



Challenges to LGBTI Inclusive Education and Queer Activism in Taiwan

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Since the beginning of the 1990s, the activism of both women and queer communities has been instrumental in making changes to laws in Taiwan. As of 2019, the Gender Equity Education Act¹ has been in force for 15 years. In 2019, Taiwan also became the first Asian country to legalize same-sex marriage. However, in the past decade, conservative religious groups have attacked queer activism and gender equity education relentlessly, with a focus on sexuality education and LGBTI-inclusive education. In November 2018, just half a year before the passage of the same-sex marriage law, about 7 million Taiwanese voted for a national referendum to legalize same-sex unions without changing the civil code's definition of marriage as a union between a man and a woman, and to call for a ban on “*Tongzhi* education (同志教育)” in elementary and junior high schools. *Tongzhi* education is the term for LGBTI-inclusive education in Taiwan.

Within the context of progressive law reform and the countermovement² against queer activism and gender equity education in Taiwan, this

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chapter aims to answer the following questions: What is at stake in the struggle over power and knowledge between the Tongzhi movement and the countermovement? How do Tongzhi activists and LGBTI-friendly teachers collaborate with each other to incorporate Tongzhi education in the school curriculum? What are the challenges Tongzhi education and activism face?

THE TAIWANESE CONTEXT IN RELATION TO GENDER DIVERSITY AND TONGZHI ACTIVISM

Taiwan had a long period under martial law (1949–1987), during which freedom of speech and social movement were forbidden. Still, the Awakening Foundation (婦女新知基金會), established first as Awakening Magazine (婦女新知雜誌社) in 1982, became the first women’s organization in Taiwan. Focusing on law reform, in the past three decades the Awakening Foundation has worked for the legalization of abortion, revision of the civil code with regard to women’s property, inheritance, and child custody rights, and for passage of the Gender Equality in Employment Act.

In 1988, the Awakening Foundation examined textbooks used in schools from elementary through senior high, analyzed, and critiqued their gender stereotypes, gender ideology, and gender ratios. During 1994 and 1996, when various nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in Taiwan asked for educational reform, women’s organizations highlighted gender issues and demanded that the Executive Yuan (行政院, the Taiwan Cabinet) Educational Reform Committee implement “*Lian-Xin* equity education (兩性教育)” (*Lian-Xin* means “two sexes” in Chinese—women and men) (Su, 2002). In 2002, some board members and previous staff from the Awakening Foundation, activists from Tongzhi NGOs, school teachers, and university scholars established the Taiwan Gender Equity Education Association (台灣性別平等教育協會, TGEAA).

Lian-Xin equity education began when the 1997 passage of the Sexual Assault Prevention Act required schools to have at least four hours of *Lian-Xin* equity education per year and established a *Lian-Xin* equity education committee at the Ministry of Education. Since 2001, *Lian-Xin* equity education has become one of the six crucial issues in the National Curriculum for grades 1–9.³ In 2004, the Gender Equity Education Act (“*Xin-Bie* equity education (性別平等教育)”—*Xin-Bie* means either “biological sex” or “social construction of gender” in Chinese; in this context

it means “social gender,” with a focus on gender diversity) was passed. Enforcement Rules for the Gender Equity Education Act were passed in 2005. Tongzhi education appears only in Article 13 of the Enforcement Rules for the Gender Equity Education Act: “The curriculum related to gender equity education referred to the second paragraph of Article 17 of the Act shall cover courses on ‘intimate relationship education, sexuality education and Tongzhi education’ in order to enhance students’ gender equity consciousness.”

The concept of “gender” in the law in Taiwan was broadened from “two sexes” in the 1990s to “gender diversity” in the 2000s. The change was catalyzed by a tragedy in 2000—the death Yung-Zhi Yeh, a ninth-grade schoolboy who was bullied in school because of his feminine traits. After the investigation of this incident, the Lian-Xin Equity Education Committee at the Ministry of Education proposed broadening the scope of equity education to include LGBTI students. In 2004, the Gender Equity Education Act was passed and the name Lian-Xin Equity Education was changed to Xin-Bie Equity Education. Article 2 in the Gender Equity Education Act defines gender equity education as generating “respect for gender diversity, to eliminate gender discrimination and to promote substantive gender equality through education,” and highlights the rights of LGBTI students and teachers in schools. The renaming process had significant meaning since it extended the binary understanding of gender to a post-structural one.

Although in recent decades there have been many progressive laws regarding Tongzhi in Taiwan, Tongzhi students still face discrimination in schools (Chiang, 2019; Tsai, 2012), just as LGBTI students’ do in other countries (e.g., Francis, 2017; Steck & Perry, 2018). The situation hasn’t improved even after ten years of the Gender Equity Education Act (Wang & Lin, 2014). During the referendum on same-sex marriage and Tongzhi education, Tongzhi students faced a hostile climate and suffered depression (Liu, 2018). Nine Tongzhi students committed suicide after the referendum.

The broadening of Taiwan’s equity education’s mandate was also due to queer activism or Tongzhi activism (Su, 2002). The term “Tongzhi” was first used in Hong Kong in 1988. It means “comrade” and appears in Sun Yat-Sen’s, who is regarded as the “father of the nation” in both China and Taiwan, famous words: “The revolution has not yet succeeded. Comrades [Tongzhi] still need to fight.” These words still appear in school textbooks in Taiwan. According to Hong Kong scholar Wah-Shan Chou

(1997), Tongzhi includes not only gays and lesbians, but any individuals who deconstruct heterosexual hegemony and are allied as a social movement to fight for Tongzhi's equal rights. In that sense, the word Tongzhi is in some ways an umbrella concept for the LGBTI movement in Taiwan as a whole and connotes some of the semantics (meanings) of the word queer/queering.

