

11. Communicating anti-LGBT content: the roles of education and media

In this chapter, I examine the ways in which the Korean anti-LGBT movement treats and uses education and media to promote its worldviews. In a broad sense, I focus on the communicative actions and channels that activists utilize, emphasizing the particular characteristics of these socio-political actors as a social movement with a conservative Christian background. This background comes with grown structures, resources, and linkages – the social movement bases – that can be expected to influence the communicative means activists use and promote. This chapter thus concentrates not on the mediated anti-LGBT discourse that activists wish to create, but rather on the means of creating public attention and of promoting a certain kind of ‘learning’¹ of anti-LGBT sentiments, which the movement wishes for. Additionally, I investigate how education and media themselves have been problematized by movement actors.

The previous chapters have focused on the *what* (i.e., action forms, targets, and frames) and *who* (social movement organizations, movement leadership) dimensions of movement activities. This chapter delves into the *how* of the dissemination of frames, including the questions of which roles activists play in this, and how the means and institutions of communication, for example TV stations and educational material at schools, get criticized for spreading positive views or even just neutral information on homosexuality and other LGBT issues. The analytical chapters so far have demonstrated that communicative and ‘educational’ action makes up a large part of the movement’s action forms: The PEA dataset reveals that press conferences and press releases are

1 Here and at other places in this study, I put the words ‘learning’ and ‘education’ (and derivatives) in quotation marks to denote the tension between a concept of education which aims at teaching things that are helpful for leading a successful and fulfilling professional and personal life. Within the normative model of conservative Christian moral doctrine, teaching the sinfulness of homosexual acts and queer lifestyles may make sense. From an empirical perspective, however, for example in the fields of psychology and social sciences, we learn that such teachings have the potential of causing great harm to LGBT people and on the people in their close social environments (cf. e.g., Linville 2017; Sowe et al. 2014; Wilkerson et al. 2012; on Korea: Lee, Hyemin et al. 2021). Under certain circumstances, the beneficial quality of ‘education’ thus becomes questionable, which justifies the usage of quotation marks as a marker of counterpurposiveness and inappropriateness.

used at 52.1 percent of all protest events investigated. 'Educational' events like seminars and fora make up 17.2 percent (cf. Table 6). But also other protest forms like rallies, petitions, and prayer meetings rely on media coverage to exploit the full potential of public attention. As I will show, the coverage of the conservative Protestant newspaper *Kukmin Daily* in particular plays an important role in the communication of the Korean anti-LGBT movement.

Previous research on anti-LGBT movements has mostly provided content analyses of the media activities of anti-LGBT activists. Nami Kim (2016, 98–100), for example, has cursorily described how the Korean Protestant Right problematized the appearance of homosexuals in TV programs. Didi Herman (1997, 25–59) analyzed how the conservative evangelical US newspaper *Christianity Today* had constructed a "devil discourse" on homosexuality since the 1950s, among others by linking the latter topic with other issues such as anti-communism, anti-Semitism, and anti-Catholicism. Studies on other countries also focus on the media representation and conveyance of anti-LGBT contents: for example, moral panics and homophobia created and reproduced by Ghanaian media (Tettey 2016), anti-LGBT coverage in the name of religious freedom in the US state of Mississippi and in US national newspapers (Brown et al. 2018), a social media campaign organized by Christian and Muslim actors against gay pride parades in Singapore (Han, Sam 2018), an anti-LGBT Twitter campaign in Indonesia (Fitri et al. 2019), and homophobic hate speech on Turkish social media platforms (Karayığit et al. 2022). In recent years, research has thus mainly concentrated on the usage of newer information communication technologies (ICTs), suggesting that they play an increasingly important role for the construction of anti-LGBT discourses.

Research on anti-LGBT attitudes and education mostly deal with the situation of LGBT students in formal education. Jones (2014), for example, examined homophobia in secondary schools (K-12) and higher education. Another study by Callaghan (2018) specifically focuses on institutionalized homophobia and transphobia in Catholic schools in Canada. In recent years, scholars have also increasingly interrogated how conservative political and movement actors politicize formal education curricula on issues of sexuality and gender. One example for such an endeavor is the so-called *Demonstration for all* (*Demo für alle*), a group that formed in the German federal state of Baden-Württemberg in 2014, opposing a new curriculum for sexual education. The group fights against an alleged 'early sexualization' of children, against same-sex marriage, and 'gender ideology' (Schmincke 2015). In Uganda, the government developed an "anti-gay public pedagogy" in cooperation with Anglicanism and US evangelicals, a lifelong learning program which also fueled the passage of a draconic anti-homosexuality bill in 2014 (Grace 2016). In their introduction of a special issue, Miller-Idriss and Pilkington (2017, 133) state that generally, there is a lack of scholarly work on educational interventions and endeavors of the radical right, especially in relation to the broad topic of gender. This study strives to help fill this research gap by analyzing in depth the educational ambitions of the Korean anti-LGBT movement, including its mediatized efforts, which also constitute channels of teaching and learning.

The now following section shortly recapitulates the Gramsci-inspired insights on journalists, the media, and education, which have already been introduced in chapters 3.4 and 3.5. The analytical section of this chapter then consists of two parts: I will first

investigate attacks against media outlets and educational actors that (are perceived to) positively cover LGBT issues. In the second analytical part, I proceed to the movement's own educational and mediatized activities against homosexuality and transgender topics. A brief conclusion assessing the communicative means of fighting for hegemony finalizes the chapter.

11.1 The roles of (social) media and education for social movements

Education is a key element in Antonio Gramsci's thinking on hegemony. In his view, hegemony can only be achieved when successfully educating the masses. Education should not be a top-down relationship, though, but rather a reciprocal one, in which the educators are also expected to be open to learning from popular knowledge (Gramsci 1971, 349f.; quoted in Borg et al. 2002, 8; Gramsci 1977b, 13). Gramsci has thus an active or activist conceptualization of education (Borg 2002, 6), which, in order to accomplish actual transformation, should not only be directed at pupils and students in educational institutions, but involve everyone irrespective of age and educational background.

Social movement studies have also granted high importance to non-formal, mostly adult education (Kuk & Tarlau 2020; Hall et al. 2006, 6; Freire 1970). A crucial social mechanism related to education is, of course, *learning*, which can affect both individual members of a movement and people outside the movement (Hall et al. 2006, 6; cf. also Hall & Clover 2005). Complex learning in the sense of changing one's beliefs, values, and behavior is a prime goal of the ideological efforts of any social movement (cf. Ayoub 2016, 34). Learning on the individual level is, however, not easily observable. Therefore, this chapter shall focus on the educational efforts of the anti-LGBT movement, analyzing the ways and means that activists use to incite learning processes in their adherents and, so they wish, in the general public as well.

Educating is, whether reciprocal or not, always a communicative process. The communication channels through which learning can take place are diverse. The educator may be an instructor, a lecturer, or an expert who presents their insights at seminars or in other kinds of 'traditional' educational settings. Education in a broader sense can also work through other means such as authored books, televised programs, or blogs and videos on social media. The media play a significant role for the dissemination of movement contents. Gramsci, indeed, argues that journalism can and should be used for political purposes. He pictures such an *integral journalism* as explicitly activist and pedagogical, in a way that it actively modifies and creates the needs and perceptions of the public, while at the same time also building upon existing knowledge and aspirations (Gramsci 1985, 408; Hoare and Sperber 2016, 49).

The concept of 'journalist' should be understood in broad terms here. Gramsci's *organic intellectuals* certainly fall into this category. Accordingly, movement leaders and rank-and-file activists alike appear in the media, but they also cooperate with and make use of media and create their own, 'alternative' media outlets. The traditional mass media play an eminent role in the creation and influence of public discourse (Gamson 2004, 243), but newer information communication technologies have also found increasing usage by social movements in recent decades (Earl 2019). Activists target and use

different media channels depending on the audiences they wish to reach. TV and radio programs, as well as newspapers are conducive for targeting large numbers of people, while self-created ICTs serve to speak to the primary constituencies of a movement (Rohlinger & Corrigan-Brown 2019, 136f.). Each means of communication thus comes with obstacles and benefits. Social media channels are attractive since they are low-cost, and activists keep control over their content production (Earl & Kimport 2011). Traditional media, on the other hand, are less easily accessible due to media bias and the gatekeeping function of journalists (Gamson 2004, 243). It can be expected that activists seek cooperation with media outlets that have a similar ideological orientation to avoid negative media attention, which could turn out detrimental for a movement (Rohlinger & Corrigan-Brown 2019, 139). Finally, the usage or fabrication of charismatic leading figures is an important factor for successful media attention. Movement strategies often include a concentration on a few selected spokespersons in their media representation to promote these individuals as leaders and make the movement more relatable (Gamson 2004, 252f.). This chapter demonstrates that all the aspects just mentioned play a role also in the workings of the Korean anti-LGBT movement.

11.2 Education and media as topics and targets of anti-LGBT activism

Beyond taking action in 'educational' and journalistic contexts themselves, the Korean anti-LGBT movement also tackles the topics of education and media in a twofold manner. On the one hand, activists criticize pro-LGBT policy proposals, regulations, as well as media programs, targeting the *content* that is produced. On the other hand, the movement also attacks the *organizations* behind the production of these contents: local governments, the ministry of education, and media companies. Table 16 provides an overview of the most frequent topics and targets around educational and media issues. The following two sections zoom in on some of the cases given in the table below.

Table 16: Education and media as targets and topics of anti-LGBT protest 2010–2020

Topic/target		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Education area	Seoul Student Human Rights (HR) Ordinance	-	6	8	1	2	-	-	2	-	-	-	19
	School textbooks	-	-	-	6	2	1	1	-	-	3	-	13
	South Kyöngsang Province Student HR Ordinance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	3	-	6
	Seoul National University Human Rights Guidelines	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	1	-	-	5
	Feminist lecture at Handong University	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	4	-	7
	Chongshin University controversy	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	2	5
Media and cultural products	Criticizing films, TV programs, etc.	4	2	3	2	4	2	-	3	2	-	-	22
	Hankyoreh reports (e.g. on Esther Prayer Movement)	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	7	1	-	10
	Journalistic regulations on homosexuality	-	-	-	-	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	4

Notes: This is an excerpt from Table 3 in chapter 6.1, displaying the topics of protest related to education and the media. Only topics/targets with more than 3 protest events are given. The year 2020 only includes data until the end of April.

