

Social Movements as an Emergence of Counterpublic Discourse and Critical Awareness in Education in Japan

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日本における対抗的な言説の台頭としての社会 運動と、教育における批判意識の醸成について

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Abstract

This article is aimed at exploring significance of social movements as an emergence of counterpublic discourse that contributes on the development of critical consciousness in education. In the first part, theoretical significances of social movements will be examined as a rise of a counterpublic sphere to challenge power dynamics and as a lived experience of learning to raise critical consciousness about the structure of domination in the society. In the second part, rise of women's social movements as a case in Japan shall be investigated to explore how views of justice and ideals spread by the social movements can emerge as counterpublic discourse to seek respectful social relationships without domination and subordination. Thus, the paper reveals that the social movements can promote a vision of social ideal and justice by challenging social norms, pointing out structural injustices and claiming for a change.

Introduction

This article is aimed at exploring significance of social movements as an emergence of counterpublic discourse that contributes on the development of critical consciousness in education. To begin with, I need to admit that, as a teacher, I have always tried to be somewhat distant from politics. Due to the misuse of education in my home country, Japan, during the World War II, education and teachers have faced pressure from the society to separate education from the politics of the nation. As a local civil servant, the article 36 of the Local Public Service Act of the nation also constrains teachers in public schools to participate in political parties or to take political actions since they are regarded as servants of the whole community and not of any interest groups. Yet, Cox (2018, 98) claims that academics cannot simply reproduce institutional mechanism but need to live more actively and fully as activists in

academia to bring systematic reflection on social movements into academic work. As I continue to read and deepen my understandings about social movements, public discourse and critical pedagogy, it is revealed that social movement can contribute on the emergence of counterpublics that shall deconstruct the power relations in the public discourse and social hierarchy, and eventually lead to empowerment of learners. The hesitation as a teacher to dig into the relationships among social movement, politics, and education has vanished as I examine the significance of social movements in education.

In the first part, theoretical significances of public spheres and discourse will be examined in relation to social movements and education. Confrontation between the dominant public and counterpublic described by Fraser (1990) shall be examined with the emergence of social movements to advocate the voice of the marginalised and subordinated. Significance of social movements in education will also be illustrated since social movements can empower those who were silenced to speak out, to share their personal accounts, to find out commonalities in their experiences, to understand the social structure that forces them to keep silent, and to be unified to act against it.

In the second part, women's social movements in Japan shall be investigated to reveal the rise of counterpublic and multiple public discourses that lead to the deconstruction of the social power structure and acknowledgement of the diversified voices in the society. In the country where gender equality is relatively underdeveloped, women's social movements have been expanding with an autobiography written by a journalist. By examining some of the comments given by those who are involved in the women's social movements and related activism by university students, voices can be heard to realise a more 'just' society for every individual to be able to step out of the pre-given gender roles and to acknowledge differences and diversity in the society, considering social movements as a form of civic education and a vision of idealism. In the process of spreading the vision of social idealism, higher education often plays a significant role to exchange different views, to foster critical thinking, and to provide concrete learning experiences of moving a step forward.

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Social Movement as an Emergence of Counterpublic Discourse and as a Lived Experience of Learning

In the following part, significance of social movements shall be explored both from social and educational viewpoints. As Choudry (2015) claims, evaluations of social movements should not be focused on its success or failure in attaining the political goals, but on the promotion of its visions and inspirations brought for next generations. Although social movements are often aimed at achieving political goals, they can give various influences on the structure of a society since it can emerge as

counterpublic discourse and deconstruct social power dynamics. Simultaneously, social movements are inevitably educational as they provide lived experiences of learning, enhance multiple perspectives in the society and promote social idealism. Social movements can be considered as an emergence of counterpublic discourse and as a lived experience of learning.

Social movements can be understood as emergences of counterpublic discourses by subordinated social groups with attempts to develop and circulate a discourse that challenges the dominant public. According to Fraser (1990, 57), public sphere is an institutionalized arena of discursive interaction. She describes that class struggle leads to a mass competition in the public sphere among different interest groups that results in manufacturing and manipulation of public opinion. In the process of the mass competition, significant exclusions of subordinated groups occur such as the political life of women, minoritised groups of people, or racialised ethnicities. She argues that the public sphere has always been constituted by multiple public arenas that compete against each other as counterpublics.

