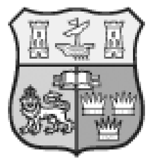
CORA Cork Open Research Archive
Cartlann Taighde Oscailte Chorcaí

Title	The Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Review: Advancing student sexual citizenship in Ireland for the twenty-first century?
Authors	Kiely, Elizabeth
Publication date	2023-11-01
Original Citation	Kiely, E. (2023) 'The Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Review: Advancing student sexual citizenship in Ireland for the twenty-first century?', in Górnicka, B. and Doyle, M. (eds) Sex and Sexualities in Ireland. Genders and Sexualities in the Social Sciences. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 85-106. doi: 10.1007/978-3-031-36550-8_6
Type of publication	Book chapter
Link to publisher's version	10.1007/978-3-031-36550-8_6
Rights	© 2023, the Author, under exclusive license to Springer Nature Switzerland AG. This is a post-peer-review, pre-copyedit version of a chapter published as: Kiely, E. (2023) 'The Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Review: Advancing student sexual citizenship in Ireland for the twenty-first century?', in Górnicka, B. and Doyle, M. (eds) Sex and Sexualities in Ireland. Genders and Sexualities in the Social Sciences. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 85-106, doi: 10.1007/978-3-031-36550-8_6. The final authenticated version is available online at: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-36550-8_6
Download date	2025-04-28 06:55:12
Item downloaded from	https://hdl.handle.net/10468/15267



UCC

University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

Elizabeth Kiely

The Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Review: Advancing Student Sexual Citizenship in Ireland for the Twenty First Century?

Chapter Abstract

In this chapter, the concept of sexual citizenship (Evans, 1993) is elaborated and employed as a lens to analyse to what extent recent Irish policy developments and more specifically the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) Review of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) (NCCA, 2019) indicates a shift away from a construction of the student's sexual citizenship as a problematic citizenship in need of regulation and control. It is argued, that while there are positive indicators that a more positive conception of the student as sexual citizen is evident in the NCCA review of RSE (NCCA, 2019), there are also clear indicators that the revised RSE curriculum is unlikely to trouble or move beyond normative conceptions of sexualities in significant ways. This means that the space to pursue the goals of equal and inclusive sexual citizenship in the revised RSE programme may still be limited.

Introduction

In 2018 the Minister for Education and Skills in Ireland requested that the NCCA undertake a major review of the RSE programme. After a broad stakeholder consultation process, the review report was completed in December 2019 (NCCA, 2019). The first state organised school-based sex education initiative *Relationships and Sexuality Education* (RSE) commenced development in 1994 and was gradually introduced into the Irish school system from 1996. If understood as a mode of government, RSE can be viewed as having been somewhat successful. It became increasingly embedded in a predominantly Catholic controlled

schooling system and sufficient stakeholders were ‘membershipped’ (O’ Sullivan, 1999, 313) to its policy and programmatic logic (Kiely, 2008). Yet students, for whom the RSE programme was devised, have been consistently critical of fundamental aspects of their RSE educational experience (MacNeela, 2018; Roe, 2010; NCCA, 2019; Youth Work Ireland, 2019). In this chapter, sexual citizenship (Evans, 1993) is elaborated and used to analyse to what extent recent Irish policy developments and more specifically the NCCA Review of RSE (NCCA, 2019) indicates a shift away from a construction of the student’s sexual citizenship as a problematic citizenship in need of regulation and control. After exploring the construct of sexual citizenship, the next section considers the student (child / youth) as sexual citizen in the context of sex education. The RSE programme is outlined prior to discussing the NCCA (2019) review of RSE in its wider Irish societal context. How the student needs and rights framework chosen to define future RSE, is undermined in four key ways is then elaborated prior to drawing chapter conclusions.

Understanding Sexual Citizenship

The ‘neat’ concept of sexual citizenship (Bell and Binnie, 2000, 2) was originated by David Evans, adopted by others and subsequently used extensively when articulating the field of sexual politics (Bell and Binnie, 2000). Evans (1993), noting the rise of the consumer sexual citizen, explored the implications for sexualities, of the relations between the state and capitalist economic system. The legalisation of homosexuality for instance facilitated the rise of the gay market economy revealing capitalism’s power in commodifying sexuality and the state’s role in supporting capitalism. For Evans (1993), sexual citizenship was a material construction produced by capitalism and consumerism. Diana Richardson (2000) focused on the power dynamics between the state and the citizen in a neoliberal context, when she constructed sexual citizenship as a sexual rights discourse involving the three elements: conduct, identity and

rights-based claims. Jeffrey Weeks (1998) elaborated positive features of sexual citizenship, viewing it is a Janus like concept permitting looking backward and forward to assess progress or lack of and to bridge the public and private. In Weeks' (1998) account, the moment of citizenship coincides with the claims to rights of citizens and is equated with the belonging that is desired by the articulation of these claims. Plummer (2003) favoured the concept of 'intimate citizenship' as a sensitising one which speaks to relationality and care, than as he perceived it, the narrower concept of sexual citizenship. His contribution also took account of the proliferation of discourses emerging in the public sphere on how people should or could live their private lives in late modern global societies (Plummer, 2003). Bell and Binnie (2000) and Phelan (2001) addressed issues pertaining to queer citizenship; the problematics involved for minorities claiming sexual citizenship and the value of retaining an anti-citizen space. While Phelan (2001) highlighted that rights claims are unlikely to be sufficient unless they have the required state recognition and endorsement in such forms as for example, legislation and public statements of support, this is not to suggest that the form of citizenship conferred by the state is automatically good enough (Richardson, 2004).

Since these landmark contributions, others have applied the concept in different ways. Monro and Warren (2004) put a focus on transgender citizenship; Sanders (2007) on disability rights and the campaign for sexual citizenship in the context of commercial sex; Grabham (2007) assessed the usefulness of the concept for articulating an intersex citizenship. There is also a body of work which addressed the shifting bodies and embodiments relating to sexual citizenship inclusion and exclusion binaries (Ryan-Flood, 2009; Sabsay, 2012; Schildrick, 2013; Rasmussen et al., 2016). In addition to Weeks' emphasis on belonging (1998) and Plummer's (2003) intimate citizenship, there is more recently, 'affective citizenship' designed to speak to the economy of feelings of belonging (Di Gregorio and Merolli, 2016). Fluid

conceptions of sexual citizenship have shifted it from the contractual talk of rights and responsibilities solely, to emphasise how citizenship may be permitted or denied by the state in the ordinary experiences of everyday living (Hemming, 2011).

