

Heterosexual Chinese Americans' Experiences of Their Lesbian and Gay Sibling's Coming Out

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This qualitative study explored the experiences of second-generation heterosexual Chinese and Taiwanese Americans who have gay biological siblings. Participants had been aware of their gay sibling's sexual orientation for over 2 years. Ten participants, 3 Chinese Americans and 7 Taiwanese Americans, completed demographic questionnaires and in-depth, semistructured interviews. Interviews were audiotaped, transcribed, and analyzed using grounded theory methodology. The authors explored the participants' overall experience in relation to their gay sibling's coming out, how their sibling and family relationships evolved over time, and how traditional Asian values were related to their worldview and relationships to family members over time. Five major themes emerged: (a) various personal reactions to finding out about their gay sibling, (b) intrapersonal changes of heterosexual individual who has a gay sibling, (c) evolving sibling relationship between heterosexual and gay sibling, (d) evolving family relationships following disclosure, and (e) interplay of culture and lesbian and gay sexual orientation following discovery of gay sibling's sexual orientation. The results of the interviews highlighted the importance of sibling relationships to the coming out process for gay siblings. Siblings typically bonded over the gay sibling's sexual orientation disclosure, became more self-reflective and self-aware, and became more politically active. Participants' struggles in accepting their gay sibling's sexual orientation revolved around conflicts between lesbian and gay sexual orientation and their ethnic cultural values, family values, and faith. Implications for future research are presented.

Keywords: Chinese American, gay, sibling relationships, family relationships, grounded theory

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In 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court made a historical decision legalizing marriage equality throughout the nation (*Obergefell v. Hodges*, 2015). This landmark decision signified a changing tide in the United States' sociopolitical culture regarding its increasing acceptance of sexual minorities. Despite the decreasing stigma for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals in the United States, however, lesbian and gay individuals of color are still at high risk of marginalization due to the intersection of multiple minority identities (cf., Balsam, Molina, Beadnell, Simoni, & Walters, 2011; Chen, Androsiglio, & Ng, 2010; Nakamura, Chan, & Fischer, 2013). LGBT individuals of color experience unique stressors

associated with the simultaneous discrimination related to both their race and ethnicity and their sexual minority status (Balsam et al., 2011). Han (2007), for example, found that gay Asian American men have difficulty coming out due to the "homophobia found in racial communities and the racism found in gay communities" (p. 65).

Heterosexual siblings of lesbian and gay individuals play a critical role in navigating the coming out process. The purpose of this study is to explore these siblings' experiences of their lesbian or gay brother coming out within the context of Chinese American cultural values. The discussion below begins with a review of the role of cultural values related to lesbian and gay sexual orientation. The critical role of siblings in the coming out process is then explored and the specific research questions of the present study are outlined.

Cultural Values and Lesbian and Gay Sexual Orientation

For racial-ethnic minorities, connection to one's racial, ethnic family, and community support can buffer the stress of discrimination due to racism; however, the family can also be a source of rejection and discrimination based on sexual orientation (Boulden, 2009). Specifically for LGBT Asian Americans, the traditional Asian values of collectivism, conformity to norms, and filial piety (Kim, Atkinson, & Yang, 1999; Sue & Sue, 1999) may protect Asian Americans against the marginalizing nature of racism and discrimination through reliance on each other. On the other hand,

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those same values may also serve to isolate and marginalize them as a sexual minority within the Asian community (Boulden, 2009). For example, lesbian and gay sexual orientation may be viewed as deviant behavior in families who have high adherence to traditional Asian values; therefore, being anything other than heterosexual brings shame to the family (Szymanski & Sung, 2010). Being a sexual minority also goes against family piety (Sohng & Icard, 1996), which may be seen as the lesbian or gay person's rejection of family and culture and a failure of the parents (Chan, 1989; Chung & Katayama, 1998; Fukuyama & Ferguson, 2000).

More specifically, Szymanski and Sung's (2013) study of 143 Asian American sexual minority participants found high adherence to Asian values to be positively associated with internalized homophobia and negatively related to sexual orientation disclosure to others. Individuals with low adherence to Asian cultural values, moreover, reported higher rates of sexual orientation disclosure than individuals with high adherence. Thus, level of adherence to Asian cultural values seems to be related to how sexual minorities view themselves and behave. Specifically, having a more traditional value set is associated with decreased likelihood of sexual orientation disclosure to others and more negative feelings about being gay.

Because more than half of the Chinese population in the United States is foreign-born, cultural considerations are particularly important for mental health professionals to consider in working with Chinese Americans. Immigrants are more likely to adhere more strongly to traditional Asian values than other Asian Americans who have been in the United States for many generations (Kim, Atkinson, & Umemoto, 2001). As a result, immigrant parents who adhere to traditional value systems may be rejecting of their children who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual. Conversely, children born in the United States to immigrant parents or children who arrived in the United States before the age of 7 (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006)—hereby known as second-generation individuals—learn both American and Asian cultures, thereby, putting them in a unique position in balancing both value systems.

Role of Siblings in the Coming out Process

Utilizing the family unit as a resource, close sibling relationships are found to play a role in buffering against stressful occurrences (Bush & Ehrenberg, 2003; Milevsky, 2004; Riggio, 2001). Toomey and Richardson (2009) found that lesbian and gay individuals were likely to come out first to one of their siblings, often a heterosexual sister (Chan, 1989) before other family members or a combination of family members. This finding highlights the important role siblings play in supporting their sexual minority sibling before they come out to the rest of the family, if at all. One reason for the order of this disclosure is to test out the heterosexual sibling's reaction before disclosing to the parents and other family members (Jenkins, 2008). The assumption is that siblings may be more accepting of the sexual orientation disclosure than their parents (Westin, 1991), and that the heterosexual sibling may be called upon later to help mediate the news to parents and other loved ones (Cain, 1991). For LGBT individuals, family support buffers mental distress while increasing self-acceptance and well-being (Shilo & Savaya, 2011). LGBT disclosure to siblings, in particular, is related to their sexual identity development (e.g.,

coming out to others at significantly earlier ages), decreased internalized homophobia, and less victimization related to their sexual orientation from their families (D'Augelli, Grossman, & Starks, 2008). Close sibling relationships were also found to play a role in buffering against stressful occurrences, such as divorce, in the family (Bush & Ehrenberg, 2003; Milevsky, 2004; Riggio, 2001). Therefore, supportive and affirming sibling relationships, in particular, provide a buffer against familial and societal stress for the lesbian and gay individual. Though these findings are promising in showing that supportive and affirming sibling relationships provide a buffer against familial and societal stress, these studies are limited in their inadequate attention to the rapid social changes, particularly within the Asian cultural context.