It is crucial to consider what allows people to speak out to share their accounts and to raise critical consciousness or works to oppress them to silence and subordinate. Fraser (1990) argues that deliberative processes and the use of language tend to give more advantage for the dominant groups rather than the subordinated. Male dominance, for instance, often becomes visible in the language of deliberation in the legal system. When a masculinist notion of power is applied in a case of sexual harassment, the voice of a female victim in a subordinated social position may not be heard sufficiently since the deliberative process and the language use of a criminal court can work in favour of the dominant male group and oppress the voice of the subordinated. Earl (2018, 90) also indicates that the power struggle between domination and subordination becomes evident in the process of meaning construction in the minds of people. When the public discourse is dominated by a single public, the voice of other marginalised groups of people may find no way to be heard in order to claim their needs and wants.

Furthermore, public spheres may only be open for its participants, closing its doors for outsiders. Fraser (1990, 71) problematises the openness and accessibility of the public sphere because what can be regarded as a public concern and of public interest is often determined by its participants. In a society with male dominance, concerns of females can be regarded as private and personal, thus, excluded from public debates. Therefore, the rise of the counterpublic sphere can enable some of the concerns previously considered as private to be discussed more openly in public such as sexual or domestic violence and discriminations. When the concern becomes regarded as a part of public interests, it can also give influences on education since the issue can be considered as worthy of being discussed at school as a part of educational materials.

Exchanging personal accounts of oppression with the rise of the social movements can contribute on the identification of commonalities in their personal accounts and lead to more profound understandings

of the social structure that causes the oppression. Freire (1996, 154) argues that when the problem of domination is simply regarded as a complaint, individuals who complain do not perceive themselves as autonomous and capable of building a future in solidarity with others, but rely on some other forces to change their reality. For Freire, education is for raising consciousness to challenge injustice and to seek freedom. Critical pedagogy of social movements can be considered as a 'praxis' that requires actual involvements and experiences of resistance against social oppression. Likewise, Anyon (2005, 11) claims that raising consciousness about the hierarchal oppression in the society by the course of education may not be sufficient and that actual participation in public debate is often necessary. Neary (2012, 6) also stresses 'the role of intellectuals at the centre of the production of a new and experimental society'. Thus, social movements can be considered as a form of critical pedagogy to uplift the critical consciousness of people. Moreover, the role of a teacher and the social movements are inevitably intertwined to nurture the basis to promote the vision of the social ideals.

In the Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong, civic awakening is regarded as the most meaningful achievement by its participants (Lau, 2019, 164). Promoting critical thinking, the Umbrella Movement can be considered as a form of civic education that attempts to promote, not teaching about civics, but supporting to behave as citizens. Thus, while school may teach about fairness and justice in classrooms, social movements can actually provide opportunities to act and protest against unfairness and injustice, which can be a more powerful tool of providing educational experience and empowerment.

The confrontation of the counterpublic can lead to reshaping of the public discourse, allowing any public spheres to temporarily take the central position to provide experiential accounts as an indication of diversity and relationality. Building on the argument of Fraser, Triggs et al (2010) discuss that the confrontation of the counterpublic against dominant public may lead to the emergence of multiple public spheres with open center, allowing any public spheres to take the central position to speak out. The emergence of the multiple public spheres with open center shall deconstruct the rigid power structure of domination and subordination and may lead to the acknowledgement and promotion of increased diversity in the society. It is also argued that learning is associated with democratic public space. Considering the existence of multiple publics, learners may come from different public spheres and standpoints. Learning experiences can involve attempts of adjustment between internal and external public spheres. The counterpublics may offer different viewpoints that the dominant public has neglected and contribute to form collective sensibility by offering experiential pedagogy that enables learners to experience or experiment personal accounts of those in marginalised public spheres. The emergence of the counterpublics can diversify the views offered by formal education since the formal education tends to be filled with storytelling of the dominant public. Thus, the emergence of counterpublic discourse through social movements is meaningful in education since it can advocate the voice of the marginalised and experience the lives of the silenced.

