

Disciplined Parenting Professionalism: FEPL, Changing Patterns of Power, Assumed Politics in Family Education

Jiarui Bai^{1,2}

¹ Institute for Advanced Studies in Education, East China Normal University, Shanghai, China

² Department of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, USA

Email: JiaruiBai.edu@outlook.com, jbai@wisc.edu

Abstract—Currently, parents are required to raise children following the law as new parenting professionalism in China. This article explores how the new Family Education Promotion Law (FEPL) creates new requirements for parents to cultivate future citizens by employing family educational science. It draws upon text and discourse analysis of bills of FEPL regarding educative parent performance law. Interweaving qualitative data with post-structural groundings, this article questions that it neglects the discussion about distinctions of educational knowledge in various family education contexts. Despite stipulation of responsibilities of parents and other guardians that underscores legality and authority of laws and regulations in order to create a suitable family education environment for children, its unexpected outcome is to include the ‘ideal’ parents and exclude others, based more on family educational science of child-rearing by neglecting the peculiar part of the culture and the produced discrimination to parents at the bottom. Moreover, we found that it produces a new decentralization trend and shifts the power among members in the education village.

Keywords—parenting professionalism, poststructuralism, family education, collaborative learning, equity issues, politics of power

I. INTRODUCTION

Family education is a crucial strategy to improve the quality of parental involvement and parent support in order to impact children’s achievement. It is widely recognized that if pupils are to maximize their potential from schooling, they will need the full support of their parents [1]. Parental participation including parental behavior [2], parenting style, educational process support, organization and interest [3] has important influences and guidances on children’s future career and interest choices [4]. However, it is conditional that parent involvement is positively correlated with student success. For example, parents need to guide the development of good parenting styles, and work together with all members of the education village. For example, Veas, Gilar-Corbi, and Miñano [3] (p. 595) found that “parental involvement in

perception of support, organization and interest in the educational process; expectations and the center relationship were statistically and positively related to academic achievement, whereas time of support with homework, monitoring, and checking were a predictor of negative academic achievement”. The latter two is related to “authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles”. Moreover, Aquino *et al.* [5] (p. 819) studied the relationship between parental involvement and academic performance in Mathematics. The results showed that “the parental involvement strategies affect the academic performance of the students in Mathematics but not to a significant extent.” The author refers to “strengthen the guidance of teachers and establish good rapport with parents”. In these cases, parent involvement is important and requires working with teachers. Therefore, there are attempts to enhance parental involvement in education occupying governments, administrators, educators, and parents’ organizations across countries [6]. Mainly, legislation on family education might make parents take responsibility legally to guarantee parenting involvement. Therefore, Family Education Promotion Law (FEPL) was adopted recently in China.

A. Background

Family Education Promotion Law (FEPL) was adopted in the 31st Session of the 13th National People’s Congress (NPC) Standing Committee (NPCSC) in China, which stipulates that parents or other guardian of children shall be responsible for family education and the corresponding social support. The FEPL approved six bills, including general provisions, family responsibilities, state support, social coordination, legal responsibility, and supplement provisions. Although it partially changed the scenario that raising children is no longer an internal family affair, it is a signal that family educating of children is an assignment for a family and an essential thing for society. That means it officially asserts a shift from increasing family involvement to legal family responsibility. The desire behind this new law has changed the traditional, pervasive, and mundane acts of parenting and family education, parents’ rights, and the demanding roles of parenthood. The assumption of ‘governmentality’ thinking beneath the FEPL is as

follows: When a child was born, s/he is not only your little girl/boy but also are future citizens in this country and the great contributors in this world. Each of them is entitled to at least a happy childhood, and some social support should be provided to create a family environment of happiness.