Although siblings play a large role in supporting the lesbian and gay individual, little is known about the heterosexual sibling's experience in the LGBT sibling's coming out process. Knowledge of the unique stressors that heterosexual siblings face has great training implications for educators and mental health professionals who provide support for siblings of lesbian and gay individuals. Additionally, attending to the needs of heterosexual individuals may, in turn, enable them to become more effective support systems for their gay brothers or sisters. In thinking about the unique influences that culture and sexual orientation have on gay and lesbian Asian Americans and their families, sibling relationships are infrequently yet highly important to examine for its social justice implications. Given that 85% of adults in the United States have at least one sibling and that sibling relationships are typically the longest lasting relationships throughout one's life span (Cicerelli, 1982), these relationships are particularly important to examine as a source of social support for the lesbian and gay individual.

The purpose of this qualitative research study was thus to capture the experiences of Chinese American heterosexual individuals who have gay siblings. Specifically, four questions were explored: (a) What is the heterosexual individuals' overall experience in relation to the gay sibling's coming out? (b) How has the coming out process affected the heterosexual individuals' sibling relationship over time, if at all? (c) How has the coming out process affected the heterosexual individuals' relationships with other family members, if at all? (d) What role do Asian cultural values play in the heterosexual individuals' relationships interpersonally and intrapersonally over time?

Method

Rationale for Grounded Theory Methodology

This study incorporated a constructivist-oriented grounded theory approach because the research questions focus on experiences or process over time that were "grounded" in data collected from participants on the basis of the complexities of their lived experiences in a social context" (Fassinger, 2005, p. 157).

Following the Fassinger (2005) model of grounded theory, long interviews were conducted with discovery-oriented open-ended questioning and follow-up prompts were used to encourage more dialogue rather than confirm the first author's own construction (Rennie, 1995). This study illuminated how heterosexual siblings may or may not undergo an intrapersonal and/or interpersonal shift following their brothers' or sisters' coming out.

Participants

Of the 10 participants, ranging from 20 to 30 years of age ($M = 25.20$, $SD = 3.77$), three were Chinese Americans and seven were Taiwanese Americans (see Table 1). All participants identified themselves as heterosexual. Chinese and Taiwanese people share similar language and roots in Confucianism that offers a very structured set of ground rules about roles and proper conduct, which make exploration of both ethnic groups appropriate for this study. All participants were from states that had already legalized gay marriage at the time of the interview. Five of the participants were women and five were men. Nine participants were born in the United States, and one participant was born in Taiwan and migrated to the United States at the age of 6. All participants are considered to be second-generation individuals (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006). Annual family income ranged from \$0–\$20,000 ($n = 2$), \$20,000–\$40,000 ($n = 2$), \$40,000–\$60,000 ($n = 1$), and \$80,000 or more ($n = 5$). In terms of highest education achieved, two participants were attending college at the time of the interview, and four had completed their bachelor's degree. One participant was completing a master's degree, one was completing a high level professional degree, and two had obtained a high level professional degree at the time of interview. Religion or spiritual orientation of the participants included: agnostic ($n = 4$), Christian ($n = 3$), Buddhist ($n = 1$), agnostic and Buddhist ($n = 1$), and none ($n = 1$).

Three participants had a same-sex gay sibling while seven had an opposite-sex gay sibling. Six participants were younger

siblings and four participants were elder siblings. Participants knew of their gay or lesbian sibling's sexual orientation for a range of 2 to 14 years ($M = 7.70$, $SD = 4.90$). Seven participants reported being the first person in the family their sibling came out to, two reported another sibling as the first, and one reported their parents as the first to know. The siblings' ages ranged from 19 to 28 years ($M = 25.10$, $SD = 2.73$). The age at which gay siblings disclosed their sexual orientation to the participants ranged from 14 to 22 years of age ($M = 19.30$, $SD = 2.75$).

Data Sources

Demographic form. All potential participants were given a copy of an online demographic form prior to the interview to ensure that all participants met the inclusion criteria. This form elicited information regarding the participant's ethnicity, generational status, gender, sexual orientation, birth order, current age, age at disclosure of sibling's sexual orientation, family income, and religion or spirituality.

Interview protocols and interviews. The interview protocol was semistructured with open-ended questions (see Supplemental Materials). Following a review of literature on Asian LGBT, families of LGBT, and siblings of LGBT in particular, questions were developed to capture the interpersonal and intrapersonal changes, if any, that heterosexual individuals undergo after learning about their gay sibling's sexual orientation. Interpersonal examines how their relationships to other people may or may not

Table 1
Participant Demographics and Background Information ($N = 10$)

Pseudonym (age) ethnicity religion or spiritual orientation	Background information
Cheryl (23) Chinese American Agnostic	Cheryl was born and raised California as the younger of two children. She is 4 years younger than her gay brother. She was the first person in the family to know about her brother's sexual orientation and kept it a secret for approximately 2 years before mother confronted her brother about his sexual orientation. Her father is deceased.
Miami (27) Chinese American Christian	Miami grew up in working class family in California as the middle child of three children. She is 1 year younger than her lesbian sister. In elementary school, she moved to a wealthy suburb with a large Chinese population. Her parents immigrated to the United States from Cambodia after the Khmer Rouge War. They are divorced.
Bruce (23) Taiwanese American Agnostic	Bruce was born and raised in a wealthy suburb in California as the younger of two children. He is 1 year younger than her lesbian sister. The neighborhood he lived in had a large Taiwanese population. His parents immigrated to the United States in their 20s. They are still married.
Jasper (30) Taiwanese American Agnostic	Jasper was born and raised in California as the elder of two children. He is 3 years older than his lesbian sister. He grew up exposed to racial and social class diversity. Parents are separated when he was young before getting officially divorced many years later. Consequently, his mother raised Jasper and his sister.
Ethan (20) Taiwanese American Agnostic	Ethan grew up in New York City and Taiwan before settling in a wealthy Californian suburb of mostly first-generation Chinese and Taiwanese Americans. He is the middle of three children with both siblings identifying as lesbian or gay. For this interview, he focused mainly on his relationship with his older lesbian sister who is 4 years older. His parents are still married.
Helen (25) Taiwanese American Christian	Helen was born in Taiwan and immigrated to the United States at the age of 6. She has a heterosexual twin brother and is 2 years younger than her gay brother. She was raised in a predominately Chinese city in California. Her parents are still married.
Matt (29) Chinese American Christian	Matt was born and raised in a wealthy suburb in California with a large Chinese population as the eldest of two. He is 2 years older than his gay brother. His parents are still married.
Eric (20) Taiwanese American Buddhist	Eric was born and raised in a conservative, rich suburb in California with a predominantly Asian population. He is the younger of two children, 3 years younger than his gay brother. His parents are still married.
Julie (25) Taiwanese American No religious orientation	Julie was born and raised in an affluent suburb of New York with a predominantly Irish American population. She is the eldest of four children, and is 6 years older than her gay brother. Her gay brother has a twin who is heterosexual. Her parents are still married.
May (30) Taiwanese American Agnostic and Buddhist	May was born and raised in a wealthy, conservative suburb in California. She described her neighborhood population as half White and half Asian. She is the eldest of three children and is 5 years older than her gay brother, who is the youngest. Her parents are still married.

