

Who Are My Family Members? Lineage and Marital Status In the Taiwanese Family

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I. INTRODUCTION

With a cultural heritage of familism, Chinese family studies have always received great attention among international scholars. For the last few decades, significant contributions to family research in Taiwan were made by anthropologists, historians, demographers, sociologists, psychologists, and other social scientists. From the published reports, each discipline appears to have its favored research focus, research loci as well as its preferred research methods. Family sociology in this regard, has moved from the traditional problem-oriented research¹ to structural and interactional aspects of the family². In fact, family structure and family organization was rated the most researched issue among family scientists in Taiwan in the 1980s.³ This is largely due to the existing context of rapid social change. Consequently, the principal question examined is the relationship between social change and family structure as well as factors accounted for the variation in different patterns observed.

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1 Ts'en-Lou Chu, "A Study of Marriage (in Chinese)," (Taichung: Wu-Feng Publishing Co. Press, 1979).

2 Chin-Chun Yi and Yu-Hsia Lu, "Evaluating of Women's Study and Family Study in Taiwan's Sociology Research (in Chinese)," Paper presented at the Conference of The Development and Exchange of Sociology among Chinese Society (1993). Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica, Taipei, Taiwan, R.O.C.

3 Chin-Chun Yi, "Studying Social Change: The Case of Taiwanese Family Sociologists," *Current Sociology* 41(1993 No.1), pp. 41-67.

With the overwhelming influence of Western culture, a natural response is to investigate whether family systems in Taiwan have maintained their tenacity. Despite rare exceptions⁴, most studies agree that the fundamental values, especially the continuity of patrilineal generations and the paternal authority have, been relatively preserved⁵. Although some changes in the family system seem inevitable, the current research indicates that these changes are usually expressed in either a compromised format or simply a matter of quantitative difference. For example, support for the elderly parents may develop into a meal rotation arrangement⁶ and financial support from the adult children is favored over a co-residence pattern by both parties.⁷ However, the support of elderly parents remains an unchallenged responsibility of children shared by all. Similarly, as married women's labor force participation results in their increased autonomy in selective areas of family power in Taiwan,⁸ the final authority endowed from the cultural norm still rests on the paternal member of the family.⁹

4 Yao-Chia Chuang and Kuo-Su Yang, "Change and Practice of the Traditional Filial Piety (in Chinese)," in *The Psychology and Behaviors of the Chinese*, ed. by Kuo-Su Yang and Kuang-Kuo Hwang. (Taipei, Taiwan: Kuei-Kuen Publishing Co. Press, 1991).

5 Yung-Mei Tsai and Chin-Chun Yi, "Persistence and Change of the Chinese Family Values: The Taiwan case," Paper presented at the International Conference on Social Change in Taiwan, 1995, Academia Sinica, Taipei, Taiwan, R.O.C. Ying-Hwa Chang, "Family Composition and Parental Care Pattern in the Changing Society: The case of Taiwan (in Chinese)," *National Taiwan University Journal of Sociology* 23(1995), pp. 1-34. Francis L. K. Hsu, "Field Work, Cultural Differences and Interpretation," in *The Chinese Family and Its Ritual Behavior*, ed. by Jih-Chang Hsieh and Ying-Chang Chuang (Taipei, Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica Press, 1985), pp. 19-29. Fred Arnold and Eddie C. Y. Kuo, "The Value of Daughters and Sons: A Comparative Study of the Gender Preferences of Parents," *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 15(1984 No.2), pp. 299-318.

6 Jih-Chang Hsieh, "Meal Rotation," in *The Chinese Family and Its Ritual Behavior*, ed. Jih-Chang Hsieh and Ying-Chang Chuang (Taipei, Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica Press, 1985), pp. 70-83.

7 Te-Hsiung Sun, "Changing Chinese Family: The Case of Taiwan (in Chinese)," in *Chinese Family and Its Change*, ed. Chien Chiao (Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong and Hong Kong Asian Institute Press, 1991), pp. 33-51. Ying-Hwa Chang, "Family Composition and Parental Care Pattern in the Changing Society: The case of Taiwan (in Chinese)," *National Taiwan University Journal of Sociology* 23(1994), pp. 1-34.

8 Chin-Chun Yi and Yao-Ling Tsai, "An Analysis of Marital Power in the Taipei Metropolitan Area: An Example of Familiar Decision-Making (in Chinese)," in *Social Phenomena in Taiwan: An Analysis*, ed. Chin-Chun Yi and Cathy Chu (Taipei: Institute of Social Sciences and Philosophy, Academia Sinica Press, 1989), pp. 115-151.

9 Chin-Chun Yi and Ying-Hwa Chang, "A Study of the Change of Family Structure and Marital Power in Taiwan," Paper presented at the XIIth World Congress of Sociology, Research Committee 06 on "Gender, Families and Social Change." 18th-23rd, July, 1994. Bielefeld, Germany.

Among various familial effects of the modernization process, change of family structure in Taiwan is probably the most noted one. Family structure is commonly operationalized by family types, family forms, or number of family members. Previous efforts in this realm of research have generated a vast amount of literature and the debate between nuclear family and stem family as the most significant family type in contemporary Taiwan has not been fully settled.¹⁰ Differences in the concept definition lead to difficulty in comparison.

While the data is of the best quality available, these studies have suffered from the lack of conclusive conceptual definitions. A typical criticism from an anthropologist would point out that the Chinese family is a multi-level concept with extensive lineage implications and complex family organizational background, which is more or less neglected by other social scientists. On the other hand, the defense from a sociologist or a demographer would probably argue that family should not be emphasized as a conceptual unit only. Although elements of common property or ancestral worship are of vital importance, a viable family unit in contemporary Taiwan as demonstrated in numerous large sample surveys is probably equivalent to the present living arrangement or whatever appears in the official registration.

It is clear that an attempt to integrate diverse emphases of various disciplines on the definition of family may be too soon at this stage. However, it is also significant that some effort be put on the clarification of different content embedded in each concept of family employed. This line of effort will need to incorporate both the cultural as well as the immediate societal effects on individual's perception of family structure. Since family is regarded as the most

10 Tse-Han Lai and Kuan-Jeng Chen, "Historical and Demographic Perspectives of the Chinese Family Size (in Chinese)," *Chinese Journal of Sociology* 5(1980), pp. 25-40. Chin-Chun Yi, "Different Family Type Preferences and Its Implications in Taiwan (in Chinese)," *National Taiwan University Journal of Sociology* 17(1985), pp. 1-14. Kuan-Jeng Chen, Edward Jow-Ching Tu and Yihou Lin, "Changes of Household Composition in Taiwan (in Chinese)," *In Social Phenomena in Taiwan: An Analysis*, ed. Chin-Chun Yi and Cathy Chu (Taipei: Institute of Social Sciences and Philosophy, Academia Sinica Press, 1989), pp. 311-336. Li Chi, "Nuclearization of Family in Taiwan in the Last Twenty Years (in Chinese)," *National Taiwan University Journal of Sociology* 20(1990), pp. 41-83. Ying-Hwa Chang and Li Chi, "Changing Family Household Pattern (in Chinese)," *Thought and Word* (1991 No.4), pp. 85-113. Chin-Chun Yi and Ying-Hwa Chang, "A Study of the Change of Family Structure and Marital Power in Taiwan," Paper presented at the XIIth World Congress of Sociology, Research Committee 06 on "Gender, Families and Social Change." 18th-23rd, July, 1994. Bielefeld, Germany.

intimate primary social group, to understand the subjective definition of family will provide us important enlightenment toward possible future development of the family system.

