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Bauer, Tobias [Hrsg.]; Pallesen, Hilke [Hrsg.]: Dokumentarische Forschung zu schulischem Unterricht. Relationierungen und Perspektiven. Bad Heilbrunn: Verlag Julius Klinkhardt 2024, S. 85-103. - (Dokumentarische Schulforschung)



Quellenangabe/ Reference:

Gevorgyan, Zhanna; Matthes, Dominique; Hinzke, Jan-Hendrik: "Doing gender" in the context of sexuality education in Armenian schools. Analyzing explicit and implicit knowledge in classroom interactions with the documentary method - In: Bauer, Tobias [Hrsg.]; Pallesen, Hilke [Hrsg.]: Dokumentarische Forschung zu schulischem Unterricht. Relationierungen und Perspektiven. Bad Heilbrunn: Verlag Julius Klinkhardt 2024, S. 85-103 - URN: urn:nbn:de:0111-pedocs-304410 - DOI: 10.25656/01:30441; 10.35468/6102-04

https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0111-pedocs-304410 https://doi.org/10.25656/01:30441

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# Zhanna Gevorgyan, Dominique Matthes und Jan-Hendrik Hinzke

# "Doing Gender" in the Context of Sexuality Education in Armenian Schools

Analyzing Explicit and Implicit Knowledge in Classroom Interactions with the Documentary Method

#### **Abstract**

The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate how gender-related knowledge is produced in sexuality education classroom discussions using the Documentary Method. Although previous qualitative research, especially with the Documentary Method, has explored various aspects of the discourse on "gender", none has examined the implicit knowledge that emerges in the construction of gender between teachers and students in gender-related sexuality education classroom discussions. This study addresses this gap by using transcripts of audio-recorded classroom discussions in the context of sexuality education ("Healthy Lifestyle" program) in Armenian schools, and analyzing them using the Documentary Method. The findings indicate that gender and cultural essentialism were present in all reconstructed classroom discussions. This was expressed through an explicit division of gender traits on the argumentative level, which depicted women and men based on their feminine and masculine characteristics. Implicitly, this was reflected in the making of universal and deterministic statements about characteristics that are assumed to apply to all women, all men, and/or all Armenians. The participants shared the conjunctive knowledge of gender roles that are common in patriarchal contexts.

### Keywords

Classroom interaction, Doing Gender, Documentary Method, Explicit knowledge, Implicit knowledge, Research on teaching, Sexuality education

### Zusammenfassung

"Doing Gender" im Kontext der Sexualerziehung an armenischen Schulen. Analyse von explizitem und implizitem Wissen in Unterrichtsinteraktionen mit Hilfe der Dokumentarischen Methode

Das Anliegen dieses Beitrags ist es, mit Hilfe der Dokumentarischen Methode nachzuzeichnen, wie Geschlechter in klassenöffentlichen Diskussionen des Sexualkundeunterrichts konstruiert werden. Während bisherige qualitative Untersuchungen, die auch mit der Dokumentarischen Methode operieren, verschiedene Aspekte von "Gender" in den Blick genommen haben, liegen keine Studien vor, die jenes implizite Wissen fokussieren, auf dem Konstruktionen von "Gender" in Diskussionen zwischen Lehrpersonen und Schüler\*innen im Sexualkundeunterricht basieren. Die vorliegende Studie greift diese Forschungslücke auf, indem sie audiographierte Unterrichtsgespräche im Rahmen eines Sexualerziehungsprogramms ("Healty Lifestyle") an armenischen Schulen mit der Dokumentarischen Methode untersucht. Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass gender- und kulturbezogene Essentialisierungen in allen rekonstruierten Unterrichtsgesprächen vorkommen. Diese zeigen sich auf der Ebene impliziten Wissens darin, dass deterministische und allgemeingültige Behauptungen über charakteristische Merkmale aufgestellt wurden, die den Anspruch erheben, auf alle Frauen, alle Männer und/oder alle Armenier\*innen zuzutreffen. Die Teilnehmenden an den Diskussionen teilen dabei konjunktives Wissen bezüglich Geschlechterrollen, wie sie in patriarchalen Kontexten üblich sind.

### Schlagwörter

Unterrichtsinteraktion, Doing Gender, Dokumentarische Methode, explizites Wissen, implizites Wissen, Unterrichtsforschung, Sexualerziehung

### 1 Introduction

Judith Lorber (1994, p. 22) argues that "individuals are born sexed but not gendered, and they have to be taught to be masculine or feminine". Following the principles of the social construction of gender, schools, along with other institutions such as families, contribute to shaping adolescents' gender roles. In the Republic of Armenia, as of 2022, the only curriculum that addresses reproductive health, gender-related topics, and family planning in schools is the "Healthy Lifestyle" (HL) program. This program is included in the physical education subject, making physical education teachers responsible for providing sexuality education in Armenian public schools.