have changed, and intrapersonal examines how they may feel, think, and act differently after learning about their gay sibling's sexual orientation. To fully understand this, the authors highlighted attitudes and beliefs about lesbian and gay sexual orientation before and after disclosure, the sibling relationship, and the family relationships over time. After the initial protocol was developed, the first author pilot tested the questions for feedback regarding the content, quality, and clarity of the questions. The 2 pilot interviews were not included in the final sample of 10 participants for further analysis. Final interview questions explored how the participant initially reacted (thoughts, feelings, and behaviors) to their gay sibling's coming out and how that reaction changed over time, if at all. Then the questions focused on the quality of the sibling relationship and relationships with other family members before and after the disclosure. The first author conducted all the interviews to ensure consistency in interviewing methodology.

Transcription. Participants used pseudonyms and all interviews, ranging from 55–110 min. in length ($M = 82.67$, $SD = 19.61$), were audiotaped and transcribed. Each transcript was transcribed and reviewed by research assistants who listened to a random 3-min. clip to ensure the accuracy of each transcription. Each participant was then sent the verified transcriptions and given the opportunity to add, delete, or edit any of their responses. Data analysis on each transcript commenced after participant verification was received.

Procedure

Data collection. This study was approved by the university's Institutional Review Board and was conducted in accordance with guidelines of the [American Psychological Association \(2002\)](#) and [Haverkamp \(2005\)](#). Participants were recruited through personal contacts, snowballing, and social media (e.g., Facebook) to target LGBT (e.g., Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays [PFLAGs], Family Equality Council, and Equality California), Asian American, and LGBT Asian American affirming groups. Interested participants went online to complete the demographic form. Participants who fit the inclusion criteria (i.e., identified as Chinese or Taiwanese American, heterosexual, born in the United States to immigrant parents, had a biological lesbian or gay sibling, and were in their 20s) were e-mailed an informed consent to sign and return and a copy of the interview protocol to help stimulate their thoughts before the interview. Eight interviews were phone interviews, one was in person, and one was conducted via online chat. After the completion of the interview, participants received two movie tickets as compensation for their participation.

Data analysis. Grounded theory methodology is an “iterative, concurrent process of data collection, coding, conceptualizing, and theorizing, wherein new data are constantly compared to emerging concepts until no new themes, categories, or relationships are being discovered” ([Fassinger, 2005](#), p. 157). The first author followed the grounded theory methodology as outlined by [Fassinger \(2005\)](#): open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. The first step of data analysis began with open coding where each interview was coded for data units such as meaningful words, phrases, or sentences that related to the larger research questions. In creating the open codes, the meaning of each code reflected language of the participants' words. Next, axial coding was the second-order reduc-

tion of meaning units where open codes were organized together in a category that subsumes several of the subcategories of open codes. Finally, selective coding was the process of refining the codes into the core phenomenon or categories, which helped integrate all of the other categories into one whole model, articulating its interrelations and relationships. Selective coding continued until saturation occurs, when no new codes or categories emerged. In our study, interviewing and analysis occurred concurrently to enhance the discovery-oriented nature of this methodology. Saturation occurred after the eighth interview when no new themes emerged. Two more interviews were conducted to ensure saturation confirmation; thus, termination of data collection was appropriate after the tenth interview.

Quality and trustworthiness of data analyses. In qualitative research, the quality and trustworthiness of the data analyses may be called into question for its subjectivity; however, embracing the subjectivity and respecting multiple perspectives is exactly the strength of qualitative research. To fully express the participants' viewpoint with clarity and precision, “thick descriptions,” defined as “captur[ing] the thoughts and feelings of participants as well as the often complex web of relationships among them” ([Ponterotto, 2006](#), p. 543), was used to exemplify common themes ([Morrow, 2005](#); [Ponterotto, 2006](#)). The conscientious utilization of long quotations helps the reader get a sense of the participant and interviewer interaction as well as establish credibility in the authors' conclusions ([Ponterotto, 2006](#)).

In addition, it is important for the authors of this study to be aware of their own biases, worldview, expectations, and value systems because they cannot be separated from the research process ([Ponterotto, 2005](#)). To this end, Jill Huang is a queer Taiwanese American who holds a strong multicultural and social justice orientation in her research and clinical work. She focused on Chinese American sexual minorities in particular because of their dual minority status that puts them at increased psychological distress and increased risk of mental illness. She believes that investigating the experience of heterosexual siblings and utilizing the power of the sibling relationship as an untapped resource for lesbian and gay people can have great social justice implications for both parties. Eric C. Chen embraces his multiple social, cultural and religious identities as a gay Taiwanese-born man. He has conducted research in LGBT and multicultural issues. On the basis of his personal and professional experiences interacting with LGBT individuals, he believes sibling relationships affect, to varying degrees, the coming out process of their LGBT siblings, particularly within the Asian cultural context. Finally, Joseph G. Ponterotto has been working in the multicultural field for three decades and has been a strong advocate of social justice for lesbian and gay individuals and has highlighted the critical role of heterosexual allies in this process. From his own social and friendship network and from his independent practice in New York City, he is highly aware of the critical role of siblings as a possible strong support to other sibling's coming out process. He had a sense of the interplay of culture and the coming out process but lacked deep awareness of the process for Chinese American and Taiwanese American emerging and young adults as reflected in the present sample.

