A CRISS-CROSS OF FORCES: THE POWER RELATIONSHIP IN THE PROCESS OF CREATING THE CITIZENSHIP CURRICULUM IN TAIWAN

Research Article

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Abstract

The citizenship curriculum used in Taiwan during the authoritarian period from 1949 to 1987 sacrificed the individual for the national interest as a tool for political socialisation. In the wake of democratisation since 1987, the curriculum has gradually been stripped of its nationalist overtones which were designed to foster 'informed citizens' to facilitate those in power. The increased stress on the reflective and critical capabilities of the individual reminds pupils to examine their positions and roles in society instead of mechanistically accepting the existing social structure. This article sheds light on the intricate internal-external power relationships and differing views on critical pedagogy among curriculum designers. Interviewed curriculum designers hold that pluralistic ideologies should be presented in the curriculum and then room should be left for students to deliberate or judge for themselves. As the gatekeepers tasked with deciding which information to include and being faced with the intervention of numerous internal and external forces, the Curriculum Committee sided with the critical theory and aimed to break the unreflective social reproduction.

Keywords: Curriculum Studies, Citizenship Education, Critical theory, Critical Pedagogy, Curriculum Design, and Social Reproduction

1. Introduction

Before 1949, Taiwan, lying approximately 120 kilometres off the coast of Mainland China, had been settled or colonised by the Netherlands, Spain and Japan (Hughes, 1997; Roy, 2003). In 1949, the KMT (Kuomingtang or Nationalist Party of China) fled the Mainland for Taiwan after being defeated by the Chinese Communist Party in the Civil War. A standoff between ROC (the Republic of China in Taiwan, founded by KMT) and PRC (People's Republic of China) ensued across the Taiwan Strait. To suppress local forces and make Taiwan easier to govern, the implementation of martial law by the KMT government in 1949 not only restricted the full panoply of human rights but also demonstrated how the authority's ideology permeated through the education system to mould citizens' compliance and allegiance (Roy, 2003). Citizenship education (CE) was introduced in schools but the curriculum was confined to policy campaigns, fostering Confucian morality and spreading propaganda about, for example, anti-communist ideology and the goal of retaking Mainland China (Deng, 2012; Hung, 2013b, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c). After the surge in social openness and democratisation following the end of martial law in 1987, the presidency changed hands in 2000 and again in 2008 and the push for liberty, equality, basic rights, and constitutional democracy spread and influenced almost every aspect of society, including education (Hung, 2018; Roy, 2003). Revisions to the citizenship curriculum in 1994 and 2005 included more coverage of the value of individuality and social participation (Deng, 2012). The latest curriculum, implemented in 2010, further stresses the pluralistic dimensions of the society and the necessity of building an inclusive environment where individuals from different backgrounds and with diverse visions of life can live side-by-side and thrive (Taiwan Ministry of

Education, 2009). The evolution of the citizenship curriculum saw a switch from a collective and nation-centered configuration to an individual-oriented and humanistic construct. The goal to produce submissive and obedient citizens and perpetuate the existing social structure has gradually been eliminated through the series of education reforms since the 1980s. The heightened weight given to the self shares a similarity with the concept of critical pedagogy. This article, therefore, attempts to investigate how the committee members absorbed this concept into the process of curriculum design so that the components that entrench social stereotypes and subservience can be ruled out. By means of interviews, 18 curriculum designers reflect on their own roles, the process of curriculum construction, the power relationships inside and outside the Committee, and the compatibility of CE with the critical theory. However, the conflict between those within the Committee holding different visions on critical pedagogy, particularly sociology and economics, highlights the difficulty of subsuming these topics into one high school subject and uncovers the still unsolved tension for the future curriculum designers to consider.