Armenia is often seen as a reform-oriented country with relatively progressive gender-related laws. Despite these developments, several studies and international reports have depicted the country as a patriarchal political-social system that has long been challenged by gender inequality and gender-based violence (Ziemer 2020; Durand & Osipov 2015; Khachatryan et al. 2015). The socio-cultural context and values prevalent among the general population in Armenia (such as societal and familial gender roles) are in conflict with the definition of gender-related concepts such as gender equality that are presented in the HL curriculum. Therefore, it is important to note that the production of gendered knowledge within classrooms occurs in the context of this incongruity.

Given the context, this paper uses the HL program in Armenian schools as an example of sexuality education to demonstrate and discuss the production of gendered knowledge during classroom discussions between teachers and students, using the Documentary Method (e. g. Bohnsack 2018, 2014; Bohnsack et al. 2010).<sup>1</sup>

This paper aims to answer the following two research questions:

- 1. What is the underlying implicit knowledge that shapes the construction of gender in classroom discussions?
- 2. How do teachers and students navigate gender-related aspects during sexuality education classroom discussions?

The Documentary Method is a well-established research tool, particularly in German research, that provides access primarily to the implicit dimension of social actions, including in classrooms (for an overview Bauer in this volume; also Hinzke et al. 2023). This method is based on the sociology of knowledge by Karl Mannheim (1980), who emphasized that interactions and experiences that direct people's decisions, such as participation in ceremonies or rituals, should be examined within the scope of collective and conjunctive experiences, which are collectively shared implicit knowledge. Therefore, this paper aims to contribute to the existing literature by making the Documentary Method accessible for Englishlanguage research contexts.

To explore the central topic of this paper, chapter 2 addresses research on gender and school-based sexuality education, providing insight into researching gender using the Documentary Method. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the data collection and sampling methods used in the study presented in this paper (sec-

<sup>1</sup> The empirical examples are drawn from a study by Zhanna Gevorgyan (2024), which examined the knowledge of gender and sought to answer the questions of what knowledge of gender is produced in classrooms and how this knowledge is produced in HL classroom discussions. To achieve this, fieldwork was conducted during the period when the HL program was taught in Armenian schools, from January to March 2018. The audio recordings of these classroom observations were the main empirical data.

tion 3.1), as well as the application of the Documentary Method (section 3.2). In chapter 4, the results of the analysis of classroom interactions between teachers and students, using the study by Gevorgyan, will be presented to demonstrate the reconstruction of gendered knowledge through the use of the Documentary Method in sexuality education classroom discussions. Finally, chapter 5 draws upon the main aspects discussed while presenting the limitations of this study and deriving implications for further research.

## 2 Research on Gender in Sexuality Education Classrooms

According to Don Zimmerman (1978), social life is characterized by accomplishments that vary depending on the situation. Gender is an accomplishment that is shaped by society and is achieved differently depending on social contexts. Gender is often seen as one of the primary divisions in society. The concept of "Doing Gender", introduced by Candace West and Zimmerman (1987), is a significant theoretical contribution to the study of gender within the ethnomethodological tradition. The authors emphasize that gender is an ongoing activity achieved through daily interactions, rather than a fixed category.

School-based sexuality education is recognized as a crucial program for adolescents to gain knowledge on gender equality (Jamal et al. 2015). Holistic sexual education, in particular, has been shown to promote understanding of gender equity (Goldfarb & Lieberman 2021). However, the provision of gender-sensitive sexuality education in schools is a relatively new area of research. It combines studies on gender, sexuality education, teaching and learning in classrooms and schools. Throughout the world, local cultures establish gender-appropriate norms that implicitly inform people on how to behave according to their gender through social institutions, social media, books, and other media (Tsaturyan 2012). By "Doing Gender", people perform femininity and masculinity and make the process naturalized. Depending on the situation and people's accountability towards gender, "Doing Gender" can result in both gender-appropriate and gender-inappropriate outcomes (West & Zimmerman 1987, p. 135). Accountability is defined as part of social relationships, and the actions of women and men are subject to scrutiny and accountability based on cultural expectations and norms of gender (ibid., p. 136). Schools play an important role in producing gender meanings and organizing the daily life of children based on gender differences (Wedl & Bartsch 2015). They are an integral part of society and a sphere for the secondary socialization of children and adolescents. Relying on the arguments made by Simone de Beauvoir (2011) in "The Second Sex" 2, children become girls and boys and maintain the "status"

<sup>2 &</sup>quot;The Second Sex" is originally published in French as "Le Deuxième Sexe" in 1949.

later as women and men, respectively, through such interactions and this process of conditioning.