There are also many, who have questioned the utility of or have pointed to the limits of sexual citizen as a concept or as it is permeates practice. It is suggested that some of its deployments in scholarship have shifted it too far away from the frame of reference (i.e. the Liberal Democratic tradition) that gave it most meaning (Wilson, 2009). Its Western centric construction and relevance is also noted (Richardson, 2017; Wilson, 2009) and its creation of insiders and outsiders or included and excluded by its very logic (Payne and Davies, 2012). Other limitations of it as a paradigm, include its constitution and regulation by the state; its demand for homogeneity; its ongoing anchoring to the individual universal subject citizen and its problematic compatibility with neoliberal constructions of the self-governing, sexually free, consumer citizen as the archetypal 'good' sexual citizen (Ammaturo, 2015; Neary, 2016; Payne and Davies, 2012; Richardson, 2017; Shildrick, 2013).

Students and Sexual Citizenship

It is broadly acknowledged that childhood and youth have difficult relationships with citizenship and the difficulty is even more pronounced when it is sexual citizenship that is being talked about (Roche, 1999; Robinson, 2012). Recognising students as sexual citizens involves first and foremost recognising students as sexual (Evans, 1994). Sexual expression by children or evidence of sexual subjectivity in them is quickly assumed by adults to be pathological (Egan, 2013). It leads to questions as to what kind of sexual expression for children and particularly for girls is possible without it being constructed as evidence of damage done by 'sexualisation' (Clark, 2013; Hawkes and Egan, 2008). The construction of child as innocent

or as sexually dormant permeates recent history and culture and it has been an enduring argument used by groups against the provision of any kind of sex education or sexual knowledge for children (Kiely, 2014). To disrupt the innocence of childhood via sex education or to provide sex education, which is not age-appropriate, is perceived by some to rob children of their childhood, to corrupt them or to do damage that cannot be undone (Robinson, 2012). If adults accept that children and young people should have the right to access a sex education, it is assumed that adults also know best what children's need for information is and this gets parcelled up to be dispensed in an age-appropriately (Egan, 2013). Indeed, for the adult, the binary opposition of the innocent child for is the child, who knows too much, that is the knowing child, who is often perceived and treated by adults as a danger to self and others and a threat to social order (Robinson, 2012).

However, children live in sexual cultures and in societies where there is evidence of appetites for the sexual child (Wurtele, et al., 2018) and this legitimates the need to protect children and to educate children and to afford them rights to protect themselves. This is evident in the introduction of child protection legislation, child abuse prevention programmes and sex education even when children's sexual citizenship is not readily embraced. As in other societies there are new practices, typically constructed as 'risks' or 'dangers' (e.g. online pornography, sexting etc.) creating sufficient concern to prompt calls for up to date or more comprehensive sex education (Ging, 2017; Houses of the Oireachtas, 2019). The private/public tension at the heart of citizenship is also central to conceptions of children's sexual citizenship. Sex education can be perceived as a private matter to be managed entirely by parents in the home without outside interference or as a public matter and predominantly the responsibility of the school. In Ireland in recent decades, it is conceptualised as a responsibility best shared between schools and parents (NCCA, 2019). There is also the question of what should students

be taught in school that reveals much about how their sexual citizenship is constructed. For instance, is it sex education for future responsible (hetero) sexual citizenship or sex education to challenge or deconstruct hetero and cisnormative gender relations? Is it comprehensive or selective; sex education for liberation or for regulation, sex education to promote abstinence from coitus or to promote safe coitus? When the sex education curriculum becomes the political battleground, much is revealed as to sex education's role in producing the sexual citizen subject. As Alldred and Fox (2019) observe, a consideration in neoliberal societies is an education for responsibilisation and self-regulation to achieve good sexual citizenship outcomes, so the state has to provide and do less to improve the material conditions of children's and young people's lives.

Increasingly in societies children are recognised and treated as rights bearers. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and its ratification and support in different countries potentially provides a framework to address children's sexual citizenship. However, the UNCRC provides little by way of specific guidance when citizenship rights are potentially contradictory or difficult to reconcile and when there are diverse interests / stakeholders seeking to appropriate sex education to advance their own agendas. Furthermore, it is argued that at the heart of the UNCRC and human rights frameworks, is an ideal male, white able-bodied boy to such an extent that 'cripping' and 'queering' the liberal humanist subject at its core is necessary (Davies and Kenneally, 2020). Indeed, Davies and Kenneally (2020) with their focus on the sexualities of children with disabilities, argue that children's rights have to be reimagined in more relational and concrete ways than they are presently in legislative human rights frameworks.

Suffice to say, that when there is talk about children and young people's sexual citizenship, this is usually talk about 'difficult citizenship' and when there is talk about children and young people's sexual education, it can be talk about 'difficult knowledge'. However, the concept of sexual citizenship notwithstanding its limits, can still provide a useful touchstone to consider what and how students' formal sex education is envisioned, as demonstrated in this chapter. In the following section, more detail is provided on school based RSE in Ireland.

Relationships and Sexuality Education

RSE was the first state lead school-based sex education programme, which was gradually introduced into Irish primary and post-primary schools from 1996 onwards. RSE was viewed relatively optimistically at the time as a significant break in the Catholic Church's monopoly over sexual morality marking the end of the dominance of an approach to sexuality education that the same Church had created and sustained (Inglis, 1998). It was viewed as a 'progressive' mode of sex education, more secular, driven by health education imperatives and designed to give students information to help them make good / normative choices (Inglis, 1998; Kiely, 2005). It could be viewed as a success to the extent that a predominantly state led, secular programme could become embedded in a predominantly Catholic controlled education system albeit with some key trade-offs. In 1999, RSE became a mandatory requirement in the Irish primary school curriculum and in 2000, a required element in the junior cycle Social Personal Health Education (SPHE) curriculum (NCCA, 2019). However, RSE experienced significant challenges after its introduction. This included slow and uneven implementation across schools for diverse reasons (Mayock et al. 2007) quality control issues in the context of challenges levelled at who should be permitted into schools to deliver components of the programme (O' Brien, 2018), inconsistent coverage across schools and student dissatisfaction with what is taught (MacNeela, 2018). This dissatisfaction intensified over time as the programme came to