Although many social movements are often initiated to attain political achievements, participating in social movements can lead to a profound learning experience. As education often aims to raise awareness and consciousness, the pedagogy of social movements raises awareness, promotes critical consciousness, and can generate hope for change beyond simply criticising the political conditions in the society. Encountering various personal accounts and understanding different perspectives in the society through social movements, people may develop a more profound sensitivity to others regarding their needs and desires (Earl, 2018, 81). Social movements can advocate the voice of the marginalised, since participants of the social movements may disclose their personal experiences and struggles and exchange stories of people from different standpoints. This process of sharing personal accounts can deepen their own understandings and lead to development of critical consciousness about the structural oppression affecting their lives and the lives of others (ibid, 89). By revealing and exchanging their personal accounts, the participants of social movements may start to reflect on not only their lives but also on the power structure that oppresses them and prevent them from speaking out. The reflection on the social power structure can enable them to become closely tied with each other to act against the hierarchal social structure. Instead of competing against each other, sharing personal accounts with each other may create a collective culture and knowledge.

Social movements are also linked with adult learning since they involve learning to question and change pre-developed assumptions or cultural norm (Brookfield and Holst, 2010). Sexual liberation, for instance, can bring an end to the silence over sexual identity and to the exclusion of women from decision-making processes in the society (ibid, 14). Understanding different interests of women and people of other racial groups, ethnic affiliations, and sexual orientations is likely to enable to appreciate different ways of viewing the world. It is also argued that the social inclusion can lead to recognition of differences among people. When more differences are recognised, extensive learning may be required to find out appropriate forms of responding to the differences to be fair for each member of the society. Simple majority vote can be problematised for being intrinsically unfair because the voice of those who are more affected by the decision can be neglected and not be heard sufficiently (ibid, 11). Then it becomes necessary to learn about how it is possible to make a more-justifiable decision. The social inclusion can contribute to increase creativity and productivity since understanding differences enables to leave from cultural norm that is often taken for granted and may seem unchangeable.

In social movements, university students are often considered as spokesperson for broader population and conscience of their societies (Gill and DeFronzo, 2009, 207). Higher education can play a crucial role in social movements because the university students may develop youthful idealism by learning about the society and express themselves more actively with increased freedom of expression. College and university can be the central place to foster the ability of critical thinking (Huber and Kuncel, 2016). Although extremist ideological beliefs may be brought by motivated reasoning, 'a form of biased

reasoning due to an unconscious tendency to reason in a way that makes us feel better or to mitigate cognitive dissonance' (Lau, 2019, 167), teachers can play a central role in supporting students to understand and cope with diversity and polarisation of opinions. Therefore, it is important for educators to provide learners with opportunities to discuss about conflicting ideas and to compromise between them in higher education in order to reduce ideological isolations.

Based on the arguments of the counterpublic sphere developed by social movements and critical awareness in education to fight against the power oppression, women's social movements in Japan will be explored in the subsequent sections as a rise of a counterpublic sphere by examining some of important publications and comments by the participants. Social activism promoted by university students will also be investigated to explore the youthful idealism developed among younger generations through the women's social movements in the nation. The personal accounts of those who speak out to challenge the oppressive domination can provide examples of empowered learners with critical awareness that attempt to construct the counterpublic discourse that can ultimately bring emergences of the multiple publics to promote diversity in the society.

Women's Social Movements in Japan as the Rise of Counterpublic Discourse and Critical Awareness

In the subsequent sections, gender justice and the rise of counterpublic discourse shall be examined as a case in Japan since Cin (2007) describes that gender is often utilised as a structural power to develop engendered cultural norms both in the private sphere and public sphere and deprives women of opportunities and freedom. Gender equality is comparatively underachieved in Japan. According to the Global Gender Gap Report by World Economic Forum (2019), Japan is ranked as the 121st place in the Global Gender Gap Index. In addition, the Survey about Violence between Men and Women in 2017, conducted by the Gender Equality Bureau, Cabinet Office, Government of Japan, revealed that 7.8 percent of the 1,807 women participated in the survey had ever been forced to have sexual intercourse against their will. The percentage suggests that approximately 60,000 to 70,000 women are victimised for forcible intercourse per year.