Effective sexuality education programs should include questioning gender roles and gender stereotypes (Pound et al. 2017). To achieve success, sexuality education programs must have a culturally-sensitive, sex-positive, and non-judgmental stance that provides students with opportunities to engage in discussions (Costello et al. 2022; Goldfarb & Lieberman 2021). Sexuality educators who exhibit judgemental attitudes and are too shy to initiate discussions about sex-related topics may be considered unqualified to teach sexuality education programs (Pound et al. 2017). Therefore, the professional development of sexuality educators plays a significant role in the successful delivery of the program and students' knowledge acquisition (Walker et al. 2021; Murray et al. 2019; Ketting & Ivanova 2018). However, training programs that aim to equip educators with the necessary knowledge and techniques may be insufficient to address gender issues in the broader context of society (Costello et al. 2022).

A review of 261 articles published from 2013 onwards that focused on comprehensive sexual education revealed the need to address gender and power in a more meaningful way in sexual education programs (Sell et al. 2023). This finding is consistent with the results of a review by Nicole Haberland (2015), which demonstrated that explicitly discussing gender and power during sexual education has a positive impact (also Harrison et al. 2010; Rottach et al. 2009). Haberland (2015) evaluated 22 programs that included a lesson, topic, or activity focused on gender or power, such as gender roles, gender inequality, or condom use. Of those programs, only ten were conducted in schools, and only two of those (Cowan et al. 2010; Allen et al. 1997) addressed gender and power (Haberland 2015, p. 36).

The ways in which teachers and students address gender-sensitive topics in class-rooms have not received much attention in research (Westphal & Schulze 2011). There is limited research on knowledge production during the discussions of gender-sensitive topics in sexuality education classes, especially when it comes to the implicit, tacit knowledge. Similarly, little attention has been paid to the actual teaching of gender at schools in former Soviet states (Magno & Silova 2007). This scarcity becomes more discernible when considering the observations of these lessons in patriarchal societies, where the provision of 'gender-sensitive' sexuality education is mandatory.

While many studies on sexuality education in English have explored program types, curricular topics, changes in behavior, and teacher perspectives, there has been limited investigation into the production of gender-related knowledge during classroom interactions.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, there is a need to analyze classroom

<sup>3</sup> The terms "classroom interaction" and "classroom discussion" are often used interchangeably in studies on gender in schools. However, it is important to note that classroom interaction encompasses a broader range of activities, including teacher-student and student-student conversations,

discussions on gender while taking into account socio-cultural attitudes, which is an aspect that has not received sufficient attention (Sinkinson 2009). The documentary approach is a useful method for observing and analyzing classroom interactions, which will be discussed in more detail in chapter 3.

The 'list of publications related to the Documentary Method'<sup>4</sup> demonstrates that some researchers have utilized this method to investigate gender. These studies have mainly focused on cultural contexts and environments within German society, as well as topics beyond classroom interactions or gender discussions within these interactions. Within the realm of school and pedagogy, one study examined group discussions about the development of female peer cultures and whether female students can successfully practice impression management (Aktan et al. 2015). Other studies have investigated gender aspects through group discussions or interviews with educators (Cremers et al. 2019; Schmidt & Schondelmayer 2014; Baar 2011), and some have additionally used photographs (Carnap 2022). In a study exploring how adolescents develop and change their perceptions of gender, Manuela Westphal and Nora Schulze (2011) investigate the impact of gender-aware pedagogy through group discussions. Similarly, Wiebke Waburg (2009) examines the orientations and constructions of femininity among female students attending mono-educative schools, while Gabriele Wopfner (2012) analyzes group discussions relevant to gender issues and drawings of children. The use of the Documentary Method in these studies provides access to both explicit and implicit knowledge, but not to the implicit knowledge produced in gender-related classroom interactions.

As Hilke Pallesen (in this volume) and Tobias Bauer (in this volume) make a distinction between research on speaking and interacting in classrooms and research on speaking about resp. in relation to classroom interactions, the studies mentioned above are part of the second mentioned research area. They use specially created situations for data collection, especially interviews and group discussions. While the studies rely on personal narrations and discourses on interactions, they do not provide an analysis of the underlying processes of communication and interaction within the classrooms itself. This paper aims to bridge this gap in research by showcasing the knowledge production that takes place during (and not on resp. in relation to) gender-related sexuality education classroom discussions. The empirical study presented in the following is utilized to highlight the potential of distinguishing between explicit and implicit knowledge.

as well as interactions between teachers, students, and classroom artifacts. This encompasses not only language but also nonverbal actions. In this study, we differentiate between the two concepts, using the broader term "classroom interaction" in theoretical discussions and the more specific term 'classroom discussions' in empirical analysis, as it became apparent that teachers primarily engaged in discussions with their students.

