UNIVERSITY COLLEGE GRONINGEN

Bachelor Thesis

Comprehensive Sexuality Education Programs and Cultural Integration: Qualitative Analysis of Non-Western Minorities' Perceptions

Wordcount: 9.993

Thesis Supervisor: Lieuwe Zijlstra
Thesis Co-assessor: Marian Counihan
Author: Saragiuliana Del Panta S3552578
Graduation Class of 2020

Introduction

In 2018, UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization) published the revised edition of the *International Technical Guidance of Sexuality Education* (ITGSE), originally released in 2009. The ITGSE states that the societal relevance of including sex education programs within the local political agendas is that of providing the tools for young people to conduct 'safe, healthy and positive relationships' (UNESCO, 2018, p.12). One of the goals of sex education programs is that of enabling young people to gain the appropriate knowledge, attitudes and skills towards sexuality. The ITGSE presents eight important key concepts which reflect learning objectives based on knowledge, attitudes, and skills adaptable to different age groups (5-18+). This means that curriculum developers can adapt the key concepts to the local level and consider the norms which come with the territory. The guidance observes and respects diversity at the regional level where sexuality education is actualized, therefore countries are allowed to negotiate program content, with regards to human rights and the principles of inclusion and non-discrimination as a basis upon which to build programs.

Core Components of Sex Education Programs.

The ITGSE specifies a set of core components which revolve around the topics of "relationships, values, rights, culture and sexuality, understanding gender, violence and staying safe, skills for health and well-being, the human body and development, sexuality and sexual behavior, sexual and reproductive health" (UNESCO, 2018, p.35). Table 1 shows each core component in its specific topics. The reason behind setting out these key concepts is to provide a common guideline that can be incorporated within school curricula and community initiatives for young people around the world, independently of their cultural, religious, ethnic backgrounds. This guidance provides the grounds to build programs that reflect the needs of those whom they are directed towards, namely young people with individual sets of values and beliefs. This leads to positive outcomes in that each component provides the skills, knowledge and attitudes to address critical issues that pertain to each individual's lives. This applies to culturally diverse contexts, where individuals might have clashing sets of values and beliefs, reflected in attitudes towards sexuality. Each core component is linked to the general aim of CSE programs in that learners gain the tools to understand and accept their needs and the ones of others, also through the aid of technology, including social media.

5.2 Overview of key concepts, topics and learning objectives

Key concept 1: Relationships	Key concept 2: Values, Rights, Culture and Sexuality	Key concept 3: Understanding Gender
Topics: 1.1 Families 1.2 Friendship, Love and Romantic Relationships 1.3 Tolerance, Inclusion and Respect 1.4 Long-term Commitments and Parenting	Topics: 2.1 Values and Sexuality 2.2 Human Rights and Sexuality 2.3 Culture, Society and Sexuality	Topics: 3.1 The Social Construction of Gender and Gender Norms 3.2 Gender Equality, Stereotypes and Bias 3.3 Gender-based Violence

Key concept 4: Violence and Staying Safe	Key concept 5: Skills for Health and Well-being	Key concept 6: The Human Body and Development
Topics: 4.1 Violence 4.2 Consent, Privacy and Bodily Integrity 4.3 Safe use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)	Topics: 5.1 Norms and Peer Influence on Sexual Behaviour 5.2 Decision-making 5.3 Communication, Refusal and Negotiation Skills 5.4 Media Literacy and Sexuality 5.5 Finding Help and Support	Topics: 6.1 Sexual and Reproductive Anatomy and Physiology 6.2 Reproduction 6.3 Puberty 6.4 Body Image

Key concept 7: Sexuality and Sexual Behaviour	Key concept 8: Sexual and Reproductive Health
Topics: 7.1 Sex, Sexuality and the Sexual Life Cycle 7.2 Sexual Behaviour and Sexual Response	Topics: 8.1 Pregnancy and Pregnancy Prevention 8.2 HIV and AIDS Stigma, Care, Treatment and Support 8.3 Understanding, Recognizing and Reducing the Risk of STIs, including HIV

Table 1. Core Components of SE Programs. Retrieved from the ITGSE.

<u>The Advance of Sex Education Programs.</u>

Over the last 35 years, 78 million people have been infected with HIV and 35 million have died from an AIDS-related illness[1]. With the spread of HIV and AIDS, sexual health has become a top priority in healthcare agendas globally to front the medical emergency (Kenny, 2014). As a consequence, sex education programs gained importance (Kenny, 2014). Sex education programs around the world have been a topic of debate for the last 50 years among psychologists, educators, sociologists and physicians, as they have proven to have a beneficial

---

[1] Retrieved from: https://www.unaids.org/en/whoweare/about

effect on attitudes towards and knowledge of sex for young learners (Voss, 1980). Already in the 1970s, research was being conducted to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of sex education programs on young adults. These can be summarized as increasing knowledge of learners, by replacing myths and misconceptions of sex with factual knowledge (Kirkendall, 1965); allowing to develop a full understanding of one's sexuality to satisfy it (Kirkendall & Libby 1969); in addition to understanding personal standards, young people should be exposed to a variety of sexual lifestyles to have an alternative view on issues regarding sexuality (Chilman, 1969); encouraging interpersonal and societal change, by improving communication between sexes. The relevance of understanding one's personal life in relation to their sexuality is that of creating awareness towards sex roles and societal prescriptions to tackle the demands which come within one's environment (Kirkendall & Libby, 1969, Kirkendall 1965).

Weaknesses of Sex Education Programs.

Available services in the U.S. are set to meet the increasing demand for sex education programs, yet they are not yet sufficient in quality or quantity (Beasley, 1975). There are weaknesses described by Kirkendall (1965) which hinder the effectiveness of delivering these programs to young people in the U.S. and around the world. He lists 7 weaknesses which can be summarized as such: the scope of sex education programs is limited, as they rarely touch upon interpersonal relationships; discussions are often discouraged, classes are often accompanied by discomfort, which contributes to stigmatization; sex education programs are prevention-focused, rather than pleasure-oriented; the secretive approach to learning about sex hinders thought-sharing; learning about sex only from the home environment is problematic, as children learn their parents' opinions; most programs are not evaluated appropriately. The weaknesses have an impact on the quality of programs developed and delivered around the world. By overcoming these limitations, program developers would be able to promote sex education programs that satisfy the needs of the learners.

Goals of the International Technical Guidance of Sexual Education.

To overcome the limitations of these programs and create a globally accessible educational framework, UNESCO and its partners in the ITGSE propose *comprehensive* sexuality education (CSE). It is a "curriculum-based process of teaching and learning about the cognitive, emotional, physical and social aspects of sexuality[2]. It aims to equip children and young people with knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will empower them to: realize their health, well-being and dignity; develop respectful social and sexual relationships; consider how their choices affect their own well-being and that of others; and, understand and ensure the protection of the rights throughout their lives." (UNESCO, 2018, p. 16). This program typology has the potential to promote acceptance and a deeper understanding of cultural differences among young adults in

---

[2] Sexuality in the context of CSE is defined by UNESCO (2018, p.17) as "a core dimension of being human which includes: the understanding of, and relationship to, the human body, emotional attachment and love, sex; gender, gender identity; sexual orientation, sexual intimacy, pleasure and reproduction. Sexuality is complex and includes biological, social, psychological, spiritual, political, legal, historical and cultural dimensions that evolve over a lifespan.

contexts where values and practices may clash.