In the nation where gender equality is relatively underdeveloped, there is an autobiographical book that contributed significantly on the rise of women's social movements. On October 20, 2017, the book named *Black Box* (Ito, 2017) was published by a journalist who experienced sexual violence while she was made unconscious with a sleeping medicine that was seemingly put into the glass of her drink. She wrote that when she realised with pain, she found herself on a bed in a hotel room being raped by a man who she thought was her future boss of her new workplace as a journalist. She disclosed her experience and published the book, indicating that the intention of writing the book is not to focus on her painful experiences but to start discussing about how to make the society a more 'just' place by identifying

legal, psychological, and educational problems. She hopes that publishing the book may contribute to prevent some of the similar cases to be caused. Her strength to bring the account of sexual violence at the center of public discussion provoked heated debate and resulted in the emergence of various women's movements in the nation.

As a victim of the crime, it is indicated in her book that she finds out some of the issues in the current legal system in the nation. For instance, she states that female victims are often made to explain the situation of the sexual violence in front of male policemen using a doll which can lead to the 'second-rape' that causes flash backs and deepens trauma. She also adds that the medical system is not sufficiently developed to provide the information of what needs to be done to prevent pregnancy or to secure the proof of the crime such as DNA test within a few days to retain the body fluid of the criminal. In the case of forcible intercourse, two issues need to be clarified for the police to accuse the suspect, firstly, if there was an act of forcible intercourse and, secondly, if there was a sexual consent. In her case, the second point of sexual consent could not be proven because two of them were in a hotel room alone and the suspect insisted that she agreed although she objected against it. As a criminal case, the case was dismissed by the decision of prosecutors, which led her to appeal to the civil court where she finally wins the lawsuit in December 2019 after over four years of the struggle since the incident of the hotel.

As the author herself indicates that she was unaware of the procedures to retain and present the proof of the crime, the book gives an opportunity for readers to understand where social injustice exists and how it is often perpetuated. Through her book, readers can recognise issues in the legal system of the nation in the case of sexual violence that reflect the voice of the dominant male public but fail to recognise the claims of those who are subordinated. Reading about the experience of fighting against power and authority can provide a learning opportunity for those who are around, yet unaware of the oppressive domination in the society.

Although the sex crime regulations of the Penal Code of the nation were revised in 2017 after 110 years, the content of the revision is still far from satisfactory for the victims. While the crime of forcible intercourse had required a formal complaint from the victim for prosecution before the revision, the revised Penal Code does not require the formal complaint from the victim for the crime of forcible intercourse to be prosecuted, facilitating the suspected to be prosecuted without the victim's claim. The victim of the crime of forcible intercourse is also extended to include men. Yet, the revised Penal Code still require to prove clear assault and threat for the suspect of the crime of forcible intercourse to be found guilty, which results in questioning the victim if it was truly impossible to resist and escape. Reflecting the difficulties of the criminal prosecution, only roughly 1,000 cases of forcible intercourse are reported to the police every year (Gender Equality Bureau, Cabinet Office, Government of Japan, 2020). Even if the victim decides to report to the police, the complaint report may not be accepted when

the assault and threat of the suspect cannot be proved as intense. Also, if the suspect insists that there was a consent of the victim, it becomes more difficult to prove the criminal intention.