<sup>4</sup> The list of publications related to the Documentary Method is constantly updated: https://www. hsu-hh.de/systpaed/wp-content/uploads/sites/755/2022/09/LitdokMeth22-09-05.pdf

# 3 Gender and Sexuality Education: Introduction of the Case **Study Methods**

In this section, we will provide an overview of the empirical analysis conducted in Gevorgyan's (2024) PhD project titled "Gender and Sexuality education: The case of Armenian public schools". The aim of the study was to investigate how participants in sexuality education classrooms in Armenia discuss gender-related topics during HL lessons, and how they address the themes of unintended pregnancy, family formation, abuse of power, bad habits, and gender roles. We will present excerpts from the audio recorded classroom interactions between teachers and students during lessons on "Gender roles" and "Abuse of power". Before we delve into the empirical findings, we will provide information on the study's design and the method used for data collection (section 3.1), as well as the analysis of the data using the Documentary Method (section 3.2).

### 3.1 Data collection and sampling

To investigate the main topic of this study, Gevorgyan used a qualitative approach by observing classroom interactions between teachers and students. In 2016, she conducted eight semi-structured interviews with six male and two female physical education teachers who taught the HL program at Armenian public schools. The goal was to gain insights into and perspectives on the topic, including their understanding of the HL program and its implementation.

However, observation data for this paper were collected during a subsequent research trip to Armenia, in 2018, during which Gevorgyan encountered difficulties in accessing schools in Yerevan due to various reasons. Some schools claimed that the HL program was not taking place at their school, while others lacked the proper monitoring facilities. The researcher also encountered cases where initial approval for observation was rescinded after revealing that the aim of the study was to observe gender-related lessons. Based on the interviews, the HL educators became the most appropriate gatekeepers for observation. Gevorgyan exchanged contact information with some of them and presented her research interest, and her insider status and familiarity with cultural specificities facilitated the establishment of trust. Ultimately, observation was conducted in two public schools in Yerevan with the consent of both principals and teachers.

In total, the researcher had access to 76 HL lessons of 8th to 11th graders with three male teachers – Felix (32 lessons), David (25 lessons) and Alex (19 lessons)<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> According to the Asian Development Bank (2019) report, even though the majority of teachers in Armenia are women (85%), the majority of physical education and military science subjects are taught by male teachers. All three teachers in this study were men. Alex was a physical education teacher at a secondary public school, while Felix and David taught at a public high school. While the teachers played a crucial role in the classroom interactions, the focus of interest was on the discussions that took place between them and the students.

- of which nine sequences had been chosen as the main data for the analysis in Gevorgyan's research project. The sequences have been selected based on the central themes for the research, intensive interactions among the participants, detailed narrations and descriptions and most importantly to answer the research questions posed in the researcher's study. Every lesson observed lasted 45 minutes.6

### 3.2 Data analysis with the Documentary Method: Categories, work steps and use within the study

The Documentary Method, which is both a methodology and a method, enables a reconstructive and qualitative-empirical research approach that is focused on detailed case analysis to gain insights into the orientation frameworks of social actors. It is structured as a comparative analysis (Asbrand 2011, p. 59).

The Documentary Method draws on Mannheim's social-theoretical considerations formulated in the 1920s and later published in 1980 in his 'sociology of knowledge' (Bohnsack et al. 2010, p. 21; Mannheim 1982, 1936). It also has its roots in the "ethnomethodological tradition of research (cf. i. e. Garfinkel, 1961, 1967), which itself is to some extent rooted in Mannheim's sociology" (ibid.). Therefore, some of the main ethnomethodological approaches – for example following the principle of "critical reconstructions [...] of social work or social science itself" (ibid., p. 21f.) - were used as a starting point for broadening the view on social practice and its relation to knowledge, including practical interactions and artifacts or documents produced in practice. The assumption is that actors and artifacts are largely guided or generated by internalized and implicit knowledge bases.