<u>The Principles of CSE.</u>

The focus shifts from preventing negative experiences to directing young adults towards a positive perception of their sexualities and it is built around values based on the United Nations Convention on Rights of the Child (UN, 1989) of gender equality, strength in diversity, reciprocal respect and inclusion. CSE focuses on the notion that individuals have a right to education and in that, to gain the knowledge to make informed sexual decisions, to carry out healthy relationships throughout their lives. The principles of CSE also include providing information about the psychological, emotional, physical, social and cultural aspects of sexuality which is based on scientific research, perceptive to cultural norms and gender and which reflects the age and development of learners (UNESCO, 2018). However, research on the implementation of comprehensive sexuality education has shown that the programs have been failing young people around the world, despite the many advances that have been made in this field (UNESCO, 2018). Topics such as gender equality, diversity, gender norms still remain unaddressed, directing the focus of programs towards the more biological aspects of sexuality, such as reproduction, puberty, risk prevention and unplanned pregnancies. This is problematic because delivering CSE in a positive-oriented manner is key to allowing learners to gain the tools to engage in healthy and respectful relationships throughout their lives.

<u>Link Between Sex Education Programs and Migration.</u>

Sex education programs have been pioneered in Western societies, specifically in Western Europe, and they have increasingly gained status in local political agendas (UNESCO, 2018). It is plausible that in countries around the world, where sex education programs have not been included within political agendas, young people are more likely to lack the institutional support to acquire skills and knowledge in this field. These programs can help young people reflect on social norms and cultural values, especially in a time when immigration flows are increasing in Europe (Algan, Bisin & Verdier, 2012). Entering a culturally different context can be problematic for many individuals and cause strong cultural shocks (Winkelman, 1994). Even within the sphere of sexuality, understanding sexual responses and adapting them to the local context can be difficult. In light of this, a question arises about whether it is important for young people, especially migrants, to gain the tools to better communicate and understand their needs and desires in a context which is culturally different from their familial ones, with traditional sets of values and practices. Addressing young migrants' needs within sex education programs has the potential to provide them with the tools to understand different values. By understanding these differences, young migrants can develop feelings of cultural integration within host societies. Berry (1980) explains cultural integration as the process by which an individual adapts to some of the norms of the dominant culture but also retains the identification with their ethnic culture. Because one of the aims of CSE is to provide the tools to understand cultural differences, the hypothesis is that migrants' feelings of cultural integration could be favored by exposing young people to the programs.

Specifically, this paper focuses on non-Western minorities in Western host societies. Researchers debate whether public policies should promote cultural assimilation of minorities to native cultures, or whether social institutions should be designed to favor cultural diversity (Algan, Bisin & Verdier, 2012). This debate is also related to CSE. On the one hand, sex education programs should undergo adaptation to accommodate cultural differences (Hunt & Ott, 2014). On the other hand, these should favor dialogue between different cultures to gain knowledge on issues that revolve around sexuality. While cultural integration is highly debated among researchers (Berry, 1980, Singh & Hu, 2001), research on the intersection between cultural integration and sex education programs has yet not been conducted, which means that a gap exists in the scientific knowledge. Therefore, this research paper contributes to the existing scientific knowledge by investigating whether CSE programs have been effective in accommodating non-Western migrants' needs with the increase in immigration flows in Western Europe.

This paper is grounded in an understanding of cultural integration as defined by Berry in the two-dimension identity theory from 1980, recalled by Algan, Bisin & Verdier (2012), that considers 4 different acculturation strategies which relate to how minority groups interact with host societies. Embedding cultural integration within Berry's broader theory about acculturation allows the reader to understand cultural integration as a process which allows minority groups to gain the tools to understand and better communicate their needs in a culturally different context. Culturally sensitive programs enable young people to navigate different sexual cultures and contextualize sexuality education in a framework of human rights and gender equality (UNESCO, 2018). This paper relates how CSE programs could be an indicator linked to the social integration of non-Western minorities, as it is an integrative part of the educational agenda within Western Europe. Stemming from the fact that CSE aims at promoting positive attitudes towards cultural differences, and the relevance of the effects of CSE on young migrants' feelings of integration, the goal of this paper is to investigate whether CSE programs have positive effects on young adults who are confronted with new cultural realities. Therefore, the research question is the following:

Do Comprehensive Sexuality Education programs have positive effects on the cultural integration of non-Western minorities within Western host societies?

This paper first reflects on previous findings on migration, cultural integration, sexuality education program adaptation, to embed the research within the existing literature. Departing from Berry's understanding of cultural integration, the paper aims to offer a new perspective within the ongoing discussion, by using CSE programs as a basis for understanding cultural differences and promoting cultural integration. This is followed by an overview of the research methodology and design, which aims at justifying the methodology used and providing relevant information about the collection of data. This is followed by the analysis of in-depth interviews with 8 participants, migrants from non-Western host societies in Western Europe. Conclusively, a discussion on the research findings will answer the research question and inform about

whether CSE programs contribute to migrants' feelings of cultural integration.

Chapter 1: Sex Education Programs and Young Migrants

In this chapter, I will discuss the debate between program fidelity and program adaptation, encompassing two examples of CSE programs which have been thoroughly reviewed and analyzed in Pakistan and in Ethiopia and addressing concerns about program implementation. A description of different integration theories will be presented to justify the use of Berry's two-dimensional identity theory. This will allow the reader to understand the theoretical framework of this research. My discussion will show that by addressing program adaptation and cultural integration, it is plausible to expect that CSE programs do have positive effects on the cultural integration of young migrants in Western host societies.

As previously mentioned, programs include core learning objectives which can be translated across settings. Eliminating key messages, topics, or skills which are fundamental to the quality of the program are a reason for less impactful programs (Wiefferink et al. 2005). The nature of the program adaptations is fundamental in understanding how lessons will be perceived and incorporated by young learners. Bonjour and Vlugt (2018) inform that program adaptations impact program effectiveness in that young learners are divested of important skills, knowledge and attitudes which influences how they learn about sexuality. Community values are factors which drive adaptation (Hunt & Ott, 2014). Communities may hold religious or political views that are opposed to program content, which can shape learning objectives. Chandra-Mouli et al. (2018) reviewed program development in Pakistan. Aahung and Rutgers Pakistan[3] have successfully adapted sex education programs by building community support and responding to resistant actors. Their success is grounded in their competence to tackle the community's nuances and work together with stakeholders (including community leaders, learners, teachers, parents). The program adaptations reflected the needs and desires of the learners and it was well perceived at the community level. This allowed to include these sets of skills, knowledge and attitudes within the school curricula's learning objectives. Figure 1 summarizes the strategies used by the organizations.

---

[3] Aahung is a Pakistani organization working in Pakistan's Sindh region since 1995 to support girls' and boys' sexual and reproductive health and rights, whereas Rutgers Pakistan is a branch of the Dutch organization that works with sexual and reproductive health and rights experts since 1997.
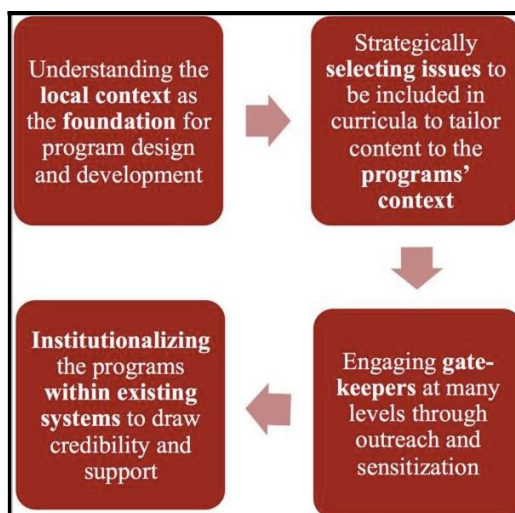
Figure 1. Strategies for program adaptation.

Research on program adaptation requires volunteers who are motivated, participants are recruited from unique populations which produce outcomes which are not generalizable (Hunt & Ott, 2014). On one hand, this allows us to understand what tools are necessary for certain groups of learners; on the other hand, it is hard to establish whether these program adaptations can be transferred at the community level. This means that adaptations should be evaluated by considering the outcome impact on the learners' attitudes, skills and knowledge around sexuality. To address this issue, Hunt and Ott (2014) and the Pakistani organizations recommend to build relationships with the stakeholders, including youth, gather data and complete needs assessments to understand the local context, select issues which are in line with core components of the programs and which can be measured as outcomes.