In the beginning of the 1990s, queer activism began with a lesbian group and later the first gay university students' club in Taipei. In the early 1990s, many lesbian university students participated in women's studies clubs and formed connections to women's organizations and social movements (Hsieh & Lee, 2014). In 1998, the Taiwan Tongzhi Hotline Association (同志諮詢熱線, Hotline Association) was established in Taipei and registered as an NGO in 2000. From 2000 to 2004, the Hotline Association held "Teachers' in-job training for knowing Tongzhi;" this was the only teacher's in-job training on Tongzhi education. Most other Lian-Xin equity education in-job training focused on gender stereotypes, inequality between women and men, and prevention of sexual assault. In 2007, the Hotline Association's southern office in Kaohsiung (Taiwan's second-largest city) began as a work group and in 2008 became a Hotline Association division office.

In Taiwan, being homosexual is not criminalized. Nevertheless, the crime of "offending against sexual morality" (妨害風化罪) in the Penal Code was applied to men with long hair under martial law, and gay men were arrested under it when the HIV/AIDS epidemic reached Taiwan in the 1980s (Chu, 2003). In 2017, the countermovement instituted lawsuits by referring to this clause in the penal code against a teacher who taught his third-grade students about condom use in sexuality education. Although currently only 1% of prosecution is under this particular clause ("offending against sexual morality") ("Statistics on Prosecution," n.d.), it can be used to threaten teachers who provide Tongzhi or sexuality education.

DATA, ANALYSIS, AND THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

The data in this chapter includes documents and interviews. The documents gathered include official documents (national Laws and Regulations Database, official website of the Ministry of Education, and local government websites); websites of both the Tongzhi movement and

the conservative or religious countermovement; and research on gender equity education and Tongzhi/LGBTI inclusive education in Taiwan and worldwide. The documents and websites are used firstly to describe the development of Taiwan's Tongzhi activism and Tongzhi education. Secondly, themes and discourses that function as pro- and anti-Tongzhi education discourse will be identified. For the semi-structured qualitative interviews, I used purposive sampling, in order to recruit teachers who have included Tongzhi education in their classroom spaces. Moreover, I targeted two of the NGOs previously mentioned—TGEEA and the Hotline Association—which both concentrate on Tongzhi education. Educational workers and board members from these two NGOs were interviewed.

During October and December 2018, 18 interviews were conducted with teachers from elementary school to university, as well as educational workers and board members from the two NGOs.⁴ Having participated in Taiwan's women's movement for more than 20 years,⁵ I personally know all the interviewees and some of the interviewees know each other. The interviews lasted from one and a half to three hours, and all the interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. I use the real names of the NGOs and pseudonyms for all interviewees. Through "careful reading and re-reading of the data" (Rice & Ezzy, 1999, p. 258) in the official documents, the website sources, and the interviews, and using inductive coding (Boyatzis, 1998) as a form of pattern recognition within the data, themes were identified on the basis of how important they are for the description and analysis of Taiwan's Tongzhi education. Furthermore, discourse analysis based on Foucault's (1972, 1978) theories on discourse and power/knowledge was employed. According to Foucault (1972), discourse formation concerns how certain discourses are produced within a network of power. In alignment with his focus on the productive network of power, the focus is on how discourses and practices of Tongzhi education are debated in books, schools, regulations, parliament, etc.

Regarding the competitive discourses between the Tongzhi movement and the countermovement, I employ Fraser's (1990) concept of "competing counterpublics." Fraser complicates Habermas's understanding of the public sphere from "a site for production and circulation of discourses that can in principle be critical of the state" (p. 57) to "a plurality of competing publics" (p. 61). Fraser exemplifies counterpublics as "subaltern counterpublics" (p. 67)—alternative publics that include groups

such as women, gays, and lesbians, who develop and circulate counterdiscourses, formulating their own interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs. However, Fraser also suggests that not all subaltern counterpublics are virtuous, as some counterpublics pursue anti-democratic and anti-egalitarian agendas.

Using Fraser's concept to analyze the development of the Gender Equity Education Act in Taiwan, feminists and members of the Tongzhi movement constituted alternative publics and invented new terms to shift the binary understanding of gender to the one of gender diversity. However, the countermovement also constituted alternative publics and participated actively to voice their views on how gender, education, and marriage should be defined and practiced. I further analyze how these competing counterpublics participate in debates on Tongzhi education at the sites of schools, committees from the school level to the central government level, public hearings, and social media.

TONGZHI EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

In Taiwan, gender equity and Tongzhi education are related to the following laws: Sexual Assault Crime Prevention Act (1997); Domestic Violence Prevention Act (1998); Family Education Act (2003); and Sexual Harassment Prevention Act (2005). All these laws and acts require two to four hours of education, which must include gender equity education. The Gender Equity Education Act requires schools to have at least four hours of gender equity education per term (eight hours per year), including Tongzhi education. These laws also request two to four hours of related in-job teacher training per year.

Gender equity education became one of the six crucial issues in the National Curriculum for grades 1–9, for which ten basic competencies are detailed. For example, the main concept of “gender identity” includes sub-concepts of “sexual orientation” and “diversities in gender characteristics.” For grades 5 and 6, the basic competence is “to know various sexual orientations” and for grades 7–9, it is “to know one’s own sexual orientation” (“2008 National Curriculum,” n.d.).

In the 2019 National Curriculum for grades 1–12, gender equity education is not one of the crucial issues but is listed in the curriculum’s Appendix II. The themes most related to Tongzhi education are “respect for diversities of biological sex, sexual orientation, gender characteristics

and gender identity,” “acceptance of one’s own and others’ sexual orientation, gender characteristics and gender identity,” and “self-recognition and respect for others’ sexual orientation, gender characteristics, gender identity” (“2019 National Curriculum,” n.d.).

To help teachers integrate the crucial issues into their teaching, there are “compulsory education counseling groups (輔導團).” Some elementary and junior high school teachers are invited by the leaders (usually university scholars) of the counseling groups to be full-time counselors, who only need to teach four hours in schools per week; or as part-time counselors, whose teaching hours are reduced by four hours per week. The counselors lead teachers’ in-job training workshops, develop teaching materials, and demonstrate teaching methods for teachers at other schools. At the level of senior high schools, the Ministry of Education established “resource centers for gender equity education (性別教育資源中心)” in 2005. The resource centers are responsible for holding in-job training and collecting related books, research, and teaching materials for senior high school teachers.