2. The formulation of the new citizenship curriculum

Throughout its almost 70-year history, the Taiwanese CE has undergone eight reconstructions and amendments (Deng, 2012). The latest version, renamed Curriculum Guidelines for Civics and Society, was introduced in 2010 to every senior high school across Taiwan and is composed of four major themes, Guideline 1- Self, Society, and Culture; Guideline 2- Politics and Democracy; Guideline 3- Morality and Legal Regulations and Guideline 4- Economics and Sustainable Development (Taiwan Ministry of Education, 2009). Guidelines 1-4 are compulsory courses for the 1st and 2nd grades in senior high school and there are also Guidelines 5 & 6, which are optional courses for the 3rd grade. In the foreword of the curriculum, it specifies that the subject attempts to enhance pupils' civic knowledge of psychology, sociology, culture, politics, morality, law, economics and sustainable development and 'abilities of thinking, judging, decision-making, reflection, communication, problem-solving, creation and proactive action for social participation' (Taiwan Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 7). In contrast to the cultivation of 'informed citizens' of the old curricula which were designed in compliance with Confucian doctrines, historical glory and ethnocultural nationalism, the new curriculum is regarded as a humanist construct centered on liberal values, democratic principles, basic rights, pluralism, and critical and reflective ability of the individual (Deng, 2012; Doong, 2008; Hung, 2013a, 2013b, 2017; Law, 2002, 2004; C. M. Lee, 2004; W. O. Lee, 2006; W. O. Lee, Grossman, & Kennedy, 2008; Liu, 2000; Morris & Cogan, 2001; Weng, 2007).

Professor of Sociology, Chang Mau-Kuei from the Institute of Sociology, Academia Sinica was appointed as the Chair of the Curriculum Committee by the Minister of Education, Dr. Du Zheng-Sheng, in 2007. The Chair provided a list of potential curriculum designers, comprised of social science academics, ranging from sociology, political science, law, economics, to educational and cultural research, and experienced schoolteachers for the minister to choose from. These fifteen curriculum developers brought their professional perspectives and personal visions of the subject to the Committee. The process of communication, deliberation, negotiation, and final agreement elicited a comprehensive and analytical examination regarding the curriculum guidelines (Chang, 2009). Four public hearings, which attracted more than 70 people, including schoolteachers, parent associations, student unions, publishers, university teachers and members of the public interested in CE, were held to gather external feedback; five focus groups also took place to gain broader opinions from social associations, such as human rights, NPOs and gender groups (Taiwan Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 48). After this preparation stage and a trial implementation, the curriculum was officially implemented in August 2010.

3. The theories of ideology and critical pedagogy

The study of the exploitable nature of ideologies has been at the core of Marxism. Different uses of the ideology can either draw people into becoming staunch believers or can liberate the adherents from their entrenched misconceptions. Geuss (1993) categorises these ideologies into three types: the 'descriptive', 'pejorative' and 'positive' senses of ideologies. The 'descriptive' form refers to the concepts, ideas, dispositions, and beliefs a human group or social class upholds (Eagleton, 1991, p. 43; Geuss, 1993, p. 4). The non-judgmental nature of this type simply reflects different strands of thinking and makes no attempt to impose any oppressive form such as the 'pejorative sense' of ideology does. By sleight of hand, which underlies the second type of ideology, it seeks to gain maximum compliance by promoting its perspectives and creates an unreflective environment to reinforce its imagined 'universal truth'. In Marxist theory, a limited or distorted view of social reality is extended to all social scenarios, thereby convincing the audience of a particular way of viewing the world cognitively and emotionally. For example, the proletariat has been deprived of sufficient information with regard to the enterprise of capitalism and socialised in a certain way, being prevented from seeing their own true interests and needs. As a lively 'camera obscura' analogy brought up by Marx, subjects are given an image of the life-world that is the inverse of this real portrayal of reality (Paolucci, 2001, p. 78). Under this 'false consciousness' and 'delusion', people unconsciously forego reasoning and deliberation (Geuss, 1993, p. 12). In contrast, the ideology in the 'positive' sense, as an ideal form, enhances the enabling conditions for a specific group or class to be aware of where they stand and how to fulfill their lives based on their choices (Eagleton, 1991, p. 44). However, any misuse of this 'positive' type may generate the same 'false consciousness' as the 'pejorative' type.

Foucault, in his famous work Discipline and Punish (1977, pp. 170-194), has described the situation where the 'pejorative' sense of ideology is applied to an educational context and forms a captivating belief for people to subscribe to, as the internalised 'disciplinary power'. This often prevails in prisons, hospitals, asylums and schools where it gradually imposes a certain hierarchical ethos and establishes a mechanism to secure control by those in authority. Marxist philosopher Lious Althusser (1971, pp. 137,145-149) also lists schools as one of the 'ideological state apparatuses' (ISAs), along with family, churches, press, trade-union etc. in capitalist societies. The monopoly of legitimate 'symbolic violence' held by the dominant group's arbitrary power creates a 'field' conducive to the maintenance of the vantage point and imposes the 'habitus' expected to be acquired by pupils (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, pp. 4-7). The 'habitus' refers to the internalized character and 'those subjective dispositions which reflect a class-based social grammar of taste, knowledge, and behavior inscribed permanently in the developing individuals' (Giroux, 1981a, p. 9). Bourdieu perceives that 'habitus' based on the shared beliefs implicitly structures the internal operational mechanism and safeguards the existing cultural and class reproduction system. Therefore, 'symbolic violence' is not a direct imposing force on the oppressed but a replication of the favoured structure which paralyses the reconstruction of a new milieu and potential social change. Imbued with conservative rather than liberating forces, schools often perpetuate the existing dominant culture and social inequality, and school children, as the most vulnerable knowledge recipients, internalise these reactionary social control structures (Lakomski, 1984, p. 152).