Furthermore, research conducted in Ethiopia described by Browes (2015) has shown that CSE programs are a useful tool to engage both students and teachers in discussions around sex. The study has suggested that it is important to engage the broader community and therefore consider the cultural setting, in order to impact CSE program outcomes. Programs often fail because their learning objectives are mismatched with reality, namely the needs of the learners, and Aggleton (2004) suggests that using comprehensive and rights-based approaches to learn about sex, including risks, pleasure and gender norms could solve this. In fact, differences in cultural values, social norms and beliefs (Browes, 2015) as well as attitudes towards sexual violence, closely tied with cultural values (Schneider & Hirsch 2018), are some of the main focuses described in the ITGSE. This case study demonstrates how cultural differences must be addressed to develop CSE programs.

Another body of research advocates for 'hybrid' programs (Castro & Barrera, 2004), which aims at combining adaptation to cultural diversity and fidelity to the developed programs. The need for 'hybrid' programs comes from immigrant populations' concerns for the impact of acculturation on traditional cultural values and practices. Therefore, adaptation should address

the deep structure of programs, referring to core values and beliefs that belong to the cultural group. By addressing the deep structure of programs, program developers can understand the target groups. This allows program developers and learners to work together with cultural nuances, which ultimately enables minority groups to build trust towards the programs (Castro & Barrera, 2004).

UNESCO's Global review (2015) revealed that there is a significant gap between commitment to programs and the implementation of CSE. The operalization of CSE programs is still problematic, in that even though some policies may be in place at the local level, a lot still has to be done to bring the programs within schools and communities (Bonjour & Vlugt, 2018). Furthermore, in cases where CSE programs were adopted, they are complementary to already existing curricula, such as biology, or citizenship. CSE program implementation widely varies in quality within countries and across countries. Wiefferink et al. (2005) identified factors which influence program implementation[4] and states that focus on these elements could account for the desired program impact (Wiefferink et al., 2005). How programs are implemented depends on these factors, so implementation influences the outcome of these factors. Therefore, this paper assumes that negative or non-significant outcomes of CSE programs might result from imprecise implementation. The purpose of addressing this concern with program implementation is to show that the effectiveness of programs could be related to program implementation and not directly to CSE programs.

Resuming the review on program adaptation, both surface and deep structures, like changing the language used and referring to other images or cultural references, have proven to not have an impact on the overall effectiveness of the programs. Those that undergo adaptation and which are transported across settings have also proven to have a positive impact on knowledge, attitudes and skills acquired by the learners. Program adaptation has the potential to address differences among people within the same group, with special attention given to ethnic diversity in mixed classes (Hunt & Ott, 2014). This is especially linked to the purpose of this research because, by addressing ethnic diversity, programs provide learners with the tools to understand cultural differences within groups, for example, mixed classes, allowing individuals, including migrants, to better communicate their needs in a culturally different context.

With the increasing immigration flows in Europe, local political agendas have to deal with the ethnic and cultural transformative heterogeneity trends (Algan, Bisin & Verdier, 2012). Public debates on national identity arise, where the advantages and disadvantages of cultural diversity

---

[4] Wiefferink et al. (2005) identified factors which influence program implementation, which can be summarized as 1) program fidelity, implementing core learning objectives across programs; 2) the content and the approach to teaching it, which can be ideological or pedagogical; 3) the teachers and educators; 4) the learner perspective; 5) the learning environment; 6) the socio-cultural, economic and political contexts to learning; 7) the programming process per se, how all the elements of implementation are tackled.

are scaled. Public bans on "the visible wearing of any political, philosophical or religious signs"[5] in the workplace, issued by the European Court of Justice show that cultural trends are a present reality in the lives of many individuals. Political agendas must find a balance between the assimilation of minorities within the majority's culture and accommodate the diversity of the cultural landscape unique to a country's demographics. Policies should promote cross-cultural communication, facilitate tolerance, trust, respect for differences among groups, which would ultimately help advance new national identities (Algan, Bisin & Verdier, 2012). By integrating the voices of ethnic minorities, policies create the space for a deeper understanding of cultural differences.

Yet, cultural integration remains a topic of debate among scholars and policymakers and culture shocks are a reality which affects individuals (Winkelman, 1994). Research on cultural integration has led to two distinct models - one linear and the other two-dimensional. The linear model conceptualizes acculturation as having strong ties with one cultural group and weak ties with the other cultural group (Singh & Hu, 2001). This model assumes that individuals' integration depends on one of the two cultural groups and that being integrated within one group automatically excludes participation with the other. The linear model shows assimilationist tones, by framing cultural differences as hindering participation, as minority groups are expected, over time, to converge towards the majority's norms, attitudes, behaviors (Gordon, 1964). The two-dimensional model adds an extra layer to acculturation. It considers the individual's relationship with both cultural groups. Minority groups can have strong or weak ties with both contemporarily, as the two relationships are independent of each other. I will now present the model.

Berry explains that there are 4 possibilities for the two groups to interact and coexist. Figure 2 is a visual representation of his theory. If minority groups have a strong connection to their traditional values, but weak to the majority group, their strategy is to remain separated from the host society. Marginalization implies separation from both traditional and host cultures, assimilation refers to separating from personal traditional cultures to *assimilate* the host society's values and practices. *Integration* occurs when minority groups feel strong ties with both their traditional and local sets of values. This is ultimately the strategy preferred by Berry for minority groups, as it allows them to coexist with host societies and function together, without having to sacrifice elements from their worlds. Minority groups are confronted with realities which can be far away from their familial ones, where the majority of people around them live by different sets of values and beliefs. Minority groups actively deal with cultural differences, however, this model does not address the host society's responsibility of integrating them in society.

---

[5] "The Hijab ruling is a ban on Muslim women" by Iman Amrani on The Guardian, 2017

	Majority group	
	Strong	Weak
Strong	Integration	Separation
Weak	Assimilation	Marginalization

Note: "Minority group" label appears on the left side of the table.

Figure 2. Two-dimensional identity theory.

Berry's theory suggests that individuals who are exposed to new sets of values and beliefs and who have received the host society's educational skills have a stronger sense of cultural integration. This is explained by the fact that host societies and cultural minorities work together to build an understanding of cultural differences. On one hand, host societies gain insights on the needs of minority groups, on the other hand minority groups learn to communicate their needs in a culturally different context. Furthermore, CSE programs have learning objectives which are adapted to the different cultural contexts (Cense, de Neef & Visscher, 2018). This leads to the expectation that, if CSE programs are implemented globally, individuals who are exposed to new sets of values and beliefs, namely migrants, should gain the tools to communicate and understand the cultural differences which stand among cultural groups and ultimately feel culturally integrated.

Chapter 2: Research Methodology and Design

The data was collected using a qualitative research approach with 8 in-depth interviews. This allows for a deeper understanding of individuals' experiences with sex education throughout their lives and their current perceptions of cultural integration within Western host societies. Interviewees were chosen by contacting International students in the Netherlands, Germany and Spain, because this kind of environment allows to recruit people with different non-Western cultural backgrounds. For the sake of objectivity, interviewees are not part of the researcher's close ties, therefore the researcher does not know the participants personally. Contact was made with them via social media, requesting to participate in an interview. 8 individuals responded positively and a video call with each of them was scheduled between 27/04/2020 and 30/04/2020. A more randomized sample would have been preferred, as this would have allowed reaching individuals from outside the academic environment, but space and time constraints limited interviews to a more contained group. Sex, gender, age and religion are factors that the researcher gathered and the purpose of asking such details is to show that the research applies to people with different backgrounds and existences. Out of the 8 participants, 4 were female and 4 were male, they all identified as heterosexual, except one female participant who identified as demisexual[6]. 5 participants reside in the Netherlands, 1 in Germany

---

[6] Demisexuality is a sexual orientation in which someone feels sexual attraction only to people with whom they have an emotional bond. Most demisexuals feel sexual attraction rarely compared to the general

and 2 in Spain and ages range from 20 to 31 years. Nationalities included Iranian, Indian, Palestinian, Russian, Pakistani, Somali Dutch and two Columbians. Each participant was enquired about their religious orientations and all reported not practicing any religion. All participants were recruited within the academic environment and they all reported having at least a Bachelor's degree.

