


ARTICLE

Socialist Sex Education and Its Transnational Entanglements: Monika Krause and the Effort to “Teach Tenderness” to the People

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Abstract

This article traces the transnational circulation of socialist reforms in the field of sex education through the work of Monika Krause, a citizen of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) who migrated to Cuba and became the “Cuban Queen of Condoms.” For Krause, the overarching goal of sex education was to “teach tenderness” to the people. The socialist state’s mission to prepare the population for love, marriage, partnership, and family in Cuba and the GDR involved using complex measures. This paper describes these, contextualizes them in transnational debates, and explains some of the internal reasoning behind their institutionalization. It also explains why looking at state-level efforts to “teach tenderness to the people” matters for a transnational history of sex education.

Keywords: sex education; transnational circulation; socialism; Monika Krause; Cuba; German Democratic Republic

Our young people need education, so that sexuality will become for them a source of happiness, mutual love, tenderness, and a positive element of personality development... . Only if we manage to find understanding and acceptance among the majority of the people regarding the necessity of cultivating the relationship between a couple as a union of sexuality and eroticism will the sexual education of adolescents be successful; [only then] will we teach them how to love.¹

This paper investigates transnational socialist sex education activities by focusing on the work of Monika Krause (1941–2019), a scientist and language assistant born and educated in East Germany who moved to post-revolutionary Cuba for love and who

¹Monika Krause, *Vorbereitung der Jungen Generation auf Liebe, Ehe und Familie in der Republik Kuba* (PhD diss., University of Rostock, 1983), 171. All quotes from Spanish or German were translated into English by the author.

became the public face of the country's sex education program.² Krause helped to introduce a systematic national program of sex education in Cuba. In collaboration with Cuban experts, she organized training and further education for various professions, provided teaching materials and translations, influenced the political framework of sex education work, and participated in international networking. Toward the end of her career, she became a publicly visible expert in film and radio on the topic of sex education in Cuba. Ultimately, the systematic national program of sex education in Cuba that Krause helped to introduce received positive evaluations from Western states and the United Nations.

Sex education, which aimed to alter the population's attitudes, its approach to sexuality, and the way the family functions, became a relevant aspect of the socialist approach to societal change in Communist countries. The overarching goal of socialist sex education, as reflected in Krause's work, was the political and cultural reform of society. She positioned sex education as essential for the achievement of well-known core aims of socialist nation-states such as "readiness for national defense," "patriotism," "educational aspirations," and "love of work."³ Because sex education mattered to the whole state, Krause developed a "complex approach" involving a large proportion of state institutions and relevant education providers.⁴

The socialist state aimed to cultivate "tenderness" in the population, a term referring to aspects of personal interaction. For Monika Krause, tenderness was an important quality that could be cultivated. Such an "education for the capacity to love" suggests the unique features of socialist sex education on which I focus in this article. The effort to "teach tenderness to the people" intentionally invoked a common value among socialist countries like the GDR and Cuba: the core value of international solidarity.⁵

Historiography

With regard to the countries of Eastern Europe, there have been relatively few historical studies of "transnational entanglements," a term this paper uses to describe international influence and collaboration in sex education. For example, in 1996, international scholars gathered in Amsterdam to discuss the history of sex education in their respective countries, a discussion that resulted in two edited volumes published in 1999. The authors summarized the contemporary status of research on the history of sex education quite well, with one volume focusing on "themes in sexuality" and the other addressing "national histories." However, whereas some of the articles in the first

²This article is based on material from the project "Education for All: Images of Self and Others in the Production and Circulation of a Central Myth in Transnational Space," funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). Note that Monika Krause married more than once and published sometimes as Krause-Fuchs or Krause-Peters. Here, I cite all works under her maiden name.

³Krause, *Vorbereitung der jungen Generation auf Liebe, Ehe und Familie in der Republik Kuba*, 172.

⁴Krause, *Vorbereitung der jungen Generation auf Liebe, Ehe und Familie in der Republik Kuba*, 192.