Auditing. In addition to thick descriptions, an auditor was used at two points during the data analysis process to reduce bias and ensure the stability of the analyses. This procedure is recom-

mended by Fassinger (2005). The auditor was an African American male doctoral student in a psychology program who had conducted research using grounded theory methodology. During the first audit, the auditor completed his own coding for one participant. The first author compared and contrasted their results, and a 94% interrater reliability was established. Discrepancies in the coding or were discussed until consensus was reached. Where discrepancies occurred, the feedback was incorporated into the independent analysis for the rest of the transcripts. During the second audit, the auditor looked at the overall open, axial, and selective categories. They established a 98% consensus on the proposed categories, indicating that the data analysis had been completed accurately and consistently.

Results

Analysis of the 10 interviews yielded 5 selective categories, 15 axial categories, and 32 open categories (see Table 2).

Various Personal Reactions to Finding out About Gay Sibling (Selective)

In this section we focused on the heterosexual participants' reactions to finding out about their gay sibling's sexual orientation ranging from support, acceptance, nonchalance, to more negative emotional reactions.

Supportive of gay sibling (axial). Regardless of how the participants felt about lesbian and gay sexual orientation, all the

Table 2
Selective, Axial, and Open Categories

Selective	Axial	Open
I. Various personal reactions to finding out about gay sibling	A. Supportive of gay sibling B. Acceptance of gay sibling C. Not surprised by disclosure D. Negative emotional reaction to disclosure	1. Emotionally supportive of gay sibling following disclosure 2. Promising financial support for gay sibling 3. Immediate acceptance of gay sibling's sexual orientation 4. Slow acceptance of gay sibling's sexual orientation 5. Reacting with nonchalance to gay sibling's disclosure 6. Initial denial of gay sibling's sexual orientation 7. Increased worry for gay sibling following disclosure 8. Feeling shocked by disclosure 9. Feeling hurt as a result of "betrayal" 10. Becoming more open-minded about lesbian and gay sexual orientation
II. Intrapersonal changes of heterosexual individual who has a gay sibling	E. Positive personal changes F. Optimism about the future generation G. Varying degrees of comfort regarding disclosure to others H. Increased advocacy	11. Actively engaging in self-reflection and learning about lesbian and gay sexual orientation 12. Increased empathy for individuals of socially marginalized groups and social, political issues 13. Feeling optimistic about the present and future generations 14. Open to disclosing gay sibling's sexual orientation 15. Hesitation about disclosing gay sibling's sexual orientation 16. Advocating for gay sibling within the family 17. Increased advocacy for acceptance of gay individuals 18. Developing a closer relationship to gay sibling following disclosure 19. Feeling special, privileged, and trusted to hold a "secret" 20. Apologizing for ignorance regarding past treatment of gay sibling 21. Increased sensitivity in discussing certain topics around gay sibling 22. Noticing undesirable characterological change in gay sibling 23. Seeing growing confidence in gay sibling 24. Continuous acceptance and support for gay sibling 25. Other family members' denial and disapproval of gay sibling's sexual orientation 26. Parents' increased worries about gay sibling's sexual orientation 27. Parents' increased internal guilt for gay sibling's sexual orientation 28. Increased communication about gay sibling with family members 29. Increased frustration and resentment towards family members who do not accept gay sibling 30. Avoiding discussions of sexuality in Chinese and Taiwanese culture 31. Lacking visibility of lesbian and gay sexual orientation in Chinese and Taiwanese culture 32. Discovering own bicultural values to resolve lesbian and gay sexual orientation negotiation
III. Evolving sibling relationship between heterosexual and gay sibling	I. Changing relationship with gay sibling J. Seeing characterological change in gay sibling	
IV. Evolving family relationships following disclosure	K. Positive family responses to disclosure L. Negative family responses to disclosure M. Changes in family relationships	
V. Interplay of culture and lesbian and gay sexual orientation following discovery of gay sibling's sexual orientation	N. Incompatibility of Chinese and Taiwanese culture and lesbian and gay sexual orientation O. Negotiating own cultural beliefs	

participants reported being supportive and sensitive to their gay sibling following disclosure. For Helen, a 25-year-old Taiwanese American woman, she came to the conclusion that:

I really do hold onto the belief that through thick and thin, I'm here for you no matter what. You know, because before I was not advocating. I was not really supportive or loving, but now it's like, oh, it's fine. You're still my brother and I'm still here for you.

Helen stated that her brother will always be her brother no matter what, proclaiming her unconditional love and support for her brother. For Helen, the sibling bond was stronger than her brother's sexual orientation.

Acceptance of gay sibling (axial). While all participants reported being supportive of their gay sibling, the majority of participants reported accepting their gay sibling's sexual orientation. Most participants were immediately accepting while some participants took years to accept their sibling's sexual orientation. Julie, a 25-year-old Taiwanese American woman, was woken up in the middle of the night for what she felt could have waited for the morning.

I was expecting some gigantic catastrophic intervention news, and instead it was just my brother telling me big important news frankly saying "I'm gay." And I was like "Oh, that's your news? Oh cool." I kind of looked at him like "Oh cool," and he was like "Cool."

Slow acceptance of their gay sibling's sexual orientation stemmed from intrapersonal struggles to resolve their love for their sibling with their preconceived notions about lesbian and gay sexual orientation. A couple of participants took several years to accept their sibling's sexual orientation, and two participants still struggled with accepting their gay brothers' sexual orientation at the time of the interview.

Not surprised by disclosure (axial). Half the participants reacted with nonchalance to their gay sibling's disclosure. Julie felt like her brother's coming out made sense to her.

It's not a big deal basically what was going through my head. This is not a catastrophic piece of news. This is not even earth shattering. My attitude was very nonchalant; so when my brother came out, I was nonchalant about it because it's like that's cool with me. It's fine. I'm glad you told me that makes total sense.

Negative emotional reaction to disclosure (axial). The participants felt a wide range of negative emotions in reaction to their sibling's coming out including denial, worry, shock, and hurt, perhaps reflecting differences in these dynamic sibling relationships. Even participants who were supportive and accepting of their gay sibling felt a negative emotional reaction to some extent. After Matt, a 29-year-old Chinese American man, discovered on the computer gay pornography and deduced it was his brother's, he pretended nothing had changed.

My brother had these weird inclinations so it was better to ignore it and delete the search histories. Do not bring it up and whatever. Maybe it'll work itself out or maybe it wouldn't, but it didn't have to be my problem. So I just didn't pretend like anything was different. I didn't change anything.