In practice, required educational hours and gender equity education are usually addressed as a theme during “flexible teaching hours (彈性教學)” and sometimes integrated into subjects, particularly Social Studies, Language Learning, Arts and Humanities, or Integrative Activities.⁶

“Flexible teaching hours” are two to six hours per week covering elective courses in various subjects, students’ clubs, and class or school activities. Before the Temporary National Curriculum (2001), “flexible teaching hours” were used for a national flag-raising ceremony every morning, class meetings, and school gatherings once a week; these occasions were meant to strengthen patriotism and discipline under martial law.

In contrast with the past, most schools use “flexible teaching hours” for gender equity education in the following ways: school teachers talk about gender issues in morning sessions; the school invites guest speakers to school gatherings; or the school holds student competitions for poster design, essay writing, or dramatic performances with the theme of gender equity (Lee, S.-C., 2011b; Lee, S.-L., 2011).

TENSIONS AND CHALLENGES IN TONGZHI EDUCATION

Although the dominant form of integration of gender equity education seems to be somewhat “decorative” in some “flexible teaching hours” in schools, conservative groups still targeted Tongzhi education for its

presence in the Enforcement Rules for Gender Equity Education at the 2018 referendum. All my interviewees call this a fake issue, since few teachers actually do Tongzhi education.

Yun-Chen (female, public officer charged with gender equity education at the Education Bureau in a municipality) said:

Usually sexuality education is practiced within Health and Physical Education. And if [the schools] talk about “body rights,” they talk mostly about self-protection, sexual harassment, sexual assault and sexual bullying, [which makes up] perhaps more than 50% of gender equity education. [...] I would estimate that...less than 10% is about gender diversity, including gender identity and sexual orientation. (Yun-Chen)

Ren-Hao (male, secondary school counselor) confirms: “Actually, few teachers talk about Tongzhi.” Mei-Yu (female, junior high school teacher), from Penghu, an island near Taiwan with fewer educational resources, said that “most teachers don’t want to get into trouble. They are not interested in [Tongzhi issues].”

Counselors in the compulsory education counseling groups, who are supposed to be capable of developing marginalized issues in gender equity education, also shy away from engaging in Tongzhi education. Take Shu-Fen’s (female, elementary school teacher and part-time counselor for a municipal compulsory education counseling group on gender equity education) words, for example:

When we [Shu-Fen and another part-time counselor] intended to raise Tongzhi education in the group, some counselors were hesitant. [...] They just wanted to do safe things and the schools were worried [about making trouble]. So, when we wanted to develop Tongzhi education, they recommended that we not talk about the issue too openly. (Shu-Fen)

These observations correspond to research on gender equity education in Taiwan. According to a national survey on gender equity education in elementary and junior high schools, of the three kinds of education mentioned in the Enforcement Rules, 80% of schools provide intimate relationship education and sexuality education, while only 24.2% of schools provide Tongzhi education (Fang, You, & Li, 2009).

Studies in multiple municipalities confirm these results. A study on gender equity education in Taipei (Lin, 2013) demonstrates that most gender equity education focuses on the prevention of sexual harassment

and violence because educators find it easier to give such a lecture to the whole school. A study in Hualien (Lee, 2011), a town in eastern Taiwan with fewer educational resources, and a study of four different cities (Lee, 2011b) also note that most gender equity education focuses on gender stereotypes, sexual harassment, and sexual assault. Taken together, the studies further illustrate that when sexuality education is mentioned, the prevention of teenage pregnancy and abstinence-only sex education are usually the focus.

As Eley points out, “the public sphere was always constituted by conflict” (quoted in Fraser, 1990, p. 61); the reality of whether Tongzhi education has or has not been practiced in schools becomes an arena for struggle. Based on observations in schools and related research results, Tongzhi-friendly teachers and scholars highlight hindrances and a failure to teach Tongzhi education.

I first situate the failure to teach Tongzhi education within the new managerialism of Taiwan’s education governance evaluating schools’ performance. Like the neoliberal discourse and parameters that influence the education system globally (Ball, 2010), the evaluation forms used under the new managerialism model privilege numbers over content. Lectures for the whole school on the prevention of sexual harassment and sexual violence produce the largest numbers. Those numbers are used for various evaluations of a school’s engagement of gender equity education as it is regulated in the Gender Equity Education, Sexual Assault Prevention, and Family Violence Prevention Acts. Issues around intimate relationships, sexuality education, and Tongzhi education are seldom covered, seen as too controversial for lectures to the whole school and better for smaller groups—which do not translate to large numbers on evaluation forms and reports (Lin, 2013). Similarly, teachers’ in-job trainings are dominated by the same subjects, prevention of sexual harassment and violence, because they meet the requirements of the various laws without causing “trouble” (Tsai, 2012).

Further, the failure to teach Tongzhi education lies not only in Taiwan’s educational governance but is reinforced by an essentialized, depoliticized understanding of gender equity education. Though the renaming process embodied in the law reform shifted the binary conceptualization of gender to one of gender diversity, most teachers still perceive gender equity education from a binary viewpoint and often avoid talking about power altogether.

Studies illustrate that when gender equity education is practiced, teachers usually don't talk about feminism or Tongzhi (Lee, S.-C., 2011b; Lee, S.-L., 2011; Tsai, 2012). Most teachers work from an essentialized understanding of gender—i.e., “men and women are different.” Many teachers see equity as an issue of treating all students equally, making it unnecessary to mention gender at all.

I classify this understanding of gender equity education in a liberalist framework, akin to early liberal feminism (Wollstonecraft, 1993 [1792]) or to the famous words of Hsiu-Lien Lu (呂秀蓮), a feminist in the 1970s and later, in 2000, the first female vice president in Taiwan: “To be a human being, and then a man or a woman.” The implicit understanding is that on the one hand, human beings are born equal, de-emphasizing gender, while on the other hand, there are fixed differences between women and men and gender equality should be achieved without breaking the harmony of and between two sexes.