⁵The association derives from a statement by Che Guevara, who supposedly said, "La solidaridad es la ternura de los pueblos." Translation: "Solidarity is the tenderness of the people." According to Ludgor Hagedorn, the saying was often used in the GDR and other socialist countries in solidarity campaigns. See Hagedorn, "Solidarity beyond Exclusion," *Baltic Worlds* 1, no. 2 (2005), <https://balticworlds.com/solidarity-beyond-exclusion>.

volume evidenced a transnational perspective, the second volume was conspicuously West-centered in its depiction of Europe, with only one article featuring Russia as an example of Eastern European developments. GDR activities were only briefly summarized in the article on Germany and Austria, which presented an account from a mostly West German perspective.⁶ In recent years, other scholars have explored nations and regions beyond Europe in greater depth. For instance, Jonathan Zimmermann's 2015 book presents a global overview.⁷ But even Zimmermann deals only briefly with global exchanges, influences, and transfer processes. His work includes historically connected spaces like India, but mostly overlooks Eastern Europe.

English-language scholarship has engaged with sex education activities in both East and West Germany, investigating their handling of Germany's National Socialist past, political-ideological negotiations, and cultural specifics of popular media and sexual culture.⁸ A number of British and American scholars have found innovative approaches to the history of sexuality in Central and Eastern Europe as well as the GDR. The following discussion surveys some of these contributions and outlines the gap they leave open.

The recent turn toward sexuality in German studies in the English-speaking literature includes the work of Donna Harsch and others.⁹ In *Revenge of the Domestic*, Harsch explores the origin and outcome of an ideological core promise of the GDR: to create more equality between the sexes in socialism.¹⁰ The concrete measures to influence gender and family relations that she focuses on include reproductive services, contraception, and abortion. As she notes, the GDR saw population policies as

⁶Franz X. Eder, Lesley A. Hall, and Gert Hekma, eds., *Sexual Cultures in Europe: Themes in Sexuality* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999); Franz X. Eder, Lesley A. Hall, and Gert Hekma, eds., *Sexual Cultures in Europe: National histories* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999). Later works included cultural perspectives, e.g., Lutz Sauerteig and Roger Davidson, eds., *Shaping Sexual Knowledge: A Cultural History of Sex Education in Twentieth Century Europe* (New York: Routledge, 2009), but only very recent works discuss connections between national cases, e.g., Anna Artwińska and Agnieszka Mrozik, eds., *Gender, Generations, and Communism in Central and Eastern Europe and Beyond* (New York: Routledge, 2021).

⁷Jonathan Zimmerman, *Too Hot to Handle: A Global History of Sex Education* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015).

⁸See Mark Fenemore, "The Growing Pains of Sex Education in the German Democratic Republic (GDR), 1945-69," in Sauerteig and Davidson, *Shaping Sexual Knowledge*, 71-90; Dagmar Herzog, *Sex after Fascism: Memory and Morality in Twentieth Century Germany* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005); Anita Winkler, "Biology, Morality and Gender: East and West German Sex Education in Films, 1945-70" (PhD diss., Durham University, 2014), <http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/10836>; Josie McLellan, *Love in the Time of Communism: Intimacy and Sexuality in the GDR* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Josie McLellan, "Even Under Socialism, We Don't Want to Do without Love': East German Erotica," in *East German Material Culture and the Power of Memory*, ed. Uta Balbier, Christina Cuevas-Wolf, and Joes Segal (Washington, DC: German Historical Institute, 2011), 49-65; Donna Harsch, *Revenge of the Domestic: Women, the Family, and Communism in the German Democratic Republic* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007).

⁹For the relatively new emphasis on sexuality in the field of German studies, see Donna Harsch, "Eroticism, Love, and Sexuality in the Two Postwar Germanys," *German Studies Review* 35, no. 3 (2012), 627-36.

¹⁰Harsch, *Revenge of the Domestic*.

key to achieving its pro-natalist and ideological superiority goals.¹¹ Josie McLellan's scholarship focuses on everyday culture and political takes on sexuality. She describes the ideological framing of Western sexual liberalization within the GDR and highlights how Eastern socialist sexual culture developed to involve the usage of sexualized aesthetics as well as erotic consumer goods. Focusing on the journal *Das Magazin*—a socialist version of the Western magazine *Playboy*—she shows how nudity and eroticism went hand in hand with a state-prescribed “clean, reproductive, heterosexual sexuality.”¹² She explains: “*Das Magazin* showed that it was possible to promote the values of the regime and win a devoted readership. Luxury did not have to be expensive, and it did not have to imitate the West. In fact, readers experienced *Das Magazin* as luxurious because it promoted the idea that socialist leisure time could be pleasurable and sensual, too.”¹³