School textbook controversies, educational policies and educational institutions: evoking dangers for children and young people

Educational policies in the broad sense are among the most prevalent protest topics of the anti-LGBT movement. The *Seoul Student Human Rights Ordinance* has been met with the greatest amount of resistance,² but also other policies and bill proposals of a similar kind have come under fire on the regional and national levels, such as the *South Kyöngsang Province Student Human Rights Ordinance* in 2018 and 2019, the *Seoul Children and Youth Human Rights Ordinance* in 2012, the *North Ch'ungchöng Province Education Rights Charter* in

2 Kim Ol Teun's (2021) PhD dissertation analyzes pro and anti-LGBT discourse coalitions. The *Seoul Student Human Rights Ordinance* is one of his primary case studies. For details on the policy-making process of this ordinance, refer to Kim's thorough study.

2016, and the *Kangwŏn Province Student Human Rights Ordinance* in 2013. In the area of legal codification, it is not only policies and ordinances that the movement finds fault with. Ministerial and governmental regulations and directives also get under attack. Examples include, on several occasions, the Ministry of Education's decision to include information on homosexuality in school textbooks, as well as the *Standard Plan for Sex Education at Schools*, and a plan of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Families to introduce gender education for public servants.

Also beyond the political and governmental arenas, regulations related to LGBT topics in education have come under fire from the anti-LGBT movement. Educational institutions – universities in particular – have been faced with backlash. The prestigious Seoul National University (SNU), for example, set out to introduce *Human Rights Guidelines* in 2016, explicitly including provisions for protection on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity. The *Human Rights Center* of SNU had done preparatory work in the previous years and joined forces with the university's student council to enact the guidelines. In the end, however, the enactment failed owing to pressures from conservative Protestant actors from inside and outside SNU. The *Seoul National University Christian Association* (*Sŏuldaehakkyo kidokkyo ch'ongdongmunhoe*), the *Conference of Christian SNU Professors* (*Sŏuldaehakkyo kidokkyos hyŏnbŭihoe*), and the ad-hoc group *Students' Solidarity Against the SNU Human Rights Guidelines* (*Sŏuldae in'gwŏn kaidŭrain pandae haksaeŋ yŏndae*) in particular fought against human rights protection at SNU, problematizing mainly the inclusion of homosexuality. Yet, other prominent anti-LGBT activists like the leader of *Es-ther Prayer Movement*, Yi Yong-hŭi, also appeared at protest events against the guidelines (Paek, Sang-hyŏn 2016, September 21; Paek, Sang-hyŏn 2016, October 10). The openly lesbian SNU student council president Kim Po-mi, who was elected in 2015, became a particularly favored target of anti-LGBT activists. For instance, on a protest poster, she was accused of being a "dictator", insinuating that the Human Rights Guidelines would lead SNU into a "homosexual dictatorship" (Yu, Yŏng-dae 2016, September 21). As of December 2022, human rights guidelines have not been introduced at SNU, as subsequent attempts to pass an *SNU Human Rights Charter* have been unsuccessful so far, despite ample support among students.³

Universities have become the sites of anti-LGBT occurrences on other occasions as well. Again at Seoul National University in 2016, a banner produced by the queer students' groups QIS (*Queer in SNU*) got destroyed by unknown perpetrators. The banner explicitly welcomed all new students to the campus, regardless of whether they belong to sexual minorities or not. The person(s) who cut the banner into pieces, however, apparently aimed at reversing this welcoming message into its opposite. In his study *When Words Become Knives* (*Mal-I k'al-I teolttae*), Hong Sŏng-su describes how QIS dealt the incident. The students, rather than producing a new banner, used band aid to restore the original, creating a sign of the wounds that those who wish to exclude LGBT people inflict

3 A survey conducted among 5,363 SNU students by the Graduate School of Public Administration of SNU found that 95% of respondents approved of the items of non-discrimination proposed by the projected *SNU Human Rights Charter*, explicitly including the categories of sexual orientation and gender identity (Kang, To-hŭi 2022, December 8).

on them. As a result, QIS and queer students in general received a lot of support and solidarity on campus, eventually reversing the intended effect of anti-LGBT forces (Hong, Söng-su 2018, 219f.).

QIS has kept up the struggle against anti-LGBT occurrences at SNU by protesting against special lectures given by anti-LGBT activists on campus. Among these anti-LGBT events were, for example, a lecture by Yöm An-söp, one of the most industrious anti-LGBT activists in Korea, organized by the *Conference of Christian SNU Professors* (Paek, Sang-hyön 2016, March 30), and a talk by a US 'ex-gay' activist organized by the *Truth Forum*, a group with dependencies at several Korean universities, which got established in opposition to the impeachment of President Park Geun-hye and promotes anti-LGBT policies, the interests of conservative Protestantism, and the alliance of South Korea with the United States (Yu, Yöng-dae 2018, July 11). Several further events with anti-LGBT contents have also taken place at SNU. An SNU professor, with whom I conducted a research interview for this study, stated that it was a clever strategy to hold events at SNU premises, since anti-LGBT forces thus communicate to the public that the most prestigious university of Korea approves the promoted contents. Anti-LGBT activists take advantage of the name of SNU, despite the fact that the actual academic quality of the lectures is highly questionable (Interview 6). As a public and religiously unaffiliated educational institution, using SNU resources renders anti-LGBT positions more reliable, legitimate, and objective, even though the actual support from the overall institution may be rather superficial. In fact, several SNU premises can be rented without much effort also by non-members of SNU. Yet just the fact that the name SNU appears on promotional posters as an event's location endows the movement, in the broad sense, with institutionalized cultural capital insofar as activists can indirectly claim recognition from a renowned educational institution (cf. Bourdieu 1986, 247f.; cf. also Interview 26).

Conflicts around LGBT issues have also entered the campuses of Christian universities. Chapter 12 delves deeper into pro and anti-LGBT endeavors at two Protestant institutions of higher education, Handong University and Changshin University. I will now focus on a case that occurred at the private Yonsei University, another prestigious university in Seoul, which has its origins in missionary activities of US Presbyterians. In 2019, Yonsei University declared that it would introduce mandatory human rights education for all undergraduate students. On 13 August of the same year, the *Alliance of Citizens Loving Yonsei University* (*Yonsedae-rül saranghanün kungmin yönhap*) held a protest and press conference at the front gate of Yonsei campus. I conducted an observation of this event. The KACC dedicated a press release to this protest (KACC 2019, August 14). The participants included several eminent figures of the anti-LGBT movement like Yöm An-söp and Yi Su-jin. After singing the *aegukka*, the South Korean national anthem, they expounded the reasons for their opposition, finding especially fault with two topics of the projected human rights curriculum: gender equality and refugees. Two parents of Yonsei students, one student, a member of parliament, and the leading figures of the anti-LGBT movement took the floor, asserting that the gender education would in fact promote homosexuality, criticizing that this would not fit the Christian foundation of Yonsei University. Kim Hyun Mee (*Kim Hyön-mi*) in particular, a Yonsei professor of Cultural Anthropology specializing on gender studies, was lambasted for her feminist positions, an

alleged hatred against men, and ‘gender ideology’.⁴ The speakers worried that students would be taught un-Christian contents and that Christian attitudes would be marginalized, which one of them referred to as “reverse discrimination”. In this line of thought, the KACC (2019, August 14) noted:

Rather than pushing ahead with such a crooked human rights education, Yonsei University should strengthen its educational system to teach students more deeply about what true Christian spirit and values are. Why do students need education on gender, and included in this, homosexuality, which shows the height of human corruption?

Be it pro-LGBT policies, the discussion of homosexuality in school textbooks, or pro-LGBT endeavors at universities: it becomes clear that anti-LGBT activists frame education or educational settings, in which positive or also just matter-of-fact information on sexual orientations and gender identities are shared, as dangerous for the public in general – and especially for Christians, children, and young people. The latter two groups in particular frequently end up being focused on by the movement. Chapter 7.2 has already established that the reference to the allegedly endangered well-being of children is a common and potentially effective framing strategy of the movement. Invoking concerns about children and young people grants credibility, moral superiority, and attention (Schmincke 2015, 93). I therefore argue that calls for protecting young people represent a common part of anti-LGBT framings, also and especially in the context of education. Many statements from anti-LGBT activists substantiate this assumption.

The head of Esther Prayer Movement, Yi Yong-hŭi, for example, claimed that education on homosexuality had already entered school education without the knowledge and consent of parents, thereby referring to concrete occurrences already mentioned above.

Parents are not aware of it, but children of elementary, middle, and high school students are thoroughly receiving homosexual advocacy education through textbooks and sex culture centers. It is no coincidence that homosexuals are elected as the president of the student council of Seoul National University and that homosexual groups are formed at theological colleges. (Yi, Yong-hŭi, quoted in Paek, Sang-Hyŏn 2016, February 23)

At a theological conference, another prominent anti-LGBT activist, Kil Wŏn-p’yŏng, maintained that general pro-LGBT policies like the Anti-Discrimination Law would also have grave effects on the education of children.

The bigger problem with the law against discrimination of homosexuals is its impact on education for the next generation. [...] It is problematic that one would no longer be able to include the view that homosexuality is abnormal, unethical, and sinful into educational goals, educational contents, and living guidance standards. [...] This would

4 For the sake of objectivity, I hereby disclose that Professor Kim Hyun Mee served as my mentor during my field work as an affiliated guest researcher at Yonsei University from March until August 2019.

lead to a serious distortion of the perception of homosexuality in the next generation. (Kil, Wŏn-p'yŏng, quoted in Ch'oe, Ki-yŏng 2016, March 9)

Activists also attempt to invoke concrete fears that children may be harmed when learning about homosexuality, also by constructing far-fetched linkages between phenomena that are not necessarily related to each other, as the following quote from activists Kim Chi-yŏn at a meeting of the *Heresy Task Force of the Korean Churches* shows.

The school teaches homosexuality as human rights, and treats moral values as old-fashioned relics, calling it sexual orientation, sexual self-determination, and third sex. According to statistics, about 15 percent of runaway boys are *alba* having sex with homosexuals for money. (Kim, Chi-yŏn, quoted in Paek, Sang-hyŏn 2016, May 15)

'*Alba*' is the Korean term for part-time jobs. Kim Chi-yŏn thus suggests in her statement that teaching positively about homosexuality might lead children to go astray and get involved in sex work. Besides such starkly fearmongering assertions concerning the well-being of children, another alleged, yet more diffuse dangers also get invoked. Despite the fact that the projected revision of the *Gender Equality Ordinance* of Kyŏnggi Province in 2020 did not include any reference to homosexuality or trans people – or to related educational contents, for that matter – parent activist Ok Kwang-jŏng insinuated that the passing of the amendment would imply grave consequences for children. "If gender education is carried out according to the Gender Equality Ordinance in Gyeonggi Province, kindergartens, elementary, middle and high schools would have to teach homosexuality and transgender people as normal and recognize dozens of third sexes." She adds that "if this happens, homosexuals and transgender people would also work as teachers or employees in daycare centers and schools" (Ok, Kwang-jŏng, quoted in Paek, Sang-hyŏn 2020, April 3).