In the book (Ito, 2017, 175), the author discusses the ‘wall of consent’, if it is possible to prove that there was a sexual consent or not, in relation to the state of death feigning;

‘… nearly 70 percent of the victims of rape fall into the state of tonic immobility such as inability to move the body, inability to resist, and being in the dissociative state while they are victimised. The tonic immobility can be interpreted as the state of death feigning that animals pretend to be dead when they sense danger. What is questioned at the court of criminal assault in Japan, however, is not whether the victim resisted inside of the heart but whether the intention of rejection was clearly communicated to the suspect or not… The judgement does not give the slightest consideration about the psychological pressure. In an extreme case, only if the suspect can say, “I didn’t notice that she was unwilling”, it might be able to legally acknowledge that both parties agreed. That is the wall of consent.’ (Ito, 2017, 175)

Here, the author points out the power structure that is constructed by the dominant public discourse and oppresses the voice of the subordinated. While the masculinist notion of sexual violence is applied and considers that the victim could have resisted more strongly against the violator, the voice of the victim is not sufficiently heard including the possibility of the victim falling into the state of death feigning and tonic immobility. The deliberative process and the language use of sexual consent in the criminal court function in favour of the discourse of the dominant male public and oppress the voice of the victims claiming about the tonic immobility. This discursive domination can be brought by absence of counterpublic discourses and underdevelopment of multiple public spheres that recognise and provide diversified perspectives from different positionings in the society.

Nevertheless, the book revealing the personal account of the courageous journalist provokes numerous discourses of counterpublic spheres to challenge the male domination in the society such as Flower Demonstration that claims against sexual abuse, initiated on April 11, 2019. The Flower Demonstration started as a response to the guiltless judgments of four cases of sexual violence in March 2019. Among those cases, the court decision on March 26, 2019, at Okazaki Branch of Nagoya District Court surprised the nation and provoked arguments because the court recognised that the victim was forced to have sexual relationships with her father since her early teens but found rationally doubtful if she was unable to resist. To claim against the judgement, a female author and a president of a publishing company posted on Twitter and called to gather at the Tokyo station with any flowers or pictures of a flower in hand to protest and to show the spirit of #WithYou (to be together) for the victims, for which over 500 people turned out. The silent movement with flowers was later named as the Flower

Demonstration and spreads to other major cities in the nation to take place on the 11th every month. The author, Minori Kitahara, who organized the movement made a speech in March 2020 and said;

‘That night, over 500 people gathered with flowers in hand and the ring of people kept expanding. We did not even name it as Flower Demo. What happened there is that people started to talk about their pain and the past. I was really surprised. Until then, it was said that victims cannot talk. But if we have the spirit of WithYou, if there is a voice that says that I believe in your voice, they may be able to talk. It made me realise that what was missing was the secure atmosphere.’ (Minori Kitahara in HuffPost Japan, March 10, 2020)

The secure atmosphere to talk about pain, as Kitahara states, is difficult to be provided if social hierarchy oppresses voice of the subordinated and marginalised. There are issues of deliberative process in the legal system but the largest issue can be embedded deep in the mind of people to conceal and ignore what has happened as Earl (2018) claims. Yet, the critical pedagogy of the social movements can challenge the cultural norm in the society (Brookfield and Holst, 2010). The social movements can be considered as a tool of providing educational experience to challenge the dominant structure, to liberate every person, and to promote social justice.

Because of the secure atmosphere of the Flower Demonstration, the people gathered started to talk about their personal experiences that raised awareness and generated a collective knowledge about the gender domination in the society. This critical consciousness about the dominant social power structure may encourage the participants to speak out and to be tied closely with each other to claim against the dominant public. The collective culture and knowledge have been significantly developed in the Flower Demonstration.

It is also crucial to note that the Flower Demonstration challenges the pre-developed assumption of women as voiceless victims. As Kitahara states, women are often expected to be passive and silent when they are victimised. Yet, this assumption has been changed in the Flower Demonstration because the victims started to stand up and share their accounts. Kitahara indicates her astonishment to realise that victims are actually able to talk about their painful experiences. Here, she realises her own assumptions to consider victims as weak, passive, and silent. Then she realises that it is the society itself that forces them to refrain from speaking out by imposing the image of voiceless victims. This image can be related with the cultural and gender norm of passive obedient women that is often promoted by the dominant male public. As Kitahara indicates, what needs to be changed is the atmosphere in the society itself that forces the victims to be silent and powerless. Thus, the Flower Demonstration is associated with critical consciousness that challenges pre-developed assumptions and cultural norm.