In Paulo Freire's famous 'banking concept of education', students are perceived as the 'depository' and teachers as the 'depositor'. The creative and transformative power of the student is smothered under the customary process of knowledge receiving, memorising and

repeating in the daily school life (Freire, 2003, pp. 72,77). However, Freire reflects on the teacher-student contradiction with optimism and concedes that sooner or later, the passive pupils would break through the 'banking education' and engage in the struggle for emancipation so that the conscious being can thrive (Freire, 2003, pp. 75,82). The stress on human agency, critical thinking of the individual, the reflections on inherent social domination and liberation can exemplify the spirits of critical pedagogy (McLaren, 1998, pp. 209-213). Critical pedagogy has inspired educators to closely inspect knowledge transmission in schools and by bearing this strand of thinking in mind, curriculum designers, as the front-line guardians to ward off the 'pejorative' sense of ideology, can prevent the school from being manipulated for political propaganda and becoming a forum for facilitating unreflective social inequality.

4. Methodology

In order to investigate the critical aspects underlying the curriculum, the composition of the Curriculum Committee and the visions of its appointed members who had a direct influence on the design of the curriculum are two major dimensions to trace. In addition to examining governmental documents, academic critics, Committee meeting minutes, public hearing records, and focus group seminar records by means of documentary research, this research interviewed (a) eight curriculum developers from the Curriculum Committee (the composition of the Committee has been explained earlier) (coded from 'A' to 'H') and (b) ten curriculum advisors, comprised of scholars and schoolteachers who took part in public hearings, focus group seminars, and the examination of textbooks (coded from 'I' to 'R'). Every one-to-one interview conducted in Chinese lasted around 60 to 90 minutes. Following the semi-structured interview method, the pre-prepared questions directed the interview process but intermittent probes came up for deeper exploration. Curriculum advisors provided opinions and this group of participants played an auxiliary role in the process of curriculum development. Each interview, taking place in Taiwan from October 2012 to April 2013, was conducted in Mandarin Chinese and lasted approximately 60 to 90 minutes. Due to the upcoming transformation of the curriculum in 2018, some abovementioned informants were re-interviewed in 2015-2016 to record how this current curriculum was shaped. The interviews started with a critical grounding of the Committee and then centered on how they overcame the divergent opinions to hammer out an agreed set of contents and handled, filtered, digested or incorporated emergent views from external forces to maintain or enhance the critical elements that the new curriculum was intended to pass on to pupils. It should be noted that, in this article, both interviewed curriculum developers and advisors are anonymously coded for ethical reasons but the names of curriculum developers referred to in the excerpted interviewees' accounts are not anonymised because the list of committee members and the meeting minutes are accessible to the public.

Both content and discourse analysis techniques were used in this research. For the former, through the documentary method, the repeated wording and language uses highlighted the agreed opinions shared by interviewees. The triangulation between curriculum designers, relevant documents and existing literature enhanced the credibility of the research (Drew, Hardman, & Hart, 1996). To explore the hidden views and agendas behind the interview data, the discourse analysis, which is more sensitive to the implicit messages, is used to read beyond the transcriptions and place interviewees' views in a larger sociocultural context so that deeper meanings and holistic analysis can be uncovered and formulated.

5. Findings and discussion

5.1 Internal power relationships and the pluralistic leanings of the curriculum

In the Curriculum Committee member selection mechanism, the appointed Chair provided candidates for the minister to choose from. It can be assumed that the Chair and minister's choices have dictated the development of the citizenship curriculum. Even though Taiwan has been a democracy only since the late 1980s, the effectiveness of supervision and scrutiny from the Legislative Yuan (Parliament) and the opposition party in examining the process of curriculum making has reduced concerns about appointments of curriculum developers being made for pure political purposes. As interviewee 'B' says that 'back then, under the inspection of the public, minister Du couldn't appoint whoever he liked to the Committee' and 'the Chair, Professor Chang, was regarded as fair and just by society'.

