi konghe" 同婚法案通過爸媽會不見？反同團體打廣告 挺同團體打臉批恐嚇 [Will legalizing same-sex marriage make parents disappear? Pro-LGBTQ group criticizes anti-LGBTQ group's advertisement as fearmongering]. *The Storm Media*, December 2. <https://www.storm.mg/article/196720>.
- Lin, Yen-Jui, and Cynthia Hudley. 2009. "Taiwanese Mothers' Reactions to Learning That Their Child Is Lesbian or Gay: An Exploratory Study." *Journal of LGBT Issues in Counseling* 3 (3/4): 154–176.
- Liu, Lake. 2018. "Marital Power in Inter-Hukou Families in China: An Intersectionality Approach." *Journal of Family Issues* 39 (5): 1165–1190.
- Liu, Min. 2013. "Two Gay Men Seeking Two Lesbians: An Analysis of *Xinghun* (Formality Marriage) Ads on China's Tianya.cn." *Sexuality and Culture* 17 (3): 494–511. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-012-9164-z>.
- Liu Shu-Ern. 2012. "Taizhong Zhanghua hunsu yaoyan yu hunjia wenhua" 台中彰化婚俗謠諺與婚嫁文化 [Folklore and the culture of marriage in Taichung and Changhua]. *Shumin wenhua yanjiu* 庶民文化研究 [Journal for studies of everyday life] 5: 26–75.
- Liu, Wen. 2015. "The Queer Paranoia of Homonormativity and Reparative Reading of the Taiwanese LGBT Movement." *Applied Ethics Review* 58: 101–128.
- Ma, Tsai-Chuan. 2011. "Bring the Culture Back In: Institutional Embeddedness between Neo-Confucianism and Patriarchy in Policy Making of Taiwan." *Asian Social Science* 7 (1): 19–31.
- Macintosh, Heather, Elke D. Reissing, and Heather Andruff. 2010. "Same-Sex Marriage in Canada: The Impact of Legal Marriage on the First Cohort of Gay and Lesbian Canadians to Wed." *Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality* 19 (3): 79–90.
- Maisel, Natalya C., and Adam W. Fingerhut. 2011. "California's Ban on Same-Sex Marriage: The Campaign and Its Effects on Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Individuals." *Journal of Social Issues* 67 (2): 242–263.
- Martin, Fran. 2000. "Surface Tensions: Reading Productions of *Tongzhi* in Contemporary Taiwan." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 6 (1): 61–86.
- . 2013. "'A Tangle of People Messing Around Together': Taiwanese Variety Television and the Mediation of Women's Affective Labour." *Cultural Studies* 27 (2): 207–224. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09502386.2012.738637>.
- Marzullo, Michelle A., and Gilbert Herdt. 2011. "Marriage Rights and LGBTQ Youth: The Present and Future Impact of Sexuality Policy Changes." *Ethos* 39 (4): 526–552.
- Ministry of Justice, ROC Taiwan 2019. *The Taiwan Judicial Branch Constitution Interpretation No. 748 Act*. Laws and Regulations Database of the Republic of China. <https://law.moj.gov.tw/LawClass/LawAll.aspx?pcode=B0000008>.
- Najmabadi, Afsaneh. 2006. "Beyond the Americas: Are Gender and Sexuality Useful Categories of Analysis?" *Journal of Women's History* 18 (1): 11–21.

- National Museum of Taiwan History. n.d. "Fengsu yu wenhua" 風俗與文化 [Customs and culture]. National Museum of Taiwan History (web site). [https://women.nmth.gov.tw/information\\_59\\_39762.html](https://women.nmth.gov.tw/information_59_39762.html).
- . n.d. "Hunyin yu diwei" 婚姻與地位 [Marriage and status]. National Museum of Taiwan History (web site). [https://women.nmth.gov.tw/information\\_47\\_39676.html](https://women.nmth.gov.tw/information_47_39676.html).
- Neary, Aoife. 2016. "Civil Partnership and Marriage: LGBT-Q Political Pragmatism and the Normalization Imperative." *Sexualities* 19 (7): 757–779.
- Puar, Jasbir K. 2007. *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Qiu Pei-Wen. 2015. "Futuan fanji Ke P: Wu xingbie yishi caishi guoan weiji" 婦團反擊柯P : 無性別意識 才是國安危機 [Women's rights groups fire back at Taipei Mayor Ko: Having no sense of gender equality IS the national security crisis]. *Newtalk*, February 16. <https://newtalk.tw/news/view/2015-02-16/57037>.
- Ramos, Christopher, Naomi G. Goldberg, and M. V. Badgett. 2009. "The Effects of Marriage Equality in Massachusetts: A Survey of the Experiences and Impact of Marriage on Same-Sex Couples." *UCLA: The Williams Institute*, Los Angeles, CA. <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/9dx6v3kj>.
- Rich, Adrienne. 1980. "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 5 (4): 631–660. <https://doi.org/10.1086/493756>.
- Rupp, Leila J. 2012. "Sexual Fluidity 'Before Sex.'" *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 37 (4): 849–856.
- Sandel, Todd L. 2004. "Narrated Relationships: Mothers-in-Law and Daughters-in-Law Justifying Conflicts in Taiwan's Chhan-chng." *Research on Language and Social Interaction* 37 (3): 365–398.
- Sang, Tze-lan D. 2003. *The Emerging Lesbian: Female Same-Sex Desire in Modern China*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Sheu Bei-Ling. 1999. "Tai wan yan yu zhong te shu de hun yin xing tai" [The study of the female in Minnan and Hakka proverbs]. *Lishi yuekan* [Historical monthly] 141: 116–121.
- "Shi jian qing yao ting hun li (quan ju zhong)" [Love: Yao and Ting's wedding (finale)]. 2015. CC Channel. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vYDNvJWL7O0>.
- Shih, Fang-Long. 2007. "Generation of a New Space: A Maiden Temple in the Chinese Religious Culture of Taiwan." *Culture and Religion* 8 (1): 89–104. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14755610601183597>.
- Shulman, Julie L., Gabrielle Gotta, and Robert-Jay Green. 2012. "Will Marriage Matter? Effects of Marriage Anticipated by Same-Sex Couples." *Journal of Family Issues* 33 (2): 158–181. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X11406228>.
- Silverstein, Judith L. 1992. "The Problem with In-Laws." *Journal of Family Therapy* 14 (4): 399–412.