Likewise, the “Ku too” movement (a mixture of Japanese terms of kutsuu, which means “pain”, and

kutsu, “shoes”) also started by a statement in Twitter by an actress, Yumi Ishikawa, in January, 2019, with the influence of the “Me too” movement expanded worldwide to act against sexual harassments. She tweeted about the pain of her feet for wearing high heels at work and her wish to eliminate unfair regulations of women’s clothes in companies. Her tweet was re-tweeted nearly 30,000 times in the nation, which encouraged her to start a signature campaign in February 2019 to request abolition of company regulations to force women to wear high heels at work. By June in 2019, nearly 18,800 signatures were collected and presented to the Japanese Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare.

The accomplishment of the “Ku too” movement also reflects the fact that online social movements can be an effective tool to advocate the voices of the subordinated and marginalized, to change the mind-set of people, and to emerge as a counterpublic to challenge the dominance and oppression. As the “Ku too” movement becomes widely recognised in the nation, JAL, Japan Airlines, announced in April 2020 regarding the amendment of uniform regulations for female employees to revise the height of heels from 3 to 4 centimeters to permit zero centimeter (The Asahi Shimbun, 2020). The emergence of counterpublic discourse by women developed with the ‘Ku too’ movement contributes on the inclusion of the women’s voice in the regulations of company uniforms. By raising the voice, women have successfully participated in the decision-making process of how women’s uniform should be considered and designed. As Brookfield and Holst (2010, 14) describe, sexual liberation can bring an end to the exclusion of women from decision-making processes in the society.

Subsequently, the social movements initiated by university students will be examined to portray how the visions of equality and justice are extended to younger generations to raise their critical awareness and to encourage them to speak out.

The Counterpublic Discourse Leading to the Rise of Social Activism by University Students

With the rise of the woman’s movements in the country, students’ organisations are established in universities to promote the concept of sexual consent and to attempt to change the oppressive social structure of dominance and subordination. Speak Up Sophia is an organisation in Sophia University in Tokyo that aims to promote the concept of sexual consent. One of the co-leaders of the organisation, Momoko Yokoi, started the activities to promote sexual consent since she read the book, Black Box (Ito, 2017).

‘I also had a negative experience in the past… Then I heard about Ms. Ito … Later when I read her book about the sexual violence, I was shocked and couldn’t move for hours. I felt angry and want to change the society that causes sexual harassment. So, I continue raising my voice.’ (Momoko Yokoi in Harbor Business Online, April 9, 2020)

Since the journalist revealed her experiences of sexual violence and pointed out the gender oppression in the dominant public discourse and the legal system, younger generations in the universities who read her book have learned and deepened their understandings about the oppressive social structure that often refuses to recognise diversified perspectives. The university students in Sophia University attempt to promote the concept of sexual consent and to convert the issue that has been considered as private and personal to become an important public issue. As one of the achievements of the activities of the student organisation of Speak Up Sophia, the concept of sexual consent has been added to the university curriculum of the Wellness class regarding mental and physical health to be learned as a compulsory subject of the first year of the university (Yokoi, 2020).

In June 2019, she and other members of Speak Up Sophia protested against the comment made by the head of the Center for Student Affairs in Sophia University at the Symposium held by Institute of Global Concern of Sophia University to prevent sexual harassment and sexual abuse. They claimed against his comment because he told that obliging the attendance in the workshop about sexual consent can lead to another form of violence and that understanding the perpetrator will also be important. The comment was objected as it can result in the ‘second-rape’ and cause psychological trauma for the victims. Receiving the objections and public attentions for his comments, the university announced in the next month that the head of the Center decided to resign. Yet, Yokoi says that the issue is more deeply related with the system that appoints the person without profound understandings of sexual harassment or violence to be the head of the center for protection of the students. Thus, she values the social activism to develop more ‘just’ relationships between partners. She mentions about the significance of the activism for the younger generations.