In schools, the word “feminism” is regarded as too radical. Taking Wan-Ting's (female, senior high school teacher) words as an example:

Once I suggested the Office invite Yun-Ling [female, university lecturer] to give a lecture about intimate relationships, but it was cancelled by the Counseling Office Director. The Director said that Yun-Ling belongs to an NGO with the name “*Nu-Quan* (女權).” [Nu-Quan in Chinese means “women's rights” or “women's power.”] The Director was afraid that this might make those “old heterosexual men” complain about lectures held by the Counseling Office. (Wan-Ting)

I would like to situate the fear of “women's rights and power” and the fear of feminism in a cultural narrative of reverse sexism that imagines a world in which women get too much power (in Chinese the term is *Nu-Quan Gao Zhang* (女權高漲), the “overflow of women's power”) and men will be oppressed by women (Yang, 2002). Therefore, when gender equity education is taught, teachers often avoid any discussion of power. This is illustrated by Yun-Chen's statement that when body rights are addressed, teachers stress self-protection instead of looking at the power relationship in sexual harassment and violence.

When the countermovement protested Tongzhi teaching materials, the term “heterosexual hegemony” was removed from materials and school textbooks. As with power and feminism, the term “heterosexual hegemony” is considered too radical.

However, in public hearings and election campaign referendums, the countermovement uses “homosexual hegemony” to allege that heterosexual students are being bullied by homosexual students. Again, the narrative of the reversal—a world in which LGBTI individuals have too much power and become the oppressors.

These competing discourses demonstrate the unequal discursive positions of a reasonable-seeming picture of a “reversed power relationship,” the taken-for-granted assumptions of gender differences and harmony between two sexes make such anti-egalitarian discourse easy to accept. In contrast, the oppositional interpretations and critiques of LGBTI-friendly teachers and scholars are unfamiliar, complex, and challenging. In short, the change from a binary to a post-structural understanding of gender happened only at the level of law revision. In practice, most teachers de-emphasize gender and essentialize the differences between the two sexes, sustaining the heterosexual norm. Within the framework of “harmony between two sexes,” Tongzhi education is considered too controversial, while feminism and heterosexual hegemony are regarded as too radical. In practice, gender equity education fails to incorporate queer pedagogy’s (Browne, Lim, & Brown, 2007) emphasis—that is, to question fixed gender identity and gender categories, and to challenge the heterosexual norm.

THE COUNTERMOVEMENT’S USE OF THE PARENTAL POSITION IN TAIWAN CIVIC SOCIETY TO STOP TONGZHI EDUCATION

Even though Tongzhi education is seldom practiced in schools, it is the main target of the countermovement. In 2011, the Taiwan True Love League (真愛聯盟, the League) argued that teaching materials on gender equity education for elementary school (Hsiao, Wang, & Hong, 2012 [2009]) and junior high school (You & Tsai, 2010)—especially the chapters titled “to deconstruct the binary of women and men” and “to challenge the myths of family,” as well as contents mentioning Gay Pride—were “confusing children’s gender identity, encouraging teenagers to have sex and leading students to diverse sexuality and families.” The League asked the Ministry of Education to stop publishing two books and for teachers not to get any in-job training on these issues of gender diversity and LGBTI families.

Responding to the League's requests, the Ministry of Education held public hearings about the 2008 National Curriculum on sexual orientation and the two books in question. In the hearings, hate speech against Tongzhi prevailed. According to interviewees who participated in these hearings, they were threatened for being Tongzhi or Tongzhi-friendly. After the public hearings, the Ministry of Education deleted the terms "myths about heterosexual love" and "homophobia" and removed the "controversial" chapters about gender diversity and Tongzhi education from the two books (Wang, 2017).

The countermovement established other leagues, such as the Taiwan Guardians of Family (護家盟), Happiness of Next Generation (下一代幸福聯盟), and National Taiwan's Mothers Association for Guarding Families and Children (台灣全國媽媽護家護兒聯盟). They continued to condemn TGEEA's short film about sexuality education and the concept of a "continuum of biological sex, gender and sexual orientation" in school textbooks as "improper." The leagues protested in front of schools, held press conferences, and asked municipal councilors to question the Educational Bureau (Chiang, 2019).

Under these political pressures, the Bureau of Compulsory Education requested that elementary and junior high schools stop using TGEEA's short film (Wang, 2017). In 2010, the Education Bureau in Taipei requested that schools from elementary to senior high ban students' gay clubs in order to "prevent students' clubs from seducement of students into homosexual activities" (Chiang, 2019). These official letters to schools reminded many of the censorship and lack of freedom of speech under martial law. It had been rare for official institutions to ban the circulation of private publication and people's freedom to organize after the lift of martial law in Taiwan (Wang, 2017).

The countermovement often positions themselves as the good and caring "parents"—even when they have no children in a targeted school—in order to stop Tongzhi education. In Taiwan, every school has its own parents' association. Parents' association representatives can participate in school committees and in decision-making processes with teachers, office directors, and the school principal. The parents' association donates money to the school and participates in fundraising for school activities. In elementary schools, parents volunteer to read books to children in the morning session before class begins. There are also various municipal and national parents' associations.

According to the Gender Equity Education Act, a Gender Equity Education Committee is required at the central level (Ministry of Education), local level (municipality), and at every school. Based on the Scandinavian participant democracy model within the democratic corporatist mechanism (Liu, 2011), the committee members include the head and administrators of the institution (at the central level, the Minister of Education and appropriate administrative staff; at a school, the school principal and office directors), with representatives from among scholars, professionals working in related areas, and NGOs. Since parents' associations count as NGOs, the NGO representatives on the gender equity education committee can be members of the countermovement.

The countermovement not only tries to forbid circulation of Tongzhi educational materials and to gain positions in related committees to influence decision-making processes, but also goes to schools directly or calls or writes the municipality to complain (when there are such complaints, the municipality, the school, and the teacher involved are all required to respond); and its members protest or hold press conferences in front of schools.

