



Introduction: The Synergistic Potential of the Outreach Work and Activism of Queer Social Movements and Schools

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The idea for this edited book began in Helsinki in 2018 where the editors participated on a panel at an educational conference discussing heteronormativity and schooling. A key thread in the research presentations was the frustrations and difficulty many teachers felt in broaching the teaching of counter normative gender and sexualities in the classroom or intervening

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to stop homophobic and transphobic bullying and harassment. In fact the corpus of international research resonates this frustrations and tells how teachers and school managers need opportunities for professional development on how they respond to issues of sexuality and gender diversity (Baruch-Dominguez, Infante-Xibille, & Saloma-Zuñiga, 2016; Carrara, Nascimento, Duque, & Tramontano, 2016; Francis et al., 2018; Kjaran & Lehtonen, 2017; Smith, 2018; UNESCO, 2016). Scholars researching the field of gender, sexuality, and schooling contend that in some school contexts heterosexist prejudice and discrimination results from attitudes and behaviors by peers, teachers, and school managers which contribute to the vulnerability, victimization, and social isolation of queer youth (Abbott, Ellis, & Abbott, 2015; Baruch-Dominguez et al., 2016; DePalma & Atkinson, 2009; Francis, 2017; Francis & Brown, 2017). Moreover, research shows that schools are ill-equipped (Allen, 2019; Bhana, 2012, 2014; Ferfolja, 2007; Francis, 2016; Francis & DePalma, 2015; Kjaran & Lehtonen, 2017; Rasmussen, Sanjakdar, Allen, Quinlivan, & Bromdal, 2017) and community organizations resourceful in their curriculum and pedagogical approaches (Chipatiso & Richardson, 2011; Francis, 2019; Hoosain Khan, 2013, 2014; Lehtonen, 2017).

Building on our own activist orientations with marginalized communities and outreach work in schools (Francis, 2010, 2013; Francis & Francis, 2006; Francis & Reygan, 2016; Kjaran & Jóhannesson, 2017; Kjaran, Francis, & Hauksson, 2019; Lehtonen, 2012, 2014, 2017), our edited book questions what if we explored solutions outside of schools with the hope of creating new insights to advancing the teaching and learning of gender and sexuality diversity in schools. What is the synergistic potential of the outreach work of queer social movements and schools and is there a mutually influential relationship between the two? By examining a range of cases from a diversity of country contexts which draw on various theoretical and methodological approaches, our edited book aims to contribute to a scholarly conversation about how queer social movements and schools connect. In doing this, the contributing authors trouble heteronormativity in educational contexts and at the same time highlight what is available in terms of queer resistance, activism, and advocacy. The time is ripe for research to focus on and explore teaching, support, and activism that challenge heteronormativity from beyond and outside the school gates.

In this book, we focus on the educational outreach work done by civil society organizations, such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex and

queer (LGBTIQ) human rights organizations, in and with schools. We acknowledge that these same organizations have been active in changing educational policies and legislation to prevent discrimination and violence based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression also within educational institutions as well as influencing schools and education system by their general advocacy work, media campaigns, research projects on education, instructional material production, and cooperation with other nongovernmental organizations working with schools.

Many of the contributing authors argue that content knowledge related to gender and sexuality diversity is either hidden in curricular policies and teaching or not broached at all. They show how queer social movements can only have limited effects when they work outside the formalized school curriculum. Also highlighted is how activist organizations have begun to develop resources to address existing gaps in the policy framework for teaching related to gender and sexual diversity. Troublingly, all the chapters highlight the hindrances, challenges, tensions, and contradictions implicit in connecting the outreach work of queer social movements with teaching, learning, and support in schools. What is consistent across the chapters, is the call and need for schools and queer social movements to build alliances to address the gap in educational policies and the teaching of gender and sexuality diversity.