Miami described how her sister's denial, after a confrontation about rumors at school, hurt her.

I just totally started crying because I totally felt betrayed and lied to because I just confirmed [the rumors] with my sister. And now I'm seeing her with another girl, and I just do not get why she needed to lie to me. I think if she would have been more honest in the beginning, everything would have been fine.

Miami was more hurt by the lies her sister than the fact that her sister was lesbian. The lie did more damage to the sibling relationship than the discovery of her sister's sexual orientation because Miami felt betrayed. Miami stated that she would have been "fine" with her sister's sexual orientation had her sister been honest from the beginning.

Intrapersonal Changes of Heterosexual Individual Who has a Gay Sibling (Selective)

This section focused on the heterosexual participants' intrapersonal changes that occurred as a result of having a gay sibling in their lives.

Positive personal changes (axial). All participants underwent positive intrapersonal changes as a result of having a gay sibling in their lives. Overwhelmingly, all participants became more open-minded about lesbian and gay sexual orientation as a result of having a gay sibling. All participants engaged in active self-reflection and learning. Jasper admitted that his sister being gay was a big part of his identity.

I think it's politicized me and made me more of a feminist, made me think more actively about my own privileges and how even though my sister and I come from the same class background and cultural background, I'm so much more privileged and have to deal with a lot less shit because I'm male and straight. I try harder to actively think about that and also make it part of my research, and teaching, and personal political life.

Jasper's relationship with his sister and her sexual orientation was transformative to his general outlook, professional interest, and political stance. He became politically engaged, more self-aware, and dedicated to learn more on how he can be an ally for his sister through active self-reflection of her struggle and his privilege.

For several participants, having a gay sibling really motivated them to expand their activism in other political realms. Also using his experience with his brother as a prototype for other issues, Matt stated:

I think about this experience of him being gay and homosexuality, being a hugely controversial issue in broader American politics, and I take that and I expand it on every other issue. I ask myself what would it be like if my brother or someone I loved was in this position, and that has made me generally a very bleeding heart moderate. Just having him there forces me to engage on a level of respect.

Imagining his brother in other issues, Matt grounded his opinions in how he would want his loved ones to be treated in a similar position. Likewise, three participants shared that having a gay sibling was influential in shaping their political, social justice stance. They expressed more global empathy for all marginalized groups.

Optimism about the future generation (Axial). Participants discussed the cultural shift in today's society toward acceptance of lesbian and gay sexual orientation. Five participants commented

on the gift of being born in this generation, this particular time in history, and discussed the high hopes they have for the future. Julie commented on the acceptance of lesbian and gay sexual orientation in today's society.

I was really happy that my brother could point-blank tell me he was gay just like that, like he had toast for breakfast. He's gay. Yeah I think that's very amazing that we live in a world where that's possible. Our generation is very special. There's gay folks on TV. There are gay folks in pop culture. I think pop culture really has this power to move things in big ways.

Julie was happy that her brother could come out to her with relative ease. In addition, today's culture makes it possible for "gay folks" to be a normal staple in popular TV. The increased visibility of "gay folks" is a marker of the changing times.

Varying degrees of comfort regarding disclosure to others (axial). Depending on the participants' level of acceptance of their gay sibling's sexual orientation, participants varied in their comfort with telling nonfamily members that their sibling was gay. Some participants reported relative comfort with how "out" they were to revealing their sibling's sexual orientation to others. For Eric "If it comes up in conversation I don't mind talking about it, but it's not exactly something I would just bring up randomly without context." In contrast, Cheryl was completely open about her personal life and shares openly with coworkers and friends.

Several participants hesitated to "come out" to friends, classmates, and coworkers about their gay sibling's sexual orientation. These participants also struggled with accepting their gay sibling's sexual orientation. May described her reasons for not wanting to "come out" for her brother.

Not only is it a coming out for him, it is also a coming out for me. I have told my closest friends that he is gay, but I am not always open about my brother's sexuality. I omit the information from conversation. I do not tell them because I do not want to tell people how I feel about it or how it happened or what I think about it. I am also unsure if my brother wants me to broadcast to my social circle that he is gay.

May was one of the participants who had not fully accepted his brother's sexual orientation. Thus, May's desire to withhold discussing her brother's sexual orientation was very strong. She often chose not to participate in discussions where lesbian and gay sexual orientation was debated. Although she felt guilty for not telling friends about her brother's sexual orientation, she did not feel ready to discuss her opinions or reveal the fact that she had a gay sibling.

Increased advocacy (axial). Half of the participants increased their advocacy for their siblings and for LGBT issues at large. They reported feeling motivated to advocate for their gay sibling to other family members. Matt spoke about the special position bicultural children of Chinese immigrants were in to bridge the generational gap.

I think it's really important for siblings, um, to be able to advocate for [their gay brothers and lesbian sisters] because they're able to hit that middle ground. You know, one thing I will really be for my family is a bridge in understanding different viewpoints and I think that's really important.

Particularly within the Chinese and Taiwanese American community, heterosexual participants play an important role in the

family. Eric stated that his role in the "family is to be supportive no matter what the circumstances are. Just trying to kind of educate [my parents] about, I guess, trying to educate them against uh, you know, the perceived stigmas of homosexuality and stuff like that." Eric's efforts were successful since he his parents seem to be more accepting toward his gay brother now.

Six of the 10 participants, armed with their personal experiences having a gay sibling, were vocal about their support for fostering compassion and empathy for gay and lesbian individuals.

Evolving Sibling Relationship Between Heterosexual and Gay Sibling (Selective)

In this section, we focused on participants' experiences of how their relationship with their sibling may have shifted as a result of finding out that their sibling was gay. Participants described how the disclosure enhanced the sibling relationship, how they adjusted to the new identity, and how the new identity seemed to change their sibling's behavior and attitudes.

Changing relationship with gay sibling (axial). All participants discussed how the sibling relationship evolved over time. Nine participants discussed getting closer to the gay sibling, feeling special for holding a secret, regretful of past relational dynamics, and an increased sensitivity while discussing certain topics around their gay sibling. Ethan stated:

This has definitely brought us closer in the sense that she can share. She can share stuff with me. So when she comes home, she can talk to me about that (experiences) at the end of the day; she can talk about that, and anything one can talk to a friend or a family member strengthens the relationship, so definitely closer.