To give an example of this, I turn to the case of Ru-Ping (female, senior high school teacher), who has collaborated with the Hotline Association for two decades. She received complaints from five parents. The parents questioned her bringing her civics class to a Gay Pride event and wondered if Ru-Ping would bring students to demonstrations organized by Taiwan Guardians of the Family. After Ru-Ping explained the reasons for the teaching activity, she was attacked by the parents, one parent splashing water from his cup on her and cursing her with the words: "How dare you say you are Christian! You will go hell!" In another senior high school, two counselors invited the Hotline Association's southern office to give an outreach lecture to the school's 10th grade Life Education Course and faced protest. According to Hua-Chuan (female, senior high school teacher), the pressure was not from parents with children at the school, but from a local parents' association. The chairperson of this association went to the school and harangued the two counselors for an hour. The outreach lectures from the Hotline Association were canceled because of "complaints from the parents."

The countermovement has pressed their complaints with related authorities, including municipalities, the Bureau of Compulsory Education, and the Ministry of Education—and has even brought a lawsuit against a teacher. Previously, I mentioned Chien-Wen (male, elementary

school teacher), who was the subject of a lawsuit brought by the counter-movement. Taiwan's public television filmed Chien-Wen's sexuality education class. In class, Chien-Wen mentioned the special kind of condoms lesbians use. The counter-movement took a picture of the blackboard showing the words "condom" and "findom" out of context from the film. This photo was spread through social networks, causing fear of lesbian sexuality, which led to an investigation by the municipality's Education Bureau. In 2017, the counter-movement used this out-of-context information to bring a lawsuit against Chien-Wen claiming that he "offended against sexual morality," as defined in the Penal Code. Although the municipality's investigation report found Chien-Wen's teaching unproblematic and the prosecutor found Chien-Wen's case non-prosecutorial, the counter-movement continued to call and write various authorities about the case, which made other teachers and schools scared.

Another example of how the counter-movement has advocated against Tongzhi education is a press conference held in front of particular schools to criticize their use of "improper textbooks." Consequentially, the school principals had to respond at the press conference and promise that they would discontinue the use of these books.

These examples demonstrate how the counter-movement can employ the position of "parents" to stop Tongzhi and related education. As the interviewees have said, "most teachers don't want to get into trouble" (Mei-Yu) and "teachers want to do safe things and the schools are worried about making trouble" (Shu-Fen). These are the "troubles" that teachers and schools face. Even when they don't face the trouble directly, news about these events can intimidate and alarm. As Mei-Hui You (2014) points out, teachers face difficulties when engaging in Tongzhi education and many become reluctant to continue it at all, given the challenges brought by conservative religious leagues.

The counter-movement has tried to stop Tongzhi education at multiple sites: At the national level, they target teaching materials published by the Ministry of Education, make complaints to various authorities—and they requested the national referendum to ban Tongzhi education altogether; at the local level, they pressure schools and threaten teachers with parents' complaints, protest or hold press conferences, and bring on lawsuits. The counter-movement not only tries to forbid Tongzhi education, but also actively forms its own discourses on and practices of gender equity education. These practices are what I analyze in the following section.

THE COUNTERMOVEMENT'S DISCOURSE FORMATION AND EMPLOYMENT OF PARENTS AS EDUCATORS

In 2011, the League produced a short film titled “Sex Education on Desire” (the title in Chinese, “*Xin Gjiao Yu* (性教慾),” sounds exactly the same as “sexuality education” (性教育) in Chinese, with the word *Yu* changed from “education” (育) to “desire” (慾)). This widely disseminated film raised a fear of sexuality and emphasized negative impacts of gender equity education on children’s gender identity and health development. By pointing out what they see as improper in Tongzhi and sexuality education, the countermovement is producing discourses on what is “good” for children (see also Huang, 2017).

The countermovement actively participates in teaching at schools to push abstinence-only sex education and sex within heterosexual marriage as the only “proper” course. For example, Taiwan Rainbow, Loving Family and Life Education Association (彩虹愛家協會, Loving Family Association)⁷ provides touring drama performances at schools free of cost or sends “rainbow mothers (彩虹媽媽)” as volunteers to teach the 12 classes of the “Rainbow Life Education Course” in schools (“Introduction of Loving Family Association,” n.d.). Similarly, the “True Love Course” provided by the Champions Education Association (得勝者協會) also stresses abstinence-only sex education and sex only within heterosexual marriage.⁸

These associations have various training programs for volunteers and many of the volunteers are mothers with school children. Often, these mothers are already volunteers at schools, where they use morning sessions to read stories to the children. These are the “rainbow mothers.” They use their volunteer positions, along with connections to teachers, the schools, and other parents, to introduce drama performances and courses adhering to the leagues’ beliefs. They “borrow” teaching hours from teachers or use the “flexible teaching hours” to teach their courses. They also introduce the training programs to other parents, thereby recruiting more parents to be trained as volunteers of these two organizations.

According to the study in Hualien, the True Love Course in elementary schools aims “to do gender education for elementary school students and teenagers in order to prevent sexual crime and sexual liberation, to keep abstinence before getting married, and to build a holy family” (Lee, 2011, pp. 158–159). Many teachers welcome the courses, consider the

teaching activities interesting, and report that children are happy in class (*ibid.*, p. 160).

Wen-Sheng (male, Hotline Association staff) further explains why school teachers welcome the rainbow mothers:

Taiwan's teaching resources are insufficient. Teachers have to be in school early [before 8:00]. Since teachers are tired, it is easy for them to give out their teaching time and let the mothers volunteer to take over the time. (Wen-Sheng)

The countermovement tends to use a general description to hide its heterosexual-centered ideology. For example, the names of the leagues contain the words "love," "family," and "happiness of the next generation," which all refer to things that most people want. The Loving Family Association's introductory film depicts the league as focusing on "inner values that can grow into a good life" ("Introduction of Loving Family Association," n.d.). A good life is also something that most people desire. However, few people question what the leagues mean by "love," "family," "happiness of the next generation," and "a good life." For the countermovement, "family" refers only to heterosexual marriage, "love" means only heterosexual relationships with traditional gender roles, "values" means traditional values in patriarchal society, and "a good life" is a life of heteronormality. These are exactly the definitions that Tongzhi activism challenges.