Therefore, this paper will explore the subjective composition of the family. Individual's views of who are his/her family members provide personal attitudes toward present family unit and imply possible changes in the direction of future family composition. Hence, our analyses will focus on answers to two defined situations: family members from general personal accounts, and family members to be included in the most significant family reunion occasion—the Chinese New Year's Eve. With systematic analysis of the subjective definitions of family, we will be able to suggest patterns of Chinese family composition in various contingencies, which hopefully will help the future interdisciplinary dialogue among family scholars.

II. CHIA AND THE FAMILY

In almost every research report on Chinese family structure, the operational definition of the family has to be specified. The scope of possible repertoire ranges from the single individual unit as appeared in the census,¹¹ the conventional basic family types—nuclear, stem, extended—gathered from the survey,¹² or the inclusion of lineage concerns in the classification of co-residence patterns as shown in most papers using the KAP data.¹³ There are obviously other considerations to distinguish various family types, such as using the number of nucleus,¹⁴ the timing of family fission,¹⁵ the actual function of the elderly parents,¹⁶ the common

11 Liang-His Hsu and Chung-Cheng Lin, "Family Structure and Social Change: A Follow-up Study (in Chinese)," in *Social Phenomena in Taiwan: An Analysis*, ed. by Chin-Chun Yi and Cathy Chu (Taipei: Institute of Social Sciences and Philosophy, Academia Sinica Press, 1989), pp. 22-55.

12 Chung-I Wen, Ying-Hwa Chang, Li-Yun Chang and Cathy Chu, "Family Structure and Its Related Variables: A Case of Taipei (in Chinese)," in *Social Phenomena in Taiwan: An Analysis*, ed. Chin-Chun Yi and Cathy Chu (Taipei: Institute of Social Sciences and Philosophy, Academia Sinica Press, 1989), pp. 1-24.

13 Arland Thornton and Hui-Sheng Lin, "Social Change and the Family in Taiwan," (Chicago University Press, 1994). Ying-Hwa Chang, "Family Composition and Parental Care Pattern in the Changing Society: The case of Taiwan (in Chinese)," *National Taiwan University Journal of Sociology* 23(1994), pp. 1-34.

14 Hsiao-Tung Fei, "Changing of Family Structure," *Ten-Jin Social Science Bimonthly* (1982).

15 *Ibid.* and Myron L Cohen, *House United, House Divided: The Chinese Family in Taiwan*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976).

property shared by males of the same lineage,¹⁷ or the baseline of conjugal pairs in the establishment of Fang.¹⁸ In order to avoid the conceptual complexity of the definition of Chinese family, a majority of social scientists who rely mostly on survey data have chosen households of present living arrangements as the analyzing unit. This certainly points out the necessity to clarify the very basic concept of the Chinese family among social science researches.

It has been argued that family translated as *Chia-T'ing* in Chinese is in fact a foreign concept.¹⁹ *Chia* which so far has no equivalent English translation is the real essence of the "family". Family scholars have also reached a consensus on the flexibility in defining *chia* as proposed by Fei Hsiao-Tung in 1947. *Chia* may be subjectively confined to members of the immediate conjugal unit only; or *chia* may extend to include members of the same clan as well as others from the same geographical origins or from similar political interests. Besides the implication of *chia* as a flexible concept, Wang²⁰ further illustrated the different nature involved in the concept of *chia-t'ing* (domestic unit) and *chia-tsu* (family). According to Wang's perspective, the structural characteristic embedded in the Chinese family system lies in the fundamental difference between these two related concepts. *Chia-T'ing* or the domestic unit is a product of the family fission and is thus exclusive in nature regarding its significant role as the inexorable basic unit of social organization. *Chia-Tsu* or the family, on the other hand, is a conceptual unit resulted from the natural developmental process of family fusion and is hence elastic or unfixed in nature. Since family fusion has its original root on the *Fang* of married brothers, pat-

16 Ying-Chang Chuang, "The Adaptation to Modernization of Rural Families in Taiwan (in Chinese)," *Bulletin of the Institute of Ethnology* 34(1972), pp. 85-98.

17 Arthur P. Wolf, "Introduction: The Study of Chinese Society on Taiwan," in *The Chinese Family and Its Ritual Behavior*, ed. by Jih-Chang Hsieh and Ying-Chang Chuang (Taipei, Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica Press, 1985), pp. 3-18.

18 Chi-Nan Chen, "Fang and Traditional Chinese Family System (in Chinese)," *Chinese Studies* 3(1985, No.1), pp. 127-183.

19 Chung-I Wen, Ying-Hwa Chang, Li-Yun Chang and Cathy Chu, "Family Structure and Its Related Variables: A Case of Taipei (in Chinese)," in *Social Phenomena in Taiwan: An Analysis*, ed. by Chin-Chun Yi and Cathy Chu (Taipei: Institute of Social Sciences and Philosophy, Academia Sinica Press, 1989), pp. 1-24.

20 Sung-Hsing Wang, "On the Household and Family in Chinese Society," in *The Chinese Family and Its Ritual Behavior*, ed. by Jih-Chang Hsieh and Ying-Chang Chuang (Taipei, Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica Press, 1985), pp. 50-58. And "The Jia Institution and Modernization of Chinese (in Chinese)," in *The Chinese Family and Its Change*, ed. by Chien Chiao (Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong and Hong Kong Asian Institute Press, 1991), pp. 9-14.

rilineal inheritance serves as the basic rule in the definition of *chia-tsu's* membership.²¹ Therefore, clan based on common surname or any relationship based on the patrilineal networks can be included in the concept of the family.

In this regard, the family (*chia-tsu*) in Wang's definition corresponds to Fei's concept of *chia* in that both emphasize the inclusive nature developed from the social relationship manifested beyond the level of domestic *chia-t'ing*. This line of thought is echoed by other local scholars²² either regarding the flexible classification of family organization or defining *chia* from the possible membership recognized by the extended family qualifications. In other words, despite debates between lineage and clan or diverse classification of family types, there are generally at least two levels of family organization that ought to be considered: the inclusive or non-fixed notion of *chia* which appears to vary according to individual contingencies; the other is the more intimate family unit often with a relatively fixed range of membership and may vary depending on the actual constraint existing in the present living conditions.