The FEPL and its requirements for all efforts come from families, state support, and social coordination. It is currently required for parents' high complement family education programs across the country from city, county, and township. Juvenile who are under the age of 18 is regarded as protective objects. FEPL links the minimum requirement and desirable image for parenting or other guardians' responsibilities to a rough judgment of parenting practice. Its aims are to both minimal and desirable judge and support the education of skills and knowledge that all parents need from the first day to be parents. The promise of FEPL as a new parental professionalism responsibility system and a family education law for minors is built on an assumption of law that can authentically strengthen, guide, scientize the actual parenting performance. For this aim, FEPL asks parents, candidates of parents, and novice parents to "conscientiously study information on family education to get a grip on scientific methods of family's education and to increase capacity for family education. (Bills of FEPL, Article 18)"

B. The Produce of Unexpected Outcome

The power in FEPL has changed; power happens through the parental responsibilities under surveillance to realize the legality of external intervention in family affairs. FEPL requires parents to take responsibility in front of their children in the public eye (e.g., disciplined professional parenting manner and behavior in family, internet, or public) and self-govern themselves for children's future as part of governmentality. What characterized the objectivity of power in FEPL is that it endows the power to everyone as the role of a supervisor in society. In that case, family education is no longer only a family affair, but a social or national affair through parents' empowerment and parent being empowered, which is believed to "professionally" represent and "objectively" measure the parenting performance, possibly neglecting the individuality and difference of family, not only relying on the consciousness and introspectiveness of human love of parenthood.

This particular kind of objectivity and its impact on shaping parenting professionalism have been studied by researchers [7] in terms of professionalizing parents and other guardians, and glorifying outcome competitiveness such as academic performance with a consistent agreement that the constitution of meaning "to be a good parent and a good adolescent". Viewing FEPL as clear legal shaping propaganda designed to define partnership or surveillance, the critiques focus on the partnership between parents from various social stratifications (power pattern of the exchanging identity of partnership or surveillance between teacher and parents could be changed mainly influenced by the perceptual gap of educational science between bottom classes and upper-

middle classes) and teachers representing the value of middle classes. It also indicated the loss of parenting empowerment and the increase of public empowerment. This phenomenon is linked to the dislocation of parent evaluation in the superficial observation, surveillance, assessment, and judgments of parents are not based on internal feelings and expressions of the parenthood between parents and children. Instead, value more on externally provided manners, standards, and disciplines, which might positively be glorified, honored, and legitimized for middle and uppers, while it would possibly oppositely be stigmatized, labeled, and de-legitimized for the bottom.

II. THEORETICAL FOUNDINGS

A. Synthesis Static Futurity in the Past and Present

What should be evident as an outcome of parenting professionalism has been a central question in the history of parenting question. Although the purpose of licensing is to prevent serious harm to children [8], it was in the post-war two periods after teaching professionalism that licensing was discussed if it should be as measures to assess the quality of parenting and to determine whether it should be licensing parents or not when adopting children.

"Parents raise their children as a labor of love and not as a professional assignment. Unlike child development experts and other professional persons concerned with childcare, parents are not specialists. Their responsibility is the whole child — his every need at all times [9]."

Raising a child is no easy task [10]. Hugh LaFollette has asserted that parents are not all-loving their children, and some parents are potentially harmful to children and one requiring competence if harm is to be avoided. La Follette argues that the state should require all parents to be licensed for child-rearing to satisfy the general criteria for regulatory licensing. Mangel "examines the rationale and justification for LaFollette's thesis and explores the present ability of screening methods to predict which parents are 'at risk' of abusing their children". Therefore, there is a conclusion that "licensing parents would be more objective, expeditious, and less costly". However, predicting which parents are "at-risk" of abusing their children could be labialized when some parents are regarded as "at-risk". The FEPL is also created to screen those who are not ideal parents or follow up the fundamental parenting responsibility such as not harming children, but most importantly to provide sufficient social support for family education. It indicates that what the necessary provision parents see as support of parenting is not only helpful for what the parents' candidate to be a novice identity, but the process of accessing, preparing, reflecting is influenced by pre-determined possibilities of the future that is predictively considered as parents with educational wisdom.

The future actively plays in the present by regulating what parents are and should be. In this sense, it will be

the predictive knowledge avoiding parenting crime for guiding parents. This is similar to the principles of setting other laws that guide others to regulate their behaviors. However, here is the difference that FEPL will have social courses to teach parents knowledge about how to be good instead of bad parents. Also, the process of accessing social education courses regulates parenting behaviors, actions, and even desires in relation to the desired outcome that is specified in the public surveillance standards. In a word, the future possibility is not visualized, but static synthesis is systematically rearranged in an array of possible.