Ethan's quote highlighted the fact that with the disclosure, his sister could reveal more of herself to him. Topics that were previously off limits when the gay siblings were hiding their sexual orientation were now open for discussion with the participants. The new wave of conversation reconnected siblings and brought them closer together.

Four participants described how privileged they felt knowing their gay sibling's "secret" sexual orientation. Cheryl described it perfectly.

I felt like I was closer to him cause he told me such a big—like that's a really, really, really, really big secret that he kept for 18 plus years. And to tell me first, his little sister, was like amazing to me and I was so excited. Like we just got closer. I think him spilling the beans was, like, opened up the door for us.

Cheryl experienced an increased reciprocity in her relationship with her gay brother following the disclosure. Especially being the younger sibling, Cheryl felt particularly touched being her brother's confidant.

Seeing characterological change in gay sibling (axial). Several participants noticed their gay siblings adopting a more aggressive, angry, defensive, withdrawn, and confident changes. Bruce stated:

We already accept you for [your sexual orientation]. Do not make it harder on mom though because um, she's not likely to ever change her opinion on you as long as you're gay. So, well basically I—I started out like 100% supportive of my sister and everything. Now today, I'm more like, I do not know, 70% because I feel like nowadays my sister

does stuff just to kind of like, be “in your face” to my mom and my dad.

Bruce withdrew some of his support for his sister after seeing her act disrespectfully to their parents. He acknowledged that society is harder on lesbian women, but to him, that was not an adequate excuse to be aggressive toward their parents. He did not appreciate how his sister had started to treat his parents after coming out.

One participant saw her brother gain more confidence and become more self-assured over time. Julie stated “Yeah, he’s become completely uninterested in covering [his sexual orientation] now, but it’s been a process.” Julie noticed that as her brother became more confident as he became more comfortable with his sexual orientation.

Evolving Family Relationships Following Disclosure (Selective)

Of the 10 participants in this study, 9 of them reported that parents were aware of their gay sibling’s sexual orientation.

Positive family responses to disclosure (axial). Ethan’s sister came out to their parents at the dinner table when their father joked about finding her a man that could take care of her. Ethan’s sister joked back saying she liked girls. After dinner, their mother asked if Ethan’s sister was serious about her statement. When his sister confirmed that she was being serious, Ethan’s parents reacted supportively.

They were assuming the parameters of “I respect you. I want you to be happy. This is your choice. Obviously we have traditions, so we need to get used to it, but we would be bad parents if we did not allow you to go out, you know, make your own story, share your own story with other people, grow up, and mature in the sense that you try to find your place in society by yourself. We’ll be here to support you. We just never saw this before, came across this before, so we need to so we need a lot of time to process this.”

Ethan’s parents were immediately supportive and accepting of their lesbian daughter. They explained that they never encountered a situation like this before and that they needed time to adjust. Nonetheless, they maintained their love for Ethan’s sister and wanted her to be happy and feel supported.

Negative family responses to disclosure (axial). Of the nine participants whose parents were aware of their children’s sexual orientation, six of them responded negatively, changing the family dynamic. The range of reactions included denial, disapproval, worry, and guilt. Four participants had parents whose denial took the form of trying to “convince” the gay sibling to become heterosexual again. May’s father disbelief was incredibly strong.

He came to me and told me that he knew [my brother], from the womb, was straight . . . and he felt like somebody convinced him to be gay throughout life, and that [my brother] was almost taken advantage of, convinced to be gay. And he felt like, [my brother] could be convinced out of being gay. My dad still said “Oh well, if you’ve never been with a girl, you don’t really know if you’re gay or not.” So he was still trying to push Max to go out with some girls, and he’ll try to set him up with girls.

One participant’s mother expressed worry related to her brother’s sexual orientation. Cheryl noticed the increase in her mother’s worry for her brother.

She used to never say anything about my brother besides like “Oh, why hasn’t he finished his masters yet?,” or like, you know, like little worrisome things that aren’t really a big deal that she’s really worried about. But like, she really worries about him being gay. She’s like, “What if he gets sick?,” and like, “What if he gets AIDS?”

Cheryl’s mother had increased her worry for her son now that she knew he was gay. She worried he would get a disease living a gay lifestyle, something that was not a concern for her before the disclosure. Cheryl also commented on how her relationship with her mother changed in that her mother’s worry shifted from Cheryl to her brother because of his sexual orientation.

Three participants experienced their parents feeling guilty for their gay sibling’s sexual orientation. Helen’s mother felt guilty for contributing something in her genetic code that may have made her brother gay.

[Mom]’s like “Well, I have three kids, and you know, we raised you guys all up in the same exact environment. You guys ate the same thing, did the same things, you know, have gone to the same places. So why is it that you’re gay and your brother and sister aren’t?” And so, I think up until this day, she still has—she still holds on, partially holds on to the fact that like, you know, genetics have something to do with it.

Helen’s mom blamed herself for transmitting genes that made his son gay.

Changes in family relationships (axial). Of the nine participants whose parents knew of their gay sibling’s sexual orientation, five of them reported experiencing changes in their relationships with their parents. Bruce’s relationship with his mother and maternal grandmother also changed dramatically: “We just talk about, uh, [my sister] more. So, I just wish they would stop like going back to it and talk about something else. Yeah. They’ll come back to it anyway.” The topic of Bruce’s sister sexual orientation, gender expression, and potential male dating candidates preoccupied his mother’s and grandmother’s lives. Much to his frustration, they continuously speak to Bruce about it.

Interplay of Culture and Lesbian and Gay Sexual Orientation Following Discovery of Gay Sibling’s Sexual Orientation (Selective)

Incompatibility of Chinese and Taiwanese culture and lesbian and gay sexual orientation (axial). This selective category discusses the role of their ethnicity in how participants negotiated their reaction to their gay sibling. All 10 participants discussed the incompatibility of the Chinese and Taiwanese culture with lesbian and gay sexual orientation. Two participants discussed the immigrant experience and its incompatibility with lesbian and gay sexual orientation. Bruce remarked that he found his parents’ rejection of his sister’s sexual orientation disappointing but understandable.

[My family] did not have it easy in Taiwan. They were successful and by sticking to their established cultural values, you know? Be really successful academically, and like, work really hard, and then that translated to success in Taiwan, which let them, uh, travel to America

to get an education and be a success here. They want to pass that on, their method of success to the next generation. And that includes their culture and everything.

Bruce empathized with the fact that, though disappointing, his parents only reacted in the way they know how. The values that they had in their country of origin were essential to becoming successful there. The implication Bruce's parents made is that being lesbian comes with it a certain amount of hardship because it is not the norm. Going against the grain may compromise one's ability to be successful, which is what Bruce's parents were afraid of.