Some scholars have focused specifically on the development of sex education in the GDR. For example, Mark Fenemore explores the development of the GDR's approaches to sex education from the postwar period to 1989:

On the eve of its collapse (in the Autumn of 1989), the German Democratic Republic (GDR) had developed a highly secular, rational and differentiated approach to sexual education. Educators in East Germany prided themselves on the open-minded and progressive attitudes they passed on to young people, and they saw free and open discussion of sexuality as one of the key achievements of a developed socialist society. They envisaged a systematic approach to reaching children about sex, beginning as early as the Kindergarten stage.¹⁴

Fenemore presents the tensions and emerging discussions in the GDR before 1969, a period when researchers and policy makers were discussing the relation between the sexual needs of individuals, on the one hand, and collective goals and the role of mass media, on the other, but he ends his study at the point when research expanded and structural measures for sex education slowly began to be implemented. The experts that were shaping sex education in the GDR, like Borrmann, Grassel, and Bach, had yet to attain their academic qualifications.¹⁵ Fenemore offers a political reading of sex

¹¹Harsh describes seminars, designed to teach parents to fulfill their parental duties, in which traditional gender labor divisions persisted. See *Revenge of the Domestic*, 284–93.

¹²McLellan, “Even Under Socialism, We Don't Want to Do without Love,” 56.

¹³McLellan, “Even Under Socialism, We Don't Want to Do without Love,” 64–65.

¹⁴Fenemore, “The Growing Pains of Sex Education in the German Democratic Republic (GDR), 1945–69,” 71. The “progressive approach” to which Fenemore refers is also discussed in Uta Kolano's popular book, *Kollektiv d'Amour*, which describes the GDR as “the German champion in sexual intercourse.” See Kolano, *Kollektiv d'Amour: Liebe, Sex und Partnerschaft in der DDR* (Berlin: Jaron, 2012), 13. Kurt Starke and Konrad Weller, researchers from the GDR, explore differences between East and West Germany. See Kurt Starke, *Varianten der Sexualität. Studien in Ost- und Westdeutschland* (Lengerich, Germany: Pabst Science Publishers, 2017); Konrad Weller, *Das Sexuelle in der deutsch-deutschen Vereinigung. Resümee und Ausblick* (Leipzig, Germany: Forum Verlag, 1991).

¹⁵Heinz Grassel with assistance from Heinz-Werner Baer and Rolf Borrmann, *Probleme der Geschlechtlichen Erziehung in der Schule* (Rostock, Germany: Abteilung Psychologie, 1964); Kurt Richard Bach, *Entwicklung Und Realisierung Eines Programms Zur Systematischen Geschlechtserziehung in Den Klassen 1 Bis 10 Der Allgemeinbildenden Polytechnischen Oberschule Der Deutschen Demokratischen*

education in the GDR, arguing that the population would use open discussion on sexuality as a substitute for open political discussion. Their discussion still fell in the middle ground between the GDR's and the Soviet Union's approaches to sex education, between secularized morality and sublimation. At the time, actors like the physician Rudolf Neubert, a former member of the Nazi Party, were still relevant and present. How the discussion shifted after 1960, when sex education professionals and other experts took over the field of sex education, remains to be described in more detail.

A number of scholars have drawn comparisons between the sexual politics of East and West Germany. In *Love in the Time of Communism*, McLellan's focus on everyday sexual cultures reveals distinct differences between East and West and also highlights how these cultures manifested in sexual activities that differed in empirically demonstrable ways.¹⁶ Nevertheless, while she demonstrates that the GDR actively encouraged sexual activity, her book includes few details about concrete sex education measures.¹⁷ Anita Winkler compares popular sex education films from East and West Germany. She finds that the Western film portrayed sexuality as an individual, value-free endeavor and was primarily concerned with the communication of neutral biological facts, whereas the Eastern film was more directly concerned with the transmission of socialist moral attitudes.¹⁸ As Winkler explains, the GDR film invoked the concept of "partnership," which entailed "respect for the partner and society, which is ultimately the main denominator of the superior truthfulness of socialist sexuality in contrast to the degenerate and superficial sexuality in the West."¹⁹ Dagmar Herzog's comparative study of sexual politics in the GDR and the FRG (Federal Republic of Germany) claims that there were more progressive sexual policies in the GDR than in the FRG. And Kristen Ghodsee's widely popular contribution to the field argues that women in the East had a better sex life before the end of the Cold War.²⁰