B. Desire Politics of Performance in Family Education

Performance of desire happens through the entangled relations of humans and behaviors. In this sense, humans such as parents and others and institutions are actors. Their behaviors are social actions. All these elements might constitute “the society of agentic actors [11]” in family education. In that case, natural conscientization of family educational science and the moral rationalization of parental responsibility might “create problems occasioning agentic pursuit” and “fueling the sweeping collective action of the modern system”.

“Article 6: All levels of people’s government are to guide efforts on family education, establish and complete mechanisms for coordinated education by families, schools, and society... coordinate social resources to cooperatively advance the construction of a family education guidance service that covers urban and rural areas... relevant departments of people’s governments at the county level or above such as for public security, civil affairs, judicial administration, human resources and social security, culture and tourism, health, market administration, radio and television, sports, press and publication, and internet information are to complete family education work within the scope of their respective responsibilities (Bills of FEPL, A6)... directories for government procurement of services, include related expenses in the fiscal budget... (Bills of FEPL, A7).”

C. The Double Gesture of External Surveillance: The Process of Abjection

This article is concerned about the double gesture [12] of parenting professionalism in family education. I use the term double gesture to discuss the paradoxical nature of FEPL: Even though the FEPL’s good intention is to develop all parents and other guardians as highly effective, the making of effective parents is undergirded by parents as “potentially harm to children [13]”. Therefore, The FEPL is probably a regulation of parental behavior in order to make kinds of people and fabricate the kinds of future citizens. There has been much research on regulating parental behavior. According to Mangel [10], the use of a Family Stress Checklist to identify “high risk” parents being potential child abusers is a more available and reliable predictive screening procedure. Sandmire and Wald [14] argued that there were “concerns Mangel and LaFollette ignored that how

a licensing scheme might be made operational” and suggested making comprehensive services available and guaranteed provision to all new parents as an alternative to licensing. There are also many researchers who hold the opposite opinions. For example, Tittle [15] assumed that people had been procreating for millennia without government interference and should not do that in the present. McLeod and Botterell [16] concluded that the same goes for others question the appropriateness of licensing of parents [17] and another groups suggested a new status quo to alternate the unjustified one [18].

However. Parenting license is hardly discussed to implement in China since it might hinder potential parents from having children, for the implementation policies of stimulating the birth rate. The FEPL is produced. On the one hand, it can provide social support for new parents to be “good” parents. On the other hand, it can protect children from the potential harm caused by novice parents or other guardians. In this sense, hope for quality education to cultivate ideal citizens by educating ideal parents is produced. That means it creates a family environment of happiness for children by improving family education and stipulates the responsibilities of parents and guardians for children as future citizens. However, idealism is the process of abjection and the realization of new inclusion and exclusion.

III. POST-STRUCTURAL METHODOLOGIES

A. Family Educational Science Become Reasonable

It is kindly reflected how the desires of science to actualize a better society were converted to the search for remaking society life that paradoxically embodied cultural differences and social divisions. The sciences are about the present and the potentialities of societies and people in the psychologies of childhood; concerns for individual development, growth, and creativity [19]; parenting professionalism; and the authentic assessments of future citizen education.

The quality and skills of “parenting professionalism” as a form of science need to be improved by relative social support such as parenting programs. Making people feels that they have this demand, which is a construction of governing in the care of people. The governing was performed through the technologies of the social and psychological sciences that generated principles about modes of living and their possibilities. The turn of the mindful parenting program of orphanage caregivers at Rumbela Muthmainnah-Bandung, for example, was based on mindfulness, which involves awareness, observation, and depiction of a person’s behavior in a no judgment way [20]. The examined reasoning of the science generates particular rules and standards about the governing of society, people, and change, which are “cybernetics” and “system theory”. The sciences, here as knowledge of mindfulness, entailed different settlements of practices as they act as memories, identities, experiences, and representations of people and societies in generating the objects of change based on its locational logic that has desires [21]. This notion of

profession-as-expert occupations is the “profession”, “as an expert legitimated by science, is injected into national discourses about education [22] including family education”, especially “parenting professionalism”, which assumes a universal quality to form of occupational status and cultural authority.