The contributions in this edited book are from a number of countries which vary significantly in legislation and attitudes. For example, in Iran, same-sex sexual acts are still punishable by death. In Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe, same-sex sexualities are illegal and, in some instances, also criminalized. Such legislation conjointly with religion and cultural heteronormativity determine educators' attitudes which shape the process of teaching, learning, and support in schools. Despite positive changes in countries such as Botswana and Taiwan, teachers who challenge normalization are often regulated and silenced (see Yang, Chapter 4 and Reygan, Chapter 9). In Canada (see Schmitt, Chapter 3), Denmark, Finland and Iceland (Kjaran and Lehtonen, Chapter 2), Spain (DePalma, Chapter 6) and South Africa (see Francis and Khan, Chapter 11)—countries seen as progressive and leading the way on various issues related to the rights and inclusion of LGBTIQ individuals—the social realities are not necessarily better. Despite the progressive legislative shifts regarding gender and sexual equality in these countries, there remains discrepancy between policy and practice concerning LGBTIQ rights and attitudes within education, keeping the power of heterosexuality intact.

At the same time, the post-gay image drawn up in some parts of the world tacitly implies that we don't need queer activism and advocacy anymore. The Nordic countries within Europe, for example, in being depicted as queer utopias are seen as beacons of LGBTIQ rights. However, some caution is advised in the tendency to cast these cultural contexts in idealized and romanticized terms, and describing them as a paradise for sexual minorities. It can also be argued, that depicting them as a queer utopia for sexual and gender minorities is in some ways a contradiction, as queer and queering can be seen as an antithesis to utopic thought. Furthermore, any notion of a utopia, for example in respect to sexual and/or gender minorities, has the tendency to include certain subjects while at the same time it excludes others, even rendering them as sexual and gendered abjects. Duggan has argued that these "utopic" transformations of LGBTIQ rights, which are mostly focused on marriage equality, have resulted in "public recognition of domesticated, depoliticized privacy" for some non-heterosexual subjects (Duggan, 2003, p. 65). In other words, these changes have, to a certain degree extended the limits of heteronormativity, including some privileged groups within the LGBTIQ spectrum, by making homosexuality, practiced within the grids of heteronormativity, more acceptable vis á vis heteronormative society. In other words, granting civil rights to sexual and gender minorities speaks, on the one hand, to utopian progressive thought, framed within the human rights discourse, but also sustains and produces homonormativity, in which some members of the LGBTIQ family seek compliance and inclusion within the heteronormative framework. Furthermore, there is still a gap between a progressive society in terms of sexual rights and gender equality, on the one hand, and more conservative schools, on the other hand, particularly in terms of the implementation of LGBTIQ policies in the classroom and educational context. Thus, institutionalized heterosexism and heteronormativity are still (re)produced and sustained within the educational context, despite progressive policies in terms of gender and sexual equality, and a strong legal and human rights history.

The contributors, concerned with the oppression of counter normative gender and sexualities, foreground heteronormative harassment as accepted parts of schooling where teachers and school managers, in most instances, do not intervene to stop bullying and marginalization. In doing so, they emphasize schools as sites of regulation that restrict gender and sexual expression and at the same time highlighting queer social movements as a powerful resource for social awareness and change. While

highlighting inequality and social injustices in education, the contributors also speak to broader issues about political repression and the containment of queer social movements in some fairly hostile contexts. Drawing on country-specific case studies, the contributors of this book illuminate what is possible when schools and queer social movements connect.

While this collection reveals a great deal of shared understanding between contributors, it also shows, and strikingly, how different country contexts enable different possibilities for queer social movements and schools to connect. With many of the chapters derived from authors writing about educational outreach work in Africa, Asia, Europe, and South America, it will not go unnoticed that there are no chapters that talk of queer social movements in the United Kingdom or the United States of America. Kjaran (in this book), in his chapter on outreach work in Iran reminds us that “coming out” as a political action, and doing outreach work in schools or formal educational settings, has not been the main focus of gay and queer activism in all social and cultural contexts in the global south.

Tunneling, through many of the chapters, are the relational mobilizing capabilities of queer social movements highlighting their collective and intersectional approach to social justice and inclusion. Chapters by Nardi, Quartiero, and Rodrigues (in this book) and Francis and Khan (in this book) for example underscore that in unequal societies like that of Brazil and South Africa, an intersectional and institutional approach is crucial in planning and analyzing outreach actions. Through the arguments raised by Nardi, Quartiero, and Rodrigues (in this book) and Francis and Khan (in this book), who showcase that heteronormativity and homophobia do not exist in a vacuum but exist alongside other oppressions such as racism and classism and that these too require reform and change in schools.