be seen as increasingly outdated and irrelevant in the context of increasing sexual liberation, less reliance on Church teachings, changing gender roles, the growth of online technologies and increasing social media usage in Irish society. Studies of RSE identified curricular absences and silences and aspects of the programme and its delivery has also received media attention. From 2017 onwards, RSE was back on the political agenda. The Citizens Assembly on the Eight Amendment [a constitutional provision that gave equal right to the unborn and to the pregnant woman] report submitted to government in 2017 recommended improved sexual health education (The Citizens' Assembly, 2017) and the fallout from the Belfast Rape Trial (2018) (see McKay, 2018) generated public discourse about issues pertaining to rape and sexual consent as well as misogyny in sexual culture. Solidarity / People Before Profit politicians introduced the 'Provision of Objective Sex Education Bill' in 2018, to prevent Catholic schools from using religious ethos as the reason for not providing comprehensive sex education curriculum in their schools. In 2018, Youth Work Ireland also launched a campaign for a more inclusive and up to date sex education than that provided by RSE.

It was building on this momentum, that in April 2018 the then Minister, Richard Bruton requested that the NCCA undertake a review of the programme. The NCCA embarked on an extensive consultation process in relation to revising RSE and produced its report in December 2019 (NCCA, 2019). In keeping with previous research, students reported that the RSE they received was inadequate or did not comprehensively meet their needs (NCCA, 2019). They reported being confused about what they learned in the Stay Safe child protection programme with RSE and showed a lack of awareness of what were RSE topics (NCCA, 2019). Primary school students recounted that they primarily learned about the biological changes accompanying puberty but that by age thirteen years they needed a programme that better helped them to understand sexual feelings and relationships. Second level students reported

that the programme neglected the emotional and relational aspects associated with sexualities and sexual relationships, even if there was more coverage on the risks as exemplified by a stronger focus on pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections. They found that some topics were repeated while others came too late or were omitted. Their sense was that RSE was accorded low priority and was low status relative to their other subjects (NCCA, 2019). It was noted that students wished to be taught RSE by teachers, who were confident, non-judgemental, who engaged positively with them and facilitated their participation. To assume that the picture, which emerges in the NCCA report is of a formal sex education in Ireland of much poorer quality than what students in other countries experience, could be incorrect. Recent data on students' school-based sex education experience in other countries such as the US (Astle et al. 2021), Austria (Seiler-Ramadas et al. 2020), Australia (Waling et al. 2020) and the Netherlands (frequently credited as a model provider of good sex education) (Cense, et al. 2020; Naezer, et al. 2017), painted a broadly similar picture.

Changing Irish Society and The NCCA Review of RSE (2019)

When NCCA produced its report, the social, cultural and political terrain in Ireland had changed since RSE's introduction in the 1990s. The principle of equality before the law was being increasingly established; secular principles and human rights were gaining ground and social diversity being progressively acknowledged. Once viewed as a European backwater, the Republic of Ireland was at times being held up as a model of sexual progress, as it set about disentangling itself from its conservative, religious past (Neary and Rasmussen, 2020). It was the first country to introduce same sex marriage (2015) and a national LGBTI+ Youth Strategy 2018-2020 (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2018). However, in 2019, Irish society was still being confronted by past sexual abuse of children and a generally shameful and disquieting legacy of modes of sexual citizenship thwarted, denied and punished.

In education, post-secular policy enactments gained currency (Kitching, 2020a) and debate about Catholic domination of primary school provision percolated. In Ireland, catholic patrons administer 90% of state funded schools and these schools espouse a catholic ethos and provide catholic religious education or faith formation. The Statutory Forum on Patronage and Pluralism in the Primary Education Sector in 2012 recommended the divestment of some Catholic schools to secular patrons but perceived impossible a wholesale nationalisation of Catholic owned schools during austerity (Coolahan, et al. 2012).

In the 1990s, the 'problems' of young people's sexualities that purportedly needed solving were overwhelmingly health problems (e.g. unplanned teenage pregnancy), whereas in the 2000s, this problematisation had shifted to the domain of sexual culture. Calls had intensified for education to address sexism, misogyny, homophobia and gender violence. Projects were underway in higher education to tackle sexual violence. In the broader Irish socio-political landscape, the teenage pregnancy rate was consistently falling (CSO, 2019); there was provision of abortion from January 2019; increased acceptance of LGBTQ+ rights and growing mainstreaming of gender equality.

The NCCA's report (2019) elaborated a framework for future RSE provision grounded in the rights and needs of children and young people as set out in international human rights standards such as CEDAW and the UNCRC. A holistic approach to RSE was advanced and school authorities advised to consult readily and regularly with students to ensure programme responsiveness to need. There were additional RSE themes and up-to-date resource materials for teachers and parents The school inspectorate was to provide oversight and support.. In 2021,

work started on an updated RSE curriculum. At the time of writing this chapter, it is a partial rather than a complete picture of what Irish RSE will look like in future so one cannot be definitive as to the implications for students' sexual citizenship. However, the NCCA (2019) report has set down certain requirements and it is possible to garner insight from what is already stated in the report and its ancillary documents. What follows is a critical discussion of how the overall student rights and needs vision, clearly articulated in the report, which provides scope for an advanced sexual citizenship, is potentially undermined by the NCCA's own discourse and provisions in four key ways. These include the reinstatement of the parental RSE opt out clause; the failure to address the tension between Catholic religious school ethos and RSE; the reassertion of the significance of an age-appropriate RSE curriculum and the avoidance of discussion on pleasure or desire.

The Continuity of the Parental Opt Out Clause

The NCCA report identities the programme's overarching framework as one which: … is grounded in the rights and needs of children and young people as set out in numerous international human rights treaties and instruments that refer to the right to education and to the highest standard of health. (NCCA, 2019, 71)

However, the report also reasserts parents' right to request an opt out for their children from RSE, which from the outset undermines a student's right and need to have access to a sex education programme. This opt out clause is in keeping with legal judgements, which at the same time as defending children's rights to non-discriminatory sex education and access to sex education for public health benefit, have also accepted the right of parents to withdraw their children from sex education lessons (Daly and O' Sullivan, 2020). This shows that access to

sex education as a child's human right independent of parental rights and other factors, is still not well established legally nationally or internationally.