B. The Historical Analysis: From Children as the Property of Parents to Licensing Parents

They change parents’ situation in the role of parenthood from active acts to passive. In the case of education, the power in institutional education is considered mainly a study object that might not be enough for the whole society. The fundamental elements of power subjects, such as the decentralization trend of shifting power among central and local governments and schools, are not only occurring in the school space. However, also, another possible decentralization of power among members, including teachers, parents, other guardians, and children in the education village, may have been neglected in past studies. Moreover, here is the question should parents like teacher professionalism be developed parental licensing?

The reason to object to licensing might be having or owning the natural sovereignty over their children for parents, especially biological parents. (From the reason to object to licensing, we can speculate that parents owning natural sovereignty over their children was a popular idea in the past, which is a sign that parental power might cause some severe consequences because there could also be an irresponsible parent exercising power. In this sense, parent Licensing is supposed to regulate potentially harmful activities. For example, LaFollette (1980)’s study Licensing parents question parents’ ability to maltreat their children and doubt the moral propriety of the prior restraint licensing requires to judge who are incompetent even though they had never maltreated any children as well. For example, children are regarded as the group whose right is represented by parents holding to exercise it. The assumption is that only if children are regarded as the property of their parents. Therefore, the discussion scope of parental rights is from parents can decide children’s everything to partially decides to the village will decide including children themselves represents the dispersion of parental power and empowerment to any relevant person. Until now, this has historically been a controversial issue.

C. Demand of Shifting Power and Post-Modern Trend

Involution describes of bottleneck in education, which refers to the high-density of units input with reduction of marginal utility appearing in the educational fields and displaying as the low efficiency [23]. The intensification of education involution displays low efficiency, which intensifies the result of fierce educational competition. The question is who should take responsibility for the educational outcomes and what the responsibilities of teachers and parents should be. In the past, the laws only stipulated parents’ responsibility for child-rearing, not educational participation. Legally parenting essential

professionalism may be changing patterns of power that parents also need to take responsibility for their children’s educational outcomes. Furthermore, parent empowerment professional teachers to regulate their children, while also “teachers attempt to distance themselves from parents through the insistence on their professionalism and that these attempts are more pronounced in relation to well-educated parents [24]”. Bæck concludes the tension between teachers and parents and describes teachers’ view on parental involvement in school, and they are asserting that “we are professionals”. Then it may come down to one controversy that who is more professional on education: teachers or parents, especially in some crossing fields between teacher profession and parent profession such that is it a sign of creativity or a problem student that children’s attention is not focused on the boring content in class. Teachers may think it is problematic behavior in the class that influences students’ academic performance. However, for parents, various voices are saying that to discipline those students as a problem is to destroy their creativity. Moreover, whose power might still be neglected in the village. Children still do not have the opportunity to change their situation. Because if parental crimes are not enough to be warranted a conviction for the reality that probably just because there was insufficient evidence, not because there was no crime, children who sue their parents are in even greater danger. Parents are only educated and “ordered to accept family education guidance (Bills of FEPL, A.49)” but will not be stripped of their parental identity.

IV. POST-DISOURSE ANALYSIS

A. Constructing an Ideal Image of Family Education and Making Kinds of People

There is an assumption that the ideal China citizen is built, and they are significant for the country in the future. The government is willing to realize the “making kinds of people” like this to find ‘the key piece’ of social support to education, especially family education. A qualified future citizen has constructed a ‘good’ citizen image. An ideal parent image is produced to cultivate this kind of citizen.

Future citizen image:

Moral, intelligent, physically and mentally healthy, strong, tasteful, cultural, diligent, hard-working, tenacious, knowledgeable, humble, tolerant, skillful, competent, self-disciplined, life-cherishing, satisfied socialism successor (Keywords that appear in Text of FEPL Bills).

Parenthood image:

Harmonical, ethical, responsible, executive, educable, positive, thoughtful, wise, patient, respectful, self-regulated, scientific, cooperative, flexible, creative, realistic, peaceful, patriotic, wisdom (Keywords that appear in Text of FEPL Bills).

There is also an assumption that the advanced way of governing people probably is to make kinds of people by implementing leading social values to make people

govern themselves, especially self-discipline through science and self-satisfied.