8 questions were prepared to cover the topics which concern this research and they are listed in the table below. The questions were semi-structured, to encourage the participants to flexibly express themselves and freely explore their memories and experiences around cultural integration and sexuality education. The structured aspect of the questions allows to answer the research question without imposing the researcher's view (Taylor et al. 2016) and to compare participants' responses. Semi-structured interviews were preferred because structured interviews don't offer the same flexibility to participants, whereas unstructured interviews constrain from comparing participants' responses (Taylor et al. 2016). Each question is preceded by a short description of the question topic to inform about the direction of the question. By not providing such explanations, the questions would have led to open-ended answers which are not useful in answering the research question. Before each interview, participants were told that they had full anonymity. They could choose to withdraw any part of the interview, go in-depth with their answers, or choose to not answer some questions, yet all participants shared information related to each question. Interviews were not restricted in a time frame, therefore each interview lasted between 1-3 hours. Lastly, the interviews were conducted via Whatsapp voice calls in English.

Question 1.
With the next couple of questions, I would like to gain a better understanding of the interviewee's cultural background, in the familial context but also throughout their upbringing, which includes school and community. Cultural beliefs are often learned within the home and the surrounding environment. For people who leave the area where those cultural beliefs are commonly shared, it can be hard to find a new balance between what we internally accept and what we are confronted with, namely new sets of values and beliefs, which can clash with our personal views of the world. This can be problematic in face of feelings of inclusion and integration.
How long have you been living where you currently reside? Did you move with your family/guardians or alone? What are the reasons behind moving?
Do you feel culturally integrated into this current cultural context?

Question 2.
Cultural integration is a process by which migrants who enter a new society with different cultural and social norms, can coexist with the differences yet at the same time maintain their own cultural, traditional norms. As opposed to assimilation, which indicates a detachment from personal, familial beliefs and separation, which implies a lack of inclusion and feelings of detachment from host society's sets of values and beliefs.

---

population, and some have little to no interest in sexual activity. Retrieved from:
http://demisexuality.org/articles/what-is-demisexuality/

Did you experience a strong cultural clash when you moved? If so, what influenced it?
Was it easier for you to integrate with people of a similar cultural background?
Did you feel like the host society was open to understanding your cultural differences? Did your feelings towards your own cultural beliefs and values change?

Question 3.
One of the factors which influence cultural integration is the social aspect, which includes language, religion, cultural beliefs, but also education. Feeling culturally integrated means that individuals have the skills and attitudes to better communicate both within their cultural groups but also with host societies. Cultural differences can be bridged with proper communication skills.
Do you have a hard time communicating with people of different cultural backgrounds to yours? If so, where would you say the difficulty lies in communicating?
The host society was welcoming in that it provided the tools for you to learning about present values and beliefs, and was open to learn about your own cultural values. This shows openness and an effort to find a balance, without pushing individuals in any specific direction. Would you agree with this? Does this resonate with your experience?

Question 4.
The sets of values and beliefs that we learn throughout our upbringing can mutate over time, be influenced by certain factors which we encounter in life (i.e. being confronted with new values which we feel more in line with). However, some values and beliefs, which ultimately shape our attitudes and behaviors, remain present throughout our lives and influence how we approach the world and how we decide to give it meaning.
Does your cultural background have a strong influence on how you relate to others in this current cultural context?
Are you ever confronted with situations in which you are reminded of your sets of values while growing up? How do you find a balance between your values and beliefs in relation to your more familial and traditional values and the circumstances laid out within the context of the current host society?

Question 5.
Western European countries are known to have addressed many 'taboo' conversations, normalizing discourses around sexuality and gender. This makes it easier for individuals to talk about issues they may be concerned with and deal with problems of different nature, by resorting to conversations with peers, teachers, families. For someone who is not used to unraveling such conversations, this can cause feelings of discomfort and ultimately exclusion from group conversations.
Do you find it easy to engage in conversations with others on different topics, i.e. sexuality?
What are some of the factors which help you engage in these conversations?
Are there specific people that you engage in these conversations with?
Are the conversations beneficial/do you learn from these conversations?
Are you able to communicate your feelings of discomfort?

Question 6.
One factor which influences individuals 'comfort' in engaging in these conversations can be because they have been normalized as they were learning, perhaps within the family or at school. For some individuals, parents and teachers may be unwilling and uncomfortable teaching young people about sexuality. This can lead individuals to feel the same discomfort, as they did not learn the tools to engage in these conversations.

Growing up, were conversations about sexuality often or re-occuringly touched upon among family members, community members, peers, teachers? If so, what was the nature of the conversations?
Throughout your upbringing within your familial and school context, have you experienced shame or guilt over talking about sexuality? If so, do you think this has influenced the way you think about sexuality?
Did you feel like you could talk to someone in case of issues or questions? Or were the conversations private, resulting in stigmatizing them?
Did the digital world have any influence on how you learned about sexuality?

Question 7.
Sex education programs have become a priority for political agendas around the world and international global organizations are active in reaching people in-school and out of school globally. However, a lot has to be done to take individuals into account with different layers of existence i.e. race, class, religion, age...
Did your school have a Sex Education program?
If so, what are the most important topics covered during these classes?
Was it more risk-prevention based?
Was it mandatory?
Were the teachers trained and open?
Were class discussions promoted or was it more structured like a lecture? Or were they encompassing feelings of discomfort? Did this influence how the learners perceived these topics?
Were there topics which still remained 'taboo' or unaddressed?
Were different cultural experiences featured in the classes? Or were there blurred boundaries which the teacher failed to resolve?

Question 8.
Sex education programs have been designed to accommodate cultural differences, meaning that topics should be tailored based on the target population. It provides the learners the tools to tackle discussions about different sexual behaviors, gender equality, diversity - which ultimately promotes inclusion, specifically of vulnerable minorities. This should provide the learner with skills, attitudes and knowledge to engage in healthy and equitable relationships throughout their lives.
Has your sex education been useful in providing these tools? If so, do you think the lessons concerning sexuality learned during your upbringing have influenced how you communicate and integrate within your societal context?
Have sex education programs played a role in how you communicate within your cultural group but also across cultures?
If not, how do you think sex education programs improve this important aspect of their aim?
Have these lessons been useful when you moved to where you currently reside?
Have these lessons had a positive effect on your perception of your cultural integration?

Table 2. Interview Questions.

The first 4 questions are related to the participants' perceptions of their cultural integration. Understanding how participants feel towards both their traditional sets of values and beliefs and the host society's is relevant to understanding how they feel about the differences. Focusing on their perceptions of cultural differences allows to understand whether they feel culturally integrated within the host society. This allows the researcher to assess whether sexuality

education has contributed to shaping their perceptions of cultural integration. The next 3 questions were related to discourses around sexuality. By asking participants about their sexuality education within and out of school, the researcher was able to assess what kind of knowledge, skills and attitudes participants were taught growing up. Questions 5 and 6 were related to how the participants confronted conversations around sexuality while growing up, whereas question 7 was specific to in-school sexuality education. The purpose of this is to understand whether the participants' attitudes, skills and knowledge towards sex now are a product of the environment in which they grew up, including in-school sexuality education. The last question addresses their understanding of how sexuality education affects how they perceive and reflect on cultural differences now. By being asked to consider if sexuality education has given them the tools to understand their sexualities and the ones of others, participants were asked to reflect on how sexuality education has shaped their feelings towards their cultural integration. Overall, the research is led by 2 broader topics which emerge with the questions: cultural integration and sexuality education. The chapter on results follows this order. Asking these questions in terms of the 2 broader topics allowed the researcher to investigate whether CSE has positive effects on cultural integration, therefore to fulfill the expectations which led the research.