Apart from selected studies on homosexuality and feminism in the GDR era, few authors have included discussion of transnational activity.²¹ One such scholar is Ghodsee, who sheds light on distinct Eastern and Central European national

Republik (PhD diss., University of Rostock, 1969); Rolf Borrmann, "Die sexuelle Belehrung der Kinder und Jugendlichen" (PhD diss., Humboldt University, Berlin, 1961).

¹⁶ McLellan, *Love in the Time of Communism*, 205–15.

¹⁷ McLellan, *Love in the Time of Communism*, 208–9.

¹⁸ Winkler, "Biology, Morality and Gender: East and West German Sex Education in Films, 1945-70," 160–64.

¹⁹ Winkler, "Biology, Morality and Gender: East and West German Sex Education in Films, 1945-70," 162.

²⁰ Herzog, *Sex after Fascism*; Kristen R. Ghodsee, *Why Women Have Better Sex Under Socialism: And Other Arguments for Economic Independence* (New York: Bold Type Books, 2018).

²¹ Ringo Rösener and Markus Stein, *Unter Männern - Schwul in der DDR* (Berlin: reelpart, 2012); Ursula Schröter and Renate Ullrich, *Patriarchat im Sozialismus?: Nachträgliche Entdeckungen in Forschungsergebnissen aus der DDR?* (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 2005); Renate Ullrich, "Die Grünen Hefte. INFORMATIONEN. Die Frau in der sozialistischen Gesellschaft," *Digitales Deutsches Frauenarchiv*, June 22, 2020, <https://www.digitales-deutsches-frauenarchiv.de/themen/die-gruenen-hefte-informationen-die-frau-der-sozialistischen-gesellschaft>. Some East German figures involved in these movements continued their work independently after 1990, leaving behind relevant sources. See Rainer Marbach and Volker Weiss, *Konformitäten und Konfrontationen* (Hamburg: Männerschwarm Verlag, 2017); Kurt Starke, *Schwuler Osten - Homosexuelle Männer in der DDR* (Berlin: Links, 1998); Günter Grau, *Schwulsein 2000 - Perspektiven im Vereinigten Deutschland* (Hamburg: Männerschwarm Verlag, 2001).

traditions, activities, exchanges, and forms of cooperation about sex education, including less-heard voices from the GDR. Ghodsee portrays the GDR as a relevant actor within socialist cooperation, advancing modern conceptions in other socialist states, developing and high-income countries alike.²² One of the most important works in the field in recent years focuses on Czechoslovakia. Kateřina Lišková's 2018 monograph, *Sexual Liberation, Socialist Style*, discusses how socialist Czechoslovakia broke down rigid sexual culture and initiated an early "sexual liberation," legalizing abortion, decriminalizing homosexuality, and supporting research into the female orgasm.²³ Lišková highlights the relevance of a transnational gathering of experts, the Symposium Sexuologicum Pragense in 1968, that testifies to the transnational cooperation of researchers within socialism.²⁴

Despite the exceptions mentioned above, scholarship focused specifically on sex education in the GDR has included little discussion of transnational entanglements. Most studies have presented a curriculum-focused history, comparing the sexual knowledge between East and West Germans or looking for ideological content within the curriculum.²⁵ We can find works on scientific institutions and their political involvement, addressing sex educators and their working environment.²⁶ But they are generally disconnected from a more transnational approach to the GDR, and the distinct contribution of the GDR's approach to sex education does not come into view.²⁷ Additionally, while broader international studies manage to depict developments in the socialist states, these often lack detailed insights into the pedagogical policies and

²²Ghodsee, *Why Women Have Better Sex Under Socialism*.