This book also emphasizes the variation of sexualities and genders around the globe. Sexuality and gender are understood and lived differently in different regions and this is also true within one country. Religious, cultural, and societal factors affect the possibilities children, youth, and adults have in constructing their sexualities and gender. Educational institutions have their own sexual and gendered cultures which are developed within their surrounding cultures. Civil society organizations including LGBTIQ or queer movements are limited by their local legislation and societal contexts but also their aspirations, aims, strategies, and tools to change the educational practices within schools, are affected by these local possibilities and discourses. At the same time, international human

rights discourses (like the ones promoted by United Nations and international LGBTIQ movements) are influencing the understanding of human rights and their connection to sexuality and gender throughout the world which has become smaller with social media and internet.

Already earlier colonization with its legal implications has influenced criminalization of homosexuality in many countries, particularly in some countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The same is true with many religious thoughts imported throughout the world which have been poisonous in many ways with respect to human rights situation of sexual minorities and gender-diverse people. They have both caused the destruction of many local practices and cultures, which have been more understanding of human diversity on gender and sexuality, and advocated sex-negative gender binary thinking, which influence greatly throughout the globe still. Also, medical discourses developed in Europe and North America, which have portrayed same-sex interests and nonnormative gender identification and behavior as well as bodies with variation in relation to gendered features, have been successfully transported all over the globe. These medical, legal, and religious discourses have interpreted differently in various contexts and they are also challenged in many ways. Interestingly, these discourses were first challenged in Europe and North America, which were the origins of many of these problematic discourses, but in later years also many other regions have joined them in questioning these. Also, human rights-based discourses around sexualities, gender, and body variation have been interpreted differently in many countries, and they have special local aspects, which are also visible in this book.

This variation of understanding sexualities and gender—as well as sexuality and gender education within schools—is expressed in the chapters of this book also in the language and terminology used. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex, and queer are common terms in many countries, but they are not always used in the same way as in the countries their use originates. The use is also challenged, and local, more appropriated terms are used. The same is true with many other concepts and terms which are related to sexuality, gender, and the work done for and with schools by the LGBTI and other civil society organizations. This book aims to be both understandable for the readers but also acknowledges and celebrates the diversity of cultures and languages concerning sexuality and gender diversity. We also acknowledge the difficulties of translating the local terminology and conceptualizations—and at the same time the local

contexts and specific ways of understanding sexuality and gender—into English (see Lehtonen & Taavetti, 2018).

CHAPTERS IN THIS BOOK

As editors, we spent time organizing the chapters to make some sort of sequential sense. We wanted to shy away from presenting the chapters in vacuous blocks based simply on their geographic sameness, and focus more intentionally on the outreach work done by LGBTIQ organizations, including tensions within their work and that of schools. Irrespective of the ordering, each chapter brings to life a uniqueness of context and the exciting connections and in some contexts, connecting queer social movements and schools.

To start, **Jón Ingvar Kjaran** and **Jukka Lehtonen**, argue that queer issues and non-heterosexuality are either hidden in many national curricula or not enacted at all. They point to the active role of LGBTIQ organizations who do outreach work within schools and educational institutions in the Nordic countries. **Kjaran** and **Lehtonen** posit that all of the stakeholders involved in outreach work draw to a varying extent on norm-critical pedagogy. Norm-critical pedagogy has been developed as the main pedagogical approach in some of the Nordic countries during the past years and entails taking a critical view to outreach work about the other in order to disrupt the workings of heteronormativity within schools. Outreach organizations thus give information on sexuality and gender diversity for students and pupils, often through “coming out” narratives, but also aim to question heteronormative practices and knowledge in the schools to promote queer education. **Kjaran** and **Lehtonen** also argue that in Nordic countries, most schools practice heteronormativity and that teachers do not have abilities and know-how to challenge this or to give adequate information on LGBTIQ issues. Moreover, LGBTIQ organizations are only reaching a small portion of schools and students with their educational outreach work, and often they work only to fill in the gaps of formal education by adding extra information on LGBTIQ issues in heteronormative schools. Their chapter thus shows how outreach organizations can only have limited effects when they work outside the formalized school curriculum. Yet, at present, they play a pivotal role in creating awareness and to some extent, a more critical stance toward heteronormative practices and curricula in Nordic countries.