Jasper, 30-year-old Taiwanese American, theorized that due to the struggle to immigrate to the United States, parents only want their children to be safe and happy.

I'm saying that our parents are more politically conservative in general, caring more about safety and welfare. And so when Taiwanese American kids come out, it really bugs their parents because they want so badly for their kids to do well in life and be happy, and being gay is like a major hindrance to that because it guarantees some persecution and less opportunity. [Parental] disapproval has more to do with desire to see their children succeed and be safe and happy after dealing with a lot of trouble getting into such a privileged position in the first place.

Jasper's theory expands on Bruce's perspective of immigrant parents. Jasper hypothesized that for Taiwanese immigrants are politically conservative due to historic political persecution that occurred in Taiwan. Coming to the United States, parents only want their children to be safe and happy. With children who identify as gay or lesbian, persecution is guaranteed to a certain extent, which is something they escaped from in their country of origin.

Four of the 10 participants reported that their families avoided discussions of sexuality in general. May compared her difficulties coming out to her parents about her heterosexual relationship with how she imagined her gay brother to feel about his gay relationship disclosure.

Personally, I think if [my brother] was dating somebody, he would probably hide it for a really long time. I say that because I'm in a heterosexual relationship, I hid my relationship for a year. And it's nothing that, you know, supposed to be bad, yeah.

May felt the instinct to hide her heterosexual relationship from her parents for a year before telling her parents about her partner. There is something about taboo about relationships within her family dynamic that caused May to hesitate disclosing about hers. She imagined that her brother, who is gay, would take much longer to tell their parents about his relationship.

Six of the 10 participants remarked upon the invisibility of lesbian and gay sexual orientation in the Chinese and Taiwanese culture. The lack of visibility and the silence in these two countries' cultures make coming out about lesbian and gay sexual orientation very difficult. Miami explained how the lack of exposure to lesbian and gay sexual orientation affected her.

When I was younger I felt very sheltered and never felt the need to know more than [my parents] did, so for me, it was a culture shock too. And finding out . . . maybe at that time, my sister was still figuring out herself, who she was. I guess maybe she couldn't explain to me, but like, I didn't even know there was a community about it.

You know, it's just something I never heard or no one talks about that stuff around them. I just feel that our background is very lame and very unintelligent because we never talked about it and we were never exposed.

Miami expressed the difficulty of accepting her sister's sexual orientation as her first exposure to lesbian and gay sexual orientation. Before her sister's disclosure, she was completely sheltered from the LGBT community, and was shocked to discover so much so quickly.

As a result of the silencing and invisibility of lesbian and gay sexual orientation in Chinese and Taiwanese culture, when parents have children who are gay, the shame is powerful. Matt explained:

I think it shapes my parents perception until now in that they aren't going to tell other Chinese people that their son is gay. They aren't going to tell anyone. They're not especially going to tell Chinese people because who comes out in China? . . . They definitely do not have a community.

The community around this topic is nonexistent and gathering support is nearly impossible because everybody is afraid to talk about it. Ironically, the perceived invisibility of lesbian and gay sexual orientation in the Chinese and Taiwanese culture silences conversations about lesbian and gay sexual orientation. The cycle of silence about lesbian and gay sexual orientation, then, continues.

Two other participants discussed how their parents feel about disclosing to others in the Chinese or Taiwanese community about having a gay child. Cheryl simply stated "[Mom] like, she—he can never tell the family, the family, it would be so shameful if everybody knew."

Negotiating own cultural beliefs (axial). All participants discussed how different aspects of their identities influenced their reaction to having a gay sibling. Eight participants explicitly discussed how they negotiated lesbian and gay sexual orientation with differing, and conflicting, cultural beliefs. For Eric, his bi-cultural identity meant deciding what values to keep and which ones to disregard.

And I was actually born here in America, in the States, so some of the things that my parents do really annoy me, so I tend to stray away from it. So like, I think, like, a lot of the negative things that they do that I disagree with, I've kind of like written off, and just not really, um, put that into my thing, into like my personal bank of what I would say and do I guess. I guess I've taken the positive things and left the negative things as they were.

Eric's freedom to pick and choose which values to retain or leave behind have helped accept his brother's sexual orientation and advocate on his brother's behalf to their parents.

Discussion

The collective set of interviews in the present study yielded five selective categories generated through a constructivist grounded theory analytic model (Fassinger, 2005): personal reaction to finding out about a gay sibling's sexual orientation, intrapersonal changes within the heterosexual sibling, the evolving sibling relationship after the coming out disclosure, the evolving family relationship following the disclosure, and the interplay of culture and sexuality following the discovery of the lesbian or gay siblings' sexual orientation. In this section we highlight key findings

and relate our results to previous research in the field. The section is organized along three broad areas focusing on the political and generation context for interpreting findings, intrapersonal changes within participants including their evolving relationship with their lesbian or gay sibling, and parent and family dynamics surrounding the coming out disclosure.

Political and Generational Context for Findings

Considering context is very important in interpreting these results. First, because of the shared Confucian traditions many Asian ethnic groups share and the perceived incompatibility of being a sexual minority in this context, our findings may be relevant to other Asian American ethnic groups. In this specific study, all the participants were Chinese or Taiwanese Americans who were born in the United States or had immigrated to the United States at a very young age; thus, most participants identified as being more acculturated, more "American." Most participants talked about how their bicultural identity as Chinese American or Taiwanese American helped them become more open to their gay sibling's sexual orientation. They all lived in states that had already legalized gay marriage at the time of the interview when not all states had marriage equality, and experienced President Barack Obama as the first sitting president to publically endorse marriage equality in 2012. All participants were college educated and most grew up in higher income families. In light of these factors, combined with their acculturation level, education, income, and political acceptance of their state, it is perhaps not surprising that all the participants were ultimately supportive of their gay sibling. Particularly for participants who were the first in the family to find out about their gay sibling's sexual orientation, they provided significant support for their gay siblings when the sibling contemplated how they would come out to their parents; thereby, buffering the gay sibling against family stress (Shilo & Savaya, 2011).