Curriculum developer 'E' and advisor 'O' both portray the Chair as a person who is 'open to different voices both from within the Committee and from external pressure groups' and has the sound 'democratic credentials'. Some may criticise this selection mechanism as 'picking all the king's men' due to the selection and nomination being in the hands of the minister and Chair. It is justifiable to say that the appointed members' characters and visions resemble the Chair's and it would be counter-productive if the committee leader searched for someone 'on different pages' to cooperate with. Curriculum developer 'G' points out that 'it is impossible to exclude any interference of politics in curriculum design because the appointment of every committee member is unavoidably made by political decisions'. Interviewee 'G' regards this as part of due process in a democratic society and argues that the public should closely scrutinise 'who is included in the Committee and to what extent political forces get involved after the appointment' rather than just criticising the intertwined relationship between politics and education. The key academic players and CE teachers selected brought their own independent perspectives on the subject, and, according to the Chair's observation on the committee － 'nothing was left un-debated', curriculum developers hardly presented uniform opinions on each curricular guideline (Chang, 2009, p. 21). Especially under the uninhibited atmosphere prevailing in Taiwan nowadays, it is insensitive to categorise the committee as mere lackeys under the thumb of the Ministry of Education.

Most people in modern democracies believe that any liberal social system, including education, should be neutral regarding individual preferences and personal decisions as long as they are made from free will. It should first be debated whether such a thing as an 'impartial' curriculum is attainable. 'No' would have to be the answer given that the most liberal curriculum still guarantees the superiority of certain forms of values, such as freedom, justice, equality, toleration, etc. The aim of creating value- or ideology-free curriculum is hardly achievable if we analyse the intentions lying behind the content (Heater, 2004, p. 156). The Chair of the Committee in October 2012 in a seminar said:

When I was invited to organise this Committee, the Minister of Education told me that he expected a new curriculum free from any ideology, in contrast to the old curricula. I also often heard similar comments from schoolteachers and parents. But, I want to pose a few questions, 'isn't multicultural education a kind of ideological education?', 'Doesn't gender education employ some ideology?', 'Aren't human rights a sort of ideology?' How can our Curriculum Committee possibly avoid embedding any ideology?

So, we should not get confused about what we are doing. That is － we are educating our pupils with ideologies. Ideologies are things which make you instinctively and naturally believe without questioning their truthfulness. For example, if you believe yourself Chinese,

you might find it okay whilst studying the old curricula. But now, almost everyone criticises the old curricula as a political tool imbued with China-centered values because most of us think we are Taiwanese and therefore encounter ideological conflicts. These conflicts happen when our belief system is impacted by new thoughts. So, we are always carriers of ideology. The aim of schooling is also driven by values and ideologies…. The difference between the old and new curricula would be that we are no longer teaching a specific ideology but teaching 'about different ideologies'. These contents are open to discussion, reflection and debate.

The Chair holds that knowledge is often transmitted under the guise of objectivity and contents and ideologies are constantly intertwined. As Giroux (1981b, p. 131) notes, 'liberation begins with the recognition that knowledge, at its root, is ideological and political, inextricably tied to human interests and norms'. The Chair thus disabuses us of the idea that the curriculum is free from any embedded intentions and remarks that only when this interrelation of curriculum, society and power relations has been unveiled, can we examine the curriculum with clear eyes. Ideology, as a contentious concept, has been deconstructed by Geuss (1993, pp. 5-26) into three subcategories: ideology in the descriptive sense, pejorative sense and positive sense. The 'innocuous' ideology remarked upon by the Committee Chair based on the spirit of pluralism stands closer to the first sense. The Curriculum Committee, in line with Guess' descriptive definition, aimed to include diverse ideological values into the new citizenship guidelines. By not 'teaching a specific ideology', the concern about imposing 'false consciousness' and 'delusion' on the next generation can be alleviated (Geuss, 1993, p. 12). The reflective and creative environment stemming from the self-aware and pluralistic views may not achieve the highest form of the positive sense of ideology but may enable students to see through the intentions underlying the knowledge transmission and form their own opinions.