According to Mannheim, everyday life is double-structured between "a public and social meaning of a name or expression on the one hand and a non-public milieu specific on the other" (ibid., p. 22). This means, that "every expression has the character of an index or a document of something representing a presumed or underlying pattern of meaning, where both sides, the document as well as the pattern, are used to explain and express the other side" (ibid., p. 21). It also means, that there is a "need to produce inter-subjectivity in the concrete situation of interaction and that current methods of scientific investigation do not meet this complexity of social reality" (ibid., p. 22). However, Mannheim did not yet provide a practical research framework which was then developed by Ralf Bohnsack and other colleagues "during the 1980s in the context of the analysis of group

<sup>6</sup> Due to limited space, we are unable to present all of the transcripts in this study. However, it is important to note that there was no intention to highlight any specific participant, including the teachers. Nevertheless, as mentioned earlier, the teachers played a dominant role in the reconstruction of these frameworks for several reasons. Firstly, due to their dominant position in the classroom. Secondly, due to the amount of time and space they took during these discussions.

discussions by young people (cf. i. e. Bohnsack, 1983, 1989)" (ibid., p. 21). Subsequently, the methodological principles have been successively transferred into the methodical inventory for research on and in schools.

The main methodological principle that Bohnsack derived from Mannheim's sociology of knowledge into the methodical framework, is the differentiation between "two forms of understanding: the immanent interpretation which works on an explicit and matter-of-fact level, on the one hand, and the non-immanent or so-called 'genetic' interpretation which is based on (implicit) shared experience and the weltanschauung of social actors" (ibid.) on the other hand.

Therefore, the "important angle of the documentary method" (Bohnsack et al. 2010, p. 22) is the "change from the immanent or literal meaning to the documentary meaning" (Bohnsack 2010a, p. 270), as it moves from the explicit knowledge of 'What' to the implicit Knowledge of 'How'. The primary goal is to reconstruct the milieu-specific level of experience based on the methodological and methodical principles. As a result, the focus is on analyzing and reconstructing the implicit knowledge and shared experiences of social actors (Bohnsack et al. 2010, p. 22). Furthermore, the Documentary Method emphasizes the importance of analyzing not only the content of the documents, but also the context in which they were produced (ibid.). This includes taking into account the social and historical background, as well as the specific situation in which the documents were created. By analyzing the context, it is possible to gain a deeper understanding of the underlying meanings and implicit knowledge that is documented in the data.

In order to be able to reconstruct the implicit stocks of knowledge intersubjectively, the formal and content structures as well as the semantic elements play an essential role in the Documentary Method. It is therefore assumed that the implicit knowledge is documented particularly in textual and visual forms of expression, especially when focusing on verbal passages, scenic metaphors or imagebased documents appear (Bohnsack 2010a, p. 288). Therefore, the reconstruction of textual documents like audio-graphed and transcribed classroom interactions is possible.

The documentary interpretation requires specific work steps in the analyzing process. Bohnsack (2018, p. 211) proposes four general analysis steps that apply to all types of documents: 1) formulating interpretation, 2) reflecting interpretation, 3) case description (within-case and between-case comparative analysis), and 4) meaning-genetic and socio-genetic typification.

In the following, we will focus on the documentary analysis of transcribed audio recordings of discussions between teachers and students as a particular aspect of classroom interaction. In contrast to the videography approach used by Matthias Martens and Barbara Asbrand (2022), our analysis focuses on reconstructing audio-recorded classroom interactions through a conceptual understanding of doing gender. To conduct the documentary analysis of transcribed audiorecordings of classroom discussions, specific work steps must be taken.

The first step is to analyze the visible formal and content elements of the discussion through a thematic structure and paraphrasing, revealing what is said or done in the sense of a description based on explicit knowledge. The second step, the reflecting interpretation, involves a genetic attitude that goes beyond the surfacelevel understanding of 'what' to uncover the deeper meaning of 'how' based on implicit knowledge (Bohnsack 2018, 2014). According to Bohnsack (2014, p. 225), "what has become the topic of discourse is to be separated from how – that means, in which framework - the topic is dealt with. This framework of orientation, which we also call habitus, is the central subject of documentary interpretation." To access these frameworks of orientation, so-called focusing passages are reconstructed, which are passages in which the discussion or interaction is relatively dense and lively, and the frameworks of orientation of the actors become visible. As already mentioned, the continual comparative analysis is at the center of the methodical approach. Bohnsack (2010a, p. 289) explains: "The specific structure of conversational meaning or of narration, for instance, is made accessible when I comparatively contrast it with alternative courses of conversation or narration." The analysis also involves reconstructing the organization of discourse, including the logics that describe how discourses are structured and produced by the actors, and how the actors refer to each other (e. g. Przyborski 2004).