B. Fabricating the Parent's Soul in Family Education Promotion Law (FEPL)

This article focuses on the elaboration embodied in FEPL in China. It recognizes that the formation of the modern school entailed historically making (fabricating) particular kinds of people that linked individuality with collective belong [25]. However, in this making of particular kind of person, parenting is another direction the soul of the conduct of the child through 'the distinctions and differentiations inscribed' in life Bildung, children's 'problem solving', and their 'motivation'. We speak of the fabrication of parents or other members in the village to point to an often-overlooked quality of governing that the 'soul' of the child influenced by family education. For example, the turn of FEPL in China was brought into the society to shape the interior of the future responsibility of children's family support, especially parenting education.

The "soul" of the child is described in the PRC Law on Family Education Promotion: The Chinese people's good tradition of emphasizing education; paying attention to families, family education, and family situations, increasing family happiness and social harmony; and cultivating the comprehensive development of the builders of socialism and their successors in terms of morality, intelligence, sport, arts, and labor.¹

V. CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

This article refers to avoiding polarized involution of parenting professionalism; how to ensure that children live safely and happily until well into adulthood. I called into question the advocate of parental professionalization as an inscription of the bounded responsibilities of family education by taking FEPL as an exemplary case. My concern was to examine how the shifting power of parental professionalism in FEPL reorients novice and experienced parents to develop "parental professionalism", that is, to exercise not only the parental discourse right but parental discourse power. To explain this, I had drawn upon the historical discussion of shifting from parental empowerment for children as property of parents to make kinds of offspring only, to assume national implementation of licensing parents for children as property of the country to make kinds of future citizens, in conditions where the qualification of parenting is evaluated only relying on what is regarded as family educational science, which may conflict with specific culture and derive the peculiar exclusion for the parents at the bottom class as an unfamiliar knowledge. These particular groups of parents might confront the kind of not so considerable public surveillance and judgments in the lens of bias affecting their parenting lives. As the analysis indicates, FEPL will produce the unexpected outcome of the legality of external intervention in family affairs and potential discrimination and stigmatization,

especially for the bottom. This study asks to consider some compensation mechanisms for the demanding families.

This study contributes to alternative conversations on parental professionalization in family education policy, reform, and research by utilizing the historical and post-structural theoretical approach to parenting and family education. Not likewise secular belief in a linear evolve of temporal, in reforms of governmentality, the desired futures are materialized in the form of bills and the assuming ideal images of parents and children, and such particular futures are actively static synthesized in the present and past by ordering the process of arranging, fabricating, and judgment. Parenting professionalism, which is seemingly to alleviate the conflicts between teaching professionalism and parenting empowerment in order to make them cultivate children effectively. However, the conflicts between them will not be eliminated, especially the difference between teaching and parenting professionalism on the notion of educational controversies. Although it is required to follow science to nurture children, not to mention its conditional restriction, some of the scientific knowledge in the current stage is still in a state of possibility to be questioned and repeatedly verified. The study asks to consider some corresponding coping mechanisms.

The study's findings provide implications regarding the power of every member of the villages and the shifting of owning control over children on educating professionalization among teachers, parents, the public, and children. This conception in this article emphasizes the decentralized trend in the education village. Not only do teachers who have discourse power and parents who have discourse rights, but parents will have discourse power for parenting professionalism, the public have the right to supervise. Moreover, children as the significant subjects are neglected their discourse right. The study informs that children's rights should be respected and considered in some ways and should think multiplying policies about ensuring that children live safely and happily until well into adulthood.

Finally, future research should examine cooperated practices of family education and multiplying the cultures and modes of parenting professionalism in family educational knowledge. Parents with professionalism are prepared for the pre-determined possibilities of the future, which still have more to engage in other options of change. For example, parents are defined with their responsibilities as discourse rights. However, there are no rules about how detailed parenting is. Parents have been the potential diffractive practitioners with the same objectivity to cultivate competitive talents in the future society. This diffraction of parenting knowledge as parental social practices based on empiricism might be dangerous, and polarized involution of parenting professionalism should be thought proactively but not reactive. Following studies should expand the realms of parent agency into more relational aspects that multiply the trajectories to the future in parenting professionalism and family education.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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