School Ethos and RSE

While the language of student rights is deployed in the RSE report and it is claimed to provide the overall framework for RSE, there is a notable sidestepping of discussion on how school ethos, particularly catholic ethos, is not conducive to comprehensive sex education or how it may address topics, which undermines RSE's rights-based framework. The NCCA (2019) report stated that 'The particular ethos of as school should not inhibit the full range of content and topics in the curriculum' and that in the identification of problems confronting the future teaching of RSE, 'school ethos seemed to come well down a list' (NCCA, 2019: 78). This contrasted with the Joint Committee on Education and Skills report, which required that the relevant Government Department provide clarity on how schools with religious patrons, could provide comprehensive RSE to ensure students' equal treatment (Houses of the Oireachtas, 2019). Furthermore, the committee suggested that a review of the Education Act 1998 would be required if religious ethos was used to undermine effective RSE (Houses of the Oireachtas, 2019). In contrast, the NCCA (2019) report obscured the continued operations of Catholic religious ethos in the majority of schools and in the teaching of RSE. However, this was apparent in the consultation undertaken for the report, as shown in this student's comment:

> *It's confusing for me when it's taught in Religion class. I'm thinking why am I learning this here?* (Transition year student, post-primary focus group) (NCCA, 2019, 20).

A quick search for individual school RSE policies using Google's search facility shows that many school RSE refer to the Catholic ethos of schools as providing the values framework for

RSE and a few policies make explicit how the Catholic ethos underpins the school programme. One school policy reads that ‘Catholic moral teaching on RSE’ should be reflected in its RSE policy formulation and another that ‘Senior cycle students will receive RSE through their religion programme.’ Catholic school ethos in Ireland can influence the school culture, the teachers and their practices; the individual school RSE policy; the resources chosen by schools to cohere with the school RSE policy; the persons / organisations invited into schools to address RSE topics; the approach taken to RSE topics and the lack of consistency achieved in RSE coverage of topics (Mayock et al. 2007; Neary, 2020). In 2021, pre-empting further NCCA developments toward the production of a more secular and wide-ranging curricular approach, the Catechetics Council of the Irish Bishops Conference, with the support of CPSMA produced its own RSE resource for use in all classes of Catholic primary schools entitled ‘Flourish’ (CPSMA, 2021). The most controversial statements were plucked from the programme and publicised in the media, generating debate and backlash. These include the following (CPSMA, 2021):

> 'My gender is part of who I am. God loves me as I am.'
>
> 'Sex is a precious gift from God. It belongs in a committed relationship'
>
> ‘Puberty is a gift from God. We are perfectly designed by God to procreate with him'.

In society where Church teaching on sexual matters was found in 2012, to have no relevance for 75% of Catholics and their families on the island of Ireland (Association of Catholic Priests, 2012), it is possibly not surprising that the Catholic inspired version of RSE, *Flourish* was not embraced. In Ireland, there is broad support from parents and students for sex education, which is comprehensive in coverage and underpinned by a health promoting, scientifically accurate discourse, rather than one inspired by Catholic teaching or a religious discourse

(NCCA, 2019). However, Irish society is still significantly culturally Catholic (Inglis, 2014, 188) and for many, Catholicism is still the key cultural ingredient marking key family celebrations (e.g. First Holy Communion, Confirmation, Marriage) and events, such as birth and death and those in between. In 2015, it was reported that 93% of parents surveyed had their children christened Catholic (Duncan, 2015). The majority of students participate in or witness sacramental preparation for Catholic Communion and Confirmation (Kitching, 2020, 2020a).

The introduction of RSE in the 1990s reflected to some extent, a wider and growing attachment in Irish society to secularism as providing the progressive future of schooling and of sex education. However, it also served as an exemplar of how the secular and the religious could be conjoined as the religious discourse residually nestled in an RSE programme defined overwhelmingly by its secular health promoting discourse (Kiely, 2004). As argued by others (Rasmussen, 2010, 2012; Thorogood, 2000), there are significant limitations in seeing secular sex education as the solution to students' sexual citizenship, considering that it too will have its own normalising and regulatory effects. School based sex education can at any time be appropriated to service political agendas, as evident in Ontario when Doug Ford, elected Premier, used sex education to advance his own conservative populist agenda (Bialystok, et al. 2020). Rasmussen (2015) has argued for affirmative engagement of religious investments within the realm of sex education, not to succumb to religious dogmatism but to avoid reification of any form of secular knowledge, thus giving it a status to put it beyond question. Indeed, Catholic religion can be expected to operate through cultural heteronormativity, to be residual and to congeal in diverse ways in practices and discourses in schools and in the hearts and minds of teachers and students in a more secular Irish society and in more secular schooling contexts.

Age-Appropriate RSE

Despite most students who engaged with the NCCA, reporting that they could sum up their sex education experience with the words 'too little, too late' (NCCA, 2019, 71) the NCCA report insisted that topics should only be covered in a sequential age-appropriate manner

> Often opportunities arise for children to consider their views and opinions in relation to those of others, in an age-appropriate and sensitive manner (NCCA, 2021cCreating the Conditions for Positive Classroom Discussions Reference Sheet).

> Make children aware that occasionally you may not be able to answer questions for a variety of reasons. Let them know that this is not because their question is wrong, but it might not be on the school curriculum or may be learning for an older class (NCCA, 2021d).

This means that students (12 years and under) will possibly not be introduced to gender diversity and alternatives to heterosexuality in any kind of meaningful way, thus bolstering the workings of heteronormativity and cisnormativity in the school environment and in wider society. As noted by Shipley (2013, 199), the exclusionary processes pertaining to sexual citizenship have already commenced 'when curricula do not incorporate, and therefore teachers do not discuss, topics of sexual diversity, such as gender identity and sexual orientation….' Processes of exclusion and discrimination are perpetuated when topics are ruled out for discussion on the grounds of not being age inappropriate. Their avoidance sends signal to students that they pertain to the non-normal, inappropriate or unnatural spheres. In the NCCA (2019, 47) report, calls by primary teachers for more attention to be given to defining in very

precise terms age-appropriate content reflect their fear that to move outside this content may invite trouble:

> I think we need a clear outline of boundaries of what you can and cannot teach at each level. It gives us protection.

> Someone telling me "You went too far". That's my biggest fear.