The approach used to analyze the data was thematic analysis, which is a method for analyzing themes within data and interpreting aspects of a research topic (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The themes were analyzed inductively, which is a process of analyzing data without trying to fit in within pre-existing analytic preconceptions, allowing for themes to emerge from the interviews. A semantic approach was used to analyze the data, which means that the researcher did not look for anything beyond what a participant said during the interviews. Thematic analysis obligates the researcher to follow their theoretical framework and embed the themes within the broader theory used throughout the paper (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Therefore, the themes are strictly linked to the participants' feelings of cultural integration and their experiences with sexuality education, as these pertain to the theory which drives the research.

Chapter 3: Results

I will first start with describing results about how participants experience their general integration within Western host societies, by presenting the themes that emerged, namely integration among people of similar cultural backgrounds, their approach to cultural differences and their perceptions of the host society's approach to cultural differences. Secondly, I will describe results about the participants' experiences with sexuality education, in school and out of school, by illustrating the themes that emerged, grouped as discourses around sexuality outside the school context and sex education programs in school. The last theme that emerged, namely at the intersection between sex education programs and cultural integration, is strictly linked to the research question because it offered insight into whether participants perceive sexuality education to have a positive effect on feelings of cultural integration.

Topic 1: Cultural Integration within Western host society.

Integration among people of similar cultural backgrounds
One of the most shared feelings was that integration was most common among people with similar cultural backgrounds. In line with Berry's acculturation theory, different participants associate this feeling to the fact that they are projected within a society which lives by a set of values and beliefs that is often hard to understand and not in line with their original cultures. Associating with people who have similar cultural backgrounds allows them to be understood on a deeper level, without having to explain themselves. They share struggles and this allows them to feel more comfort and less alienation. One participant reported that certain cultural differences among groups back home are resolved here, in that in the Western host society, they are seen as one unique minority. Related to the theoretical framework on cultural integration, this finding entails that integration is strongly influenced by the sets of values and beliefs that a person holds, as they are a ground upon which individuals build connections.

"Here we are a minority, even if we are different, so we rather come together instead of going against each other." - Participant 1

All participants were clear in explaining that their sets of values and beliefs were key in enhancing or hindering integration with the other cultural group. Because similar cultural groups have similar sets of values and beliefs, integration is facilitated among individuals with similar cultural backgrounds. This theme is linked to the research question in that it shows how non-Western migrants in Western host societies are faced with new sets of values and beliefs which can be far from their traditional ones, which can hinder their integration process. This links to the following theme, in that not only are non-Western migrants drawn to people with similar backgrounds, but they are also confronted with cultural differences with host societies.

Approach to cultural differences
Following Berry's model, participants revealed that their cultural integration was influenced by their perceptions of the cultural differences with the host society. Confirming Winkelman's theory on culture shocks, many interviews show that cultural shocks are common among migrants and that each individual deals with cultural shocks differently. One of the differences lies in how values are approached and questioned. One participant describes their experience of cultural shock as bringing them closer to the values they grew up with. Another participant reported diverging from their original sets of values, feeling more in line with the host society. Another interviewee reported that being confronted with new sets of values and beliefs allows them to be critical of the differences.

"Balance comes from understanding [...] what would be beneficial, being critical about values and from the other side as well, be critical about everything" -Participant 7

Individuals critically reflect on the sets of values and beliefs they are familiar with and the ones they are confronted with. Ultimately, the outcomes of this reflection is tailored to each individual. Being able to accept and understand new mindsets which come with different values is a step towards reconciling cultural differences. This finding is in line with the aim of CSE to allow learners to engage with and understand cultural differences. Interviewees report that one way of reconciling the differences is by departing from a common line of understanding and that failing to do so can complicate the integration process. However, a common thread that was found among interviews was the fact that all the participants live within International contexts, which welcomes people from all over the world. New migrants who arrive build relationships with people with whom they share struggles and host societies are more welcoming towards cultural diversity.

"It was easier to communicate with people who have international backgrounds, rather than with Germans [...] Because you have similar experiences and struggles. This makes you feel more connected." -Participant 4

"To establish whether I am culturally integrated is tricky. I do feel integrated within the international scene, but not within the Dutch" -Participant 1

"There are many cultures here so I felt very well accepted." -Participant 7

Another common finding concerning cultural differences among interviewees is the perceived difference between sympathy and empathy, closed societies and open societies, and how this affects individuals' perceptions of cultural integration.

"The ones that are open have a stronger sense of the collective, are more empathetic, whereas the closed ones are more individualistic, in terms of efficiency and thinking about individual needs. I come from a very open culture to a closed and individualized one. I don't know what is hindering integration… whether it is *knowing* of this phenomenon or actually not being able to." -Participant 5

"[...] there is also a difference between understanding on an intellectual level and then actually understanding on a personal level. This might be the difference between empathy and sympathy. People here are more sympathetic, while back home and among people who are part of the eastern clique, it's more about empathy. Sometimes you don't have to give cultural contexts, because some people instantly get it because they have grown up with similar understandings of life." -Participant 2.

This finding shows how individuals might initially struggle with cultural integration because the differences are deeply rooted in how they interact with one another. This hinders cultural integration because the difference is salient and migrants experience this constantly, which can increase feelings of alienation for some people. This can have negative consequences on their

sense of integration, gravitating towards strategies of separation or marginalization, described by Berry (see figure 2, chapter 1) . On the other hand, this major difference can also enhance individuals' understanding of their own culture, making cultural differences deeply appreciated and embraced.

"In Spain they appreciate how warm South American people are. Spain is still very Western, compared to Latin America which is still warm, they appreciate this difference." -Participant 6

"[...] you take the good parts of both cultures and leave out the bad things. Everything that is positive for me. [...] you get the best of both worlds. " -Participant 8

These data extracts show how integration processes are nuanced and tailored to each individual. Participants were clear in explaining that assimilation, as defined by Gordon (1964), is a process which they do not accept. They perceive cultural integration to be a process which leaves space for their traditional sets of values, beliefs and norms within a culturally different context. Assimilation, as portrayed in the linear model of integration discussed by Singh and Hu (2001), refrains individuals from expressing the traditional aspects of their culture - yet the interview extracts show that individuals who integrate are driven by the desire to find a balance between their traditional values and the mainstream norms. This leads the researcher to focus on how the host society approaches cultural differences.

Perception of host society's approach to cultural differences
Another theme that emerged, which is lacking in Berry's theory, is the role host societies play in the cultural integration of minorities. If host societies gained the skills, knowledge and attitudes to deal with cultural differences, minorities could feel more integrated, understanding cultural integration as a process driven by both groups. One participant explained that even if she feels fully integrated within Dutch society, there are times where she feels that the host society treats her differently, based on assumptions about her cultural background and this makes it hard for her to feel fully integrated with Dutch society, even if she has lived there for 23 years.

I already know that I will face some harder experiences compared to people who come from here and look like it." -Participant 8

A common understanding among participants is that host societies are open to accepting cultural differences. The problem rather lies in the fact that there are common assumptions about non-Western cultures (e.g. Pakistani or Palestinian). This hinders individuals who have these cultural backgrounds to explain the reality of these assumptions. One interviewee reports that this inability to act upon the assumptions is driven by the fact that the Western culture tends to generalize Middle Eastern cultures to one unique cultural group.