To understand the key elements of the discussion's developments, one must observe the discourse structure, including how the actor's proposition is received, responded to, elaborated on, and dealt with by other participants. To find out more about the implicit knowledge, the approach to the discourse movement must be explained. For example, the clarification of whether the statement was a proposition, elaboration, differentiation, validation, antithesis, or opposition helps to structure the discourse and understand the implicit knowledge. The process is continued until new homologies are identified and the previously identified ones are found in other passages. The aim of reflecting interpretation is to differentiate between implicit, practical knowledge and general communicative knowledge. In the third step, the case description, the main findings of the formulating and reflecting interpretation are summarized briefly to identify orientation frameworks that are typical for certain groups or a milieu. In the fourth step, similarities and differences between cases are emphasized. First, through abstraction, "components of the framework of orientation common to all the cases" (Bohnsack 2010b, p. 111) are identified. Then, the analysis focuses on identifying typical

Gevorgyan's study adopts the methodological aspects mentioned above and presents the results of the formulating and reflecting interpretation, followed by within-case and cross-case comparative analysis.

"differences, [...] contrasts" (ibid.) within this commonality.

# 4 Unpacking Gender Discussions in Armenian Sexuality **Education Classrooms: From Gender Roles Equality** Discourse to "Housewife and Husband's Help"

As part of classroom discussions in the context of the HL program, domestic labor and care division within families was a central topic and framework of orientation. The question of which parent or both should take charge of household tasks was frequently discussed, including task specialization, physical labor such as cooking and cleaning, general purchasing, caring for a partner and childrearing, as well as earning.

This paper drew on excerpts from two sequences: "Armenian 'Mentality' and Gender" and "The 'Good' Housewife". One of the classroom discussions between Teacher Alex<sup>8</sup> and 8th-grade students involved a situation about sharing tasks when a female pupil (Af) pointed out that women are not always alone in doing household chores:

Sequence "Armenian 'Mentality' and Gender": Lines (L.) 1-119

For example I heard that in the European countries woman's (.) hm:: work homework is also done by a man (.) it's not not always that woman that only a woman does

Alex: So I'm a European then? (.) if a woman

Bf: I consider that man

Alex: Lno excuse me excuse me let's this way okay a bit more okay? (.) that European country (.) I don't understand that comes (.) that depends on a person (.) we were talking about smoking (.) a dad feels himself fully fully like a person at his home who can do anything he wants to (.) now (.) this is a situation (2) a person got married (.) his wife is pregnant his wife (.) carries his child (.) and has difficulties in some things (.) how normal is it if that person (.) allows his wife with that condition (.) with physical workload dur- during any activity (.) to do that thing in that situation (2) for example what do you think?...

The statement made by Af highlights a difference in men's behavior between European countries and Armenia, emphasizing that women in Armenia are primarily responsible for household tasks. This comparison to European countries highlights the societal framework that places women as primary homemakers, while Af's acknowledgment of shared responsibilities in Europe implies a counter horizon with regard to this societal context.

<sup>7</sup> The name "Housewife and Husband's Help" was derived from a reconstructed sequence in Gevoryan's PhD dissertation.

<sup>8</sup> Hereinafter the teachers are referred to as Teacher David, Teacher Felix, and Teacher Alex instead of "the teacher" for a better readability.

<sup>9</sup> The transcripts were transcribed using the notation system by Przyborski (2004, pp. 331ff).

Following this, Teacher Alex<sup>10</sup> brings up a hypothetical situation about marriage and only then followed pregnancy, questioning whether he can be considered European in such a scenario. This brief comment suggests that he also participates in household chores, whilst also documenting a low eagerness to reveal further information. This attitude aligns with Af's perception of European men and contradicts societal expectations of men's roles in Armenia.

While Bf attempts to label men who work, Teacher Alex interrupts with overlapping speech and requests attention with the phrase "no excuse me excuse me let's this way okay a bit more okay?" (L. 5). Teacher Alex then presents a counterargument to Af's earlier statement that men who do housework are considered European. He argues that it is up to the individual and challenges the idea that housework is only suitable for European men. This contradicts Teacher Alex's earlier comments in other parts of the conversation, where he discusses women in Armenia who serve their husbands and are solely responsible for household chores, as seen in the "Smoking Fathers" sequence (L. 49, 100, 105-106).

This excerpt from "Armenian 'Mentality' and Gender" highlights a common tendency to compare Armenians to other groups, such as Europeans, when discussing gender-sensitive issues like family roles. The discussion in the classroom revealed that both the students, who engage in classroom discussions, and the teacher shared the belief that European men have certain common characteristics, and there was a prevailing notion that Armenian society should have a single way of thinking. It suggests that there have been a tendency to generalize certain groups of people based on cultural or societal assumptions. However, the lack of specificity regarding which particular European country or countries were being referred to limits the accuracy of such understanding, as cultural and societal norms can vary significantly across different European countries.