Homosexuality and related topics are presented as threats on basically every level and in all areas of education. All institutions, starting from kindergartens until universities, the movement claims, are affected by pro-LGBT education. The underlying fear that activists wish to create is that of a 'sexualization' of children and youth, meaning that teaching and learning about sexual minorities might make kids homosexual or trans. This has been disproven by serious research (cf. e.g., Briken et al. 2019), but the movement tries to spread 'alternative facts' by vociferously claiming the opposite – also through referring to allegedly scientific research (cf. chapter 8.3). The framing strategy of combining educational 'threats' with the focus group of children and young people seems to be regarded as effective to the extent that a vast range of policies, educational curricula, and institutions gets connected to this topic. In this 'logic', a broadly conceived bill like the Anti-Discrimination Law, which, essentially, does not have an educational component, would also ultimately and centrally harm the youth.

Another aspect of education is of course the Gramscian perspective. If we assume that the Korean anti-LGBT movement follows a Gramsci-inspired strategy of reaching cultural hegemony, for which this study has demonstrated much evidence, then we should also expect them to counteract similarly oriented activities on the side of the opponents. Since education plays an eminent role in Gramsci's 'war of position' strategy,

delegitimizing the opponents' educational efforts can be regarded as a key task as well – even though such strategies may include nonfactual claims and consciously launched attacks against selected, unrelated policies and institutional settings. Similar strategies of delegitimization and blaming can also be observed in the area of media and cultural production, as the next section will illustrate.

Attacking the media and cultural production for covering LGBT themes

A particular point of contention for the anti-LGBT movement in the area of media is the *Human Rights Reporting Rules* of the *Journalists Association of Korea* (*Han'gukkiyahyŏphoe*). Passed in September 2011 with the support of the *National Human Rights Commission of Korea* (NHRCK), these rules specify in article 8 that media coverage should not present sexual minorities as wrong or corrupt, that hateful speech should be avoided, and that sexual minorities should not be linked to mental illness and other social pathologies such as HIV/AIDS (Journalists Association of Korea 2022). Anti-LGBT activists blame these rules for what they regard as a biased, that is, *positive* media coverage on LGBT topics. At many protest events, activists especially attack the NHRCK, a common target of anti-LGBT activism, which they claim is mainly to be held accountable for “dictatorial” press control as the following KACC statement suggests.

The current NHRCK has strong powers. For example, in September 2011, the Journalists Association of Korea issued the ‘Human Rights Reporting Rules’, which contain provisions that block honest reports on sexual minorities (homosexuality). Because of this, most of the media in Korea are doing things like ‘press control’ like it is common in a dictatorship, so that they cannot approach and report about the problems of homosexuality in Korea and social problems caused by it. (KACC 2015, July 9)

Another press statement accompanying a protest event against the NHRCK claims that, as a result of the Human Rights Reporting Rules, “no media in our country are properly reporting on the misery and evils of homosexuals” (quoted in Yu, Yŏng-dae 2016, June 23). At yet another protest directed directly against the NHRCK and the Journalists Association of Korea, an activist from the *Real Love School Parents’ Alliance* (*Ch’amsaranghakhpumoyŏnhap*) argued that the reporting rules “cover the eyes and ears of people”, adding that “as a result of these policies that make people more ignorant, AIDS is spreading rapidly among teenagers” (An, Ch’ŏn-il, quoted in Paek, Sang-hyŏn 2016, August 3).

Based upon the claim that an allegedly biased coverage on homosexuality would harm people (especially the youth) and that the freedom of press was in danger, the anti-LGBT movement not only attacks the NHRCK and the Journalists Association, but also other media companies. Media houses with wide coverage in particular often come under fire when reporting, in the eyes of anti-LGBT activists, ‘all too positively’ about homosexuality and transgender topics. In September 2012, for example, anti-LGBT groups protested in front of the public KBS (*Korean Broadcasting System*) subsidiary *KBS Joy* against the projected airing of a program on trans people. Activists called it a “shameful transgender talk show”, demanding KBS “not to raise its ratings with sen-

sational and provocative material while turning a blind eye to the national sentiment”, and announcing a “one million signatures movement” against the TV station (quoted in Yu, Yöng-dae 2012, September 2). The program ‘That XY Woman’ (*XY künnyö*) was in fact cancelled shortly afterwards owing to the massive opposition from Protestant groups, which had formed the ad-hoc *National Alliance against KBS which Instigates Transgender and Transsexuals*, comprising a total of 237 SMOs. One representative of the alliance demanded that “such programs should be completely abolished because they can especially affect children and confuse gender identity” (quoted in Yu, Yöng-dae 2012, September 13).

TV stations have been attacked on numerous other occasions as well. In 2014, MBC (*Munhwa Broadcasting Corporation*) came under fire for airing the historical drama ‘The Diary of Hyöng Yöng-dang’ (*Hyöng Yöng-dang ilgi*), lambasting a homosexual storyline and criticizing the appearance of handsome male actors (“*kkotminam*”) who might influence the imagination of young people (Yu, Yöng-dae 2014, October 1). Anti-LGBT activists often raise the fear that the gender and sexual identities of children and adolescents are not yet fixed, so that movies and TV series could lead them to ‘become’ homosexual. A KACC press statement in 2011 focused on the alleged dangers of the gay-themed movie ‘Just Friends?’ (*Ch’in’gu sai?*), even increasing the threat through indirectly comparing homosexuality to cases of sexual violence:

The problem of homosexuality has a huge impact on young people. This film is an artwork that does not interest the older generation. However, it is a topic that young people are interested in and show curiosity for. This is the period when gender identity is less established. Therefore, there is a high possibility of imitation. In 2008, there was an incident in the Taegu area in which elementary school students imitated sexual violence that they saw on cable TV. (KACC 2011, April 21)

A lesbian-themed drama, ‘Sönam Girls High School Detectives’ (*Sönam’yögo t’amjöngdan*) produced by the private TV station JTBC (*Joongang Tongyang Broadcasting Company*) was also met with fierce resistance from anti-LGBT groups for depicting the first lesbian kiss on Korean TV. The groups handed over 30,000 signatures to JTBC, criticizing the “support and promotion of homosexuality among female students” (quoted in Yu, Yöng-dae 2015, March 3). In June 2017, ‘ex-gay’ groups and other anti-LGBT SMOs criticized an MBC program on the human rights of sexual minorities for failing to also include an ‘ex-gay’ perspective (Yu, Yöng-dae 2017, June 5). A special broadcast by EBS (*Educational Broadcasting System*) in December 2017, in which homosexual, bisexual, and trans students spoke about their experiences, was also met with protest by anti-LGBT activists who blamed the TV station for advocating homosexuality and radical feminism. The activists used violence against objects, throwing eggs and flour onto the EBS company sign, and tried to occupy the lobby of the broadcasting service, demanding EBS’s CEO Chang Hae-ran to resign (Paek, Sang-hyön 2018, January 10).

The cases just presented give an overview of the action forms and frames used against the televised coverage of LGBT themes irrespective of whether they take the form of artworks such as series or films, or a more documentary or informative style. The alleged threat to children and youth gets invoked here as well, and also the educational ‘mission’

of TV stations is emphasized in many statements. It is noteworthy, however, that over the years, TV stations seem to have become less amenable to anti-LGBT groups' demands. Except for the KBS program on transsexuality in 2012, broadcasting services have predominantly remained steadfast in the face of attempts to restrict their press freedom. This shows that the very arguments on the freedoms of press and of expression, which anti-LGBT very much like to point out to their opponents, can also be turned against them. As I shall demonstrate later in this chapter, in fact, nobody hinders anti-LGBT activists from exercising their freedom of press, a freedom that they, I argue, interpret in narrow terms in order to spread their own worldviews and impede others from getting public attention.

Media formats other than TV and movie productions also often get attacked by anti-LGBT actors. This is especially the case when the activists themselves or the Protestant Right at large draw criticism due to their actions, which shows that they are very much aware of the negative effects that unfavorable media coverage can have on them. In this context, both social media companies, as well as progressive traditional media have become targets of protest. In May 2016, for instance, anti-LGBT SMOs criticized Facebook for deleting a post by the group *People's Solidarity for a Healthy Society* on what they claim was "sound" criticism against homosexuality, reproaching Facebook of seriously violating the freedom of expression and "manipulating public opinion in a biased manner" (quoted in Paek, Sang-hyön 2016, May 16). The influential Korean portal website Naver was confronted with similar complaints, after it had deleted an online comic ('webtoon') from a Christian blog. The comic dealt with the alleged problems in the way school textbooks treat homosexuality. The KACC decried Naver's course of actions as "defaming Christianity" and criticized that "such a large Internet company shuts its eyes and ears in face of actions deprecating and dishonoring certain religions, but shows a supportive attitude towards homosexuality, which has unethical, immoral, and anti-social tendencies" (KACC 2013, July 6).

Such self-victimization frames are commonly used by anti-LGBT activists to divert attention away from accusations of misconduct brought against them (cf. chapter 7.3). This strategy also became apparent when the progressive daily newspaper *Hankyoreh* published an investigative report about the spreading of wrong or misleading information by conservative Protestant groups. The piece particularly referred to *Esther Prayer Movement* as a "fake news factory" fueling hatred against homosexuals and refugees" (Pak, Chun-yong 2018, September 27). *Esther Prayer Movement* retaliated by releasing a detailed press statement in which they provided sources for the information that *Hankyoreh* had pointed out as 'fake news'. Yet mostly, they denounced *Hankyoreh* for allegedly suppressing the freedoms of faith, conscience, and expression, and arguing that this was "an attempt to obliterate Christian forces who oppose the legislation of homosexuality" (quoted in Paek, Sang-hyön 2018, September 28). This counterattack was accompanied by the formation of an alliance catering specifically to this case, the *Meeting of the Victims of the Hankyoreh Fake News* (*Hankyore sinmun kajjanyusú p'ihaeja moim*), which accused the newspaper of using the "fake news frame" as a "dictatorial" means to suppress opposing opinions and "truths" (Paek, Sang-hyön 2018, October 10). Several of these self-declared victim groups filed a lawsuit against *Hankyoreh* on the charge of damage of honor, but lost in court (Kim, Min-je 2020, February 19).