Disputing the existence of a 'neutral' curriculum and the presence of objectivity of knowledge contained within, the Chair, in one of his published articles, admitted that every Curriculum Committee member carries individual enthusiasm, ideals and ideologies to join this process of curriculum construction. As described in the article, exhaustive consultations were undertaken to reach the 'most probable agreement' and 'nothing was left un-debated' (Chang, 2009, p. 21). Curriculum developers and advisors 'G' and 'J' also reveal the complexity of the process to construct the curriculum, and respectively analyse the group from different aspects:

The nature of this subject exposes its limits in the curriculum establishment. CE consists of eight disciplines [psychology, sociology, culture, politics, morality, law, economics and sustainable development] and needs specialists from diverse social science backgrounds to work together. Besides, schoolteachers from different corners of Taiwan also joined this already-complicated group. The process of brainstorming and deliberation was described by some people as a 'tug of war' between different forces. (Interview with 'G')

Each curriculum developer has his or her own individual expertise. Almost everyone thinks their own discipline most important and asks for more space for their themes. For example, moral educationists and legal specialists are in charge of the whole Guideline 3 Morality and Legal Regulations, but one moral educationist thought his/her discipline very important and kept asking for more space. So the curriculum ends up with two chapters about moral theories, which some of us still think unnecessary. (Interview with 'J')

Interviewees 'G' and 'J' single out the type of 'power relation' among specialists from different academic backgrounds within the committee. Interviewee 'G' maintains that those with stronger personalities can make their voices heard more easily. The curriculum

developers who are selected to join this team are expected to stand out in their field and the eight major disciplines they represent are of equal significance. When a discipline, for example, economics or politics, gains 'high visibility' in the citizenship curriculum, it may interest more students to explore it further and benefit either the future development of the subject or the numbers of enrolments at the university level, which is an issue particularly since certain universities and less popular departments are suffering from a shortage of new students in Taiwan. CE comprised of eight major humanity subjects becomes a battlefield open to competition, described as the 'politics of curriculum' by curriculum developer 'E'. As Coulby (2002, p. 15) observes:

Specialist academics are all too likely to be partial to their own subject and to wish it to have a preponderant part in the school and university curriculum. Their very specialism might itself preclude them from the broad overview needed in the definition of the shape and structure of curricular systems. They may be concerned with large amounts of specialist subject content that readily leads to overcrowded and cluttered curricula.

'It is believed that every committee member intends to give pupils the most rounded knowledge of their discipline, but we should pause to think whether such knowledge is what they need in daily life or what "we" expect them to get hold of', interviewee 'R' says. However, the limits on space for the guidelines, competition for that limited space between disciplines and the question of each guideline's worthiness stimulated and intensified the critical examination of the curriculum content, as can be seen in the internal process of curriculum construction. The next section will extend the focus on how the Curriculum Committee dealt with the external forces and countered the interferences that reflected existing social inequality.

5.2 The critical feature of the curriculum committee and its evaluation of the external interference

With Curriculum Committee members' divergent opinions about current Taiwanese society and CE, a new epistemological system was formed after the collision and melding of their different 'horizons'. Curriculum advisor 'O' sketches his/her impression on the curriculum developers and states:

If you have the chance to look at the members in the committee, you can find that they are full of critical thinking…. Attributed to the Chair's lead, I am impressed by this new and different curriculum. The committee strongly stresses progressive spirits and anything detrimental to these progressive values would be ruled out. When Professor Chang chose the committee members, progressive-minded candidates were invited to join. Thus, the traditionalists and conservatives were crossed out first. For example, those who adhere to traditional Chinese thinking were eliminated this time. (Interview with 'O')

The emeritus professor, Weng Zhi-Zong from National Academy for Educational Research also gives the Committee and the new citizenship curriculum positive feedback:

The curriculum manifests the value of humanism. Basic rights, environmental rights, people's peace and existence rights, the right of access to the media, the introduction of the first, second, third and fourth-generation of human rights, and civil disobedience are progressive thoughts. Thus, the new curriculum embodies the value of individuality and humanism (Weng, 2007, p. 42).

The pluralistic and critical features of the Curriculum Committee guide the curriculum in a certain progressive direction, encompassing democratic, liberal, egalitarian and pluralistic values. This transformation to modern progressivism shows a sharp distinction from previous curricula. Apart from the constant collision of different visions among committee members

that shape the contours of the subject, the external forces also, at times, sneaked an invisible hand into the curriculum design process.