Using interview data collected from 39 teachers in Canadian schools, **Irina Schmitt** examines what informs educators' social justice work on gender and sexuality and how this relates to queer social movements. Drawing on these interviews she discusses how it is possible to differentiate three strategies in terms of queer educational justice work: reflexive identity politics, intersectional systems critique, and individual humanism. Furthermore, she argues that responsibility for queer educational justice work is attached to queer educators through fear. Thus, as further discussed in this chapter, it is necessary to analyze this attachment of responsibility to understand how it can undermine the work of QSM and queer educational justice work in schools.

Chapter 4, **Chia-ling Yang**, draws on data from Taiwan by focusing on the struggle over power and knowledge between the Tongzhi (LGBTI) movement and the religious or conservative countermovement in gaining access to educational spaces and doing outreach work in schools. In the chapter she demonstrates that with unequal discursive and nondiscursive resources, the religious or conservative countermovement employs both prohibition and productive discourse formation to hinder Tongzhi education and sustain the heterosexual norm in schools. In response to the challenges, Tongzhi activists and LGBTI-friendly teachers have collaborated to defend Tongzhi education and Tongzhi students' rights in schools, public hearings, and various committees at the local and central government level.

While many of the chapters in this volume focus on how queer social movements and schools connect, **Pablo Astudillo** and **Jaime Barrientos**'s chapter analyze the actions and involvement of the *Sexual Diversity Pastoral Office* in Chilean Catholic school's sexuality education. The *Sexual Diversity Pastoral Office*, comprising a community of young and adult Catholic gays and lesbians, including the parents of LGBTIQI youth, operate in three Chilean cities. Participating in different fora for sexuality education in the country's Catholic schools the *Sexual Diversity Pastoral Office* might be thought of as representing a shift in how traditional attitudes to homosexuality has been understood in Catholic schools themselves contravening in many ways a catechetical norm. Chapter 5, therefore, zooms in on the outreach work of the *Sexual Diversity Pastoral Office* in Chilean Catholic schools and the implications this has for the debate about the role of schools in sexual education and the teaching of sexuality diversity specifically.

Renée DePalma in Chapter 6 illustrates how activist organizations have begun to develop resources to fill an existing gap in the policy framework for teaching related to gender and sexuality diversity. DePalma looks at the two main lines that social movements in Spain have followed—the promotion of equality and visibility for (primarily gay and lesbian) persons, and a more radical trend based on transfeminist thinking that resists the notion of normal, extending a feminist critique of the patriarchy. DePalma points out that some of the stumbling blocks that prevent direct participation of activist organizations in teaching activities and teacher preparation is that teachers need to cover the explicit school curriculum, and furthermore that some might be reluctant to draw attention from the small but vocal conservative movements that have begun to respond critically to gender and sexuality diversity education initiatives. The author argues that in the Spanish context, where curricular inclusion is permitted and supported by the nation’s broader legal context, partnerships with social activist organizations can help fill the gap left by educational policy and practices.

Chapter 7 by **Jón Ingvar Kjaran**, situated in a different national, social, and political context—that of Iran—is a compelling site for understanding queer outreach work in schools given the prohibition on homosexual acts, as well as the scarcity of research on the topic in this context. The chapter offers fresh insights into what it means to be a sexual minority and queer activism in Iran as a context with strict prohibitions around sexuality. Appropriately, the chapter draws on post-structural approaches to language and identity construction to make sense of queer agency and resistance.