'[...] in the Netherlands I felt that there is a notion of superiority to Islamic background cultures, it happens politely but mainly from my interactions there is a sense of superiority." -Participant 3

"[...] some people really have a bad perception of Pakistan as a 'bad' country [...] so it's hard to communicate the complexity of my country." -Participant 5

"[...] people tend to generalize and misunderstand, so I would like to tell them, but then I also don't want to be passive aggressive." -Participant 8

These interviews show that misconceptions are common among Western societies, related to the impression that minorities from the Middle East are one homogeneous cultural group. This is attributed to a lack of skills, knowledge and attitudes from the host society's side in understanding cultural differences, which Berry's theory fails to address. Another assumption which appeared through the interviews is the common belief that values of freedom are unique to Western societies and that non-Western societies reject them. Commonly known 'Western values' are products of the West, yet they are values which relate to human rights and therefore touch people all over the world. This perspective relates to this research in that it shows how CSE programs may be pioneered in the West, yet they are based on universal human rights and as such concern populations from all over the world.

"In Pakistan, feminism is shunned, it is seen as Western and foreign, but the values which come with feminism are intrinsically human, not Western" -Participant 5

A shared perspective which emerged from the interviews is that, overall, Western host societies are less understanding of cultural differences because they simply are not interested and don't have the tools to approach the differences. This is a common perception of migrants in all three regions of Europe analyzed, Spain, Germany and the Netherlands.

"[...] generally Spanish people don't care too much about that, not that they don't want you to adapt, they just don't mind and so they are not interested in understanding more about your culture, they just coexist.' -Participant 7

"[In Germany] They were not open to my perspective, they provided tools to understand their own culture and were welcoming, but they didn't really try to understand my beliefs and what I went through." -Participant 4

"I was given the tools to adapt to Dutch culture [...], like what to expect from Dutch people [...]. But this was not both sided, Dutch society was not interested in hearing my story [...]."
-Participant 5

These recollections show that host societies are not always interested in learning about cultural differences, but on the other hand, they are welcoming and open to non-Western minorities, providing tools to be understood by migrants. This finding shows that differences which remain unaddressed can lead migrant communities to feel further alienated from the host society, fostering feelings of exclusion, which ultimately hinders cultural integration - as confirmed by Berry's theory. However, what this research shows is that integration is facilitated if both parties

show interest in reaching common understandings. In fact, participants report that being understood by host societies is an integral aspect of their cultural integration.

<u>Topic 2: Sex Education in school and out of school.</u>

Discourses around sexuality outside the school context

The first theme which emerged with regards to sexuality education is that participants learn about sexuality outside the school and throughout their lives. The reason behind analyzing the emerging themes around sexuality education is to highlight that interviewees learned about sexuality within their communities and not solely through sex education programs in school. What is meant by "discourses around sexuality" is the participant's ability to engage in conversations about sex, growing up and now. All the interviewees reported being more open towards these conversations now. Different reasons for this emerged, such as having more tolerant attitudes towards sexual differences, more knowledge and skills around topics, the curiosity to understand other people's perspectives. For some individuals, this comes more naturally, as they were familiarized with the topic at a younger age.

"My mom had gay best friends, she was very open, so she taught me, because of my upbringing I was already familiar with this discourse" -Participant 5

Other individuals found it more challenging to engage in these conversations, because growing up, they have associated many aspects of sex with stigma and 'taboo'. A lot of stigmatization comes from the fact that topics were not addressed at the community level, including gender bias, inequality and toxic masculinity.

"[Talking about shame and stigma] as a girl you have to behave, there is a lot of stigma around female sexuality, historically, also considering *machismo*. In schools guys really contributed to this machismo." -Participant 6

Another example disclosed by a few participants is that homosexuality was never addressed in their community and that therefore they grew up misunderstanding this nuanced existence. This has influenced their approach to the topic in their adult life as they didn't have the tools to relate to it. This is often mistaken with a lack of openness towards acceptance.

"I wasn't exposed to anyone who is gay and going into depth about sex, so I feel a bit lost, I can't relate." -Participant 2

"I lack study on the matter, but I am keen to learn but I cannot participate in a discourse. People [back home] don't have discussions like this, they are afraid to open up, seek freedom."
-Participant 1

This finding shows that having knowledge around sexuality helps individuals engage in these conversations, especially with certain people. For example, participant 1 also reported that people who have similar backgrounds to him are more approachable with questions because they lack judgment, they can dissociate his ignorance from stigma and prejudices, such as around the notion of homosexuality. This links back to the findings around the theme of cultural integration among individuals with similar cultural backgrounds. People of similar cultural backgrounds understand cultural nuances. This finding is in line with CSE programs introduced in Pakistan, where developers worked together with different stakeholders, including learners, to understand their attitudes towards sexuality. Interviewees brought up the feelings of closeness to the people they talk to, understanding their perspectives, which drives acceptance of sexual diversity, but also feeling more comfortable with talking about and engaging in sex.

"Growing up, a lot of sex conversations wouldn't happen. [...] Listening to the experience of a friend, I got a lot of tips on how to discover sexual endeavors with men. When I did have sex,[...] I felt more comfortable." -Participant 5

All the participants also associated learning about sexuality with media, including social media, film, pornography. Overall, this tool is perceived to have beneficial effects on individuals' knowledge around sexuality. One participant reported feeling more comfortable resolving their questions online because there was no judgment, while another reported feeling more open towards sexual differences and attributed this to social media. Bonjour and Vlugt (2018) do refer to the increasing role of the digital world in shaping learners' knowledge around sexuality and state that sexuality education should include digital material which learners can use privately. Another interesting perspective was given by participant 3, as they mentioned that they learned about sexuality through the aid of religious books.

"[...] there are books that teach about sex and being in bed. Sex in portrayed in a good way, it is part of you perfecting something about yourself, you perfect yourself as a good Muslim." -Participant 3.

This leads to the debate between religion and culture, found across interviews. A common perception is that religion holds values that are conservative and against any kind of sex education. Sexuality is perceived as something reserved to the married couple, yet this interview demonstrates that what is associated with conservatism is an expression of culture, Islamic practices and Middle Eastern cultural preservation, rather than religion (Page & Shipley, 2016). In their chapter about sexuality and religion, Page and Shipley explain how many people build on the stigma around virginity. Women are respectful of this religious practice because they are fearful of the consequences within their families and communities. Participant 1 confirms this relationship between stigma and religious practice:

"My cousin is 26 and even if we are less conservative as a family she doesn't want to have sex before marriage, because of stigma, not for religion." -Participant 1

Nevertheless, CSE programs are set out to meet community needs, therefore religious beliefs are to be taken into account, along with cultural norms. The next part of the analysis focuses on presenting the findings on the theme of sex education within schools, to understand how cultural norms influence program content.

Sex Education programs in school

The interviews revealed that there are some common aspects of sexuality education programs across the world. Participants often revealed that the sex education programs offered in school are integrated within other curricula, such as biology in India or ethics in Colombia, as suggested by studies on CSE program implementation (Bonjour & Vlugt, 2018). Others referred that the programs were called differently, for example 'managing the Family', in the case of Iran. The content of these programs was often said to be superficial, lacking an in-depth perspective on sexual behaviors that go beyond mere explanations of puberty, prevention and reproduction, which is also one of the pitfalls described by Bonjour and Vlugt.

> "[...] there was a hint on the topic in biology, but just about reproduction, there was not even anything about how to navigate love." -Participant 3

> "Mostly around reproduction and how it works, not even prevention of STDs/HIV, only condoms. There is a strong stigma around periods in Pakistan as well." -Participant 5

> "[...] they didn't pay much attention to it, this is how the body reproduces, they tell you about contraceptives, but not much about pleasure, gender norms, sexual violence." -Participant 8

Overall, the interviews show how superficial sex education programs are around the world, some of which also concentrate on what is culturally unacceptable. In fact, only one interviewee reported being satisfied with the curriculum content. Even though she went to an all-girls Catholic school, she was still given the tools to explore sexuality safely.

