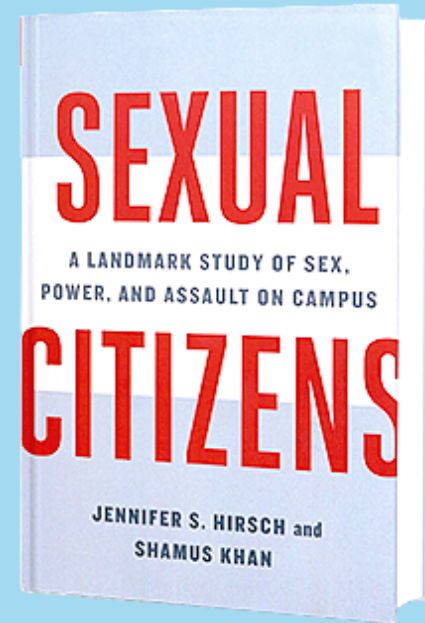


**WINTER 2022**

**#TalkAboutItTUESDAY**



**HOW DOES  
OUR UPBRINGING  
INFLUENCE  
OUR SEXUAL  
CITIZENSHIP?**

How do we  
define  
'upbringing'?

“Upbringing” includes our **family** or the **people we lived with** growing up, as well as our **education, culture, nationality, religion, peer groups,** and much more.

Each of these has the power to **positively** or **negatively** impact our sexual citizenship.

When taking charge of our own sexual citizenship, it can be helpful to take a look at what shaped our **beliefs and feelings** about sex.

**How is  
upbringing  
related to  
sexual  
citizenship?**

**Cultural beliefs and attitudes toward sex vary greatly from country-to-country, region-to-region, city-to-city, and even within even smaller communities.**

Think about your own community...

- How willingly did people talk about sex?
- Was teenage sex and sexuality accepted?
- How open were adults to questions about sex?
- What kinds of relationships were deemed acceptable?

**What are  
important  
factors to  
consider?**

# RELIGION

Many religious organizations promote certain practices regarding sex, and sex is often moralized.

**This impacts the way we think about sex, and influences our sexual projects.**

These influences aren't necessarily empowering or disempowering, but they can make understanding our desires in sex more complicated.

**Consider the messaging you received about sex from your religious community or organization, if you had one, and how that impacts your sexual citizenship today.**

# SEXUAL EDUCATION

According to the 2014 CDC School Health Profiles, **fewer than half** of high schools and **only a fifth** of middle schools teach all 16 topics recommended as essential components of sex education.

Abstinence-only messaging may promote **shame and fear** surrounding sex without achieving its goal of reducing instances of teenage sex.

It's not just what's in curriculum and school assemblies, but also the messages we receive from our caregivers and other influential community members. Intentionally or not, these messages can **shame us out of our sexual citizenship.**



# GENDER ROLES

Gender roles teach that women/femmes are to be acted upon, rather than being **active players in their sexuality**. This sends the message that women have less agency in their sexual lives.

Men, on the other hand, are often portrayed as always wanting sex. This can be especially invalidating to men who have experienced assault.

These sorts of messages are also usually **heteronormative** (i.e., they present heterosexual relationships as the norm)

# REPRESENTATION

Seeing **accurate representations** of people who hold similar identities to yours in media about love, sex, and dating can help in thinking about our own experiences and sexual citizenship, and feeling **validated in your desires.**

LGBTQ+ folks and people of color are particularly underrepresented, which can make it harder for them to feel **sexually empowered** and secure in their sense of **agency and citizenship.**