The age-appropriate staged curriculum seems to be premised on an idea that students are not gendered or sexual beings and have no awareness of gender or do not have prior sexual knowledge until they encounter it in the RSE curriculum. However, religious ceremonies at approximately ages eight (Communion) and twelve years (Confirmation) have been found to amplify gender in schools in ways which are intensely felt by many students and particularly transgender students (Neary, 2021).

However, the reality is that students are too diverse as are their interests and knowledge, which are also dynamic and require more flexible and immediate responses than knowledge packaged in an 'age-appropriate' standardised way. Teachers are not the only knowers, when studies show that transgender primary and secondary school students in Ireland and in other countries are visible and are directing learning about gender diversity in their school environments (Bragg et al. 2018; McBride and Neary, 2021). The reliance on an age-appropriate curriculum reflects a wider view that formal RSE provides a more acceptable way of integrating learning provided by teachers and parents, who are identified as the most reliable educators on gender and sexuality in comparison to other sources of education, which are nearly always negatively viewed. However, the reality is that students tend not to see their parents and teachers as sex

educators, superior to others (e.g. peers), and they find other sources (particularly peers, youth workers, websites and social media) more accessible (Youth Work Ireland, 2018). They report finding the internet useful to address their curiosities, their learning needs, and to reach out to find people, who think and feel like them to confirm their 'normalcy'. (Naezer et al, 2017; Youth Work Ireland, 2018). Particular adults (teachers) providing students with a certain kind of knowledge at a certain time and in certain way, can be expected to do little to address students' rights and needs, if the other purveyors of knowledge and the sources valued by students are excluded from formal sex education, rather than viewed as a resource for critical appraisal. It may be more fruitful for students' formal education to provide opportunity for them to engage in a collaborative critical exploration of the different forms of sex education at their disposal. The cultural ideal of the child as conceptualised in the age- appropriate sex education curriculum, is innocent, white, middle class, growing up 'from blank-innocence to all-knowingness' (Kitching, 2020) with its presumed destination of heteronormative marriage, reproduction and the 'good' life. There will be students, who grow 'sideways' (Stockton, 2009, 13) that is, to the side of these cultural ideals. The notion of growing sideways rather than up builds on the influential sociological critique in the 1990s of developmental theories, which constructed children and young people as always in a process of becoming and never in a state of being (James, et al. 1998). When developmental approaches are the frame of reference, students are perceived as citizens in the making rather than citizens in the here and now (Lister, 2007). In this context their sex education may be conceptualised as passive learning for the future rather than active learning in the present.

RSE and the Pleasure Discourse

The obfuscation of a discourse of pleasure, a noted silence in the current RSE programme may be disrupted in the revised programme but the signs are not positive. On the NCCA site (NCCA, 2021a), there are Frequently Asked Questions /FAQs, written for a teacher and parent audience. One posed was: 'Why not simply point out to young people the risks associated with sexual activity?' and while it could have been answered in a way that referenced the importance of sexual activity for the experience of pleasure and to express desire, it was answered as follows:

> 'A comprehensive approach to RSE does address the risks, but it also focuses on the positive and healthy aspects of relationships and builds the skills needed to make responsible and healthy choices.'

This indicates that pleasure may continue to be erased in the RSE discourse. Whereas in the past, pleasure was conceptualised in the religious discourse in negative and sinful terms, the silencing and invisibilising of pleasure pervaded the RSE curriculum introduced in the 1990s (Kiely, 2005). Recent indicators are that it will still be avoided or limited in coverage in the new RSE curriculum as there is cultural unease when talk of childhood, youth and sexual pleasure intersect. For example, in 2013, an Irish youth information website 'SpunOut.ie' provided frivolous tips for young people on how to manage threesomes, which included advising them not to solely concentrate on their own individual pleasure but to 'give equal time' to others involved. A political and media furore ensued and the organisation found its funding threatened by politicians (Irish Examiner, 2013). While the organisation's CEO defended providing the information, its content was later significantly altered to downplay threesomes as any kind of an experience that young people might enjoy.

The discourse of pleasure has been more central to sex education in some countries (Sweden, the Netherlands) such that it could be seen to be an imperative (Bengtsson and Bolander, 2020). For instance, it is perceived as important for students to know names of body parts for the purpose of accessing pleasure (e.g. the clitoris) as it is for reasons of information and health care (Bengtsson and Bolander, 2020). However, in the academic literature, calls for the inclusion of a discourse of pleasure or desire in the sex education curriculum (Kiely, 2005) and claims of its power when it is included (Koepsel, 2016) have not received unconditional support. A number of scholars have challenged its inclusion, perceiving it to be susceptible to commodification, normalisation in problematic ways, simplification and idealisation as a by-product of the secular society (Lamb et al. 2013; Rasmussen, 2012; Wood et al. 2018). Some (Allen and Carmody, 2012; Lamb et al, 2013) have argued that if pleasure is to be included in sex education that it should be situated in a sexual ethics framework, that recognises all sexual relations embeddedness in their wider web of unequal gendered and heteronormative power relations. Nonetheless, the implications of such research findings are that if pleasure is not given attention in RSE curricular material, opportunities to identify and disrupt heteronormative, sexist, ableist and racist attitudes to pleasure and desire may also be impoverished. Its absence or lack may also mean that RSE teachers continue to defensively teach RSE, unsure otherwise that they will supported to include discussion of pleasure or to use pleasure when filling gaps in student learning. To date, pleasure has not been embraced in the imaginary of the student in Ireland as a sexual citizen or in RSE, with its focus on propagating the sexual citizen, as one who is expected to consistently practice responsibility and self-control.

Conclusion

The RSE programme when it was first introduced in the mid-1990s was overwhelmingly a neoliberal, broadly secular, problem focused public health programme. It aimed to reduce unplanned / teenage pregnancies, abortions, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and to promote responsibility via firstly, abstinence or secondly, safe sexual relations (Kiely, 2014). While it is highly likely that the newly revised RSE programme will retain much of this orientation, particularly in the context of an increasing rate of STIs, the NCCA (2019) report indicates a reframing of the programme in the direction of students' rights and needs. Does this mean that the revised RSE curriculum will advance students' sexual citizenship? Certainly, there are more positive indicators of a stronger conception of the student as sexual citizen in the NCCA (2019) review of RSE. It attends to students' calls for a more relational approach to be taken in RSE lessons and it accepts the need for more expansive, up to date, relevant content, which recognises that there is diversity in how persons live their sexual lives. While the framing of the programme with reference to students' rights and needs is welcome, what this will mean in actual practice has yet to be seen. It is starting from a weak position given the continuation of the parental opt out clause and the legal ambivalence relating to access to sex education as an unequivocal human right (Daly and O' Sullivan, 2020). However, what is not yet known is how Comhairle na nÓg (Ireland's network of child and youth councils) may inform the NCCA's work and ultimately the RSE programme, seeing that a more inclusive RSE is the focus of its activity in 2022-2023.