In the "Armenian 'Mentality' and Gender" sequence, Teacher Alex presents a hypothetical situation where a woman in a wife status is carrying her husband's baby. He describes her as a "carrier" of the husband's child, highlighting the idea that the wife is seen as not only a woman, a wife or a woman who is going to have a child but as a carrier of this hypothetical husband's own child. Teacher Alex continues to elaborate on the situation by mentioning the hypothetical wife's difficulties, without providing any specific details. This framing depicts the woman as pregnant and in a difficult situation. Teacher Alex then asks the class how "normal" (Sequence "Armenian 'Mentality' and Gender": L. 9) they find it for the hypothetical husband to refuse to help his pregnant wife, who is carrying his child and experiencing health complications while doing physical work. This question implies that there may be an expectation for men to provide physical support to

<sup>10</sup> Hereinafter the teachers are referred to as Teacher David, Teacher Felix, and Teacher Alex instead of "the teacher" for a better readability.

their pregnant partners, who carry their child and have complications while doing physical work.

In the hypothetical situation presented by Teacher Alex, it is assumed that the wife is primarily responsible for homemaking and household chores, regardless of her pregnancy, and is facing difficulties during her pregnancy. Teacher Alex raises the question of the possibility of helping a pregnant wife by highlighting a situation where it becomes hard for her to continue working. This situation necessitates assistance not only due to her condition but also because she is carrying her husband's child. This example reinforces the idea of a full-time housewife, where a husband's support is conditioned by the wife's situation and status.

Throughout the conversation, neither the students nor the teacher raised the possibility of an alternative situation in which the work was shared by both partners, or what would happen if the wife was pregnant with someone else's child, and whether that would indicate a lack of "moral" obligation to help. The fact that this orientation pattern was not questioned may imply a shared, implicit knowledge among the class. However, the teacher-student hierarchy, where the teacher holds power over the students, may have restricted the students' ability to freely express themselves and maintain their original opinions if they conflict with those of the teacher. The power dynamic between teachers and students is evident in various contexts, as seen in the presented excerpt and teacher's tendency to question one student's statement while leaving another's unfinished. Additionally, there are documented instances of teachers threatening and offending students who express alternative opinions, such as in the Sequence "Gender and Familial Roles" (L. 36-37).

One of the central topics and frameworks of orientation shared by most of the classroom participants is the idea that if a wife is unable to do household chores, either other women who are present at home should do them or a man should do it if the task demands physical strength. This statement was introduced by Teacher Alex and was not questioned or challenged by the students. Similarly, during a discussion about readiness to start a family, Teacher Felix, in the sequence "The 'Good' Housewife", mentions that his and his wife's family members came to help his wife. Teacher Felix mentions help to overcome his wife's difficulties: "...my wife was 19 when she got married (.) she couldn't (.) but (.) my sister took care of (.) her (.) mom came (.)..." ("The 'Good' Housewife": L. 186-187).

This is homologous to another classroom discussion in the sequence "Armenian 'Mentality' and Gender" with Teacher Alex, who suggested that a man's sister and mother should do household chores:

Sequence "Armenian 'Mentality' and Gender": L. 13-15

Alex: or let's say his sister (2) if she has to clean the cupboard I don't know do something that is difficult (.) should he watch TV sitting like this smoking while his sister and mother suffer there? (.)

This sequence presents a hypothetical situation in which a man's sister is expected to clean without any explanation as to why it is her responsibility. Teacher Alex highlights the hard work that women in the household are expected to do, while portraying the man as sitting in front of the TV and smoking. He raises the question of whether the man should continue to entertain himself while his sister and mother are working hard. This implies a similar framework of orientation as in the earlier excerpt of the sequence "Armenian 'Mentality' and Gender", where a man's assistance was expressed in terms of his pregnant wife who carried her husband's child and was struggling with household chores. In all the sequences mentioned, a woman's work at home is taken for granted, while men are expected to help when a woman struggles with physically demanding tasks.