The Chair, in his article, first points out some 'extra attention' from governmental institutions, such as the Ministry of Justice and the Financial Supervisory Commission, urging the Curriculum Committee to include the Laws & Regulation Database and financial education to inform pupils of their rights to access legal resources and to enhance their financial literacy (Chang, 2009, pp. 12,13). The committee did not follow all of the advice received from the government, especially regarding financial education, as curriculum advisor 'O' explains:

People always talk about the importance of financial education because lots of people end up becoming credit card slaves or being trapped in investment scams, suffering deep debt. However, the Chair insisted on including knowledge on labour affairs rather than financial knowledge. He thinks that most pupils will, in the future, become different kinds of 'labourers' and focusing on 'financial management' presupposes that everyone will get hold of a fortune to manage. But apparently, instead, lots of people are experiencing unemployment or are ignorant of their labour rights. Therefore, financial management is mentioned but not completely included. (Interview with 'O')

The curriculum design process, characterised as a wrestling match over knowledge and power, might impair most people＇s trust in education and resonates with Foucault＇s dictum－ 'power is knowledge＇. However, as Foucault and Bourdieu have illustrated, power is omnipresent and power relations cannot and should not be ruled out because this is how the society is constituted and evolves (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Foucault, 1977). What we should eliminate is the extent of 'inequality and discrimination' rather than the power relations themselves. Therefore, if the Committee fails to act as a gatekeeper to filter the forces involved in the process, the embryonic curriculum may be paralysed by the external powers. In this case, the Committee took the Minister of Justice's suggestion to include the legal database in the curriculum but declined to extend the economic contents section to include financial education, showing its resistance towards the 'middle class' concept of financial investment and wealth accumulation. The Curriculum Committee is cautious about replicating a certain socio-economic class's ideology and attempts to challenge the deliberate reproduction of the social, economic, and cultural status quo. A school ethos imbued with bourgeois ideologies creates a 'habitus' marginalising children from less wealthy backgrounds. The dominant groups' mindset, which the aforementioned financial and investment education may fall into, may be therefore endorsed by schools and internalised by pupils through daily educational activities (Giroux, 1981b, pp. 134,135). To break this mechanistic reproduction, schools should instead include the general public's lifestyle and language, for example labour knowledge, to counter against the omission or depreciation of the dominated class's values in the curriculum, and promote pupils' 'critical reading of reality' and 'creative power' to look beyond the surface of the transmitted knowledge (Giroux, 1981b, p. 134).

In Gramsci's view, those who resist hegemony and bring the creative force of transformation to their fellow countrymen are 'organic intellectuals', in contrast to 'traditional intellectuals' who duplicate the old class structures of society with the reactionary force and withhold their empathy from the voiceless and subjugated (Kincheloe, 2004, p. 66). Banks (2001, p. 10) also defines those intellectuals who challenge 'mainstream' knowledge and unconscious social reproduction as 'transformative scholars'. In order to question the taken-for-granted values in the education system, the 'transformative scholars' create a dialectical space for diverse views to be heard and deliberated. The progressive structure of

the curriculum conceived by the designers with transformative and forward-looking characters is not only receptive to the varying visions of the society but also reciprocally contributes to incessant social change.

Apart from the aforementioned pressure from the state apparatus, the Chair in his article also mentions the attention paid to the process by politicians. For instance, the office of the former vice president, Lv Xiu-Lian, (from 2000 to 2008) encouraged the committee to include 'competence indicators of maritime education' given that Taiwan is an island nation dependent on the sea for trade and with a large fishing industry. The agenda of maritime education was posed upon the committee in the construction of curriculum guidelines (Chang, 2009, p. 14).

In addition to political interference, we can also find evidence of strong pressure from social groups. Pressure groups concerned with social issues hoped for their viewpoints to be covered in the curriculum (Coulby, 2002, p. 14). Gender and human rights associations particularly paid careful attention to its construction, concerned as they were about the promotion of gender equity and the avoidance of discriminatory language. The critical character of the citizenship curriculum has been formed not only by the Curriculum Committee but also by external influences, depending on how the curriculum developers construed, evaluated, and incorporated the various suggestions and proposals from outside. Even though the curriculum members reached a consensus and put the new programme into effect, the end product of the curriculum is, by no means, free from inherent contentions. The next section will unveil the tension underlying the new guidelines between those holding sociological and economic perspectives with the consequence that the left-leaning foundation and the critical features of the curriculum faced a challenge from supporters of laissez-faire and consumerism.