Other less positive indicators in the NCCA (2019) review report, are its reluctance to unsettle the top-down educational approach and the emphasis on age-appropriate information. The NCCA review accepts that the programme to date has neglected a conception of sexualities as they are encountered and experienced relationally. However, this acceptance does not seem to extend to giving pleasure and desire due critical attention, suggesting that the programme will

continue to evade pleasure in its conception of the student sexual citizen. It is also not clear to what extent the RSE discourse will open a space beyond the gender and sexual binaries to meet the needs of students whose intersectional subjectivities are rich and complex (male, gay Catholic Travelling student) and who find themselves interacting with multiscalar structures of privilege and oppression in knotty and diverse ways. If the NCCA's prevarication on Catholic school ethos was intended to instil confidence in the Catholic patrons that they should and could trust the Council to continue its work, it may well have backfired, in view of the introduction of 'Flourish' into schools.

Finally, it is clear that the revised RSE programme is unlikely to move beyond or to trouble normative conceptualisations of sexualities in significant ways. There are no indicators that approaches adopted in other countries to engage with equality and inclusion more robustly, such as norm critical perspectives and pedagogies (Bengtsson and Bolander, 2020) or intercultural, critical and queer RSE, are emergent in Ireland. This suggests that despite some progress, there is still scope for sexual citizenship to inform debate on the future of RSE in Irish schools.

References

Alldred, Pam and Nick J. Fox. 2019. "Assembling Citizenship: Sexualities Education, Micropolitics and the Becoming-Citizen." *Sociology* 53, no.4 (February): 689-706.

Allen, Louisa. 2012. "Pleasure's Perils? Critically Reflecting on pleasure's Inclusion in Sexuality Education." *Sexualities* 15, no.3-4 (June): 455-71.

Allen, Louisa and Moira Carmody. 2012. "'Pleasure has no Passport': Re-Visiting the Potential of Pleasure in Sexuality Education." *Sex Education* 12, no.4 (May): 455-68.

Ammaturo, Francesca Romana. 2015. "The 'Pink Agenda': Questioning and Challenging European Homonationalist Sexual Citizenship." *Sociology* 49, no.6 (December): 1151-66.

Association of Catholic Priests.2012. "Contemporary Catholic Perspectives." *Amárach Survey.* https://www.associationofcatholicpriests.ie/2012/04/contemporary-catholic-perspectives/

Astle, Shelby, Paige McAllister, Sarah Emanuels, Jennica Rogers, Michelle Toews, and Ani Yazedjian. "College Students' Suggestions for Improving Sex Education in Schools Beyond 'Blah Blah Blah Condoms and STDs'." *Sex Education* 21, no.1 (January): 91-105.

Bialystok, Lauren, Jessica Wright, Taylor Berzins, Caileigh Guy, and Em Osborne. 2020. "The Appropriation of Sex Education by Conservative Populism." *Curriculum Inquiry* 50, no. 4 (August): 330-51.

Bell, David, and John Binnie. 2000. *The Sexual Citizen: Queer Politics and Beyond*. Oxford: Polity Press.

Bengtsson, Jenny, and Eva Bolander. 2020. "Strategies for Inclusion and Equality - 'Norm-Critical' Sex Education in Sweden." *Sex Education* 20, no. 2 (March): 154-169.

Bragg, Sara, Emma Renold, Jessica Ringrose, and Carolyn Jackson. 2018. "'More than Boy, Girl, Male, Female': Exploring Young people's Views on Gender Diversity within and Beyond School Contexts." *Sex Education* 18, no. 4 (July): 420-434.

Cense, Marianne, Steven de Grauw, and Manouk Vermeulen. 2020. "'Sex is Not Just About Ovaries.' Youth Participatory Research on Sexuality Education in the Netherlands." *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 17, no.22 (November): 8587. doi: 10.3390/ijerph17228587.

Clark, Jessica. 2013. "Passive, Heterosexual and Female: Constructing Appropriate Childhoods in the 'Sexualisation of Childhood' Debate." *Sociological Research Online* 18, no.2 (May): 1-9.

Coolahan, John, Caroline Hussey, and Fionnuala Kilfeather. 2012. *The Forum on Patronage and Pluralism in the Primary Sector: Report of the Forum's Advisory Group.* Dublin: Department of Education and Skills.

CPMSA 2021. *Flourish, An RSE Programme for Catholic Primary Schools on the Island of Ireland, Class by Class.* https://www.cpsma.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/RSE-by-Class.pdf

CSO. 2019. *Press Statement, Vital Statistics Annual Report 2017.* Cork: Central Statistics Office.

Daly, Aoife, and Catherine O'Sullivan. 2020. "Sexuality Education and International Standards: Insisting upon Children's Rights." *Human Rights Quarterly* 42, no. 4 (November): 835-58.

Davies, Adam W. J., and Noah Kenneally. 2020. "Cripping the Controversies: Ontario Rights-Based Debates in Sexuality Education." *Sex Education* 20, no. 4 (July): 366-82.

Department of Children and Youth Affairs. 2018. *LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy 2018-2020.* Dublin: Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

Di Gregorio, Michael, and Jessica L. Merolli. 2016. "Introduction: Affective Citizenship and the Politics of Identity, Control, Resistance." *Citizenship Studies* 20, no.8 (November): 933-42.

Duncan, Pamela. 2015. "93% of Parents Baptise their Kids but just 35% Pray with Them." *Irish Times*, May 24, 2015.

Egan, R. Danielle. 2013. *Becoming Sexual, A Critical Appraisal of the Sexualisation of Girls.* Cambridge: Polity.

Egan, R. Danielle, and Gail Hawkes. 2009. "The Problem with Protection: Or, Why we Need to Move Towards Recognition and the Sexual Agency of Children." *Continuum* 23, no. 3 (June): 389-400.

Evans, David. 1993. *Sexual Citizenship: The Material Construction of Sexualities*. London: Routledge.