To summarize the analysis of the short excerpts presented above from the sequences 18 "The 'Good' Housewife" and 53 "Armenian 'Mentality' and Gender", several key topics and frameworks of orientation can be identified. The classroom participants reproduced gender inequality while discussing gender equality, as presented in the teacher's manual and read by the participants at the beginning and during these lessons. To illustrate this, there was a tendency in the lesson on "Gender roles" (such as the Sequence 53: "Armenian 'Mentality' and Gender") to reproduce gender stereotypes on both explicit and implicit level while discussing gender equality. This was evident in the examples used to illustrate women's ability to work while mentioning professions stereotypically associated with women, such as cosmetologist. The discussion was often framed within a binary gender role framework, which was further reinforced during the discussion on food and cooking. For example, the assumption that a male partner would prefer to cook meat or drink beer, and that women prefer popcorn and water instead, reinforce the stereotypical views about gender roles. The division of labor and care in the family was a central topic, and the central framework of orientation was the idea of the female as the primary homemaker. This was evident in different sequences including the discussion about gender roles and household chores and the expectation that a wife and female family members should primarily be responsible for them. The reconstruction of these discussions showed that the participants tended to view a husband's involvement in housework as minor and only necessary in special scenarios such as help with physically demanding tasks.

Overall, the analysis highlights the implicit reproduction of gender stereotypes and binary gender roles in the classroom discussions, which reinforces the patriarchal structure of the society. This tendency reflects a hegemonic gender framework that is explored in detail in Gevorgyan (2024).

### 5 Conclusion

The aim of this study was to investigate the underlying knowledge that influences the development of the gender construct during classroom discussions, and to examine how teachers and students negotiate gender-related aspects within the context of sexuality education. To achieve this, the paper reviewed literature on gender aspects in sexuality education, and explored the potential of the Documentary Method to reconstruct both explicit and implicit knowledge, with a particular focus on analyzing classroom interactions between teachers and students. Whereas research with the Documentary Method on classroom interactions in English language has already generated some subject-specific insights into students' learning processes (for an overview Hinzke et al. 2023), there has been limited research on the use of this method to study gender discussions in sexuality education classes. Additionally, this paper seeks to spark discourse in English-speaking research circles on gender topics in sexuality education classroom discussions and demonstrates the usefulness of the Documentary Method for reconstructing this knowledge. We showed that the examination of gender aspects through the consideration of classroom interactions and gender-related lessons was an area that had been overlooked in sexuality education studies.

Due to space limitations, we did not present the sense-genetic typification as discussed in Gevorgyan's (2024) study. In that study, the analysis of classroom interactions with the Documentary Method demonstrated and discussed in detail that lessons aimed at conveying knowledge about gender equality actually produced gender inequality and gender essentialism by moralizing people's behavior and actions based on their sex and respective expectations.

In summary, this paper exemplified the production of knowledge within classroom interactions between teachers and students where gender-related topics were discussed. It provided insights into the examination of gender-related sexuality education classes and gave foreign researchers an understanding of the potential of the Documentary Method in reconstructing gendered knowledge in the classroom. This method allows for the reconstruction of implicit knowledge and shared experiences that often go unspoken if analyzed differently. Through our empirical analysis, we found that despite incongruences on the explicit level, on the implicit level, the reconstruction of short excerpts demonstrated the reproduction of patriarchal binary gender roles and shared understanding and conjunctive knowledge among classroom participants. This was illustrated through the reconstruction of one of the orientation frameworks, which involved the division of labor and care in the family, where females were seen as primary homemakers and a husband's involvement was limited to helping. Bell hooks<sup>11</sup> (2004, p. 29) argues

<sup>11</sup> Hooks preferred her name to be written in lowercase to shift the focus from the individual to the work produced by her.

that patriarchal rules are deeply ingrained in people's "collective unconscious", often going unnoticed and unchallenged. The discussion of "Doing Gender" by West and Zimmerman (1987) and its relevance to schools aimed to explore the key gender concepts and highlight how gender is an achievement performed by individuals and an ongoing process that is achieved through daily interactions. In this regard, the authors discussed the notion of gender as "normative conceptions of attitudes and activities appropriate for one's sex category" (West & Zimmerman 2009, p. 114), and emphasized its accountability to cultural expectations of femininity and masculinity.

One of the limitations of the empirical analysis was the challenge of maintaining the original meaning while translating the audiographed transcripts from Armenian to English. It is worth noting that most of the research discussed in this study focused on the binary study of gender, and there is an increasing need to approach gender through an intersectional lens that takes into account different dimensions such as ethnicity and class. This approach could provide more profound insights into the topic. Additionally, future research could explore the applicability of the basic theoretical premises and analyzing steps of the Documentary Method in non-German-speaking countries and for cross-national comparisons, such as the production of knowledge during gender-sensitive sexuality education classroom interactions in Armenia and Germany.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> In contrast to Armenian HL program, in Germany, sex education "is usually integrated in wider subject areas, including biology, ethics, religion and the social sciences. In very few states it is taught as a stand-alone subject" (Ketting & Ivanova 2018, p. 97).

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