The above dichotomy of conceptual versus practical family unit is perhaps best regarded as another possible baseline to the study of complex family structure in Taiwan. It is not intended to neglect the importance of economic factors—namely, the family property—in the classification of family structure. However, due to the physical constraint of most survey data and partly due to the different emphases of various disciplines, the economic aspect of the definition of family structure seems to be treated with considerable flexibility in actual survey research. To take typical examples from sociological and demographic analyses, it becomes apparent that household or family household has become the core unit in most reports. Thornton and Lin in their book on family change in Taiwan during the last three decades use co-residential household as a basic unit of family structure. Their discussion on the family economy mainly deals with the labor pooling to wage-pooling tran-

21 Sung-Hsing Wang, "The Jia Institution and Modernization of Chinese (in Chinese)," *ibid.*, pp. 9-14.

22 Ying-Chang Chuang and Chi-Nan Chen, "Review of the Current Phase of Research into Chinese Social Structure: Some Lessons from Taiwan Studies (in Chinese)," in *The Sinicization of Social and Behavioral Science Research*, ed. by Kuo-Shu Yang and Chung-I Wen. (Taipei, Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica Press, 1982). Chung-I Wen, Ying-Hwa Chang, Li-Yun Chang and Cathy Chu, "Family Structure and Its Related Variables: A Case of Taipei (in Chinese)," in *Social Phenomena in Taiwan: An Analysis*, ed. by Chin-Chun Yi and Cathy Chu (Taipei: Institute of Social Sciences and Philosophy, Academia Sinica Press, 1989), pp. 1-24.

sition.²³ Specifically, *chia* is considered as "... (a) group of kin who have rights in common property whether or not they technically co-reside under a single roof."²⁴ Household, on the other hand, refers to the co-residential unit which may or may not correspond to the *chia*. Although ownership of the property is not a necessary condition of *chia*, the remaining analyses show that this economic aspect is at best served as a common background in the interpretation of the result. Furthermore, the assertion of flexible family forms observed in a variety of contingencies actually justifies the employment of household as the ultimate analyzing unit throughout the book.

In a similar vein, Chi²⁵ defines his basic family unit as the family household which is comprised of kin members eating and living within the same household. By including kin relations in the household, Chi extends his concept closer to the meaning of *chia-tsu*. Nevertheless, the importance of *chia-tsu* in the family system is positioned in the conceptual level only, just as the common economic expenses as a criterion in distinguishing family forms is recognized but considered infeasible.²⁶ Other related surveys on family structure in Taiwan often restrict the data to the self-report from the respondent on who are residing together at the time of the interview.²⁷ Overall, co-residence is probably the most used principle of classification in the study of family structure mainly because of its clarity in the measurement.

In short, it is clear that the above argument on the content and the definition of family structure appears to fall into two separate

23 Arland Thornton and Hui-Sheng Lin, *Social Change and the Family in Taiwan*, (Chicago University Press, 1994).

24 *Ibid.*, pp. 26.

25 Li Chi, "Nuclearization of Family in Taiwan in the Last Twenty Years (in Chinese)," *National Taiwan University Journal of Sociology* 20(1990), pp. 41-83.

26 *Ibid.*, p. 73.

27 Chin-Chun Yi, "A Study of Work Orientation, Job Condition, Work Satisfaction and Child Care Arrangement among Married Working Women (in Chinese)," *Chinese Journal of Sociology* 11(1987), pp. 93-120. Ying-Hwa Chang and Li Chi, "Changing Family Household Pattern (in Chinese)," *Thought and Word* (1991 No.4), pp. 85-113. Chin-Chun Yi and Ying-Hwa Chang, "A Study of the Change of Family Structure and Marital Power in Taiwan," Paper presented at the XIIth World Congress of Sociology, Research Committee 06 on "Gender, Families and Social Change." 18th-23rd, July, 1994. Bielefeld, Germany. Chin-Chun Yi, Yu-Hsia Lu and Yu-Hua Chen, "Interview Notes of "Economic Development and Domestic Status: A Study among Family Structure, Female's Working Patterns and Family Power Structure (in Chinese)," included in-depth Interview and Focus Group Interview. (Project Sponsored by National Science Council in Taiwan, 1995), (No. NSC83-0301-H-001-064 NSC84-2411-H-001-018).

categories. Firstly, the qualitative fieldwork predominated in anthropology provides rich information on the complexity of *chia*. These field notes shared with other historical accounts inform us that it would be too simplistic to limit the concept of family structure to the living arrangement. Property rights as well as subjective inclusion of family members for various contingencies ought to be considered in the classification of Chinese family structure. Since the typical source of these data pertains to the small sample of rural areas, studies focus on the contemporary urban samples attempt to discover another valid and easier indicator. The answer up to now seems to rely on the data available from a typical survey which suggests that household or co-residential unit is probably close or equivalent to the family structure that researcher has defined.

In this paper, we will address our research question to how people define family members with an intention to expand the conventional thoughts of family structure from researcher's arbitrary definition to respondent's personal perception. In other words, we will explore the possibility of the definition of *chia* in a relatively large and representative sample. Since subjective family composition is the conceptual unit subjectively defined by the respondent, it is clear that the subjective family may represent the notion of *chia*.

Before going into details of the analysis, a brief review of the development of family composition in Taiwan may be helpful for interested readers.

III. PATTERNS OF FAMILY COMPOSITION IN TAIWAN

One of the most prominent changes in the Chinese family structure is probably the gradual transition from the extended family to the nuclear family. The modernization process accompanied by massive rural-urban migration have been documented as the underlying structural forces.²⁸ In general, conclusions drawn from

28 Yung-Mei Tsai and Chin-Chun Yi, "Persistence and Change of the Chinese Family Values: The Taiwan case," Paper presented at the International Conference on Social Change in Taiwan, 1995, Academia Sinica, Taipei, Taiwan, R.O.C. Ying-Hwa Chang, "Family Composition and Parental Care Pattern in the Changing Society: The Case of Taiwan (in Chinese)," *National Taiwan University Journal of Sociology* 23(1995), pp. 1-34. Ying-Hwa Chang and Li Chi, "Changing Family Household Pattern (in Chinese)," *Thought and Word* (1991 No.4), pp. 85-113. Kuanjeng Chen, Edward Jow-Ching Tu and Yihou Lin, "Changes of Household Composition in Taiwan (in Chinese)," in *Social Phenomena in Taiwan: An Analysis*, ed. by Chin-Chun Yi and Cathy Chu (Taipei: Institute of Social Sciences and Phi-

studies utilizing aggregate data will point out the persistence of patrilineal living arrangements in addition to the seemingly dominance of separate nuclear families. The co-residence pattern of elderly parents is thus proposed and evidenced as the key element in studying family structural changes in Taiwan.²⁹

Using three different datasets—a village survey in 1943 mainland China, census data of a northern district in Taiwan (before 1945), and four consecutive KAP island-wide surveys (1968-1986), Chang and Chi have shown that there are roughly three historical stages in the change of household structure in the 20th century Taiwan.

During the Japanese Colonialization and Before 1960s

Complex family types dominated with a stronger tendency to form extended families, especially during the later years of colonialization.

From the 1960s to the 1970s

A drastic decline of extended families being replaced by stem families, and demographic factors as well as attitudes toward co-residence are suggested to be responsible.