²³Kateřina Lišková, *Sexual Liberation, Socialist Style: Communist Czechoslovakia and the Science of Desire, 1945-1989* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

²⁴Kateřina Lišková, "Sexological Spring? The International Gathering of Sexologists in 1968 Prague as a Turning Point," *Life Sciences after World War II: Institutional Change and International Connections*, ed. Patrick Manning and Mat Savelli (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press), 114–27. For the involvement of Polish experts in the international discourse, see Natalia Jarska, "Polish Experts in School-Based Sex Education and the West: Exchanging Ideas through the IPPF (1956-1989)," *Contemporary European History* 32, no. 2 (2023), 1–14; Kateřina Lišková, "Sexology's Unexpected Progressiveness in the Cold War East: Shaping People's Sexual Selves, Creating Socialist Societies," in *Histories of Sexology: Between Science and Politics*, ed. Alain Giami and Sharman Levinson (Cham, Switzerland: Springer, 2021), 25–40; Kateřina Lišková, Natalia Jarska, and Gábor Szegedi, "Sexuality and Gender in School-Based Sex Education in Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland in the 1970s and 1980s," *History of the Family* 25, no. 4 (2019), 550–75.

²⁵Marc-Dietrich Ohse, *Jugend nach dem Mauerbau: Anpassung, Protest und Eigensinn (DDR 1961 - 1974)* (Berlin: Links, 2003); Susanne Zimmermann, *Sexualpädagogik in der BRD und in der DDR im Vergleich* (Gießen: Psychosozial-Verlag, 1999).

²⁶Andreas Malycha, *Die Akademie der Pädagogischen Wissenschaften der DDR 1970 - 1990: Zur Geschichte einer Wissenschaftsinstitution im Kontext staatlicher Bildungspolitik* (Leipzig: Akademie Verlag, 2008); Sonja Häder and Ulrich Wiegmann, *Die Akademie Der Pädagogischen Wissenschaften Der DDR Im Spannungsfeld Von Wissenschaft Und Politik* (Frankfurt a.M.: Peter Lang, 2007); Nicole Zabel, *Zur Geschichte des Deutschen Pädagogischen Zentralinstituts der DDR* (PhD diss., University of Technology Chemnitz, 2009).

²⁷Marcelo Caruso, Jane Weiß and Ingrid T. Mieth, eds., *Socialist Educational Cooperation and the Global South* (Frankfurt a.M.: Peter Lang, 2020); Ewald Weiser, ed., *DDR-Bildungshilfe in Äthiopien: Interaktive Erkenntnisse, Erfahrungen und Eindrücke*, Die DDR (Berlin: Literatur Verlag, 2013); Detlef Siegfried, *Bogense: Weltrevolution in der DDR 1961-1989* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2021); Sabine Reh, Meike Sophia Baader, and Marcelo Caruso, eds., *(Post-)Sozialistische Bildung - Narrative, Bilder, Mythen* (Weinheim: Beltz Juventa, 2023).

practices of the GDR, especially after 1969.²⁸ What has largely been missing is a focus on the transnational efforts of the GDR in the field of sex education. In fact, a comprehensive analysis of the ideological background, planning, activities, success, and transnational circulation of state educational activities in this field is still lacking.

Reconstructing Socialist Sex Education

This paper explores transnational entanglements in socialist sex education by focusing on the work of Monika Krause. As we will see, Krause participated in training events and interdisciplinary conferences in the GDR that often involved international participants.²⁹ (See [Figure 1](#) for the title page of one such conference publication.) Krause had a unique position as a kind of liaison between the GDR and Cuba.³⁰ Moreover, her socialist approach to sex education was not limited only to Cuba's or GDR's activities; it also reveals connections within the Eastern Bloc and with transnational agencies, highlighting some instances of global East-West cooperation.

The following discussion, which is based on Krause's unpublished—and thus untapped—dissertation (1983) and other sources, explores socialist sex education activities in the GDR and in Cuba.³¹ Though limited in scope, Krause's detailed notes and documentation allow for a novel look into the structures of international exchange and cooperation, thereby adding to a transnational history and understanding of socialist sex education discourse.

Monika Krause: A Life between Science and Practice

Born in 1941 in Mecklenburg, Krause started studying Romance studies at the University of Rostock in 1959. She originally aimed to become a language assistant. Her Spanish interpretation and translation skills qualified her to work as such, supporting foreign workers, or assisting delegations visiting the GDR or in international contexts.³² Her studies included politics as well, which prepared her to propagate GDR policies and

²⁸James Mark and Paul Betts, eds., *Socialism Goes Global: The Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in the Age of Decolonization* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022).