5.3 The unsolved tension between sociological and economics education

As discussed above, 'labour affairs knowledge' has been given preference to financial education by the Curriculum Committee and became individual Guideline 5.4 The Meaning of Labour Force Participation. However, some labour unions worry that it is not enough. Taking aim at the introduction of basic economic concepts in the curriculum built upon Adam Smith's liberal market theory, these groups voice their strong antagonism, as interviewee 'D' describes:

Once we held a focus group seminar, the labour groups, which are against the market economy, struck the table and accused us of exclusively endorsing the free market. They claimed that the underlying assumptions like 'governmental interventions are bad', 'restrictions are not good', 'labour movements are detrimental', 'the increase of the minimal wage will lead to higher unemployment', are rampant throughout the Guideline 4 [this guideline covers the topics of economics and sustainable development]. They are right in some way, I admit. This part of our CE is quite right wing and capitalism-oriented. We sometimes do not know how to deal with this section because the free market is like Economics 101 and lots of well-known economic theories, either pro- or anti- Adam Smith stem from the free market concept. I know we did not incorporate this part into the whole curriculum well enough. We did use the theme of 'sustainable development' to point out some external effects and bad consequences generated by a capitalist economy system. (Interview with 'D')

It can be argued that different political and social groups attempt to bring their aspirations and ideals into the process of knowledge selection. Not only did the distinct beliefs held by individual committee members collide, but also the external forces complicated the whole

curriculum construction. To sum up the above arguments, the Curriculum Committee, the government, politicians, especially from the opposition, pressure groups, and the public form a complex 'balance of opinions' in a sense to ensure that the direction is not dictated just by a specific group of people. Under this mesh of power relations, it is difficult to place the curriculum along a specific strand of thinking due to the imprints left by the multiplicity of players. The interview accounts gathered from the curriculum developers and advisors exhibit a wide spectrum from left to right on the political continuum. Curriculum advisor 'P' maintains:

If we compare this new curriculum with the old ones, this one leans towards the left wing in general. The old curricula never taught Administrative Law, the administrative procedure, or the State Compensation Act [in Guidelines 3-5-1, 3-5-2 & 5-8-3]. The old ones did not talk about the right of petition for a constitutional interpretation of a case, or the contravention of human rights caused by the random police checkpoint inspections. In the past, we never taught pupils to debate whether the police can be wrong or can abuse its powers. Now, we teach constitutional interpretations, the possibility of a violation of the constitution taking place, students' rights, civil obedience and administrative litigation [in Guidelines 3-3-3, 1-3-2 & 3-8-2] to illustrate the supremacy of human rights and civil conscience. The curriculum is following the liberal trend and societal transformation. (Interview with 'P')

Administrative law and procedures taught in schools aim to empower civil society to monitor whether the government is bypassing regulations and is violating the principle of rule of law. Interviewee 'P' further points out that 'when pupils are given these concepts, they tend to reflect on these in the school context and pay more attention to the legitimacy of school regulations. Another curriculum developer 'F' shares the same opinion, and specifies:

For the current social development, the Chair once told us that modern citizens should play a centre-left role to counter the machinery of the nation-state. His stance from the very beginning has been very clear. We include new contents such as gender and sexual diversity, the rights of the socially disadvantaged, social movements and civil disobedience. Civil disobedience, in particular, attempts to teach pupils how to stand up to deal with illegitimate acts by the state. (Interview with 'F')

Interviewee 'F' implies that the new curriculum intends to challenge the traditional perspectives on gender difference, the ignorance of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender groups. The non-discrimination statement and the protection of the minority groups are also stressed in Guideline 1-8-1-1 The Cultural Difference and Equal Treatment & 1-8-1-2 The Protection of the Minority Groups and the Promotion of their Rights. Moreover, the measures and approaches to defend individual and collective rights from oppression and exploitation, such as labour strikes, consumer movements, non-violent resistance and non-cooperation movement, are also expounded to manifest their relevance to democratisation and social development. When we take the aforementioned resistance to 'middle class' financial education into account again, that the curriculum displays left-oriented features and the spirit of 'egalitarianism' becomes clear.

The above illustrates the difficulty and limitations inherent in combining economics and CE due to the different natures of the two disciplines. The discussion of economics starts with microeconomics and thus free-market capitalism, based on the theory of supply and demand reaching equilibrium, is first introduced in Guideline 4. Even though the curriculum designers attempt to dispel the impression of the supremacy of classical and laissez-faire economics by depicting recessions, inflation, market failure and the destruction of the environment, the Keynesian macro concept of government intervention, later on introduced in Guideline 4, fails to redeem Guideline 4 from being labelled as having a pro-capitalism

and pro-privatisation bent. Interviewee 'D' therefore confessed 'we did consider separating CE and economics before'. However, more interestingly, those who are in support of including economics education in compulsory education tend to regard this social science discipline as an approach to enhance students' acumen for rational judgment, risk evaluation and life planning and these seemingly self-interested behaviours can also be associated with the virtues of honesty, trustworthiness, cooperation and responsibility, although they are hardly driven by pure altruistic motives (Clark & Schug, 2010, p. 88; Gutter & Garrison, 2010, p. 128). Educating pupils about where to draw the line between 'self-responsibility' and 'greed' is supposed to be covered in the guidelines for the economics curriculum.