Anti-LGBT actors react sensitively when their reputation gets tarnished and when their actual strategies get revealed, especially when this is done by actors with opposing political positions. The large public attention that media such as Hankyoreh are capable of producing is particularly problematic for the movement, which may explain their harsh reactions, including legal action to clear their name of a bad image and rather transfer similarly oriented vilifications to the opponent, where the accusations had originated. This is true for media actors external to Protestantism. But also within Korean Christianity, journalists have set out to expose and debunk the hostile communication strategies of the anti-LGBT movement. The case of the progressive Christian online newspaper *Newsnjoy* will be treated in detail in chapter 12. In the face of such adversity from established media and in the area of formal education, it does not come as a surprise that the movement has been striving to create their own media outlets and ‘educational’ formats, over which they can exert control. The next subchapter details these ‘educational’ and journalistic efforts of anti-LGBT activists.

11.3 Communicating anti-LGBT contents: the movement’s ‘educational’ programs and media activities

‘Education’ as a main action form of the movement

The ‘Christian Academy for Countermeasures against Homosexuality’ at the *Hapdong Theological Seminary* in the city of Suwŏn on 18 March 2019 provided a diverse program for the participants.⁵ The event started off with music,⁶ a Bible reading, and a common prayer, in which the moderator pleaded with God “to save this country”. This way, the religious and patriotic character of the ‘academy’ was set. The patriotic nature of the event was underscored by the collective singing of the Korean national anthem in between lectures. As the label ‘academy’ suggests, however, the lectures given by prominent anti-LGBT activists represented the most important items on the agenda. The pharmacist Kim Chi-yŏn talked about “the global sexual revolution and the sexualization of children”, the lawyer Cho Yŏng-gil concentrated on “the Anti-Discrimination Law and homosexual dictatorship”, Reverend Kim Yŏng-gil from the anti-LGBT *Just Military*

5 I was present at this event myself, conducting a participant observation. For the sake of objectivity, I hereby disclose that as a non-Korean, it was not easy to ‘just’ observe the event. In fact, despite sitting in a back row and attempting to remain low-key, I was especially welcomed by the moderator who, without asking, apparently assumed I was a supporter of the anti-LGBT cause. Another participant later during the event approached me to ask whether I was available for an interview with a journalist, which I kindly declined.

6 More specifically, it was a piano version of ‘By good forces’ (*Von guten Mächten*), a famous poem written by the German Protestant theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer who was an opponent of the Nazi regime and got killed in a concentration camp on 9 April 1945. While ‘good forces’ may be a fitting self-description in the eyes of anti-LGBT forces, it is highly doubtful that Bonhoeffer would have approved of the exclusionary and discriminatory behavior of the Korean Protestant Right – demeanor and ideologies against which Bonhoeffer fought as a founding member of the anti-Nazi Protestant movement *Confessing Church* (*Bekennende Kirche*).

Human Right Institute focused on the “human rights frame” used by pro-LGBT forces, and the law professor Yi Chŏng-hun argued for the political engagement of churches in politics to safeguard the constitution and Christianity against oppression, gender ideology, and political correctness (cf. also Paek, Sang-hyŏn 2019, March 12). The moderator highlighted the academic credentials of the speakers (Cho and Yi, for example, have a degree from Seoul National University) and praised the speakers’ expertise in the field of ‘countermeasures against homosexuality’. Besides presenting their ‘expertise’, the lecturers also larded their talks with spontaneous prayers and fervent outbursts of emotion – giving the event, again, an evangelical and revivalist touch very much welcomed and replicated by the audience.

I am expounding the details of this ‘academy’ at length since these kinds of events are a common feature of Protestant anti-LGBT activism in Korea. The PEA dataset counts 119 ‘educational’ events from 2000 until April 2020. The conveyance of anti-LGBT and related contents in nonformal ‘educational’ settings forms the centerpiece of these events, be they called ‘academy’, ‘academic forum’, ‘seminar’, ‘colloquium’, ‘discussion’, or ‘lecture event’. These designations grant such events academic weight and an objective or neutral semblance, and in fact, many of the speakers are university professors. At the same time, the events keep a clearly ‘Christian’ nature in most cases, be it concerning the locations (churches, theological seminaries, Christian universities), regarding the oft-cited Christian foundations of the alleged necessity to counteract LGBT rights, as well as the audience, which presumably consists of the faithful for the most part. Such forums or seminars are thus mainly directed internally to train devoted and loyal church members so that they also get active against homosexuality. Many of these events have also been recorded on video and are accessible on websites such as YouTube to create greater public attention.

Many important anti-LGBT activists give lectures at such events. Kim Chi-yŏn is especially active in this ‘educational’ branch of the movement. She is part of the inner leadership circle, representing two SMOs, the *Parents’ Alliance for Building the Next Generation* and the *Korean Association of Family and Health* (cf. chapter 10.4). As of 2018, she claimed having given already more than 2000 lectures with anti-LGBT content (Chang, Myŏng-sŏng 2018, December 18). At the above mentioned ‘academy’, Kim Chi-yŏn covered a wide array of topics, claiming that public education conveyed wrong and biased information on homosexuality, that children got sexualized and endangered early on by such a kind of sexual education, which ignores the alleged connection between homosexuality and AIDS, that male homosexuality was not innate, that one could not call everything that was, according to Kim, obscene and lewd, love, and that one should strive for sanctification (*sŏnghwa*) rather than sexualization (*sŏngaehwa*) – to name only some of the aspects mentioned. After getting emotional and shedding some tears, saying that it was all about the children, she maintained in a closing prayer and final statement that Korea was in a “spiritual war” (*yŏngjŏk chŏnjaeng*) and that Korea must not end like Europe. Kim directly addressed the audience, asking them to not surrender and to incessantly spread anti-LGBT messages through the Internet. Following her lecture, she stayed a bit longer at the venue to promote and sell a book she published on the ‘truths’ about homosexuality that are purportedly being covered up (Kim, Chi-yŏn 2019).

The ‘academy’ in March 2019 gave a general overview on anti-LGBT topics and arguments, but the movement also hosted ‘educational’ events with thematic foci. Indeed, the movement proved to be capable of quickly reacting to new situations and summoning up venues and speakers to treat the respective topics of interest – also on the local and regional levels, not only in Seoul and its surroundings. This was, for example, the case when churches in the city of Taegu organized a seminar against the local Queer Culture Festival on 28 May 2014 or when anti-LGBT groups hosted a forum on 14 December 2017 against the new terminology in relation to ‘gender equality’⁷ proposed by the Ministry of Women and Family.⁸ Forums were also held in reaction to decisions that the movement welcomed in order to emphasize that their lines of argument kept the upper hand, for instance, on 29 August 2016, when the Constitutional Court declared the anti-gay article 92–6 of the *Military Criminal Law* constitutional. On other occasions, however, the title of an event like ‘Emergency Seminar on Countermeasures against Homosexuality’ organized by the Presbyterian *Kosin* denomination on 15 June 2015 did suggest a sense of immediacy and urgency, but rather rhetorically, urging churches and attendees to get active against LGBT rights, and not so much concerning a concrete burning issue.

Despite having a concrete thematic focus, a broad repertoire of arguments and frames is commonly used at all kinds of ‘educational’ events. As shown in chapters 7 and 8, combining and juxtaposing different frames is often done by anti-LGBT activists. Fearmongering, medicalization, ‘othering’, nationalism, and legal approaches, as well as Christian self-efficacy or self-aggrandizement and other frames have been adapted to many contentious cases and circumstances. This becomes obvious also in the creative recombination of topics of educational events: While most of them focused, as already mentioned, on homosexuality in general or on *one* related topic such as the Anti-Discrimination Law, the NHRCK Act, or AIDS, organizers also combined several diverse topics in one seminar or forum. On 7 July 2015, the *Christian Future Research Institute* arranged a seminar on ‘Unified Korea and Homosexuality’. The Presbyterian *Hapdong* denomination held a seminar on 23 February 2016 on the problems of halal food and homosexuality, and the ‘We Korea 2020 Forum’ on 11 February 2020 concentrated on the fight against the Anti-Discrimination Law, abortion, and alcohol addiction. While seemingly unconnected at first sight, these topics capture well many of the topics and attitudes that the Protestant Right has been promoting for the past decades: anti-Muslim sentiments, fear of North Korea, ‘pro-life’ efforts, and hostility against sexual minorities (cf. Kim, Nami 2016). Apparently, the intermixing usage and combination of these topics make sense within the ideological spectrum of conservative Protestantism in Korea.

The movement also offers educational events with an explicitly religious focus, such as a seminar on homosexuality from a theological perspective (22 September 2015), and a seminar dealing with the “heretical character of queer theology” organized by ‘ex-gay’ groups (20 November 2015). Some events had special target groups such as a seminar on countermeasures against homosexuality attended by 150 pastors (24 September 2015),

7 Refer to chapter 8.3 and footnote 2 in chapter 6.1 for details on this contentious definitional issue.

8 I refrain from providing references for all the events mentioned in this section. Details on the involved groups, the frames used, etc. at these protest events can be accessed in the PEA dataset.

the 'Kukmin Daily Christian Women's Forum' on the topic of "Stop Homosexuality! Christian Women in Korea, Wake Up!" (28 April 2016), and a seminar on the dangers of homosexuality directed at Christian teachers (10 August 2016). These latter cases are examples of explicitly training people that presumably already show a high level of involvement in Protestant churches. This strategy of educating potential educators or, in other words, disseminators and mediators, appears to be a key goal of these educational meetings. While most of the events are free of charge, some do have an entrance fee. The motivation to participate and receive education in the these events can be assumed to be quite high, considering that people are willing to pay for it.

Broadening the support and activist basis by means of 'educational' efforts is not only done domestically, but also abroad. On 16 September 2019, for instance, Kim Chi-yŏn gave a seminar on Biblical values and homosexuality in Sweden. While this is an example of the transnational connections of the Korean anti-LGBT movement, basically, the event kept an intra-Korean nature since it was held at a *hanin* church, that is, a church attended by Koreans living abroad.