> "I have a clear idea of the values that I learned and I still use them in my life, they help me integrate with many people. I was lucky to learn so well in school." -Participant 6

Nevertheless, this person also reported that the classes were taught heteronormatively, meaning that topics around non-heterosexuality were only mentioned. Other participants reported programs not even mentioning non-heteronormative sex, which is damaging to children's understanding of sexual identity, which is a core component of CSE programs.

> "I did not understand homosexuality fully, I was never in a culture open to homosexuality, I found it bizarre to find someone homosexual. I didn't know how to deal with this." -Participant 3

> "[...] school should be a safe space, [children] should have the same access to information compared to any heterosexual kid." -Participant 8

An overarching perception is that sex education programs are not set out to be sex-positive as they often fail to address the positive aspects around sex, such as pleasure and arousal, and the more sociological aspects of sex, including sexual diversity, gender equality, GBV[7], which are essential aims of CSE. The findings show that program content is also determined by the rules set out by the schools and the community. This is positive in light of program adaptations, but it risks leaving out important key components of CSE programs. In fact, one interviewee reported that their school program catered to the community's cultural beliefs more so than protecting students from unhealthy sexual behaviors.

"[Sex education programs are] not even risk-prevention, it was more about cultural preservation, because it's a community governed by religion and culture" -Participant 3

This shows how CSE programs, which aim at including all aspects of sex within curricula content, have to face adaptation to community needs and cultural norms. This requires working with teachers to create programs which are respectful towards cultural preservation and include all core components (Bonjour & Vlugt, 2018). Several interviewees reported that to overcome shame or stigma around certain topics, teachers could perhaps refer to other platforms which can educate students, including media. This theme is crucial to understand that sexuality education happens both in school and out of school. People's perception of sexuality is closely linked to the personal and private sphere and learners need to develop the tools to face sexuality and sexual differences within a safe environment. This can include online platforms, where judgment, shame and stigma weigh less on individuals.

"Other platforms can help, like the digital world, there is no judgment about reading an article. I don't have to engage, or be judged for my lack of insight, from a video even." -Participant 1

"The discomfort comes from the fact that no one was equipped with talking about these things, in terms of the physicality of sex and the emotional aspect was learned through mass media."
-Participant 4

Sex Education Programs and Cultural Integration
Another theme appeared throughout the interviews. Many people reported that classes are perceived as homogenous groups. Students in the class are taught concepts independently of their cultural background, which is blind to within-group cultural differences. This is essential to the research because it shows how students are denied access to important tools that would aid them in navigating cultural differences among people throughout their lives. Furthermore, one participant reported that this is common among teachers and other program devices, such as manuals.

---

[7] Gender-based violence.

"Teachers were unfamiliar with ethnic backgrounds, they were not able to address the cultural differences. In Middle Eastern and African cultures, sexuality is seen as taboo, so you could tell when people felt uncomfortable when the topics were raised, even school books fail to address this." -Participant 8

"There was not much cultural differentiation, it was more centered around our culture."
-Participant 6

In fact, the last interview questions are linked to the effect of this shortcoming on the interviewees' lives throughout their adolescence and adult lives. All participants reported that sex education programs have failed them in providing them with the tools to navigate different cultures, especially in a world which is exposed to cross-cultural demographic landscapes - this is in line with the existing literature on CSE program implementation conducted by Bonjour and Vlugt (2018). The following section delves into this concept and aims at demonstrating the hypothesis of this paper.

Each participant was asked to reflect on their experiences with sex education programs and their approach to discourses around sexuality in the context of their migration from non-Western countries to Western Europe. They all had a clear understanding of the lessons they learned throughout their lives and were critical about how each lesson contributed to their approach to cultural diversity. A reoccurring line of thought is that knowledge is a crucial element for understanding other people and their sexuality. In fact, participants often referred to this knowledge as 'building blocks' to learn about sexuality.

"You have to give them the building blocks step by step, for them to create a big picture of sex and build it on their own." -Participant 5

"Primary education helps you make psychological connections, school shouldn't teach you the *right* way, but give you building blocks to understand that people make choices, and do this in an objective way." -Participant 8

By providing tools and building blocks, sex education programs invite students to understand and navigate different sexual realities. Participants reported having a more nuanced understanding of sexuality education. By addressing the biological aspects, but also the socio-cultural realms of sexuality, young people would gain a better understanding of other people's experiences, which is an essential aspect of CSE programs.

"[...] there is more of a focus on protection, they tell you to feel free to practice, but be healthy, there should be a focus on some psychological aspects and sex education should be more respectful to culture and religion, before even talking about health and safety." -Participant 3

When students are given the tools to understand that cultural differences exist and are taught to address them, they also learn to respect the fact that people have different internal values and

beliefs. This is ultimately the foundation of cultural integration, as described by Berry, because by respecting other individuals' values and beliefs, young people are encouraged to accept them and coexist with them.

"[...] provide information and present them what is going on, give the context, teach them how society behaves right now, so that they have personal criteria of what is happening and relate themselves to the context, [...] but just give the building blocks" -Participant6

What this stands to show is that providing students with building blocks to shape their own understanding of sexuality can benefit cultural integration, yet programs should not be imposing or invasive towards the target group's reality, as established within the literature on program adaptation. One participant revealed that one way to effectively teach about differences and creating an inclusive environment is that of understanding that humans are intrinsically similar. This provides students with mutual ground upon which they can build relationships and create positive learning experiences on sexual diversity.

"Humans are more alike than they are dissimilar, the things that separate us is in how we deal with stuff and demonstrate things, this should be taken into account." -Participant 8

Generally, the common thought which is shared among interviewees is that cultural integration is nuanced, it stems from many aspects of life, as confirmed by Berry. However, sex education and discourses around sexuality have the potential to free young people from expectations and stigma around sexuality, which makes it easier to understand individuals' motifs behind their sexual behaviors and ultimately their sexual differences. By providing these sets of skills, knowledge and attitudes, young migrants do benefit from this and overcome feelings of exclusion.

"There is this potential in sex education programs, but they have to be implemented properly. If it's not done properly, you risk increasing the problem of exclusion." -Participant 2

However, the most relevant information which was gathered from the interviews is that in-school sex education programs founded on the principles of CSE have yet a long way to go before they can be considered liable for young people's knowledge around the cultural, social and psychological realms of sex. The reason behind this is that sex education programs address topics superficially and in most cases only the biological aspect of sex (Bonjour & Vlugt, 2018). What proves this is that most participants reported being self-taught and learning about sex through other inputs, such as media, conversations, books and films.

Chapter 4: Reflection

The goal of this study was to examine if sex education programs based on the principles of CSE allow young non-Western migrants to foster a sense of cultural integration in Western Europe.

The focus of the study mainly targeted migrants from Colombia, Palestine, Iran, Pakistan, Russia, India and Somalia who have been living in Western Europe, to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences. To assess the experiences of the interviewees, the research focused on the two-dimensional identity model by Berry. The relevance of assessing developments in the field of sexuality education comes from the fact that many international organizations have addressed this issue and presented evidence-based guidelines to implement them, including the *International Technical Guidance for Sexuality Education* by UNESCO, reviewed in 2018. This study suggests that sex education programs based on CSE have the potential to foster positive effects on feelings of cultural integration of non-Western migrants in Western host societies.