Since the 1980s

While stem families maintained its dominance, the rapid increase of nuclear families has become a significant phenomenon. The rise of nuclearization is regarded as an independent trend, beyond the by-product of stem families.³⁰

The general trend of the drastic decline of extended families, the relatively stable stem families, and the clear increase of the nuclear family has also been observed in rural areas of mainland

losophy, Academia Sinica Press, 1989), pp. 311-336. Ronald Freedman, Ming-Cheng Chang and Te-Hsiung Sun, "Household Composition, Extended Kinship, and Reproduction in Taiwan: 1973-1980." *Population Studies* 36(1982 November), pp. 395-411. Tse-Han Lai and Kuan-Jeng Chen, "Historical and Demographic Perspectives of the Chinese Family Size (in Chinese)," *Chinese Journal of Sociology* 5(1980), pp. 25-40.

29 Chin-Chun Yi and Cathy Chu, "The Change of Family Structure and Functions: the Comparative Study among Taiwan, Hong Kong, Mainland China, and Singapore Society (in Chinese)," In cross-cultural Transplants: *Western Social Science Theories in Chinese Societies*, ed. Cho-Yee To (The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 1993), pp. 79-82. Arland Thornton and Hui-Sheng Lin, *Social Change and the Family in Taiwan*, (Chicago University Press, 1994). Yung-Mei Tsai and Chin-Chun Yi, "Persistence and Change of the Chinese Family Values: The Taiwan case," Paper presented at the International Conference on Social Change in Taiwan. 1995, Academia Sinica, Taipei, Taiwan, R.O.C. Ying-Hwa Chang, "Family Composition and Parental Care Pattern in the Changing Society: The case of Taiwan (in Chinese)," *National Taiwan University Journal of Sociology* 23(1995), pp. 1-34.

30 Ying-Hwa Chang and Li Chi, "Changing Family Household Pattern (in Chinese)," *Thought and Word* (1991 No.4), pp. 85-113.

China³¹ as well as in other island-wide surveys in Taiwan over the last few decades.³² An overall examination of the different focus that each major discipline has contributed to our understanding of the family change in Taiwan indicates that anthropologists provided us with detailed accounts of the viable, compromised, physically efficient, and subjectively variant family structure.³³ Demographers, especially Chen and his colleagues, taking the population transition as a baseline argument, strongly suggested that the stem family has always been the most important family type in Taiwan.³⁴ Sociologists, on the other hand, appear to endorse the modernization theory as well as favor the urban-family linkage perspective, and the consequent result usually shows the tendency toward family nuclearization in Taiwan.³⁵

31 Hsiao-Tung Fei, "The Change of Family Structure in China (in Chinese)," in *The Chinese Family and Its Change*, ed. by Chien Chiao (Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong and Hong Kong Asian Institute Press, 1991), pp. 3-8.

32 Chin-Chun Yi and Ying-Hwa Chang, "A Study of the Change of Family Structure and Marital Power in Taiwan," Paper presented at the XIIth World Congress of Sociology, Research Committee 06 on "Gender, Families and Social Change." 18th-23rd July, 1994, Bielefeld, Germany. Arland Thornton and Hui-Sheng Lin, *Social Change and the Family in Taiwan*, (Chicago University Press, 1994). Li CHI, "Nuclearization of Family in Taiwan in the Last Twenty Years (in Chinese)," *National Taiwan University Journal of Sociology* 20(1990), pp. 41-83.

33 Ying-Chang Chuang, "The Adaptation to Modernization of Rural Families in Taiwan (in Chinese)," *Bulletin of the Institute of Ethnology* 34(1972), pp. 85-98. Margery Wolf, *Women and the Family in Rural Taiwan*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972). Myron L Cohen, *House United, House Divided: The Chinese Family in Taiwan*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976). Arthur P. Wolf, "Introduction: The Study of Chinese Society on Taiwan," in *The Chinese Family and Its Ritual Behavior*, ed. by Jih-Chang Hsieh and Ying-Chang Chuang (Taipei, Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica Press, 1985), pp. 3-18. Jih-Chang Hsieh, "Meal Rotation," in *The Chinese Family and Its Ritual Behavior*, ed. by Jih-Chang Hsieh and Ying-Chang Chuang (Taipei, Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica Press, 1985), pp. 70-83. Chi-Nan Chen, "Fang and Traditional Chinese Family System (in Chinese)," *Chinese Studies* 3 (1985) No.1, pp. 127-183.

34 Tse-Han Lai and Kuan-Jeng Chen, "Historical and Demographic Perspectives of the Chinese Family Size (in Chinese)," *Chinese Journal of Sociology* 5(1980), pp. 25-40. Kuanjeng Chen, Temu Wang and Wenling Chen, "Causes and Consequences of Population Change in Taiwan (in Chinese)," *Journal of Population Studies* 9(1986), pp. 1-23. Kuanjeng Chen, Edward Jow-Ching Tu and Yihou Lin, "Changes of Household Composition in Taiwan (in Chinese)," in *Social Phenomena in Taiwan: An Analysis*, ed. Chin-Chun Yi and Cathy Chu (Taipei: Institute of Social Sciences and Philosophy, Academia Sinica Press, 1989), pp. 311-336.

35 William Parish, "Modernization and Household Composition in Taiwan." in *Chinese Family Law and Social Change in Historical and Comparative Perspective*, ed. David C. Buxbaum (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1978), pp. 283-320. Liang-His Hsu and Chung-Cheng Lin, "Family Structure and Social Change: A Comparison of a Chinese and American 'Single Parent Family' (in Chinese)." *Chinese Journal of Sociology* 8(1984), pp. 1-22. Chin-Chun Yi, "Different Family Type Preferences and Its Implications in Taiwan (in Chinese)," *National Taiwan University Journal of Sociology* 17(1985), pp. 1-14. Li Chi, "A Study

Since co-residence with elderly parents is the key to distinguish stem versus nuclear families, several studies have documented the difference between attitudes and behaviors in this issue.³⁶ Specifically, there is a strong preference toward a separate living arrangement or nuclear family on the general attitudinal level, but the personal attitude toward living arrangements after retirement leans clearly toward the stem family.³⁷ In other words, attitudes regarding personal expectation coincides more closely with the present living arrangement in that approximately 70 percent of elderly parents are living with their elder sons.³⁸ However, further studies point out that attitudes toward co-residence and financial support of parents do not correspond with each other. Although both adult children and aged parents favor financial support more than co-residence (and parents express stronger attitudes toward independence on both aspects), nevertheless, children prefer financial support of aged parents more than actual living together.³⁹ It is clear that from the children's perspective, to contribute part of parent's living expenses is considered a feasible substitute of the traditional support system (i.e., to live together). This also signifies an important compromise under the existing physical constraint of the family that may develop into an institutionalized pattern in the future.

on the Effect of Rural-Urban Migration on Household Composition in Taiwan in Recent Decades (in Chinese)," *Chinese Journal of Sociology* 13(1989), pp. 67-104. Ying-Hwa Chang and Li Chi, "Changing Family Household Pattern (in Chinese)," *Thought and Word* (1991 No.4), pp. 85-113. Ying-Hwa Chang, "Family Composition and Parental Care Pattern in the Changing Society: The Case of Taiwan (in Chinese)," *National Taiwan University Journal of Sociology* 23(1994), pp. 1-34. Chin-Chun Yi and Ying-Hwa Chang, "A Study of the Change of Family Structure and Marital Power in Taiwan," Paper presented at the XIIth World Congress of Sociology, Research Committee 06 on "Gender, Families and Social Change." 18th-23rd, July, 1994. Bielefeld, Germany.