A recurring type of educational or informational events are the 'Ex-Gay Human Rights Forums'. Being both a series of events and a group sustained by ex-gay SMOs like *Holy Life*, these forums were first arranged in 2014 and have seen 12 editions until 2019. Just like the rest of the 'educational events they also include lectures, but the key element of these events are personal testimonies given by self-declared 'ex-gay' people from Korea and from other countries worldwide. They share their life stories, their sufferings as homosexual or trans people, to then relate their 'conversion', both in the religious sense and in the sense that they claim being gay (or lesbian, or trans, etc.) no more. These typically emotional testimonies may be regarded as a special feature of 'ex-gay' events, but when looking closer at other 'educational' events, they exist there as well. The shedding of tears and emotional outbursts have already been mentioned. In addition to this, activists like Kim Chi-yŏn commonly also share personal information, particularly on parenthood and personal and professional experiences. The next section will further detail the 'self-dramatization' or 'self-staging' of central figures of the anti-LGBT movement. For now, suffice it to say that such testimonies have the potential of making anti-LGBT causes more relatable and convincing for audiences, who may be moved by what they have heard – both in the literal and metaphorical senses: being touched and thus motivated to 'move' from inactivity towards activism within the movement in one or another capacity.

Other action forms of the anti-LGBT movement, particularly rallies and press conferences also feature personal statements and attempts to convey a special kind of anti-LGBT 'knowledge'. However, the difference to the educational events of the movement is that the latter openly flaunt their alleged educational quality. As already mentioned, this is done through labeling the events as 'academies', 'seminars', etc., and by inviting 'experts' for extensive talks. Among these experts are also university professors who provide educational capital to the movement. But the contents that they portray as academic knowledge are in fact often inaccurate and biased (cf. chapter 8.3). The 'educational' character of these events may also aim at 'neutralizing' anti-LGBT actions in the sense that activists can claim outwardly that they have the neutral objective of disseminating 'true' and 'proper' knowledge. As the close analysis of these educational events

reveals, however, they are always political, promoting an agenda that is clearly hostile towards sexual minorities.⁹ Antonio Gramsci's activist conception of education points to exactly this finding, namely, that education is always political and that, actually, activism needs to include educative elements in order to be effective (cf. Fontana 2002, 32).¹⁰ In a research interview conducted for this study, an anti-LGBT activist pointed out that education was the most important action form of the movement. The interviewee elaborated that in their perspective, only when actively listening to lectures and when learning by heart contents that have often been repeated, activism can be successful. According to the interviewee, lecture events are also crucial for forming new speakers and activists. The interviewee claimed that the movement aimed at educating Christians first so that the rest of South Korea would change as a result (Interview 7).

Informing and educating about anti-LGBT topics is not confined to educational events only, though. In fact, several of the key social movement organizations provide plenty learning material on their websites. For example, the *Korean Sexology Research Association* (*Han'guk sŏnggwahak yŏn'gu hyŏphoe*), an SMO that promotes anti-LGBT positions under the guise of scientificity (Baek 2018), provides a well-organized online "reference library" (*charyosil*) including texts on different aspects of homosexuality such as definitions, statistics, allegedly scientific insights on whether it is a phenomenon based on genetics, and on the alleged possibility of 'healing' it. Further materials include topics such as sexual education, gender ideology, feminism, transgender, and many other subjects. In many cases, informational and 'educational' videos are part of the materials, demonstrating that the movement uses diverse media types to communicate its contents (cf. also the next part of this chapter) (Korean Sexology Research Association n.d.). Other anti-LGBT SMOs like *Tongbanyŏn* and the *People's Solidarity for a Healthy Society* (PSHS) provide similar online collections of materials, including information on several pro-LGBT legislative issues.¹¹ These latter websites often feature links to other anti-LGBT-themed websites that offer anti-LGBT information and learning materials, showing that diverse anti-LGBT actors closely cooperate also in the area of 'education'.¹²

The question remains whether the educational efforts of the movement have in fact been successful. While further research, for example in the form of conducting a survey among the participants of the events, would be needed to confidently draw conclusions concerning this question (and also on the assumption of identity shift which may come along with educational activities, cf. chapter 7.3), some tentative assumptions can be made based upon the existing research data. One can suppose that the main goal of

9 A common venue of anti-LGBT 'educational' events, rooms at the National Assembly, also bespeak their immanently political nature. Lectures held at these premises are often preceded by welcome addresses held by members of parliament, whose approval and invitation is needed to use these rooms in the first place. Explicitly political messages, especially concerning concrete law proposals, are commonplace at such gatherings.

10 This part of Gramscian thought has also led me – besides the empirical reality found in the field – to include 'educational events' into the list of items of action forms in the protest event analysis.

11 Printouts of informational material and of collections of the lectures given are also often provided at the 'educational' events of the movement.

12 The respective websites are the following. People's Solidarity for a Healthy society: <http://www.pshs.kr/homo>. Tongbanyŏn: <http://nahs.kr/85>.

the educational efforts of the movement is to enable the *learning* of anti-LGBT positions. In the perspective of anti-LGBT activists, learning ideally affects both outsiders and insiders of the Protestant Right. As I have demonstrated, however, the educational events are mostly directed at a Christian audience. While restricting the potential reach of their efforts, the strategy of especially addressing conservative Protestants in Protestant environments (both socially and in terms of the venue) may also prove successful. One can assume that learning is particularly effective in settings made up of like-minded participants. When experiencing or assuming that a collective of believers is convinced by the contents and sentiments presented and that one is not alone, accepting the common mission passed on to them becomes more probable. This is especially the case when the participants get the impression that they do something good for the church and for the country, as they are indefatigably told by the lecturers.

Complex learning in the sense of fundamentally changing one's values and beliefs may not even be necessary in this context since most participants can be expected to share similar values and beliefs from the outset. The speakers and organizers can build upon the ideological foundation of the Korean Protestant Right, which has been established over the past decades. In general, the relationship between educators and educated can be described as rather hierarchical, but one cannot say that the educators are unreceptive for the needs and learning environments of their 'students'. They strategically create links to elements of their audience's presumably conservative, and preexistent Protestant *common sense* – reflecting at least indirectly the Gramscian conceptualization of reciprocal educational relationships (Gramsci 1971, 349f.; quoted in Borg et al. 2002, 8). Dynamic continuity is thus also present in the explicitly educational framing efforts of the movement. Hearing and potentially internalizing the anti-LGBT contents promoted by anti-LGBT actors is the new, dynamic part of the learning process. This learning process may also be enhanced when the lecturers promote the image that the participants learn something special, which makes them stand out amid the religious and socio-political actors in Korea. The Gramscian idea of raising the intellectual levels of people so that they become aware of their own activist potential and turn into educators themselves (cf. Hoare & Sperber 2016, 39) may play into this, even though the actual content may in fact be incorrect or inaccurate. I argue that it not so much about the quality or accuracy of the 'curriculum' that influences learning in the context of social movements. Rather, it is the emphasis on significance and agency that draws people into a movement. The combination of anti-LGBT 'educational' contents with appeals to duty and protective behavior is often done at educational events, which suggests that activists regard such an educational program as particularly effective (cf. also chapter 7.3). Taking part in such 'educational' events makes people believe that they belong to a 'knowledge elite', that they are ideologically and morally ahead of other parts of society.

In summary, four main insights can be drawn from the analysis of the educational efforts of the anti-LGBT movement. First, 'education' plays a significant role within the repertoire of action forms. Second, the formats and contents of the 'educational' events are mainly directed at conservative-minded Protestants, thus catering a clientele that activists could assume sympathetic to their agenda from the outset. Third, lectures attempt to appeal to these particular audiences by combining the 'new' aspects of anti-LGBT politics with established behavioral and thought patterns of the Protestant Right,

especially in terms of encouraging participants to get active out of a sense of self-efficacy and special duty. Fourth, the pretension of objectivity and academic quality, coupled with personal and emotionalized statements increases the trustworthiness and authenticity of the contents presented, and ultimately, the likelihood of successful and effective learning.

Implicitly, of course, almost all actions of the anti-LGBT movement can be regarded as having 'educational' elements and goals, in the sense that activists strive to change the worldviews of people in order to eventually reach hegemony. The now following section details how journalistic activities and cultural production, accomplished by activists themselves, feed into this hegemonic project.

Mission-conscious organic journalists: using traditional and social media for anti-LGBT 'proselytization'

Anti-LGBT activists in Korea do not only act as educators as just illustrated, but also as journalists in the broad sense as I will now demonstrate. I argue that they serve as *organic journalists* in the Gramscian sense, which means that they actively use communicative and, especially, journalistic means for their activist purposes. This happens in three main ways: first, activists cooperate with, or work within traditional media to disseminate anti-LGBT content. Kukmin Daily is the one of the main media partners in this respect, through favorable reports about the movement, but also by granting some of the central activists the possibility of writing columns themselves. Second, many of the activists write books with anti-LGBT content, or support the publication of books written by foreign anti-LGBT actors. Finally, besides using traditional media, activists also create their own social media channels on YouTube or other platforms, which allows them to exert greater control over the contents produced.

Kukmin Daily as the anti-LGBT movement's main mouthpiece

Kukmin Daily is the central source of empirical data for this study. This conservative newspaper with a Protestant foundation has published over 4000 articles treating homosexuality in one or the other way from 1990 to 2020. Since the mid-2000s, its coverage on LGBT topics has been overwhelmingly negative (cf. chapter 5). The reports do not only include summaries of anti-LGBT protest events and occurrences, but also opinion pieces and renderings of press statements released by organizations with an anti-LGBT orientation. Kukmin Daily itself has produced a total of 34 editorials from 2003–2020, which clearly show the newspaper's overall hostile positioning against LGBT rights. The largest share of articles with anti-LGBT content is written by just two journalists: Yu Yŏng-dae closely reported on the topic in the period from 2010 until 2017, and Paek Sang-hyŏn has been intensively covering anti-LGBT themes since 2015.¹³ Consequently, it can be assumed that these journalists have been maintaining particular close relations with

13 The importance of these two journalists also becomes obvious when taking a look at the primary sources of this study. More than half of the primary sources quoted have been written by Yu Yŏng-dae and Paek Sang-hyŏn.

the anti-LGBT movement. In fact, I argue that they are an active and crucial part of the movement, guaranteeing the reporting on anti-LGBT topics in an established newspaper with print and online presence. Paek Sang-hyŏn is not only a reporter favorable of the movement, he is also a ‘traditional’ activist himself. He participates in anti-LGBT events, for example, by giving talks about what he claims is the ‘truth’ about homosexuality (cf. chapter 10.4). He is also the author of two books with anti-LGBT contents (Paek, Sang-hyŏn 2017; 2015). The importance of the Kukmin Daily journalist Paek Sang-hyŏn was also highlighted in one of the research interviews conducted for this study (Interview 8).