The discourses demonstrate that both the conservative groups and Tongzhi activism compete under a definition of "social good." As previously mentioned, these counterpublics are unequally positioned in society and it is generally the conservative groups' discourse that resonates most with the societal default of heterosexual ideology.

In contrast, Tongzhi activism's oppositional interpretations defamiliarize the unquestioned vision of a "normal and happy life" and invent new definitions for a normal and happy life to challenge the heterosexual norm in schools. This makes many teachers and schools uneasy, since Tongzhi education questions the comfort zone most people spend their lives in and raises fears of disturbing the "harmony" between sexes. Thus, the countermovement's rhetoric suits the prevailing perceptions of gender equity education, in which the terms and substance of feminism and Tongzhi education are avoided or marginalized, so that the familiar, essentialized, and depoliticized understanding of gender may continue to dominate.

Moreover, the countermovement's conservative activism appropriates terms from feminism and Tongzhi activism. For example, "rainbow mothers" and "rainbow kid." The stated aims of the league's True Love Course are "to do gender education" and "to prevent sexual crime." In recent years, the countermovement also established an NGO called the "Taiwan Gender Education Development Association (台灣性別教育發展協會)," which is quite similar to the TGEEA's name, since both can be shortened to "Gender Association" (性別協會, *Xin-Bie* Association in Chinese). The touring drama performances, lectures, and courses provided by the countermovement also talk about gender and relationships. According to a PhD study on Tongzhi education (Chiang, 2019), the countermovement even imitates the format of the Hotline Association's outreach lectures and employs individuals who have "stopped" being gay or lesbian to share their life stories in schools.

This appropriation of terms and themes makes it difficult for parents, teachers, and schools to distinguish between the educational activities of the countermovement and those of LGBTI NGOs in actual gender equity education. Additionally, since the names of the countermovement's courses and organizations sound associated with the related laws, purporting to discuss prevention of sexual assault and harassment, family education, and gender equity education, schools often include these countermovement educational activities as part of their required educational hours.

The countermovement also appropriates the terms "freedom of speech" and "diversity" when asking for more parent and scholar representatives on gender equity education committees. When other representatives question whether these representatives are qualified, given their anti-LGBTI stance, the countermovement claims that the committees cannot be dominated by "only one voice" and that there should be different viewpoints on them. In other words, the design of participant democracy allows the countermovement to enter the committees. Many of my interviewees describe gender equity education committee meetings as "battle fields," which hinders the development of gender equity education at the local and central levels (see also Wang, 2017).

Additionally, just as Ke-Hsien Huang (2017, pp. 130–131) analysis of how Taiwan's religious conservative groups use news about anti-gay-marriage protests in Western countries, the "truth" about how same-sex marriage "impacts children's rights" and reports from the United Nations

Human Rights Council and European Court of Human Rights to demonstrate that they are aligned with civilized Western society, I argue that the countermovement's appropriation of terms from the women's movement, Tongzhi activism, and the rhetoric of democracy serve to disguise their anti-democratic and anti-egalitarian discourses.

DOING TONGZHI EDUCATION: EDUCATORS' PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES

The teachers I interviewed who engage with Tongzhi education use various methods and strategies to include LGBTI issues in their classroom curriculum. For example, some elementary school teachers find stories (Wang, Liu, & Lin, 2011) useful in helping school children understand diversity in families, including single families, children cared for by grandparents, transnational families (especially women from other Southeastern Asian countries who married Taiwanese men), and rainbow families. Moreover, Tongzhi education occurs when it's necessary and relevant to a student's daily life—teachable moments. Many teachers say that most often it is students who raise questions about LGBTI issues and this opens the way to Tongzhi education and dialogue. If teachers integrate Tongzhi education into other subjects, they usually begin with deconstruction of gender stereotypes followed by discussion of gender diversity, and/or include Tongzhi education as the last part of a section on intimate relationships and/or sexuality to illustrate that heterosexual intimate relationships are not the only valid expression of intimacy and sexuality. When the Hotline Association is invited to offer outreach lectures to school gatherings, the lectures run one to two hours and Tongzhi education only constitutes about one-fifth of the time. Teachers and Tongzhi NGOs use these strategies to incorporate the so-called “controversial issues” (such as sexuality education or Tongzhi education) that schools try to avoid when doing Tongzhi education.

If teachers really want to focus on Tongzhi education, they often collaborate with the Hotline Association, whose volunteers provide outreach lectures using ideas like those underpinning “the human library,” which uses life stories shared by individuals from groups discriminated against for gender, sexuality, and race/ethnicity to deconstruct prejudice against these groups. These outreach lectures are important resources for Tongzhi education in schools. For example, Ru-Ping participated

in the Hotline Association's first "Teachers' in-job training for knowing Tongzhi" and has collaborated with the Hotline Association since then:

As a resource center for gender equity education, we could provide in-job training courses for teachers in this municipality. Nevertheless, we didn't have extra money for lunch seminars or lectures [in our own school]. Therefore, I either gave lectures myself without extra payment or...I really thank Wen-Sheng because he brought volunteers to these seminars for free. (Ru-Ping)

Even when schools have money for only one lecturer to come to a school gathering or lecture in a class, the Hotline Association usually offers multiple diverse speakers, gay, lesbian, intersex, and transgender, to demonstrate gender and sexuality diversity and deconstruct LGBTI stereotypes. Teachers welcome this, but Wen-Sheng admits that due to limited resources they can only offer free-of-cost outreach lectures in western and northeastern Taiwan, leaving the rest of Taiwan with little access. Moreover, the Hotline Association relies on volunteers, who are usually university students. In Taipei, there were only 25 volunteers to do outreach lectures in 2018; in Kaohsiung, there have been around 50 volunteers over the last ten years. In contrast, the countermovement's resources include more than 6000 volunteers conducting courses in more than 700 schools for 150,000 school kids per year ("Introduction of Loving Family Association," n.d.). Conservative groups are often supported by material resources from churches, faithful wealthy businesspersons, and international connections (Huang, 2017), enabling them to actively circulate their discourses, through the production of teaching materials, training of volunteers, and the free-of-cost drama performances and lectures. Using these abundant resources, the countermovement can employ the strategies mentioned earlier to stop Tongzhi education and create a hostile environment that makes Tongzhi education more difficult.