Henrique Caetano Nardi, **Eliana Quartiero**, and **Manoela Carpenedo Rodrigues** describe and analyze “queer intersectional outreach work” aiming to prevent and fight prejudice and discriminations against LGBTQI students in Brazil. It has been developed in public schools in the city of Porto Alegre, in the south of Brazil and carried out by graduate and undergraduate students. In the chapter the authors discuss the benefits of this approach to outreach work, particularly in extremely unequal societies like Brazil. Furthermore, the chapter gives an overview and a brief history of education on sexuality and gender diversity in Brazil.

In many African countries, liberated from colonial rule, gender and sexuality diversity is perceived to disrupt the continuity of national progress. In response, queer social movements challenge the prevalent

homophobia and transphobia as part of the decolonization movements that have emerged in post-independence nations in the global South. Drawing on data from a five-country study by UNESCO, HIVOS and Gay and Lesbian Memory in Action (GALA) on homophobic and transphobic violence in schools and an eight-country, civil society organization project on sexual and reproductive health rights education, **Finn Reygan** explores how civil society organizations challenge and advance teaching and learning on gender and sexuality diversity in Eastern and Southern Africa. Drawing on the lessons learnt from both projects, Reygan concludes that to make critical anti-homophobic teaching, learning, and support connections with the education sector, LGBTIQ civil society organizations have the potential to play a vital role given their expertise related to the social and cultural forces that perpetuate homophobia and transphobia across the region.

Andrea Arnold and **Nin Langer**, based on the experiences and self-reflexive processes of a queer educational group in Vienna, Austria, explore the potential of autobiographical storytelling used by LGBTIQ activists. In the chapter the authors argue that the presence of LGBTIQ activists in schools and the method of autobiographical storytelling help question the cis-heteronormative framework predominant in most Austrian schools. However, in order to destabilize heteronormative assumptions and to counter processes of Othering, it is important that the narrations draw upon queer theoretical considerations, such as underscoring the fluidity of identities and desires. As discussed further in the chapter, a specific challenge for LGBTIQ activists within a teaching context lies in negotiating the ambivalence between the desire to destabilize norms and the students' understandable need for security and labels.

In questioning the utility of creative methods in bringing together queer activists, teachers, and school managers to address homophobia in South African schools, **Dennis A. Francis** and **Gabriel Hoosain Khan** show that while South Africa's transition to democracy is filled with promises of transformation in education and access to all South Africans, these promises are met by the reality of lasting and entrenched inequality. South African schools remain defined by racism, sexism, homophobia, and transphobia. Even in this oppressive environment, educators, learners, and communities have been coming together to respond to these adverse circumstances. When it comes to gender and sexual diversity in education, while there are many challenges—opportunities for dialogue and social change are emerging. Drawing on a two-day workshop with

queer activists and school teachers, their chapter focuses on the potential of creative methods, including Boal's Forum Theatre and Art for Activism inspired by Freire to facilitate partnership and discussion on how best to address gender and sexuality diversity in schools and the classroom.

Intersex individuals and the topic of intersex often do not appear in educational curricula. **Martina Enzendorfer** and **Paul Haller** focus in their chapter on what kind of needs and challenges there are in the educational outreach work within schools by LGBTIQ organizations from the perspective of intersex people and issues. They base their analysis on the school experiences of intersex people, the recommendations of international organizations and their analysis of the local Austrian outreach work done by LGBTIQ organizations.

Chapter 13 brings this collection to an end by addressing the challenges and opportunities regarding outreach work of queer social movements in schools globally.

In terms of the chapters, it has to be said that, there are more queer outreach projects, initiatives, and interventionist work in schools across the world than the ones included here. The fact that they are not here does not mean that they are less important or not worth writing about; it means that we need more platforms to hear about and learn about the different outreach practices, pedagogies, and interventions in schools.

Our hope for you is that the collection of chapters is relevant and useful to those who undertake research on gender, sexualities, and schooling. Furthermore, we hope that this book offers a profoundly critical contribution to the debates on sexualities and schooling and the synergetic potential of the outreach work and activism of queer social movements. Mostly, we want the reader to take away a key message of many of the contributions that there are in fact, many examples of queer advocacy, resistance, and commitments for social change.

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