‘... what I can do now to change the society is to promote the concept of sexual consent at the university. ... If the students who understand about the sexual consent start working in the society, it will become possible to prevent cases of sexual violence or harassment at work. When those people start participating in decision making process in the future, the impact on the society will be big and it will be passed on to the younger generations. If it can be changed gradually through the activities on SNS... Understanding that we have the choice to say “No” can be very empowering, and it can make us rethink about the relationships. ... By the activities in SNS, I also realise my gendered prejudice or misogyny in myself that I was unaware of. I think it’s important to become aware of those imprinting and consciously try to “unlearn” or drop them.’ (Momoko Yokoi in *Wezzy*, January 3, 2020)

Here, she clearly comments that her motivation of participating in the social activism is to foster the younger generations who will promote the gender equality and ideal of changing the society. It is

indicated that the activism is aimed at pointing out the preconceptions in the society and to alter them in the course of education to develop the future generations with a different mindset. She also mentions that the learning process needs to be reversed if some forms of prejudice have been already acquired and found out to be incorrect.

While the woman's social movements and the activism by the university students have brought significant changes in the mind-set of the younger generations and in the curriculum of their university, the gender activism of sexual consent promoted in the Sophia University also illustrates new forms of active learning to respond and correct some of the injustices of the society. Through the emergence of the counterpublic discourse and the critical pedagogy in higher education, the student has learned to question the cultural norm and image of silent and passive women and attempts to challenge the norm by promoting the activism. The student mentions that it is important and necessary to 'unlearn', or actively re-learn, about some of the pre-developed assumptions and cultural norm related to gender. She stresses that it is crucial to be aware of the assumptions and subconscious bias to be able to challenge and change them if necessary. Since unjust gender relations in the society have been revealed by the emergence of the counterpublic discourse developed with the women's social movements, the younger generations in the universities who observe the struggle and learn about the dominance and subordination attempt to stand against the injustice.

Another student organisation, ICU PRISM, was also founded in International Christian University, in Tokyo, to educate and foster an understanding of gender issues while advocating for gender equality in the campus and in the society. One of the founders, Rin Yoshitani, says that it is necessary for people of the majority group to take an action to change the society;

"I was interested in gender studies from the beginning but was apprehensive to learn more about it because I knew I would struggle after learning about our society and how it negatively affects people of different genders. I just didn't know if I could handle that. However one day, my fears were overturned. In ICU, there is a class... which aims to develop students' English skills while fostering their critical thinking. The class is conducted in English and consists mainly of group discussions. I was inspired by one of my classmates, who was also interested in gender studies. From talking to her... and the various events she was attending, I was inspired to take action..."

(Rin Yoshitani in Voice Up Japan Media, April 26, 2020)

By meeting one of his classmates at the university in a class to develop critical thinking, he starts his journey as an activist for social equality and justice. Education and interacting persons with different views and ideals provide an opportunity for him to face his internal hesitation of discovering the unfavorable reality of inequality in the society to take an action forward to tackle the issues of diversity,

equality, and social justice. Thus, the university education can play a major role to develop critical thinking to reflect on their own values and attitudes toward the power oppressions in the society (Huber and Kuncel, 2016).

It is also important to note that he reveals the difficulty of those in the dominant group to step out of the pre-given gender-role and to take an action to realise the social equality;

“I feel like some men already realize the gender issues around them. For instance, I think there are a lot of men who might already realize the male superiority in society but don’t or can’t take action against it. The majority of the Japanese society, especially in the workplace, is men. So the majority should help to change society because if not, nothing will change. I think this could be said about the LGBTQ community as well. The majority of the population is straight, and if those people do not do anything, LGBTQ people might not be able to get the same rights, or it will be harder to have an equal society. Therefore, especially in Japanese society, the majority of people should support to bring about change in society, and that is why I think there needs to be more male feminists.” (Rin Yoshitani in Voice Up Japan Media, April 26, 2020)

He describes that those in the dominant male group may face difficulties of living the reality by recognising the power relations exercising in the society. The power structure may not only oppress the subordinated but also force those in the dominant group to play certain role in its rigid mechanism, thus, affect every member in the society. He reveals the difficulties within the dominant male public to step out of the pre-given conventional gender-related position to speak out. He implies that the dominant public does not only prioritise men but also impose them to fit within the established structure as a part of mechanism in the society. Thus, he emphasises the importance of being a feminist to support the emerging counterpublic to realise a society where the voice of each individual is valued and heard.