Taking the statistics from Hotline Association as an example, after the passage of the Gender Equity Education Act, the Hotline Association provided 150–200 lectures in schools per year. In 2016, it provided 441 lectures for students and teachers (415 for students). After the same-sex marriage debates and the backlash against Tongzhi education, the Hotline Association's outreach lectures dropped to 146 (139 for students) in 2017, with similar numbers in 2018 (Hotline Association, 2016, 2017,

2018). That means outreach lectures to students dropped 67% in 2017–2018. Similarly, the Hotline Association’s southern office, according to Chi-Kai, had 150 outreach lectures in schools several years ago, but in the last two years only around 80 outreach lectures per year.

During the years between 2004 and 2016, the counterdiscourse from the women’s movement and Tongzhi activism successfully changed the state’s law and gained activists’ access to a position from which to circulate discourse through these outreach lectures. Nevertheless, with the protests from the countermovement since 2011, together with the intensified struggles between Tongzhi activism and the countermovement over the public concerns around equal marriage, the hostile atmosphere has caused schools and teachers block the Hotline Association’s outreach lectures in order to protect themselves from trouble with the countermovement.

LGBTI-friendly teachers face similar difficulties in doing Tongzhi education. For example, Shu-Feng invited a Hotline Association lecturer to her classes for several years using her own money. Nevertheless, it put her in a difficult position:

Actually, there have always been courses offered by the “rainbow mothers.” [...] I have been telling our school that we should say no to such a course [...] but then they said that my invitation of Tongzhi to my class is also not “unproblematic”. (Shu-Feng)

Shu-Feng’s words demonstrate that schools often regard Tongzhi NGO’s outreach lectures and the courses offered by the countermovement as the same thing.

Wen-Sheng, however, pointed out the disparities between the two in terms of frequency and access:

The gender equity education offered by the Hotline Association is usually once in the whole semester, while the “rainbow mothers” are in school every day. I would like to ask what problem there is in Taiwan’s educational system. The conservative groups tend to criticize that we are not qualified teachers, but how about the qualification of those rainbow mothers? We are only guest lecturers and the teachers are in class with us. But the rainbow mothers are in class alone every day, giving their own course. (Wen-Sheng)

Wen-Sheng’s words illuminate the everyday presence of the rainbow mothers and this resonates with the connections these rainbow mothers

have to the schools and the teachers. Compared to Tongzhi activists, the countermovement enjoys far more convenient access for their activities. I would argue that the unequal access provided to Tongzhi activism and to the countermovement demonstrate clearly that schools are “heteronormative sites” (Kjaran, 2017).

Some members of the gender equity education committee in the municipality where Yun-Chen worked took a stricter stance on courses offered by conservative groups, since the committee members thought that the contents of the courses and the way students were asked to sign and swear to keep celibate before marriage contradicted the Gender Equity Education Act. Accordingly, the municipality listened to the concerns of the gender equity education committee and asked schools to be cautious about the “Rainbow Life Education Course.” Moreover, Yun-Chen held a workshop for school principals in the city:

I asked the school to follow the Curriculum Guideline, that if the school wants to invite someone outside school to do such long-term courses, [...] the school has the responsibility to know the contents of the course. Besides, the teachers should be in class so that they can clarify or guide students to think critically. Moreover, we emphasize that [...] the school should know what kind of NGOs are in school. If there are complaints about the course, the school can know how to react according to the Gender Equity Education Act. (Yun-Chen)

As a public officer, Yun-Chen stresses the need for school professionalism in enforcing the Gender Equity Education Act. In a similar vein, Shu-Feng thinks that teachers’ professionalism is the vital element:

In my opinion, education is to do right things. Why should I ask permission from the parents in doing right things? If I need to go through such kind of procedure, it will become the referendum this time. (Shu-Feng)

Both Yun-Chen and Shu-Feng emphasize the professionalism that educators should demonstrate and that they should defend doing the right thing within the framework of the Gender Equity Education Act. However, the challenge that Tongzhi activists and educators face is that teachers’ and schools’ perception of gender equity education is often different from what is regulated in the Act. As a result, teachers and schools either cannot distinguish the countermovement’s rhetoric from LGBTI

activism, or they outright block LGBTI and feminist organizations and Tongzhi education.

Since courses from the countermovement and outreach lectures from the Hotline Association are often seen as the same thing—all being lecturers from outside—and since there have been controversial cases in the news, schools tend to use “course development committees,” that is, the democratic procedure, to solve the problem. However, despite the supposed democratic process, many of my interviewees said the course development committees tend to be more critical of gender equity education. In Hua-Chuan’s words:

[Although lectures offered by the Hotline Association constitute only one of the 18-week lectures], the counselors have to prepare a thick bunch of profiles of the teaching plans of this course, while other teachers only need to provide one-page description of the lecturers they invite from outside the school. (Hua-Chuan)

How the course development committee works depends largely on the educators’ professionalism, but the democratic process in schools faces the same challenges mentioned earlier—it is usually Tongzhi education under scrutiny, not the countermovement’s courses.

Studies have demonstrated that the heterosexual norm is maintained and enforced in the everyday routines of school life (DePalma & Atkinson, 2009; Epstein & Johnson, 1998; Kjaran, 2017). Although LGBTI-friendly teachers include Tongzhi education in their classrooms and collaborate with Tongzhi activists to challenge the heterosexual norm and support LGBTI students in schools, they face pressures from parents, colleagues, school heads, and conservative groups.