36 Chin-Chun Yi and Yu-Hsia Lu, "Evaluating of Women's Study and Family Study in Taiwan's Sociology Research (in Chinese)," Paper presented at the Conference of The Development and Exchange of Sociology among Chinese Society (1993). Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica, Taipei, Taiwan, R.O.C.

37 Chin-Chun Yi, "Different Family Type Preferences and Its Implications in Taiwan (in Chinese)," *National Taiwan University Journal of Sociology* 17(1985), pp. 1-14.

38 Chi-Chiung Lo, "Changing Elderly Family Structure in Taiwan During the Past Decade (in Chinese)," *Taiwan Economic Forecast* 18(1987 No.2), pp. 83-107.

39 Te-Hsiung Sun, "Changing Chinese Family: The Case of Taiwan (in Chinese)," in *Chinese Family and Its Change*, ed. by Chien Chiao (Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong and Hong Kong Asian Institute Press, 1991), pp. 33-51. Ying-Hwa Chang, "Family Composition and Parental Care Pattern in the Changing Society: The case of Taiwan (in Chinese)," *National Taiwan University Journal of Sociology* 23 (1994), pp. 1-34.

Thornton and Lin in a book on social change and family change in Taiwan point out that educational expansion, both premarital and marital nonfamilial work experiences, and premarital nonfamilial living arrangements contribute to the changing family organization in Taiwan. Furthermore, in the following persuasive and compelling presentation, premarital exposure to nonfamilial contexts and interaction, e.g., work activities, autonomous decision-making, independent living experience, migration, etc, is argued to be determinants of co-residence with husband's parents.⁴⁰ Although co-residence at marriage as well as duration of co-residence after marriage are declining, there are still half sample who reside with husband's parents six years after marriage. These empirical findings on attitudes and behaviors of the family process indicate that values toward elderly parents have undergone some changes, but the actual living arrangement are kept relatively intact.⁴¹

In short, patterns of family composition in Taiwan have shown a general picture accepted by most researchers in this field: the declining extended family has been replaced by the stable stem family, while the increase of nuclear family has simultaneously occurred. Despite variation in explaining this process, future research on the change of family structure not only should take the difference between attitudes and behaviors into account, it ought to explore effects of both physical and non-physical factors (e.g., willingness of co-residence of different generations, psychological feeling toward independent living, etc.) on changes of co-residence patterns in the future. It is clear that non-physical factors are closely related to normative as well as personal constraints.

From the above discussion, with regard to changes of the family structure in Taiwan, the fundamental question on the conceptual variation of the basic analyzing unit—*chia* or family—remains unresolved. This paper intends to focus on one aspect of this issue by delineating the subjective *chia* as reported by a large sample. Differences of patterns observed will enable us to clarify the possible notion of Chinese family as an non-fixed or loosely structured so-

40 Arland Thornton and Hui-Sheng Lin, *Social Change and the Family in Taiwan*, (Chicago University Press, 1994).

41 Chin-Chun Yi, "Children Arrangement of Employed Mothers in Taiwan." in *Women, the Family, and Policy—A Global Perspective*, ed. by Easter Ngan-Ling Chow and Catherine White Berheide (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), pp. 235-254.

cial group which may be subjectively defined according to various contingencies allowed.

IV. CHIA OR THE SUBJECTIVE FAMILY COMPOSITION

A. Data

Data are taken from "The Economic Development and Female's Family Status: Family Structure, Female's Employment Patterns, and Family Power Structure in Taiwan".⁴² 1000 currently married females aged 20-64 as well as half of their husbands (i.e., 500 couples) were randomly selected from the island-wide registration data. Three stage stratified sampling procedures were employed in spring 1994 and nine levels of developmental types were formed, of which our primary selection unit was individually classified into an appropriate level. 958 wives and 516 husbands completed the interview and became our final sample.

B. Variables

As discussed above, *chia* in a typical Chinese mind is a relationship bounded but unorganized social group.⁴³ *Chia* may be considered as a flexible unit defined under the principle of differential hierarchy⁴⁴ which allows membership to expand from small to large sizes. Hence, depending on the situation or the existing constraint, *chia* is not a notion of fixed boundary, but rather a concept which may be extended in a concentric circular manner. On the other hand, except in rare instances such as soliciting voters with any possible distant network relations, members to be included in *chia* are usually governed by the accepted cultural system. In other words, albeit the flexible nature of the definition of *chia*, there is a relative normative guidance in terms of who are the corresponding *chia-jen* (family members) in various circumstances.

Therefore, two indicators are decided in the "measurement" of *chia*. It should be noticed that *chia* is defined in this study as the subjective family composition expressed by the respondent which may have variance due to different occasions or particular aspects specified. The two indicators chosen are firstly, a direct open-

42 NSC 83-0301-H-001-064 and NSC 84-2411-H-01-018.

43 Sung-Hsing Wang, "The Jia Institution and Modernization of Chinese (in Chinese)," in *The Chinese Family and Its Change*, ed. by Chien Chiao (Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong and Hong Kong Asian Institute Press, 1991), pp. 9-14.

44 Hsiao-Tung Fei, *Earthbound China: From the Soil, the Foundations of Chinese Society* (1947), 1991 edition. (Hong Kong: Joint Publishing (H.K.) Co., Ltd. Press.)

ended question probing the subjective inclusion of family members with an emphasis on purely personal views. The other subjective family composition indicator is restricted to the most important family reunion occasion—the Chinese New Year's Eve. Respondents are asked to list members who he/she thinks should be eating the dinner together, despite the physical restraint in geographical distances. Female samples are expected to provide different answers from males in their subjective definition of *chia*. Because by focusing on the personal conception of one's intimate group, each respondent is allowed to go beyond the traditional definition of the normative, prescribed family unit. In other words, the psychological importance of lineage, especially the matrilineal influence, may be expressed in these two subjective and somewhat abstract questions.

V. SURVEY RESULTS AND *CHIA* TODAY

Table 1 shows the result of the first subjective indicator of the family composition: a general definition of family members in *chia*. The listing was ranked from the most reported family member in order. For the WIVES' SAMPLE, there appears at least two natural breaks in the list: husbands (98%) and unmarried children (90%) which comprise the typical nuclear family ranked far ahead of other categories; parents of both husband's (53%) and wives' own (48%) are close in the ranking; married sons (30%) and grandchildren (26%) of successive generations as well as unmarried brothers (20%) and sisters (19%) of wife's natal family, along with other relatives share relatively lower proportions in the subjective definition of the family. The last lists are also more variant in the component as expected.