²⁹Some examples: Zentralinstitut für Jugendforschung and Kurt Starke, ed., *Ehe - Familie - Sexualverhalten: Vorbereitung Auf Ehe Und Familie, Sexualverhalten Jugendlicher* (Leipzig: Zentralinstitut für Jugendforschung, 1983); Heinz Grassel, *Sexualerziehung als Vorbereitung auf Ehe und Familie - Sonderband Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Universität Rostock: Materialien des Internationalen Symposiums* (Rostock: Universität Rostock, 1969).

³⁰This paper adds to the research on the migration of experts to Cuba. See Margarita Cervantes-Rodríguez, *International Migration in Cuba: Accumulation, Imperial Designs, and Transnational Social Fields*, with forward by Alejandro Portes (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2015).

³¹The mundane struggles and anecdotes surrounding the program are described in greater detail in later biographical works. See Dominique Gay Sylvestre, *Navegaciones y Borrascas: Monika Krause y la Educación Sexual en Cuba (1979-1990)* (Augsburg, Germany: Universität Augsburg, 2015); Monika Krause, *Monika y la Revolución: Una Mirada Singular Sobre la Historia Reciente de Cuba* (Tenerife, Spain: Centro de la Cultura Popular Canaria, 2002); Monika Krause, *¿Machismo? No, Gracias: Cuba, Sexualidad en la Revolución* (Santa Cruz de Tenerife: Ediciones Idea, 2007); Emily J. Kirk, "Cuba's National Sexual Education Program," *Cuban Studies* 49 (2020), 289–309.

³²Martin Franzbach, "Die Anfänge der Lateinamerikanistik in der DDR," *Iberoamericana* 66, no. 2 (1997), 7–8; Dörte Ahrendt-Völschow, *Die Lateinamerikawissenschaften an der Universität Rostock von 1958 bis 1995* (Rostock: Universitäts-Institut für Politik- und Verwaltungswissenschaften, 2004).



Figure 1. Cover of the edited volume of one international meeting held at Leipzig 1982. The note in the top corner, “Nur für den Dienstgebrauch” (For Official Use Only), illustrates the internal character of the publication. Source: Zentralinstitut für Jugendforschung and Starke, *Ehe - Familie - Sexualverhalten*.

ideology, especially within Latin America. In the course of her language studies she met civilians from Cuba and started a relationship with a Cuban man, whom she married and accompanied to Cuba in 1962. There she first worked as a German language teacher and translator for politicians, while she continued her studies and translation training, which included the acquisition of English language skills. Later she worked as a language mediator in Cuba, New York, and Chile.

Krause became involved in sex education at the request of Vilma Espín, president of the Cuban Women's Association. In 1976, Krause was involved in a car accident. While in recovery, Espín, for whom Krause had previously worked as a language assistant in international relations, tasked her with studying sex education programs in depth. From this time onward, Krause was a member of the emerging interdisciplinary expert working group on socialist sex education and family problems (Grupo Nacional de Trabajo de Educación Sexual), which later became the central research center on the topic in Cuba (Centro Nacional de Educación Sexual, or CENESEX).³³

After developing a program for comprehensive sex education, Krause put the proposed measures into action and remained—with a few exceptions and interruptions—in this field until 1990, when she and her family relocated to Germany.³⁴ The program included expert visits from the GDR to Cuba that Krause coordinated and accompanied as language mediator. These visits most often were paid for by the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Population Fund, UNESCO, UNICEF, and the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF).

But this was not her only involvement at the transnational level. When engaged with sex education and women's policy matters, she traveled with delegations to The Hague, the United Nations in New York, and to conferences in Moscow, Mexico, and Geneva to participate in discussions and become acquainted with relevant actors and programs. She participated in delegation trips to the GDR, first to the district of Cottbus in 1975, to connect with the sex education activities in that district, and later as part of a WHO delegation visiting GDR marriage and family counseling facilities in Karl-Marx-Stadt, Dresden, Leipzig, and Berlin in 1978. She also joined a delegation trip to Rostock in 1979 to partake in training programs on problems relating to marriage and sexual counseling.

Krause's curriculum vitae closely documents her strong political involvement; from 1974, she had been intensively active in various party and political roles. She signed her dissertation as "Cuban citizen and member of the CPC [Communist Party of Cuba]."³⁵

³³During this period, she was not necessarily qualified to conduct research in the field of sexual education; in fact, the field had not yet been scientifically developed in the GDR when she had studied in Rostock. This might explain why Krause later so heavily relied on research literature from the GDR. For the state of research on sex education in the GDR, see Fenemore, "The Growing Pains of Sex Education."