The microeconomic structure of Guideline 4 adds a 'libertarian' flavour to the curriculum. Curriculum developers from the sociology disciplines criticise Guideline 4 for being indifferent to the inequalities existing in society. The clinical attitude towards egalitarianism is criticised for being inadequate to transform the status quo and for not reining in the more dehumanising and exploitative features of a less regulated market. Libertarians, on the contrary, question the feasibility of constructing an equal society attuned to the principle of 'the greatest benefits to the least advantaged' by means of redistribution, which may result in sacrificing the value of self-determination to government intervention (Kymlicka, 1990, pp. 154,155). The consequence of intervention may be, on the contrary, to restrain the full development of the individual and the liberating and creative civic awareness may be subordinated to the ubiquity of national administrative apparatus. The discordant views on whether egalitarian measures, such as social welfare and wealth redistribution, can enhance or compromise the value of human agency and the emancipatory potential of civil society has undermined the formation of a consensus on the curriculum for economics education.

However, the complaint that the curriculum leans towards the 'right' does not concern curriculum advisors 'R' and 'Q'. As they remark:

Without knowing how the market works, we cannot have reflective thoughts on it. Therefore, it is good to learn the rudimentary concepts underlying capitalism. Then, taking into account the current global financial crisis, pupils will not naively regard capitalism as the best way to enhance human well-being. (Interview with 'R')

I am honestly not that bothered by this inconsistency in the curriculum flow. Since the 'pluralistic feature' is heavily stressed in the Committee, the constellation of ideologies in CE is the right response to this aim and the plurality of the modern society. (Interview with 'Q')

Due to the social transition in Taiwan from authoritarianism to democracy, the citizenship curriculum has swung between the right and the left on the ideological spectrum. The conservative forces controlled society until the mushrooming of social activism began in the 1980s. The centre-left gradually gained incremental support and pioneered a variety of social reforms. In line with the objectives of pluralism and the cultivation of pupils' critical and reflective capability as written in the preface of the curriculum, the citizenship curriculum, built upon each curriculum designer's visions and the joint efforts after discussion and negotiation, intends to empower students to realise their full potential and demonstrates the multiplicity of ideological strands which mirror the polycentric nature of a modern society such as Taiwan.

6. Conclusion

Apart from the constant collision of different visions among committee members that shape the contours of the subject, the external forces also, at times, sneaked an invisible hand into the curriculum design process. It can be argued that different political and social groups attempt to bring their aspirations and ideals into the process of knowledge selection.

Although the Chair of the committee set a 'centre-left' tone at the outset and curriculum members demonstrated critical insights on curriculum design, within this complex web of internal and external power relationships, struggles between individual curriculum developers swung the guidelines back and forth between right and left on the ideological spectrum. The multiplicity of ideological strands detectable throughout the curriculum, consistent with Geuss' descriptive sense of ideology (1993, p. 4), reflects the polycentric and multicultural nature of a modern society like Taiwan. Moreover, the Curriculum Committee not only presented the pluralistic aspects of the society, but also acted as the gatekeepers to ensure that the material being included in the written curriculum does not reproduce social inequality and intensify class divides.

Giroux (1981b, p. 98) articulates that schools are often simplistically likened to prisons, asylums, and other oppressive 'total institutions', but the counterforces for autonomy and emancipation in schools cannot be overlooked and downplayed. It is likely that education can take on a transformative role of contributing to the cultivation of students capable of critical thinking as long as diverse and reflective views are allowed to come into play in schooling. Generally speaking, critical pedagogy is compatible with the aims of the Taiwanese CE but the process of curriculum construction is by no means free of disentanglement from ideologies, disputes, and complexity. The outright disclosure of the list of curriculum committee members by the Taiwanese government is not common compared to neighbouring East Asian countries, and although the committee chair seems to hold great power in directing the future guidelines, the negotiations and decisions are examined closely by myriads of involved individual and collective forces. While the power relationship can never entirely be eliminated, the possibility of greater consensus is enhanced by opening the dialectical platform to non-curriculum members to contribute their opinions. Uncovering the black box of the Taiwanese curriculum design process and scrutinising the development of discourse on curriculum themes manifests the complex nature of the curriculum creation and reminds us to look at curriculum guidelines through critical eyes.

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