- Song, Yi, and Yan Bing Zhang. 2012. "Husbands' Conflict Styles in Chinese Mother/Daughter-In-Law Conflicts: Daughters-in-Law's Perspectives." *Journal of Family Communication* 12 (1): 57–74.
- Stiers, Gretchen A. 1999. *From This Day Forward: Commitment, Marriage, and Family in Lesbian and Gay Relationships*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Strom, Robert, Shirley Strom, Yuh-Ling Shen, Shing-Jing Li, and Hwey-Lin Sun. 1996. "Grandparents in Taiwan: A Three-Generational Study." *International Journal of Aging and Human Development* 42 (1): 1–19.
- Taiwan Alliance to Promote Civil Partnership Rights (TAPCPR). n.d. "Introduction of Taiwan Alliance to Promote Civil Partnership Rights." <https://tapcpr.org/english/about-us>.
- "Taiwan's First Same-Sex Wedding Held at Buddhist Monastery." 2012. *Huffington Post*, August 13. [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/taiwan-same-sex-wedding-photos\\_n\\_1773086](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/taiwan-same-sex-wedding-photos_n_1773086).
- "Taiwan Voters Reject Same-Sex Marriage in Referendums." 2018. *BBC News*, November 25. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-46329877>.
- Tang, Wen-hui Anna, and Hong-zen Wang. 2011. "From Victims of Domestic Violence to Determined Independent Women: How Vietnamese Immigrant Spouses Negotiate Taiwan's Patriarchy Family System." *Women's Studies International Forum* 34 (5): 430–440.
- Thornton, Arland, and Hui-Sheng Lin. 1994. *Social Change and the Family in Taiwan*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- TNL editors. 2014. "2013 zhongyao dashi huigu: Duoyuan chengjia shijian zong zhengli 2013重要大事回顧：多元成家事件總整理 [2013 major events in review: summary of the Diversified Family Formation Bill]." *The News Lens*, February 01. <https://www.thenewslens.com/article/1882>.
- Trask, Bahira Sherif. 2010. *Globalization and Families: Accelerated Systemic Social Change*. New York: Springer.
- Wang Jia-Jun. 2013. "Tongzhi jiaohui zheng pingquan zao youxing minzhong baowei" 【短片】同志教會爭平權 遭遊行民眾包圍 [LGBTQ-friendly church rallying for support besieged by anti-LGBTQ crowd]. *Apple Daily*, November 30. <https://tw.appledaily.com/new/realtime/20131130/301237/>.
- Warner, Michael. 2002. *Publics and Counterpublics*. New York: Zone Books.
- Weston, Kath. 1997. *Families We Choose: Lesbians, Gays, Kinship*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Whyte, Martin K., and Charlotte Ikels. 2004. "Filial Obligations in Chinese Families: Paradoxes of Modernization." In *Filial Piety: Practice and Discourse in Contemporary East Asia*, edited by Charlotte Ikels, 106–127. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Wierzbicka, Anna. 2016. "Back to 'Mother' and 'Father': Overcoming the Eurocentrism of Kinship Studies through Eight Lexical Universals." *Current Anthropology* 57 (4): 408–429.

- Wolf, Arthur P. 1968. "Adopt a Daughter-in-Law, Marry a Sister: A Chinese Solution to the Problem of the Incest Taboo." *American Anthropologist* 70 (5): 864–874.
- . 1987. *Marriage and Adoption in Northern Taiwan*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Yan Si-Qi. 2013. "Taiwan duoyuan chengjia xiufa, zhengfan shuangfang shangjie pinchang" 台灣多元成家修法 正反雙方上街拚場 [Taiwan's Diversified Family Formation Bill draws opponents and supporters to streets in protest]. *BBC*, November 30. [https://www.bbc.com/zhongwen/trad/china/2013/11/131130\\_taiwan\\_gay\\_marriage](https://www.bbc.com/zhongwen/trad/china/2013/11/131130_taiwan_gay_marriage).

### **About the Author**

JhuCin Jhang has a PhD in Communication Studies from the University of Texas, Austin. She is the deputy Secretary-General of Green Party Taiwan and the incoming president of the North American Taiwan Studies Association.