Despite the participatory democratic mechanism inherent in committees that include teachers, school principals and directors, parents, NGO representatives, and scholars to discuss controversial issues, such as who qualifies as a guest speaker for gender equity education and what teaching materials and contents are appropriate for students, the dominant heterosexual ideology and the conservative groups that support it—through existing access for “rainbow mothers” as school volunteers and creating a fear of “causing trouble” that inhibits teachers and schools—are guaranteed greater access to schools and classrooms.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I employ Foucault's understanding of discourse formation and Fraser's concept of competing counterpublics to analyze the development of and struggles over power and knowledge in Tongzhi education in Taiwan. Habermas defines the public sphere as a site for discourse production critical to the state, which can be applied in analysis to the development of Tongzhi education. Since the 1990s, the women's movement and Tongzhi movement have constituted oppositional discourse and successfully extended the definition of gender from a binary understanding to one of gender diversity. With Fraser's concept of "competing counterpublics," I illustrate how conservative groups take the position of "subordinate groups" when the Gender Equity Education Act's inclusion of LGBTI rights in education seems to harm their belief in what gender, family, and marriage should look like. I argue that the competing counterpublics have unequal discursive and nondiscursive resources in the struggle over definitions of gender, family, and gender equity education. For example, conservative groups' discourses suit the prevailing, essentialized, and depoliticized understanding of "gender equity education" in schools and correspond to the existing cultural narratives of heterosexual ideology. This makes conservative groups' discourses easy to accept.

The countermovement also employs a wealth of material resources to actively circulate their discourses within the network of power. Using strategies from complaints and protests to pressuring teachers, schools, and politicians, they create a hostile atmosphere that makes the practice of Tongzhi education difficult. I classify this as the "prohibition discourse" that the countermovement deploys to stop the circulation of Tongzhi activism's discourse and thereby sustain the heterosexual norm. Moreover, as Foucault reminds us, the power/knowledge apparatus is not only deployed for prohibition but can also be productive. The countermovement employs the position of "caring parents" to invent narratives and rhetoric of morality and to define values with regard to children, love, and family. Schools, as heteronormative sites, also provide the countermovement with greater access to circulate their idea of "gender education" in schools. Additionally, the countermovement's appropriation of progressive terms like "rainbow" and "gender education," and of the progressive value of diversity in participatory democracy, serves to disguise their anti-egalitarian discourses. This adds to the difficulty teachers and schools have in distinguishing between heterosexual-centered education that reinforces

the traditional gender ideology, as well as heteronormativity, and Tongzhi education that calls for respect of gender and sexuality diversity and the elimination of discrimination based on gender and sexual orientation.

Since the counterpublics are always conflictual, Tongzhi activists and LGBTI-friendly teachers collaborate with each other to form oppositional discourse against the conservative groups, articulating alternative definitions of love, family, and marriage and defending the need for LGBTI students' rights and Tongzhi education. The arenas—the network of power—include classrooms, related committees in schools, social media, public hearings, and various committees at the local and central government level. My research demonstrates the discrepancy between progressive laws and the actual practice of Tongzhi education. The critical discourse analysis provides a complicated reflection of competing counterpublics in a democratic society and the relationship between subordinate groups and the state.

In struggles over power and knowledge in a democratic society, it's necessary to reflect carefully on the meaning of freedom of speech and democracy. As one of the scholars who participated in writing the draft of the Gender Equity Education Act suggests, we should consider a new law making, which would aim at restricting hate speech (Hsieh, 2019). Regarding challenges in competitive discursive formation and the professionalism of school educators, I propose that empowering school teachers' education and in-job training with a better post-structural understanding of gender and sexuality diversity, as well as being equipped with a knowledge about queer or critical pedagogy, would enable the discursive change in the revision of the laws to extend to the everyday world and allow for the practice of Tongzhi education in schools. In other words, transforming policy into practice and making school spaces inclusive of all students, those who identify as LGBTI and those who do not.

NOTES

1. In Chinese “*Ping-Den*” (平等) is either translated into “equality” or “equity.” I use “gender equity education” throughout the chapter because the Gender Equity Education Act is translated as such in Laws & Regulations Database of The Republic of China. Most scholars in Taiwan use “equity” education (e.g., Chuang, 2004; Lee, 2011a) and define the differences between “equity” and “equality” as the following: “Equality generally refers to equal opportunity and the same levels of support for all segments

of society. Equity goes a step further and refers to offering varying levels of support depending upon need to achieve greater fairness of outcomes” (“Equity vs. Equality,” n.d.), which illustrates similar understandings of the two words among Taiwanese scholars.

2. According to Chao-Ju Chen (2014), the countermovement arose in Taiwan after some success in the Tongzhi movement and women’s movements. Throughout this article, I employ the term “countermovement” to refer to the conservative movement against Tongzhi activism.
3. In Taiwan, grades 1–6 are elementary school. Grades 7–9 are junior high school. Beginning in 2014, 12-year education, with the first nine years compulsory, followed by three years (grades 10–12, senior high schools) of universal, free-of-cost, noncompulsory education. There are some secondary schools (grades 7–12) where the first three years are compulsory, while the last three are the same as senior high schools. There have been four versions of the National Curriculum: the 2001 Temporary National Curriculum, the 2003 National Curriculum, the 2008 National Curriculum, all of which are for grades 1–9 and, in autumn 2019, the new National Curriculum for Grades 1–12.
4. I conducted the interviews mainly in Mandarin Chinese, sometimes mixed with Taiwanese. My first language is Taiwanese; I learned Mandarin Chinese, Taiwan’s official language, in school. All translations are my own.
5. I became a board member at the Awakening Foundation in 1998, the year that a lot of teachers’ in-job training lectures on gender equity education began. I have given lectures to students and teachers from preschools to universities since then and published two books about gender equity education before the Gender Equity Education Act was passed (Yang, 2002). I was one of the founders and the first Secretary General at TGEEA.
6. *Integrative Activities in Elementary School* is a junior high course that includes different subjects such as Guidance and Counseling, Home Economics, Scouts, etc.
7. Here I translated the name of the association, founded in 1999, directly from the Chinese name, although they use “rainbow kids” as the name of their website link. I shortened the name to “Loving Family Association” to stress that it is the heterosexual family they love.
8. According to Champions Education Association’s description, the association “was founded by a couple from the U.S. to devote themselves to Life Education in schools in 1994” (“Champions Education Plan,” n.d.).

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