Intrapersonal Changes, Personal Growth, and the Sibling Relationship

Relationally, sibling relationships became closer as a result of discovering their gay sibling's sexual orientation. All participants reported undergoing positive personal changes including: becoming more open-minded, engaging in active self-reflection and learning, and increased empathy for their gay sibling and for others in general. Having a gay sibling gave participants direct access to a sexual minority story that expanded their perspective. Participants reflected upon their own biases and privileges, and actively began to learn more about the LGBT community and related issues. Participants became more involved in LGBT issues and other political issues involving marginalized, minority populations. This finding is consistent with a dissertation study examining heterosexual siblings of lesbian sisters that found increased intrapersonal awareness, which included increased acceptance and compassion for differences, increased interest in gay issues, and awareness of the broader societal biases and issues (English, 2008). For participants who continued to struggle at the time of the interview, they differentiated between supporting their gay sibling, which they did, and accepting their gay sibling's sexual orientation. It is noteworthy to state that for the participants who were not told directly about their gay sibling's sexual orientation and had

found out through other means (e.g., rumors, evidence on the computer) had a harder time initially coming to terms with their gay sibling's sexual orientation. They went through a period of denial before eventually accepting their gay sibling's sexual orientation. The participants who held strong Christian beliefs went through their religious transformation to reevaluate how they can still love and accept their gay sibling while maintain Christian values.

Savin-Williams (2005) and Diamond (2008) found that adolescents and young adults of today were more likely to have flexible ideas about sexual diversity and gender fluidity. This, in turn, implies that American culture is shifting to be more accepting of gay individuals. This finding was consistent with this study's participants' expressions of optimism regarding the emerging cultural acceptance of lesbian and gay sexual orientation. They expressed gratitude for being born in the current sociopolitical climate so that their gay sibling could come out with relative ease. Participants also believed that the presence of gay characters in pop culture (e.g., on TV) was beginning to expose the world to lesbian and gay sexual orientation on a larger scale. Thus, future generations can begin to see lesbian and gay sexual orientation as a normal expression of sexuality, including the conservative Chinese and Taiwanese community.

Parent and Family Dynamics Around the Coming Out Disclosure

While some parents of these gay siblings were supportive, most reacted with denial, disapproval, worry, and guilt. This finding is consistent with many studies that stated that parents are more likely to respond to their gay children's disclosure with guilt and a sense of parental failure (Chan, 1989; Chung & Katayama, 1998; Fukuyama & Ferguson, 2000). One important factor that was not explicitly explored was the parents' acculturation level, which may have explained the intensity of parental reaction. Some participants' parents who knew about their children's sexual orientation also did not want to disclose it to other family members. The reasoning for this, as participants explained, was that parents did not have a community to go to for support and having a gay child is shameful. This is consistent with the findings from Szymanski and Sung (2010) where being anything other than heterosexual brought shame to the family.

Participants whose parents knew of their gay sibling's sexual orientation reported experiencing changes in their relationships with their parents. Although participants expressed increased frustration and resentment toward family members who did not accept their gay sibling, these conversations appeared to put the heterosexual participant in a particularly important position to be supportive of their gay siblings when other family members were not (Qin, Way, & Mukherjee, 2008). Moon (2008) stated that emotional and social support from family, peers, and community members may resolve some of the intergenerational cultural conflicts in Asian American families. Heterosexual participants seem to play this role of a buffer between the generations, offering their social support for both their gay sibling and family members while they listen (Lee, Su, & Yoshida, 2005). Participants noted that their families avoided discussions of sexuality; therefore, discussions of lesbian and gay sexual orientation were even more taboo. This finding is consistent with other studies interested in the

intersection of ethnicity and lesbian and gay sexual orientation (e.g., Asian Americans and Latino Americans) where lesbian and gay sexual orientation was also seen as taboo and stigmatized (Espin, 1987).

In the broader Chinese and Taiwanese culture, although LGBT issues have gained public awareness and acceptance, lesbian and gay sexual orientation still manages to be invisible, which contributes to the taboo lesbian and gay sexual orientation had associated with it. Participants reported that they were not even aware initially of the LGBT community because Chinese and Taiwanese culture had no visible gay culture or family role models. Chan (1989) also found more than half of the Asian American participants endorsed the denial of the existence of gay Asian Americans. Although in recent years Taiwan has been increasingly progressive in recognizing the rights of LGBT individuals, Taiwan's sociopolitical climate historically had "very little history of celebrities coming out, no articulate gay movement and no parent support groups" (Wang, Bih, & Brennan, 2009, p. 292). In this way, participants' use of their bicultural identity helped them resolve the incompatibility of lesbian and gay sexual orientation in the Chinese and Taiwanese culture while providing support and acceptance for their gay sibling. In this current sociopolitical time in the United States, finding ways to support heterosexual individuals who have gay siblings as educators and mental health professionals may be a great way to tap into their ability to be an effective resource for the gay sibling.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

There are several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings from this study. First, participants who choose to participate in this research were a self-selected group who were likely to be different in some ways than those who chose not to volunteer for this study. For example, they may be more open and accepting about their gay sibling's sexual orientation than those who may be less comfortable with their gay sibling's sexual orientation. Second, despite efforts to recruit nationally and through LGBT related list serves, participants were mostly from the Los Angeles County area. Lastly, recruitment was also geared toward attracting second-generation participants who were born in the United States with immigrant parents. Though technically still considered a second-generation individual, one participant was born in Taiwan and came to the United States at the age of six; therefore, it is uncertain if her experience was inherently different from the rest.

Future qualitative research may focus on capturing the experiences of a wider range of heterosexual Asian Americans who have gay siblings. The participant sample for this study was limited to heterosexual Chinese and Taiwanese Americans in their 20s who were born in the United States. Though their experiences may be similar to other Asian American ethnic groups of differing immigration statuses and ages, future qualitative and quantitative research is needed. Not only will it help illuminate the experiences of heterosexual individuals across cultures, it will also help untangle whether the experiences of this particular sample is culturally specific or universal.

Several factors would be great to explore in more depth: birth order, gender dynamics, religion/spiritual orientation, and disclosure type. Although the demographics were recorded, future stud-

ies may focus more explicitly on how heterosexual individuals' birth order (having an older or younger gay sibling) and sex (same-gender or opposite-gender) affects their reaction to their gay sibling's coming out process because both variables are very important constructs in the Chinese and Taiwanese cultures. In addition, focusing on how religion influenced the sibling dynamic is another potential research question. Lastly, the type of disclosure about sexual orientation (i.e., directly from gay sibling, indirectly through other mediums) seemed to play a huge role in participant reactions. It would be interesting to see if this is a common phenomenon.

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