The close relationship between Kukmin Daily and the leadership of the anti-LGBT movement also becomes apparent when considering the manifold columns that the latter contribute to the newspaper. Table 17 gives an overview of the Kukmin Daily columns with anti-LGBT content.¹⁴

Table 17: Kukmin Daily columns written by anti-LGBT activists

Column title	Author(s)	N of columns on LGBT topics (out of total, where applicable)	Period
<i>“So Kang-sŏk’s flower seed column”</i>	So Kang-sŏk	13 (30)	2015.04 – 2016.05
<i>“Sound of Zion”</i>	So Kang-sŏk	15 (45 by So Kang-sŏk; in total 802 by diverse contributors)	2017.03 – 2020.08
<i>“Telling the truth about gender ideology”</i>	Cho Yŏng-gil, Min Sŏng-gil, Kim Chi-yŏn, Kil Wŏn-p’yŏng, and others	23	2019.10 – 2020.03
<i>“God’s righteous army fighting against homosexuality”</i>	Yŏm An-sŏp	41	2019.10 – 2020.08
<i>“The church’s evangelical response to the anti-discrimination law”</i>	Cho Yŏng-gil	19	2020.08 – 2021.01
<i>“Homosexuality is not genetic”</i>	Kil Wŏn-p’yŏng	20	2021.01 – 2021.05
<i>“Getting to know correct knowledge on gender issues”</i>	Min Sŏng-gil	10	2021.06 – 2021.10

While all columns have the common theme of opposing homosexuality and related topics, each one also has its special features. The contributions by the university professor Kil Wŏn-p’yŏng in the year 2021, for instance, give the impression of imparting scientific

14 Anti-LGBT activists have written columns for other media as well. Pastor Chu Yo-sep, for example, contributed the ‘Chu Yo-sep column’ to the online newspaper *Christian Today*, counting 11 opinion pieces explicitly directed against LGBT rights published in 2015 and 2016 (cf. e.g., Chu Yo-sep 2016, February 21).

knowledge on homosexuality. The column written by the lawyer Cho Yŏng-gil combines a focus on legal arguments against pro-LGBT laws with a general perspective on how LGBT rights are, allegedly, part of a larger ideological project directed at oppressing churches. He also gives recommendations on how to concretely fight against such developments. In the last edition of his column, for example, he praises educational programs like the 'Christian Academy for Countermeasures against Homosexuality' as "a good pathway helping to arm oneself correctly against homosexuality" (Cho, Yŏng-gil 2021, January 1). The second crucial task for Christians that he promotes besides 'learning' is to "persuade, and pray for the rulers of the nation" (ibid.), thus taking a clearly political perspective. In the same text, however, he attempts to conceal the political character of anti-LGBT struggles when claiming that

the anti-homosexuality movement is not based on the ideology of left and right, progressivism and conservatism, which were created by humans. It is a war between the gospel and the anti-gospel, the Bible and the anti-Bible. The Korean churches should transcend ideological and regional factions within the gospel against homosexuality. We must pray with all our might so that we can unite as one. (Cho, Yŏng-gil 2021, January 1)

The focus on the alleged sufferings of churches and the appeals to the responsibility of church members are present in many of the other columns as well. They appear in columns which highlight the necessary fight of churches against the phenomenon that anti-LGBT activists call 'gender ideology', as is the case in the contributions written by several authors under the title 'Telling the truth about gender ideology' or in the column by the former university professor Min Sŏng-gil. Pastor So Kang-sŏk in particular offers reflections that touch upon basic religious and political questions of interest for Korean churches. Very much like Cho Yŏng-gil in the above quote, he often calls for the unity of church actors and tries to overcome rifts that also run through the Protestant anti-LGBT camp, for example, on how exactly to counter the *Seoul Queer Culture Festival* (e.g., So, Kang-sŏk 2019, July 3; cf. esp. chapter 12). The head pastor of the *New Eden* megachurch writes his columns in the style of a wise spiritual leader who claims to have the greater good in mind when pondering difficult questions. Yet, he consistently comes to the same conclusions, that is, that the fight against homosexuality and LGBT rights in general must be vigorously fought and that the political involvement of Korean Protestantism is appropriate and necessary, despite criticism from within and from without. After the repeated loss of Protestant political parties in the 2016 general elections, for instance, Pastor So asserts that the establishment of a political party and political representation were not the primary aim of churches, but that "the goal of Korean churches is to eliminate toxic clauses on homosexuality, Islam and other aspects in the anti-discrimination law" (So, Kang-sŏk 2016, April 27). In contrast to other leading figures of Protestantism who pointed out the potential harm caused by disregarding the separation of state and churches, So Kang-sŏk argues that a Christian political party is necessary if the established parties fail to prevent pro-LGBT legislation (ibid.). He makes homosexuality an issue that should be a common concern for all Christians, often deriving from this claim the justification for the political involvement of Korean Protestantism. In this

respect, Pastor So's commentaries in Kukmin Daily play an important role for the anti-LGBT movement. Being an established and successful leader of a megachurch, So Kang-sök legitimates anti-LGBT activism, also by placing it into a larger context of alleged 'Christian' and national(ist) duties.

Kukmin Daily thus provides So Kang-sök and the other anti-LGBT columnists with a platform for directly defending their actions. Yet most importantly, the columnists use the opportunity to vaunt their activism and achievements in their opinion pieces. This self-adulation becomes especially obvious in Yöm An-söp's contributions. Of all the columns listed in Table 17, Yöm's 'God's righteous army fighting against homosexuality' has the largest number, counting a total of 41 columns published from October 2019 until August 2020. The medical doctor writes extensively about his youth and the beginnings of his involvements in church, his missionary work, and his fight against homosexuality (Yöm, An-söp 2019, October 22; 2019, October 29). The articles also boast photos showing Yöm in action as a missionary, medical doctor, and lecturer, and at his wedding and graduation ceremony. A picture from July 2018 showing Yöm having his hair shaved off in protest against the *National Action Plan for National Human Rights Policies* stands out in these visualizations, attesting his willingness to make huge sacrifices for the movement (Yöm, An-söp 2020, August 6). Over the course of these columns, Yöm An-söp touches upon many topics such as cases of alleged oppression of people with anti-LGBT attitudes, the lives of 'ex-gay' people, and the purported dangers of homosexuality in relation to AIDS – often emphasizing his special role as an activist and using, or rather claiming his expertise in the area of medicine. Like the other special contributors, he frequently combines his personal stories and descriptions of purported facts with urgent appeals to the readers, as the following rather bellicose example from his last column shows: "Let's wake up and pray, let's become God's righteous army, and make a new history on the spiritual front line" (Yöm, An-söp 2020, August 6). This statement demonstrates that Yöm embeds himself as well as the anti-LGBT movement in a greater context. The fight transcends LGBT issues. What the movement and the Protestant Right at large are pursuing is rather a full-fledged creation of "new history", in the process of which Protestant believers are assumed to be the central leading actors.

Kukmin Daily plays an important role in this desired process of reaching hegemony. The newspaper, through offering communicative means to leaders of the movement, enables a more approachable, personalized, and less abstract image of anti-LGBT activism. Concrete figures like Yöm An-söp are placed on a pedestal. To a certain extent, they become, and in fact: they make themselves subjects of 'hero worship' – an image and a practice that we will come across again when elaborating on an anti-LGBT YouTube channel run by the very Yöm An-söp. In a way, Kukmin Daily can be regarded as a 'party organ' of the anti-LGBT movement. The newspaper uncritically reports about basically anything related to the fight against LGBT rights and grants the activists important opportunities to determine the published contents themselves. The column series written by several central anti-LGBT activists stands testament to this influence. Apparently, Kukmin Daily has made the editorial decision to pursue a clear political line against the rights of LGBT people. The newspaper has therefore become an important agent *and* tool of the movement. As I have shown, part of the movement's media strategy is to actively promote and single out particular activists, bestowing relevance and, to some extent, authenticity on

them. From a Gramscian perspective, Kukmin Daily can therefore be regarded as both an actor and a means of *organic journalism*, that is, a kind of journalism that emerges and grows alongside a social movement.

Publishing books: another means of anti-LGBT communication

Articles and columns in Kukmin Daily are not the only means of ‘traditional’ communication used by the movement. Activists also publish different kinds of books with anti-LGBT contents. Table 18 gives an overview of some selected publications. Figures like Kim Chi-yŏn and Paek Sang-hyŏn are especially active in writing books. Both have released two self-authored volumes with general perspectives. Interestingly, the authors themselves or the publishing houses have chosen bright and flowery cover designs, which contrast with the partly sinister and scandalizing titles. This may have been done to dissipate the attributes of hatred and hostility that pro-LGBT forces often use to describe the anti-LGBT movement. Alongside these books with a general focus on anti-LGBT matters, Cho Yŏng-gil has written a book with a legal focus, and Lee Jonah (Yi Yo-na) published a guide for people who allegedly suffer from their sexual orientation, also recounting his own ‘ex-gay’ life story.

Table 18: Print publications by anti-LGBT activists (selection)

Author(s)	Title	Year of publication	Type
Kim Chi-yŏn	<i>The one who wants to cover up, the one who wants to spread: the story about the carpet that covers up homosexuality and homo+sexuality</i>	2019	Book
Kim Chi-yŏn	<i>As created by God: education curriculum on Biblical sexual values</i>	2022	Book
Kim Chi-yŏn, Pak Sun-ae	<i>Ding dong! A present has arrived: Christian sexual values project, 5 years plus</i>	2021	Children's book
Paek Sang-hyŏn	<i>Homosexuality is</i>	2015	Book
Paek Sang-hyŏn	<i>Fake Human Rights, Fake Hatred, Fake Minority – Telling the Truth about the Homosexual Dictatorship Frame</i>	2017	Book
Cho Yŏng-gil	<i>The Anti-Discrimination Law and homosexual dictatorship – The problems of ‘sexual orientation’ in article 2–3 of the National Human Rights Commission Law</i>	2019	Book
Lee Jonah	<i>Coming Out Again: truth and freedom</i>	2017	Book

Author(s)	Title	Year of publication	Type
Min Söng-gil, Youth's Meeting Dreaming for a Beautiful Marriage and Family	<i>Professor Min Söng-gil's homosexuality counseling for youth</i>	2019	Comic book
Gabriele Kuby	<i>The Global Sexual Revolution: Destruction of Freedom in the Name of Freedom</i>	2018	Translated book

There are also other types of books, which are directed at different audiences. Among these are a children's book co-authored by Pak Sun-ae and, again, Kim Chi-yön. The comic book 'Professor Min Söng-gil's homosexuality counseling for youth' is, as the title suggests, mostly directed at adolescents and young adults. These two publications summarize the main arguments and frames of the movement in simplified ways. These publications are evidence for the fact that anti-LGBT activists strive to widen their audiences, trying to exert their 'educational' efforts also with children, starting from an early age.¹⁵ Finally, anti-LGBT publications are not restricted to Korean authors. Foreign books also get translated, showcasing the awareness of Korean anti-LGBT actors (among them, in the broad sense, also publishing houses) about important publications from abroad that may have the potential of supporting similarly oriented endeavors 'at home' in Korea as well. The probably most significant translated book is one written by the German anti-LGBT activist Gabriele Kuby. Her framing of positive socio-political changes for LGBT people as a "sexual revolution", which is said to destroy the freedom of those opposed to such changes, is frequently referred to in talks and texts of anti-LGBT activists. The book has also been on offer for sale at some of the 'educational' events described before.