He also understands that taking the feminist position will lead to the deconstruction of the dominant public and result in emergences of diversified public discourse where multiple public spheres co-exist and interact actively. His comment describes how different views of women and those of different sexual orientations have become recognised. The emergence of counterpublic discourse by the women’s social movements can promote different views of the society that have been undermined such as the voice of sexually minoritised groups of people. His comment indicates the increased awareness about the social mechanism that privileges the dominant group and neglects the voice of the other marginalised groups.

He recognises the bipolar situation created by the dominant male public against the feminists’ counterpublic in the society and stresses the importance of avoiding the confrontation and creating more space also for other minoritised groups of people. By mentioning the minoritised groups, he intends to open up spaces for every person in the society to live more freely without being oppressed to

carry out a pre-given gender role to fit into the power structure built in the society. His comment relates to the possibility of developing multiple public spheres with open center by the emergence of counterpublic that Triggs et al (2010) claim. Therefore, the promotion of the feminist's viewpoint as an emergence of the counterpublic sphere may bring more freedom in the society by challenging the social norms and pre-given gender roles and by deconstructing the social power structure that consciously or subconsciously controls the life of every person.

As it has been examined, the social movements can contribute on critical thinking in education. The voice of the journalist who drew attention to the sexual violence and the issues in the deliberative system empowered others who felt isolated and powerless and encouraged to speak out in the Flower Demo. Tools provided online facilitate to learn about the cases of injustice, to support those who are struggling for social justice and to act together for the expansion of the “Ku too” movement. Views of justice and ideals spread by the social movements can activate many people including younger generations in the universities to seek more respectful personal relationships without oppression and subordination. The social movements can be considered as a lived experience of learning with continuous process of raising an issue, provoking a public debate, and taking actions to create a space of the counterpublic discourse to emerge and to acknowledge different views of different standpoints. Providing opportunities of experiential learning that can lead to the empowerment of the subordinated and silenced, the social movements can lead to critical pedagogy to raise consciousness about the structure of domination in the society.

Conclusion

Considering the theoretical significance of social movements in education and by the examination of the women's social movements as a case in Japan, the paper has revealed that the social movements can be considered as a rise of counterpublic discourse that promotes critical pedagogy about raising voice, sharing personal accounts, identifying the issues in common and acting to challenge the hierarchal oppressions in the society. Although many social movements are often aimed at attaining political goals, they simultaneously promote a vision of social ideal and justice by challenging some of the social norms, pointing out structural injustices and claiming for a change.

The woman's movements in Japan can be understood as an emergence of counterpublic discourse that aims to challenge the dominant public by providing voices from different perspectives to deconstruct the power structure of the society. The rise of counterpublic by the women's movements can be considered as a first step forward to the emergence of multiple public spheres with open center that embraces increased diversity in the society. The voice of one journalist who disclosed the experience of sexual violence to point out the male dominance in the legal system as well as in the society provoked public debate about the court decisions of sexual abuse and domestic violence,

ultimately leading to the expansion of the woman's social movements in the nation including the activism by the university students.

The rise of counterpublic and multiple public discourses shall inevitably influence on the development of curriculum of education, as it has been altered the curriculum of Sophia University, by raising the critical consciousness of people. With the online tools contributing enormously to advocate a large number of voices of people, the social movements provide opportunities to learn about the social structure perpetuating the dominance and oppression in order to claim for justice. Through social movements, highlighting the social injustice and demonstrating the process of the political challenge can contribute on the critical pedagogy of the university students and future generations since they can provide a learning opportunity of how to bring a change in the society. The social movements can contribute on the empowerment of the students to foster more critical generations to speak out and challenge some of the social norms instead of blindly accepting them. In conclusion, the relationship between education and social movement can be understood as the knowledge accompanied with responsibility. The more one understands profoundly in the course of education, the more responsible one shall become to tackle some of the crucial issues in the society.

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