It is interesting that wives tend to report their subjective *chia-jen* not necessarily in conformity with the traditional definition practiced in the patrilineal family system. From wife's report on Table 1, at least three aspects attract our attention. Firstly, from the most listed family members, it is clear that nuclear family and stem family of both lineages are the subjective *chia* for the wife's sample. Secondly, among categories listed in the last section, two patterns emerge with unmarried siblings of wives (20%) ranking higher than married siblings of hers (12% and 13%) on the one hand, and matrilineal relatives more important than the patrilineal side in general as shown by both of husband's married (11%) and unmarried (10%) siblings being last. Thirdly, the difference of mar-

TABLE 1:
THE LIST OF FAMILY MEMBERS IN THE SUBJECTIVE FAMILY
COMPOSITION: WIVES' AND HUSBANDS' SAMPLE

Wife		Husband	
Husband	97.9	Wife	95.3
Unmarried Children	89.8	Unmarried Children	89.5
		Parents	81.8
Parents-in-Law	52.9	Unmarried Brothers	32.2
Parents	48.1	Married Sons	29.8
		Unmarried Sisters	29.1
Married Sons	29.6	Grandchildren	24.2
Grandchildren	26.3	Patrilineal Grandparents	23.6
Unmarried Brothers	20.3		
Unmarried Sisters	19.2	Married Brothers	16.7
		Married Sisters	10.5
Patrilineal Grandparents	15.0		
		Married Daughters	9.9
Married Brothers	12.9	Parents-in-Law	9.5
Married Daughters	12.5		
Married Sisters	12.3		
Husband's Married Siblings	10.9	Wife's Married Siblings	3.3
Husband's Unmarried Siblings	10.3	Wife's Unmarried Siblings	2.5

(N of Wife = 958 ; N of Husband = 516)

ried sons (30%) and married daughters (12.5%) clearly demonstrates the emphasis on male descendant in the subjective family composition.

In other words, the subjective reports of *chia-jen* by the wife sample point out that lineage and marriage are after all significant principles in the definition of family. When a female is married into a patrilineal household, her status at her natal family will seriously decrease as reflected in the consistently lower ranking of married children and married siblings of wives' in contrast with unmarried counterparts. Nevertheless, the interplay between line-

age and marriage is more intriguing in that these wives, although they are married daughters in their own natal families, obviously still regard their maternal lineage as a significant component in their subjective perception of family. Hence, the bilateral stem family appears to be well accepted because parents of both lineages are in a relatively equal status. In addition, wife's own siblings are included more often than husband's siblings in the subjective family composition.

With regard to THE HUSBAND'S SAMPLE, Table 1 shows interesting comparisons with the wife's sample. For husbands, the natural break is clear as well but the cutting point leans toward the top three categories—wives (95%), unmarried children (90%), and husbands' parents (82%). These are the most common members in a typical patrilineal stem family. Unmarried brothers (32%) and sisters (29%) as well as married sons (30%) and grandchildren (24%) or grandparents (24%) follow, which seem to indicate a strong patrilineal component in the subjective identification of family members. Furthermore, the wife's siblings, whether married or not, are considered the least in the husband's subjective family composition. Since the generation and the unmarried status involved does not interfere with the traditional definition of typical patrilineal stem families, lineage is inferred to be the most important concern from our husband's sample.

The significance of patrilineal lineage in the husband's sample is further evidenced by two more facts: wife's siblings, whether married or not, are considered the least in husband's subjective family composition; wife's parents also do not receive important ranking (9.5%), especially when compared with wife's ranking of the patrilineal parent (53%).

In addition, marriage is viewed as a significant dimension in the definition of family from husbands' reports. Table 1 points out that in addition to the much higher importance of unmarried children over married children to be included in the subjective family, unmarried siblings (29% and 32%) are also ranked higher than married brothers (17%) and married sisters (11%). Again, married daughters (10%) are no comparison to their married brothers (30%) in the inclusion of family members as reported by fathers.

In short, Table 1 offers interesting patterns of the subjective family composition reported by wives and husbands. The similarity of both samples lies in the importance of lineage and marriage as the basic principle considered in the inclusion of family members.

However, wives clearly exhibit a tendency to possess the concept of a bilateral family system in their subjective perception; while husbands maintain a strong patrilineal preference. Therefore, unmarried siblings are consistently ranked higher in the hierarchical order by both husbands and wives, but siblings of the spouse's lineage actually have the least likelihood to be included in the subjective family composition by either husband or wife.

As to the subjective inclusion of family members who should be present at the family reunion on the Chinese New Year's Eve, Table 2 indicates that the relative order of membership categories are basically similar to the subjective definition of family composition as presented in Table 1. But the percentage difference of the wife's sample in these two subjective indicators is noticeable, especially in categories where the ranking in the hierarchy has been changed. For wives, nuclear and patrilineal stem family constituents of husbands, unmarried children, and parents-in-law are undoubtedly members who ought to be present at the New Year's Eve dinner. But the order of married sons and matrilineal parents changed from parents being reported by almost half of the wife's sample (48%) in the general subjective family composition to 32% in the family reunion occasion. This may imply that the matrilineal preference, although manifest in the wife's personal definition of the family, is somewhat subdued in a specific situation such as the New Year's reunion which is characterized by the strong cultural norms.

Another evident change comes from husband's siblings being promoted to the ranking of middle importance in wife's inclusion of participants at the reunion dinner. It was discussed in Table 1 that for the wife, patrilineal siblings are considered the lowest possible family members to be included in her subjective *chia*. However, regarding the traditional norms exercised in the most important Chinese holiday, Table 2 shows that patrilineal values become overriding and the husband's siblings rather than wife's own are considered family members who ought to attend the dinner.

The comparison between wife's general perception of subjective *chia-jen* shown in Table 1 and her idea of family reunion members listed in Table 2 indicates that, the bilateral stem family and the matrilineal family composition are probably inherent in wife's definition of the *chia*. However, when specific cultural norms are taken into account in an occasion like the New Year's Eve dinner,

TABLE 2:
THE LIST OF FAMILY MEMBERS WHO SHOULD BE PRESENT AT THE
CHINESE NEW YEAR'S EVE DINNER WIVES' AND HUSBANDS' SAMPLE

Wife		Husband	
Husband	96.8	Wife	96.5
Unmarried Children	87.5	Unmarried Children	89.1
Parents-in-Law	62.6	Parents	80.0
Married Sons	34.7	Unmarried Brothers	35.7
Parents	31.9	Married Sons	35.1
Grandchildren	29.0	Unmarried Sisters	29.7
		Grandchildren	28.9
Husband's Married Siblings	16.4		
Unmarried Brothers	14.3	Married Brothers	22.1
Unmarried Sisters	13.0	Patrilineal Grandparents	19.8
Husband's Unmarried Siblings	13.0	Married Sisters	9.5
Patrilineal Grandparents	10.4	Married Daughters	9.1
Married Daughters	8.0	Parents-in-Law	8.3
Married Brothers	7.8		
Married Sisters	6.4	Wife's Married Siblings	4.1
		Wife's Unmarried Siblings	3.5

(N of Wife = 958 ; N of Husband = 516)

patrilineal influence becomes evident and the wife demonstrates a stronger tendency to follow patterns delineated in the patrilineal family structure.