Evans, David . 1994. "Falling Angels? - the Material Construction of Children as Sexual Citizens." *The International Journal of Children's Rights* 2, no.1(January): 1-33.

Ging, Debbie. 2017. "The Sex Education Programme in Irish Schools is Over 20 Years Old… Change is Essential." *Irish Independent*, November 22, 2017.

Grabham, Emily. 2007. "Citizen Bodies, Intersex Citizenship." *Sexualities* 10, no. 1(February): 29-48.

Hawkes, Gail, and R. Danielle Egan. 2008. "Landscapes of Erotophobia: The Sexual(ized) Child in the Postmodern Anglophone West." *Sexuality & Culture* 12, no. 4 (December)193-203.

Hemming, Peter J. 2011. "Educating for Religious Citizenship: Multiculturalism and National Identity in an English Multi-Faith Primary School." *Transactions* 36, no. 3 (July): 441-54.

Houses of the Oireachtas. 2019. *Joint Committee on Education and Skills Report on Relationships and Sexuality Education.* 32/ES/20. https://data.oireachtas.ie/ie/oireachtas/committee/dail/32/joint_committee_on_education_and_skills/reports/2019/2019-01-29_report-on-relationships-and-sexuality-education_en.pdf

Inglis, Tom. 1998. *Lessons in Irish Sexuality*. Dublin: University of Dublin Press.

Inglis, Tom. 2014. *Meanings of life in contemporary Ireland: Webs of significance*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Inglis, Tom. 2002. "Sexual Transgression and Scapegoats: A Case Study from Modern Ireland." *Sexualities* 5, no.1 (February): 5-24.

Irish Examiner. 2013. "HSE to Review 'Threesomes' Article on Spunout.ie." March 25, 2013. https://www.irishexaminer.com/news/arid-30589127.html

James, Allison, Chris Jenks, and Alan Prout. 1998. *Theorizing Childhood.* Cambridge: Polity Press in association with Blackwell Publishers.

Kiely, Elizabeth. 2014. "Lessons in Sexual Citizenship: The Politics of Irish School Based Sexuality Education." In *Sexualities and Irish Society: A Reader*, edited by Máire Leane and Elizabeth Kiely, 297-320. Dublin: Orpen Press.

Kiely, Elizabeth. 2008. 'Relationships and Sexuality Education in the Irish Context: An Analysis of Policy and Programme Implementation." In *Governance and Social Professions*, edited by Peter Hermann, 61-78. New York: Nova Science.

Kitching, Karl. 2020. *Childhood, Religion and School Injustice*. Cork: Cork University Press.

Kitching, Karl. 2020. "A Thousand Tiny Pluralities: Children Becoming-Other than the Requirements of Postsecular Neoliberal Policy Recognition." *Critical Studies in Education* 61, no.2 (March): 133-48.

Koepsel, Erica R. 2016. "The Power in Pleasure: Practical Implementation of Pleasure in Sex Education Classrooms." *American Journal of Sexuality Education* 11, no. 3 (July): 205-65.

Lamb, Sharon, Kara Lustig, and Kelly Graling. 2013. "The use and Misuse of Pleasure in Sex Education Curricula." *Sex Education* 13, no.3 (April): 305-18.

Lister, Ruth. 2007. "Inclusive Citizenship: Realizing the Potential." *Citizenship Studies* 11, no.1(February): 49-61.

Mayock, Paula, Karl Kitching, and Mark Morgan, 2007. *Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) in the Context of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE): An Assessment of the Challenges to Full Implementation of the Programme in Post-Primary Schools*. Dublin: Crisis Pregnancy Agency.

McBride, Ruari-Santiago, and Aoife Neary. 2021. "Trans and Gender Diverse Youth Resisting Cisnormativity in School." *Gender and Education* 33, no.8 (November):1090-11071.

McKay, Susan. 2018. "How the 'Rugby Rape Trial' Divided Ireland." *The Guardian,* December 4, 2018. https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/dec/04/rugby-rape-trial-ireland-belfast-case

MacNeela, Padraig, Siobhan O' Higgins, Charlotte McIvor, Chiara Seary, Kate Dawson, and Neil Delaney. 2018. *Are Consent Workshops Sustainable and Feasible in Third Level Institutions? Evidence from Implementing and Extending the SMART Consent Workshop. Galway: School of Psychology.* NUI Galway. https://www.nuigalway.ie/media/smartconsent/SMART-Consent-Report-2018-web-.pdf

Monro, Surya, and Lorna Warren. 2004. "Transgendering Citizenship." *Sexualities* 7, no. 3(August): 345-62.

Naezer, Marijke, Els Rommes, and Willy Jansen. 2017. "Empowerment through Sex Education? Rethinking Paradoxical Policies." *Sex Education* 17, no. 6 (November): 712-28.

NCCA. 2019. *Report on the Review of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) in Primary and Post-primary Schools*. https://ncca.ie/media/4462/report-on-the-review-of-relationships-and-sexuality-education-rse-in-primary-and-post-primary-school.pdf

NCCA. 2021c. *Creating the Conditions for Positive Classroom Discussion Reference Sheet. https://www.curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/e5b6aa5a-f55b-486e-8058-b4136dda4f4/Creating-the-conditions-for-positive-classroom-discussions_final.pdf*

NCCA. 2021d. *Fostering Relationships, Expectations and Boundaries Reference Sheet Preparing to Teach. In the RSE /SPHE Toolkit.* https://www.curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/ca489297-431f-412c-bb4b-b68f7dfa3d50/Fostering-relationships_final.pdf

NCCA. 2021a. *Relationships and Sexuality Education-FAQs.* https://www.curriculumonline.ie/Junior-cycle/Short-Courses/SPHE/SPHE-RSE-toolkit/Relationships-and-sexuality-education-FAQs/

NCCA. 2021. *General Information about Relationships and Sexuality Education across Primary and Post-Primary Schools.* https://www.curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/f18248cc-e6e1-42d7-b0f1-b28a853e5a22/Information-on-relationships-and-sexuality-education_final.pdf

Neary, Aoife, Breda Gray, and Mary O'Sullivan. 2018. "Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Teachers' Negotiations of Civil Partnership and Schools: Ambivalent Attachments to Religion and Secularism." *Discourse* 39, no. 3 (May): 434-47.