In line with the hypothesis, CSE programs can foster feelings of integration, by addressing cultural differences, specifically of non-Western minorities within Western host societies, if they follow the core components described in the ITGSE and if they address cultural differences within groups. Yet the question which guides the research was to understand whether CSE programs *do* have positive effects on cultural integration. In light of the results and the review of the literature on CSE programs, a lot has yet to be done to develop sex education programs worldwide. In fact, the results show that CSE programs have found many obstacles with program adaptation and that locally, program developers have yet to find a way to address the difficulties encountered by minority groups, especially migrants. This has been proven by the fact that many of the participants reported that their cultural integration was not influenced by the tools learned during in-school sex education. Furthermore, the interviews show that participants have not been exposed to the core components of CSE, as these are often left out of curricula, as they are not prioritized within local political agendas. Additionally, the results show that the teachings have not shaped the participants' attitudes towards cultural differences. In light of the research, the findings stand to show that CSE programs, at the time when the participants were exposed to in-school sex education, have yet to advance towards a more culturally inclusive direction, meaning that cultural differences are yet left unaddressed. This means that CSE programs have failed to provide learners with the skills, knowledge and attitudes to address, understand and accept cultural differences.

The results show how participants associate cultural differences with cultural integration. By failing to address cultural nuances within sexuality education curricula, participants are left without the tools to understand cultural differences. In the case of young migrants, they are left to navigate these differences and build their own experiences with no institutional support to direct them towards understanding and accepting new sets of values and beliefs. Additionally, results show that host societies are also divested of these important tools. This is challenging to the existing theory, because it shows how, even though CSE has been pioneered in Western Europe, the learning objectives have yet to be incorporated within Western society's skills, knowledge and attitudes towards cultural differences. In light of the theory around cultural integration, the disparity between CSE aims and the current perceptions of cultural differences within Western host societies, makes the cultural integration process troublesome for young

migrants, leading them to implement different acculturation strategies related to Berry's two-dimensional model.

However, the findings presented in this paper have implications for future research into the effects of CSE programs on feelings of cultural integration. The current results are limited to a small number of data and are thus not representative of migrants' diversified experiences with cultural integration in Western Europe. Furthermore, it must be recognized that all the interviewees had different ethnicities, thus cultural backgrounds, except for two individuals from Colombia, and they were all conforming to heteronormative genders and sexual orientations. Investigating someone from the LGBTQIA+ would have given more insight on the matter, as it would elucidate the current situation of sex education programs in relation to understandings of sexual diversity. Perhaps replicating the study with more specific groups would allow to draw more conclusions about the effect of their sex education on their feelings of cultural integration, for example, individuals from the same school.

Nevertheless, when the participants were asked to reflect upon their experience with sexuality education and how it relates to their perception of the process of cultural integration, they all reported that sexuality education programs have the potential to create a space for individuals to address cultural differences. In light of this, the results confirm that CSE programs do have the potential to positively influence young migrants' feelings of cultural integration because they provide the skills, knowledge and attitudes to deal with sexual and cultural differences. However, this finding does not portend that CSE has been developed and implemented extensively, fulfilling all its core components; the results suggest that cultural differences are a topic which is hardly addressed in sex education curricula. This could be related to the fact that sexuality education has been historically associated with biological aspects like reproduction and risk-prevention. It could perhaps be the case that the concept of sexuality as such has yet to transform on a societal level. This means that there might be a gap between how society perceives it and builds understanding around it and how it is interpreted and defined by the ITGSE, as the "biological, social, psychological, spiritual, political, legal, historical and cultural dimensions that evolve over a lifespan" (UNESCO, 2018, p.17).

Bibliography

Aggleton, P. (2004). *Sexuality, HIV Prevention, Vulnerability and Risk*. Journal of Psychology & Human Sexuality 16 (1): 1 – 11

Algan, Y., Bisin, A., Manning, A., and Verdier, T. (2012). *Cultural integration of immigrants in Europe* Studies of policy reform, 1st edition. Oxford: Oxford UniversityPress.

Beasley, R. (1975). *Current status of sex research*. J. Sex Res. 11: 335-347.

Berry, John W. (1980), *Acculturation as Varieties of Adaptation* in Acculturation: Theory, Models, and Some New Findings, ed. Amado M. Padilla, Boulder, CO: Westview, 9-25.

Bonjour M., van der Vlugt, I. (2018). *Comprehensive Sexuality Education Knowledge file* (Rutgers). Retrieved from https://www.rutgers.international/sites/rutgersorg/files/PDF/knowledgefiles/20181218_knowledge%20file_CSE.pdf

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006) *Using thematic analysis in psychology*. Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3 (2). pp. 77-101.

Browes, N. (2015). *Comprehensive sexuality education, culture and gender: The effect of the cultural setting on a sexuality education programme in Ethiopia.* Sex Education, *15*(6), 655-670.

Castro, F. and Barrera, M. (2004). *The Cultural Adaptation of Prevention Interventions: Resolving Tensions Between Fidelity and Fit*. Prevention Science. 5.

Cense M., de Neef M., Visscher, W. (2018). *Culture, Religion and Sexual and Reproductive Health & Rights Knowledge file* (Rutgers). Retrieved from https://www.rutgers.international/sites/rutgersorg/files/PDF/knowledgefiles/Culture-Religion-SRHR.pdf

Chandra-Mouli V, Plesons M, Hadi S, Baig Q, and Lang I. 2018. *Building Support for Adolescent Sexuality and Reproductive Health Education and Responding to Resistance in Conservative Contexts: Cases from Pakistan. Global Health, Science and Practice* 6(1):128–36.

Chilman, C. (1969). *Some social and psychological aspects of sex education*. Broderick, C. and Bernard, J. (eds.), The Individual, Sex and Society, Johns Hopkins Press, Balti-More.

Gordon, M.M. (1964), *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion, and National Origin*, New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Hunt, A., and Ott, M. (2014). *Challenges in adapting and implementing evidence-based sex education programs to local contexts.* Sex Education: Attitude of Adolescents, Cultural Differences and Schools' Challenges (pp. 17-26). Nova Science Publishers, Inc.

Kenny, M. (2014). *Sex education: Attitude of adolescents, cultural differences and schools' challenges* (Education in a competitive and globalizing world). Hauppauge, New York: Nova Science. (2014).

Kirkendall, L. A. (1965). *Sex Education*, Sex Information and Education Counsel of the United States, New York.

Kirkendall, L., and Libby, R. (1969). *Trends in sex education*. In Broderick, C., and Bernard, J. (eds.), The Individual, Sex and Society, Johns Hopkins Press, Bakimore.

Page SJ., Shipley H. (2016) *Sexuality*. In: Yamane D. (eds) *Handbook of Religion and Society*. Handbooks of Sociology and Social Research. Springer.

Singh S. and Hu M. (2001), *Context-Dependent Ethnic Identity and Its Impact on Product Evaluations: a Case of the Asian Indian Immigrants*, Association for Consumer Research, Pages: 150-155.

Schneider, M., and Hirsch, J. (2018). *Comprehensive sexuality education as a primary prevention strategy for sexual violence perpetration.* Trauma, Violence, and Abuse, 2018.

Taylor, S. J., Bogdan R., and DeVault M.L. (2016) *Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods: A Guidebook and Resource*. Fourth ed. Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley & Sons.

Voss, J., Ph.D. (1980). *Sex education: Evaluation and recommendations for future study.* Archives of Sexual Behavior: The Official Publication of the International Academy of Sex Research,*9*(1), 37-59.

UNESCO. (2018). *International Technical Guidance on Sex Education*. Second Revised Edition.

UNESCO. (2009). *International Technical Guidance on Sex Education*. Volume 1.

UNESCO. (2015). *Emerging evidence and lessons and practice in comprehensive sexuality education review.*

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). (1989). Retrieved from https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/

Wiefferink, K., Poelman, J., Linthorst, M., Vanwesenbeeck, I., Van Wijngaarden, Paulussen, T. (2005). *Outcomes of a systematically designed strategy for the implementation of sex education in Dutch secondary schools*. Health Education Research, 20(3), pp 323-333.

Winkelman, Michael. 1994. "Cultural Shock and Adaptation." *Journal of Counseling & Development* 73(2):121–26.