Some of the books are also evidence for the close network that exists among the leading figures of the anti-LGBT movement. For the 2017 book written by Paek Sang-hyön, for instance, several other anti-LGBT activists contributed short recommendations that got printed at the beginning of the book. Among these benevolent reviewers are Min Söng-gil, Ko Yöng-il, Yöm An-söp, and Kim Chi-yön. Yi Yöng-hun, the main pastor of the large *Yöido Full Gospel Church* also provided praise for Paek's book, attesting the relations of anti-LGBT activists with the highest ranks of Korean Protestantism. The book 'Coming Out Again' by Lee Jonah also received praise from Yi Yöng-hun, as well as from another head pastor of a Korean megachurch, So Kang-sök. The anti-LGBT activists Cho Yöng-gil, Min Söng-gil, and Kil Wön-p'yöng wrote recommendations for the translated book by Gabriele Kuby, highlighting its relevance also for the Korean situation.

15 From a critical perspective, these publications directed at children and youth could be regarded as potentially harming to the target groups. Research has shown that discriminatory and exclusionary educational settings can cause great harm with young LGBT people, also and especially when there is a Christian background (cf. e.g., Butler et al. 2002; Wolff & Himes 2010)

Social media activities of anti-LGBT actors: the cases of 'GMW Union' and 'Rainbow Returns'

Beyond print publications and traditional media, the anti-LGBT movement also turned to social media as a means of communication. SMOs like the *People's Solidarity for a Healthy Society* operate a website, a Facebook page, a channel in the Korean chatting app *Kakaotalk*, and a blog on the Korean portal site *Naver*. Other groups and also event series like the anti-LGBT academies run similar social media channels to disseminate anti-LGBT contents and to inform followers about upcoming events and protests and to motivate them to participate (Interviews 3; 5; 8). This study cannot cover the whole range of social media activities of anti-LGBT actors, but will focus on two examples that have been especially active in the past years: the blog *GMW Union* (*GMW yŏnhap*) and the YouTube channel *Rainbow Returns* (*reinbou rit'ŏnjŭ*). The now following portrayal of these two social media outlets gives a broad overview of their content production and communicative strategies, yet it is not based on a thorough content analysis.

The acronym 'GMW' in the name of the blog stands for 'God make Man and Woman united', highlighting the blog's religious basis, and hinting at a worldview that only accepts heterosexual relationships of cis-gendered individuals. GMW Union began its activities as a blog on the Naver web portal in 2015, but since then it has expanded to other fields of action as well. For example, GMW Union representatives participate as speakers in anti-LGBT protest events and run a YouTube channel, which features more than 400 videos, and has more than 12,000 subscribers as of March 2023. A few videos have more than 100,000 views, but the majority of videos only attracted far less viewers, with numbers lying in the hundreds or lower thousands. Initially, the original blog had an almost exclusive focus on LGBT topics, but over time, the spectrum of covered subjects has increased. The blog's landing page displays a short text in which the operators claim that they "offer Biblical and correct information" on various topics (GMW Union n.d.). Table 19 displays the themes that GMW Union has most frequently addressed over the past years.

While topics related to LGBT rights such as homosexuality, the anti-discrimination law and other legislations, schoolbook controversies, queer culture festivals, same-sex marriage, and 'gender' make up a large part of the blog entries, other themes also figure prominently on this website. The religious focus becomes apparent in the more than 1,500 posts including prayers. Yet apart from this, the blog broaches diverse socio-political issues. The category 'Republic of Korea', which has by far the greatest number of entries, for example, consists of posts on the latest issues in Korean politics. GMW Union has turned to covering diverse topics, but all of these contents can be said to be of special interest to a conservative Protestant and politically rightist audience. Beyond the focus on LGBT themes, these common right-wing topics include, among others, North Korea, abortion, the alliance with the United States, refugees and migration, Islam, and a critical stance towards China.

Table 19: Most frequent topics on the GMW Union blog

Topic	N	Topic	N
Republic of Korea	3,127	Contemporary and modern history of school textbooks	224
Prayer	1,513	International, USA	208
Homosexuality	667	Queer culture festival	153
Equality law (anti-discrimination law)	639	Refugees/migrants/multicultural	146
Christianity and politics	448	Same-sex marriage	146
North Korea	379	China	138
Abortion and pregnancy	349	Heresy, religious cults	135
Etc.	312	News reports related to homosexuality	133
Student Human Rights Ordinance	279	Islam and halal	132
Emotional stories	260	Correct sex/gender (<i>parŭn sŏng</i>)	131
TOTAL: 11,482 blog entries			

Notes: The frequencies were taken from the website as of 30 March 2023. The topics given here are the translated versions of the titles/tags assigned by the blog itself.

This broad thematic focus has attracted a considerable number of views, more than 15,7 million over the years. However, the number of active followers, who are designated as ‘neighbors’ (*iut*) on Naver, is comparatively low, counting 14,000 people. Naver also provides data on the views per day. The average number of views per day over the period of existence of the blog amounts to around 5738.¹⁶ Even when considering outliers such as especially successful blog entries, this latter number bespeaks a considerable amount of attention – although one may assume that the viewership is mostly made up of a ‘hard core’ when considering other research results of this study such as the survey of protest participants (chapter 9).

Judging from the contents of the blog, GMW Union seems to play an important role for the communication of the anti-LGBT movement and the Protestant Right at large. Many posts include advertisements for anti-LGBT events and, after these events have taken place, collections of ‘learning’ materials or links to videos of the lectures. The lectures of central anti-LGBT activists like Kil Wŏn-p’yŏng, Kim Chi-yŏn, Yŏm An-sŏp, and others even have their own categories on the blog. Books with anti-LGBT or right-wing

16 I calculated this number by dividing the total number of views (~ 15,7 million, as of 31 March 2013) by the approximate number of days that the blog existed (late 2015 – March 2023, that is, around 7.5 years). $15,709,540 / (7.5 \times 365) = 5738.6$. From the period of 31 March until 16 April 2023, I also checked the number of views on the GMW Union blog every day at 3 pm (Central European Time), which corresponds to 11 pm South Korean time, thus covering the largest part of the day. In this period, the average daily number of views stood at around 1000, suggesting that the interest in the blog may have declined recently.

conservative contents are also frequently reviewed. GMW Union often refers to other media, providing summaries of, or links to news reports from relevant Christian and conservative TV stations and newspapers. The posts also often include links to other social media channels like *Rainbow Returns*, which will be covered below, and *PragerU*, a US-based right-wing conservative NGO that produces thematic videos. The blog provides edited versions of *PragerU* videos with Korean subtitles, so that rightist content from the United States can be accessed by interested audiences in Korea as well. The posts mostly feature visual components like photographs of events and YouTube videos. Sometimes, there is no accompanying text at all apart from the headline. Part of the visual contents are also webtoons drawn by an artist called Yun Sō-in. These short comics treat common topics of the radical right in Korea such as pro-Park Geun-hye and anti-Moon Jae-in contents, as well as pro-Trump and anti-China sentiments.

GMW Union itself refers to its posts as 'articles' (*kisa*), suggesting that the information presented meets journalistic standards such as objectivity and thorough investigation. While the accuracy and impartiality of some of the contents can be put into question – also when considering their obvious bias towards positions that are commonly associated with right-wing politics – the news value of the posts is certainly high for specific audiences. GMW Union can, in fact, be considered a news page rather than just a blog. It has developed from a single-topic social media channel into a provider of news on a wide range of topics which are relevant to conservative Protestant audiences. Even more so than through favorable traditional media like *Kukmin Daily*, the operators of GMW Union can decide on what to cover. They can react to new developments and swiftly adapt the coverage. What is more, the social media platform allows for less strict formats and greater creativity, so that contents can be adapted in a way to appeal to large audiences, or to make contents more 'digestible' for them. Embedding self-produced or external videos and webtoons is part of this flexibility, but the links to other content producers also demonstrate the close relationships and networks that exist among anti-LGBT organizations on the one hand, and other actors with right-wing leanings on the other. GMW Union – just like *Kukmin Daily* – has actively promoted anti-LGBT activists as charismatic, approachable, and knowledgeable leaders. The operators of the blog themselves, however, do not come into the picture, at least not in the context of the blog itself. The blog does not mention the names of the content producers of the posts. The exact opposite is true for the YouTube channel *Rainbow Returns*.

Rainbow Returns was established in March 2019 on YouTube. From the beginning, the channel produced professional videos in a studio, where a moderator, Yōm An-sōp, interviewed or discussed with other anti-LGBT activists. Most videos feature a short opening with a jingle. The visualization of this opening is noteworthy, since four of the leading figures of the anti-LGBT movement are presented as tiny comic 'supermen' wearing superhero suits and capes, with the heads of Kil Wōn-p'yōng, Yi Yong-hŭi, Cho Yōng-gil, and Yōm An-sōp on top. The design of the opening is colorful and jolly, but I argue that the message that the producers of the videos wish to convey is quite serious. Said anti-LGBT activists are depicted as 'heroes' with the mission of rescuing churches, youth, families, the nation as a whole, among others. The name of the YouTube channel itself is also evocative of a superhero. *Rainbow Returns* seems to be a reference to the 1992 Tim Burton movie 'Batman Returns'. The description of the channel elaborates that "the 'rainbow' has

become a symbol of homosexuals, but there is a separate, original ‘rainbow’”. The description continues explaining that it is “a project to recover and restore the real meaning of the rainbow together with homosexuality experts” (Rainbow Returns n.d.). The channel’s ‘about’ section does not explicitly say so, but the ‘real’ meaning of the rainbow implied seems to refer to the Judeo-Christian tradition, according to which the rainbow represents the covenant between God and humans (Genesis 9:11–17). The goal and purpose of the channel are also explicated: “It is a channel that correctly informs about the truth concerning homosexuality”. Before reminding the visitors of the channel of the possibility of donation, the description ends with an appeal: “Check out Rainbow Returns!!! For real facts about homosexuality!! You cannot hear anywhere else” (Rainbow Returns n.d.).