Results of the husband's sample points out that membership categories listed regarding who should attend the family reunion are almost exactly identical as who are included in the subjective definition of family members (Table 2). The percentage reported as well as the order in the hierarchy of two tables exhibit similar patterns.

The patrilineal stem family (wife, unmarried children, husband's parents) has unquestionable dominance in the ranking. Patrilineal relatives of husband's unmarried siblings as well as his married sons and grandchildren follow. Notice that these are family members next to the immediate nuclear families in the traditional family structure. Apparently, patrilineal concern is still the husband's major inclusive criterion in defining his subjective family composition.

Comparing husbands' reports on two subjective indicators of the family composition shows that the only change of ranking order is between married brothers and patrilineal grandparents. But the percentage difference is not large and both categories fall into the last group. Moreover, wife's siblings remain the least important family members to be included in the subjective definition of *chia*, either measured by husband's general perception or by his list of participants to the New Year's Eve dinner.

Therefore, for the husband's sample, both indicators of the subjective family composition shows similar patterns or orders in terms of who are considered his family members. Lineage receives unanimous support in this regard. Husbands tend to delineate subjective families from close to distant family group boundaries under the basic principle of patrilineal considerations. Marriage also proved to be important on concerns in the subjective definition of family composition. Hence, there is a clear pattern for husbands that unmarried family members and patrilineal relatives have closer membership than married and matrilineal counterparts in their subjective of family composition.

From the personal definition of *chia* or the subjective family composition portrayed by the respondent, husbands and wives seem to have different conceptions of the family structure. The most noteworthy finding is perhaps that bilateral family composition is indeed inherent in the wife's subjective inclusion of the family. Since the two subjective indicators are expected to show answers of a general personal view of who are his/her family member versus answers more or less governed by the existing cultural norm toward a specific family reunion occasion, a cross examination of patterns expressed in the above two contexts will enable us to delineate possible differences in the subjective definition of family composition.

Table 3 indicates family types reported on two subjective definitions of the family: family members defined by personal inclusion

(*chia*) and the expected family members present at the New Year's Eve dinner. From the report of each respondent, lists of family members may be organized into eight family types. It can be seen from Table 3 that the first four of nuclear, stem, joint, and extended corresponds to family types used in the objective indicator; while the bilateral, matrilineal stem, and matrilineal extended are products from the subjective analysis. It is clear that despite actual living arrangement or economic functions of the family denoted by objective indicators, subjective definition of *chia* is not always consistent with the present family structure.

TABLE 3:
THE FAMILY TYPE REPORTED BY HUSBAND AND WIFE IN TWO
SUBJECTIVE FAMILY COMPOSITION INDICATORS: GENERAL FAMILY
COMPOSITION AND MEMBERS INCLUDED IN THE NEW YEAR'S EVE

Family Type	Family Composition		New Year's Eve Dinner	
	Wife	Husband	Wife	Husband
Nuclear	190 (19.8)	58 (11.2)	133 (13.9)	51 (9.9)
Stem	179 (18.7)	<u>243 (47.1)</u>	230 (24.0)	188 (36.4)
Joint	6 (0.6)	5 (1.0)	23 (2.4)	7 (1.4)
Extended	130 (13.6)	162 (31.4)	<u>28. (29.2)</u>	<u>235 (45.5)</u>
Bilateral	<u>257 (26.8)</u>	41 (7.9)	160 (16.7)	28 (5.4)
Matrilineal Stem	125 (13.0)	1 (0.2)	74 (7.7)	-----
Matrilineal Extended	48 (5.0)	-----	46 (4.8)	1 (0.2)
Others*	23 (2.4)	6 (1.2)	12 (1.3)	6 (1.2)

(N of Wife = 958 ; N of Husband = 516)

* This type includes other relatives and non-related individuals as well.

Regarding the personal definition of *chia-jen*, the bilateral family is the most dominant type (27%) for wives (Table 3). Nuclear (20%) and stem (19%) families ranked second subjectively while extended (17%) and matrilineal stem (13%) family types closely follow. Since there is a substantial proportion of wives including both patrilineal and matrilineal parents in the answer and thus falls into the extended family type, the pattern indeed evidences the importance of matrilineal inclusion among the wife sample.

On the other hand, in terms of family members attending the New Year's Eve dinner, traditional patrilineal values become dominant and wives tend to submit themselves to the expected pattern.

Hence, extended family (29%) and stem family (24%) are more likely to be reported inconsistent with what should be expected in an well defined cultural event, such as the family reunion. But we should point out that the bilateral family (17%) of which wife's parents are a major component still remains the important type, even higher in ranking than the nuclear family (14%).

Therefore, if we compare wife's reports on family types of a general definition and of a specific occasion, it is not hard to see that subjectively, her lineage attachment to her natal family is expressed directly in the first unconditional question and indirectly or inherent in the culturally specified context. In fact, if we combine all family types with a matrilineal component (i.e., bilateral, matrilineal stem, matrilineal extended, and some of extended families), the significance of matrilineal inclusion for wives is no doubt the most interesting finding that requires serious attention.

Patterns observed from the husband's sample indicate that normative effects appear to be stronger on their subjective definition of family composition. Discussions of Table 1 and Table 2 have already pointed out that patrilineal concerns are the basic principle for husbands in their lists of subject family members. Here, it is shown again, that husband indeed demonstrates a different pattern from their counterpart. As can be seen from Table 3, stem family and extended family are clearly the most important family types in the subjective definition of family members, either in the general conception (47% and 31%) or in the family reunion dinner (36% and 46%). Other types including the nuclear family (11% and 10%) are evidently much lower in importance in the subjective definition of who are family members by our husbands.

In the same data, respondents were asked about their actual family arrangement. Among these objective family compositions, one indicator, namely, members who actually share economic expenses assumes significant association. It will be interesting to examine the correspondence between subjective and objective family members. Findings above regarding the subjective family composition point out the importance of matrilineal inclusion for the wife's sample (Tables 1-3). Hence, we will focus on the objective and subjective family composition of wives to further examine if there is a significant association between these two conceptually different indicators.

Table 4 shows that among the three major family types—nuclear, stem, extended, there is a relative correspondence between

the objective and subjective family compositions. Twenty-eight percent of those who are presently in the nuclear family reports nuclear family as their subjective family composition. Nearly twenty-eight percent and 32.5% of those who are in stem and extended family compositions also report the same family type as their subjectively defined families. Although these numbers are not overwhelmingly large, the substantial proportion certainly indicates that for the wife's sample, objective family compositions often coincides with her subjective family definition.