Neary, Aoife, and Mary Lou Rasmussen. 2020. "Marriage Equality Time: Entanglements of Sexual Progress and Childhood Innocence in Irish Primary Schools." *Sexualities* 23, no. 5-6 (September): 898-916.

Neary, Aoife. 2016. "Civil Partnership and Marriage: LGBT-Q Political Pragmatism and the Normalization Imperative." *Sexualities* 19, no.7 (October): 757-79.

Neary, Aoife 2021. Trans children and the necessity to complicate gender in primary schools. *Gender and Education* 33, no.8 (November): 1073: 1089.

O' Brien, Tim. 2018. "School Sex Education 'Outsourced' to Catholic Agencies." *Irish Times,* April 4, 2018. https://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/school-sex-ed-outsourced-to-catholic-agencies-1.3450443

O' Sullivan, Denis. 1999. "Gender Equity as Policy Paradigm in the Irish Education Policy Process" *The Economic and Social Review* 30, no. 3 (July): 309-36.

Payne, Robert, and Cristyn Davies. 2012. "Introduction to the Special Section: Citizenship and Queer Critique." *Sexualities* 15, no. 3-4 (June): 251-56.

Phelan, Shane. 2001. *Sexual Strangers: Gays, lesbians and dilemmas of Citizenship.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Plummer, Ken. 1975. *Intimate citizenship: private decisions and public dialogues*, Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Plummer, Ken. 2001. "The Square of Intimate Citizenship: Some Preliminary Proposals" *Citizenship Studies* 5, no. 3 (July): 237-53.

Rasmussen, Mary Louise. 2012. "Pleasure/desire, Sexularism and Sexuality Education." *Sex Education* 12, no.4 (December): 469-81.

Rasmussen, Mary Lou. 2010. "Secularism, Religion and 'progressive' Sex Education." *Sexualities* 13, no. 6: 699-712.

Richardson, Diane. 2000. "Constructing Sexual Citizenship: Theorizing Sexual Rights." *Critical Social Policy* 20, no. 1 (February): 105-35.

Richardson, Diane. 2004. "Locating Sexualities: From here to Normality: Locating Sexualities: Politics, Identities and Space." *Sexualities* 7, no. 4 (June): 391-411.

Richardson, Diane. 2017. "Rethinking Sexual Citizenship." *Sociology* 51, no. 2: 208-24.

Robinson, Kerry H. 2012. 'Difficult citizenship': The precarious relationships between childhood, sexuality and access to knowledge. *Sexualities* 15, no. 3-4: 257-76.

Robinson, Kerry H. 2012. *Innocence, knowledge, and the construction of childhood: The contradictory nature of sexuality and censorship in children's contemporary lives.* London: Routledge.

Roche, Maurice. 1992. *Rethinking Citizenship: Welfare, Ideology and Change in Modern Society.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Roe, Sandra 2010 in co-operation with Dáil na nÓg. *Life Skills Matter, Not Just Points: A Survey of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) in Second-Level Schools.* For the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs. Dublin: Government Publications.

Ryan-Flood, Róisín. 2009. *Lesbian Motherhood: Gender, Families and Sexual Citizenship*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Sabsay, Leticia. 2012. "The Emergence of the Other Sexual Citizen: Orientalism and the Modernisation of Sexuality." *Citizenship Studies* 16, no. 5-6 (August): 605-23.

Sanders, Teela. 2007. "The Politics of Sexual Citizenship: Commercial Sex and Disability." *Disability & Society* 22, no.5 (August): 439-55.

Seiler-Ramadas, Radhika, Igor Grabovac, Thomas Niederkrotenthaler, and Thomas E. Dorner. 2020. "Adolescents' Perspective on their Sexual Knowledge and the Role of School in Addressing Emotions in Sex Education: An Exploratory Analysis of Two School Types in Austria." *The Journal of Sex Research*. 57, no. 9 (November -December):1180-8.

Shildrick, Margrit (2013) "Sexual Citizenship, Governance and Disability: From Foucault to Deleuze." In *Beyond Citizenship?*, edited by Sasha Roseneil, 138-59. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Shipley, Heather. 2013. "Queering institutions?: Sexual identity in public education in a Canadian context." *Feminist Teacher* 23, no.3:196-210.

Stockton, Kathryn Bond. 2011. *The Queer Child; or Growing Sideways in the Twentieth Century*. Durham NC: Duke University Press.

Stychin, Carl F. 2001. "Sexual Citizenship in the European Union." *Citizenship Studies* 5, no. 3 (July): 285-301.

The Citizens' Assembly. 2017. *First Report and Recommendations of the Citizens' Assembly, The Eight Amendment to the Constitutiion.* https://2016-2018.citizensassembly.ie/en/The-Eighth-Amendment-of-the-Constitution/Final-Report-on-the-Eighth-Amendment-of-the-Constitution/Final-Report-incl-Appendix-A-D.pdf

Thorogood, Nicki. 2000. "Sex Education as Disciplinary Technique: Policy and Practice in England and Wales." *Sexualities* 3, no.4 (November): 425-38.

Waling, Andrea, Christopher Fisher, Paulina Ezer, Lucille Kerr, Roz Bellamy, and Jayne Lucke. 2021. "“Please Teach Students that Sex is a Healthy Part of Growing Up”: Australian

Students' Desires for Relationships and Sexuality Education." *Sexuality Research & Social Policy*. 18 (December): 1113-28

Weeks, Jeffrey. 1998. "The Sexual Citizen." *Theory, Culture and Society* 15, no.3 (August): 35–52.

Wilson, Angela R. 2009. "The 'Neat Concept' of Sexual Citizenship: A Cautionary Tale for Human Rights Discourse." *Contemporary Politics* 15, no. 1 (March): 73-85.

Wood, Rachel, Julia Hirst, Liz Wilson, and Georgina Burns-O'Connell. 2019. "The Pleasure Imperative? Reflecting on Sexual Pleasure's Inclusion in Sex Education and Sexual Health." *Sex Education* 19, no. 1 (January): 1-14.

Wurtele, Sandy K., Dominique A. Simons, and Leah J. Parker. 2018. "Understanding Men's Self-Reported Sexual Interest in Children." *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 47, no. 8 (November): 2255-64.

Youth Work Ireland. 2018. *Sexual Health Survey*. https://www.youthworkireland.ie/youth-work-centre/sexual-health-survey