These alleged facts have, as of 3 April 2023, attracted 86,200 subscribers and around 10,3 million views in total. The channel, which is mainly run by Yöm An-söp, has uploaded 945 videos in various formats. One of the most common formats includes Yöm reporting on diverse LGBT-related issues. The channel also offers short Q&A videos, in which Yöm and other ‘experts’ answer questions like “Isn’t homosexuality love?”, “How do you contract AIDS?”, or “How do you differentiate between the truth and lies about homosexuality?” (Rainbow Returns 2019, April 18; 2019, April 11; 2019, September 27). Slightly longer discussions among anti-LGBT actors on various topics with a duration of about 10–15 minutes are also part of the program. The longest formats are livestreams of prayer meetings to stop the Anti-Discrimination Law that have been taking place in a tent in front of *Democratic Party of Korea* party headquarters every Saturday since mid-2021. Another livestream format consists of lectures from the ‘Academy Informing Correctly about the Anti-Discrimination Law’ (*Ch’abyöl kŭmjiböpye paro algi ak’ademi*). Rainbow Returns provides 138 such videos, which are about two hours long each. There is a YouTube channel of the same name, which uploads the same lectures and further broadcasts. This latter channel’s description states similar fields of action and goals as the ones claimed by Rainbow Returns, writing that the channel “informs churches and believers about the hidden identity and dangers of the anti-discrimination law and awakens churches, believers, and even the entire nation” (Academy Informing Correctly about the Anti-Discrimination Law n.d.). The channel was launched in August 2020 and has since uploaded 421 videos, garnered around 12,000 subscribers, yet records only approximately 570,000 views in total as of 4 April 2023.

In comparison, Rainbow Returns has proven more successful in terms of viewership and subscriptions, but it is worth taking a detailed look at the respective numbers. Table 20 shows the numbers of videos sorted by viewership. While the channel does have some very successful videos with more than 100,000 views, these only make up 1.7 percent of the total of 945 videos. The vast majority of the videos is far less successful. 83.3 percent of the videos have less than 10,000 views, and more than half of the videos, 54.4 percent, count less than 3000 views.

Table 20: Videos and viewership numbers of Rainbow Returns (as of 3 April 2023)

Number of views	Number of videos in category 'videos'	Number of videos in category 'live'	TOTAL		Cumulated TOTAL		Cumulated TOTAL (reverse)	
			N	~ %	N	~ %	N	~ %
> 500,000	1	-	1	0.1	1	0.1	945	99.8
300,000–499,000	3	-	3	0.3	4	0.4	944	99.7
100,000–299,000	13	-	13	1.3	17	1.7	940	99.4
50,000–99,999	20	-	20	2.1	37	3.8	927	98.3
25,000–49,999	31	-	31	3.2	68	7.0	907	96.2
10,000–24,999	82	10	92	9.7	160	16.7	876	93.0
5,000–9,999	115	15	130	13.8	290	30.5	784	83.3
4,000–4,999	58	9	67	7.1	357	37.6	654	69.5
3,000–3,999	62	14	76	8.0	434	45.6	587	62.4
2,000–2,999	76	60	136	14.4	570	60.0	511	54.4
1,000–1,999	91	140	231	24.4	801	84.4	375	40.0
500–999	59	81	140	14.8	941	99.2	144	15.6
0–499	-	4	4	0.4	945	99.6	4	0.4
TOTAL	612	333	945	100	945	~100	945	~100

These numbers suggest that the YouTube channel Rainbow Returns is highly industrious, with almost 1000 uploaded videos over a period of just four years, which, by the way, supposedly also requires substantive financial means. However, overall, these efforts do not pay off in terms of viewership numbers for most videos. Considering these data, one can assume that the number of loyal audiences is rather small and that, consequently, the impact of the videos may not be all that significant.¹⁷ But also when reviewing the most viewed videos, in many cases, it is doubtful whether an intrinsic interest for anti-LGBT contents has led the viewers there. The most successful video (with more than 690,000 views), for instance, deals with the openly gay celebrity Hong Sök-ch'ön. Perhaps it was rather the tabloid style of reporting that drew such high numbers of viewers. This sensationalist tendency is also present in other successful videos. Yöm An-söp commonly acts in the style of an investigative journalist, for example, when reporting about a hole in the wall of a public bathroom that he claims is used for sexual actions by gay men (~352,000 views; Rainbow Returns 2020, August 10). In several videos, Yöm

17 In general, one must be cautious not to misinterpret viewership numbers, since it is impossible to find out, for example, whether the viewers have watched the whole videos, which would be necessary to internalize the contents, or whether the audiences agree with the presented information at all. It is conceivable that some of the viewers have stumbled upon these contents unintentionally, e.g., after looking for general information on homosexuality. The search algorithm of YouTube may have led them to this or other anti-LGBT channels, which, however, can be assumed to be desired by the operators of these channels.

tries to blame homosexuals for the spread of Covid-19. For example, he reports about a public meeting spot of homosexuals where, he claims, they gather and contribute to the spread of the pandemic (~349,000 views; *Rainbow Returns* 2020, March 10). In another video entitled “Fear of repeated spreading of Covid-19! Shocking gay x-file”, Yöm reports about a case of a local Covid-19 spread attributed to a party in a queer club. Here, he also relates the spread to the sexual behavior of gay men by ‘analyzing’ a gay dating app (~190,000 views; *Rainbow Returns* 2020, May 12).¹⁸ One video deals with the situation in Korean prisons, asking: “How bad is the homosexuality taking place in prisons?” (~268,000 views; *Rainbow Returns* 2019, June 20). Among the ten most-viewed videos of the channel, only three have an exclusive LGBT focus. Two videos feature testimonies of a former trans person about the process of detransition (~396,000; 194,000 views), and one video includes a ‘confession’ of a gay cross dresser (278,000 views).

The YouTube channel *Rainbow Returns* thus broadens its content production by going beyond covering only anti-LGBT issues. Claiming the existence of causal links between sexual minorities and social problems, which potentially affect many people, proves to be especially effective for reaching large audiences. The fearmongering and scapegoating, as well as the sensationalist and scandalizing framings that I have analyzed in chapters 7 and 8 can also be observed in the case of this social media outlet. However, the actual influence exerted through these efforts remains unclear. Overall, the followership seems to be rather small. Both *GMW Union* and *Rainbow Returns* do not reach large audiences. But this does not mean that there is no effect. It can be expected that the – assumably mostly conservative Protestant – loyal following of these social media presences gets ‘empowered’ to some extent for the fight against LGBT rights. The reoccurring ‘Christian’ contents also point in this direction. However, the effect of the social media efforts of the Korean anti-LGBT movement is, arguably, mostly an internal one limited to the Protestant Right.

11.4 Conclusion: anti-LGBT ‘missionaries’ seeking communicative hegemony

This chapter has set out to analyze the actions of the Korean anti-LGBT movement in relation to education and communication. It did so in two steps. First, the chapter investigated how the movement has criticized and tackled educational policies and institutions, as well as media outlets, which treated sexual minorities in a positive or neutral way – or at all. Second, it analyzed in which capacities and through which means activists themselves have gotten active in the fields of ‘education’ and media.

I found that the activists seem to be well aware of the importance of communication and education for sustainable movement success. This is why they turn educational institutions like schools and universities into sites of contention. They attack the very communicative strategy that they themselves are using to induce anti-LGBT ‘learning’ when

18 By reporting in such a sensationalist way and by scandalizing the places where queer people socialize, the videos may have worsened the already precarious situation for sexual minorities during the pandemic, further endangering and limiting the options to interact with like-minded people under the conditions of social distancing.

employed to disseminate benevolent information about homosexuality and related topics. In the context of this communicative 'warfare', concrete institutions like universities, newspapers, and TV stations come under heavy fire. However, activists do not only react to the educational and communicative efforts of opposing forces. They also engage in 'educating' and media production themselves, becoming, in the Gramscian sense, educators and organic journalists. The educational and journalistic endeavors of the movement are 'organic' in the sense that they have emerged along with the movement and are of a clearly political and activist nature. Anti-LGBT activists use both traditional and newer forms of education and, especially, media. The newspaper *Kukmin Daily* plays an important role on the 'traditional' end of the media spectrum, potentially reaching larger audiences. The blog *GMW Union* and the YouTube channel *Rainbow Returns*, on the other hand, represent newer information communication technologies, which I argue target, reach, and consolidate, for the most part, already existing support bases.

In all of these communicative efforts, selected movement figures are presented – or present themselves – as charismatic, proficient, and authentic disseminators of information. Yet, the fact that they frequently emphasize the Christian foundation of themselves and of their contents at educational events or in their social media channels may be damaging to their goal of reaching hegemony. Their communicative strategy is twofold, as I have already demonstrated in previous chapters. The anti-LGBT movement tries to convince both Christian and non-Christian publics. In a way, the activists act like missionaries trying to impose their worldview on others. However, they do not only spread a Christian message, but augment it by adding a political one directed against LGBT rights and other socio-political phenomena that the Protestant Right regards as problematic. The viewership numbers of *Rainbow Returns* show that the movement is remote from hegemony, though, definitely in the field of communication. It is also possible, however, that the focus on a conservative Christian audience is an intentional choice of the movement leadership, for it is easier to reach and mobilize such grown support bases.

Yet in general, the impact that the anti-LGBT movement has on Korean politics needs to be raised at this point. Korean politicians have often claimed that a majority among all South Koreans must be achieved as a precondition for introducing pro-LGBT legislation. Moreover, politicians seem to be afraid of campaigns directed against them should they support or approve of such bills (cf. chapter 10.5). When reversing this argument, one could also ask how big the support of *anti-LGBT* positions actually is. This chapter has demonstrated further evidence that the core support base of the anti-LGBT movement is in fact quite small. But the movement is very loud, using sensationalist and fearmongering tactics in their external, 'educational' communication, which may especially impress decision makers who generally shy away from scandalous contents.

Speaking of education, it is important to also instruct politicians about the mechanisms, framing strategies, and the actual support numbers of the anti-LGBT movement. The fields of education, journalism, and social media are particularly crucial in this respect since they are prone to potentially harmful misinformation. The partly inaccurate and hostile contents produced by anti-LGBT activists may be especially damaging for LGBT individuals as well as their families and friends. Therefore, communication is not only an important task for social movements, but also for the academic community, in

that relevant research results should make their way into decision-making processes, especially when basic human rights are endangered.