However, it should also be noted that the bilateral family along with other matrilineal family types have become significant constituents in the definition of *chia* for wives, regardless of their present family composition. Adding together the matrilineal component (i.e. bilateral, matrilineal stem, and matrilineal extended), 45% of wives living in the nuclear family, 44% of those in the stem family, and 45% from the extended family include their matrilineal relatives in the subjective definition of family composition. From unreported results, the association with other objective indicators have very similar patterns. In other words, there is no doubt that for wives, despite the fact that they may currently live in different types of patrilineal families, the matrilineal attachment of the natal family is significant as reflected in the subjective conception of their expected family members.

VI. CONCLUSION

This paper examines the subjective family composition with an attempt to clarify the significance of the meaning of *chia* in the Chinese family system. The subjective family composition is analyzed by two indicators, namely the general subjective definition of family members (or *chia-jen*) and members who ought to be present at the Chinese New Year's Eve dinner. The first indicator is assumed to reflect the personal psychological state of his/her family; while the second denotes the cultural effects on the individual's perception. Survey interviews were applied to 1500 married respondents.

The result indicates normative influence. Differences between wives and husbands in the subjective definition of *chia* clearly indicate the significance of lineage and marriage in personal conceptions of the family. Specifically, with regard to the general perception of the subjective family, it was shown that wives demonstrate a bilateral family concept in their subjective definition of

TABLE 4:
OBJECTIVE VERSUS SUBJECTIVE FAMILY COMPOSITION: FAMILY TYPES
INCLUDED IN SHARED ECONOMIC EXPENSES VERSUS THE SUBJECTIVE
DEFINITION OF THE FAMILY

Objective	Nuclear (N=573)	Stem (N=261)	Extended* (N=80)	Parent only (N=40)	Others (N=4)
Subjective					
Nuclear	161(28.1%)	15 (5.8%)	6 (7.5%)	5	3
Stem	94 (16.4%)	72 (27.6%)	8 (10.0%)	5	0
Extended*	48 (8.4%)	53 (20.3%)	28 (35.0%)	7	0
Bilateral	149(26.0%)	81 (31.0%)	21 (26.3%)	6	0
Matrilineal Stem	85 (14.8%)	26 (10.0%)	7 (8.7%)	7	0
Matrilineal Extended	24 (4.2%)	8 (3.1%)	8 (10.0%)	8	0
All Relatives	12 (2.1%)	6 (2.3%)	2 (2.5%)	2	1

(N of Wife = 958)

* Extended includes both joint and extended.

family members; while husbands reveal a strong tendency toward patrilineal consideration. On the other hand, both husbands and wives share the importance of marital status and lineage preference in their inclusion of subjective *chia-jen* in that unmarried family members and relatives of one's own lineage are more likely to be ranked at a higher order than their counterparts in the subjective family composition.

Findings concerning family members to be present at the New Year's Eve reflect the normative expectation of the patrilineal family system for both husbands and wives. Wives who express clear

matrilineal attachment in the subjective definition of family become subdued in this culturally defined event. The traditional patrilineal stem family members are listed in the highest order for husbands and wives alike. Patrilineal relatives also ranked higher than matrilineal members by wives as members expected at the family reunion. Again, marriage is an important concern in the inclusive principle of subjective family membership. Both husbands and wives follow the cultural normative expectation in that patrilineal relatives have priority to be included. But they vary by husbands ranking unmarried siblings ahead of married counterpart, while wives have opposite choices but with a lower percentage. The substantial proportion of including matrilineal parents in the wife's sample (32% vs. 8% of husbands') suggests that the maternal lineage is still inherent in the wife's subjective definition of family, even under this specific culturally defined context.

In addition, in order to delineate different family compositions expressed by the subjective definition of the family as well as by members included in the New Year's Eve between our samples, it is shown that the bilateral family system is indeed evident in the subjective family for wives while patrilineal family is dominant in the normative event for all. The contrast between husbands who reveal a clear patrilineal pattern in their subjective definition of *chia-jen* and wives who split their responses toward personal conception versus a normative expectation of a cultural event suggests that the matrilineal attachment of wives is an important aspect worth further investigation.

The last examination of objective versus subjective family compositions documents the relative correspondence between these two indicators as well as the simultaneous variation of patterns observed. What should be noticed is that wives with various objective family compositions express similar matrilineal emphasis in their subjective family composition. This clearly points out that different contingencies should be specified in the study of family composition, especially with regard to the gender difference.

Therefore, with regard to subjective family composition, this paper points out that wives exhibit a consistent tendency to include matrilineal relatives in their subjective family membership. The modification (or back to the mainstream) of wives' answer, with regard to the family reunion signifies the importance of specifying the context under study so that the influence of normative expectation may be revealed.

The most noteworthy finding is probably the fact that the subjective definition of family composition appears to be a flexible concept or a non-fixed notion. The list in Tables 1 and 2 in particular shows that both husbands and wives tend to rank their immediate nuclear family members on top, stem families of the elder generation (either patrilineal or matrilineal), and married sons, unmarried siblings who do not confound the typical family type classification closely follow. On the outer boundary, the range of family membership may extend to the grandparent's generation, to married siblings of one's own lineage, as well as to married siblings of the spouses. In other words, the most intimate family members are always defined from the typical nuclear to stem and to extended families under the basic principles of lineage and marriage. The actual exercise of lineage and marriage in the subjective definition of families may differ between husbands and wives and may vary under different contexts as well. However, it is shown that the subjective definition of *chia*, in our samples, is by no means fixed in range and is certainly flexible according to various contingencies specified. Among these variations, lineage and marital status are two basic principles in the subjective definition of *chia-ren* among Taiwanese families.

APPENDIX 1:
THE COMPLETE LIST OF FAMILY MEMBERS REPORTED IN THE
SUBJECTIVE FAMILY COMPOSITION

	Subjective Family Composition		The New Year's Eve Dinner	
	Wife	Husband	Wife	Husband
Parents	48.1	81.8	31.9	80.0
Unmarried Brothers	20.3	32.2	14.3	35.7
Unmarried Sisters	19.2	29.1	13.0	29.7
Husband (Wife)	97.9	95.3	96.8	96.5
Unmarried Children	89.8	89.5	87.5	89.1
Patrilineal Grandparents	15.0	23.6	10.4	19.8
Patrilineal Grand-grandparents	5.4	8.1	2.9	6.8
Matrilineal Grandparents	5.6	5.8	2.5	1.9
Matrilineal Grand-grandparents	3.3	3.1	1.4	1.6
Parents-in-Law	52.9	9.5	62.6	8.3
Married Sons	29.6	29.8	34.7	35.1
Married Daughters	12.5	9.9	8.0	9.1
Grandchildren	26.3	24.2	29.0	28.9
Married Brothers	12.9	16.7	7.8	22.1
Married Sisters	12.3	10.5	6.4	9.5
Married Uncles	5.3	3.7	5.7	4.7
Unmarried Uncles	4.2	3.3	5.7	4.1
Husband's (Wife's)	10.9	3.3	5.7	4.1
Married Siblings				
Husband's (Wife's)	10.3	2.5	13.0	3.5
Unmarried Siblings				
Other Relatives	5.5	6.2	7.2	7.4
Others	0.6	1.7	0.9	2.7

(N of Wife = 958 ; N of Husband = 516)

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