³⁴Monika Krause, *Cuba - Meine Hölle, mein Paradies: 30 Jahre Fidel Castro und ein Ende* (Halle: Projekte-Verl. Cornelius, 2008), 401.

³⁵This connection of course was not unique to Krause. The division between politics, research, and practice was not as strictly observed in Communist states as in the West. Research was supposed to improve current practices; consequently, for this type of research it is harder to distinguish between political ideology and empirical observation. In the case of Krause's others' work, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between scientific positions and political ones. For her methodological understanding, see Krause, *Vorbereitung der jungen Generation auf Liebe, Ehe und Familie in der Republik Kuba*, 4.

Her curriculum also highlights the intersection with Western interests of the time: during when teenage pregnancy was a topic of interest for Krause and in Cuba, she cooperated closely with the London-based IPPF, with whom she was in close, mutually influential contact for several years.

In 1983 Krause wrote her dissertation, “Preparing the Young Generation for Love, Marriage and Family in the Republic of Cuba (with Special Attention to the Role of the Cuban Women’s Federation FMC).” Although she received her doctorate from the University of Rostock, she did not play a significant role in the GDR’s (and later reunified Germany’s) academic debates on sex education, as far as we know from research conducted after 1990.³⁶ While she did take part in networking meetings and made individual contributions to internal publications, sex education experts in the GDR rarely referred to any of her articles.³⁷ She is better known to a broader audience because of a 2007 documentary about her sex education work in Cuba.³⁸

To understand Krause’s position and status in sex education in the GDR and later in unified Germany, it is important to understand the changing social context. At the time that Krause was tasked with developing a sex education program for Cuba, in the GDR an advanced system for the provision of sex education was becoming slowly established, consisting of medical experts, marriage and sex counseling centers, public journals, newspaper columns, and comprehensive and extracurricular activities within schools and mandatory youth organization activities. This system also included information materials produced by the Hygiene Museum in Dresden and considerable psychological and medical research in the area, specifically surveys on opinions and attitudes that were conducted by the Zentralinstitut für Jugendforschung (Central Institute for Youth Research) in Leipzig.³⁹ All the actors together created an elaborate system of sex education using medical, educational, and psychological knowledge.

³⁶Kolano, *Kollektiv d’Amour*; Schröter and Ullrich, *Patriarchat im Sozialismus?*; Harald Stumpe, “Die Vergessene DDR-Sexualwissenschaft,” in *Die Deutschsprachige Sexualwissenschaft*, ed. Heinz-Jürgen Voß (Gießen: Psychosozial-Verlag, 2020), 299–318; Susanne Zimmermann, *Sexualpädagogik in der BRD und in der DDR im Vergleich* (Giessen, Germany: Psychosozial-Verlag, 1999); Harald Stumpe and Konrad Weller, eds., *Familienplanung und Sexualpädagogik in den neuen Bundesländern: Eine Expertise im Auftrag der BZgA* (Köln: BZgA, 1995).

³⁷Monika Krause, “Vorbereitung Auf Ehe Und Familie in Kuba,” in Zentralinstitut für Jugendforschung and Starke, *Ehe - Familie - Sexualverhalten*, 14–17; Monika Krause, “Sexualerziehung in Der Republik Kuba,” *INFORMATIONEN des Wissenschaftlichen Rates, Die Frau in der Sozialistischen Gesellschaft* (Berlin: Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1982), 42–65.

³⁸In this film, her son Julian Daniel Jimenez Krause follows the trajectory of her work in Cuba. *La Reina del Condón*, directed and written by Silvana Ceschi and Reto Stamm (2007), <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1468074>.

³⁹Kurt Starke, *Junge Partner - Tatsachen über Liebesbeziehungen im Jugendalter* (Leipzig, Germany: Urania-Verlag, 1980); Kurt Starke, *Sex Hoch Drei: 216 Fragen und Antworten zum Liebesleben* (Berlin: Neues Leben, 1995); Kurt Starke, *Fit for SexPower? Eine Sexualwissenschaftliche Untersuchung zu BRAVO GiRL!* (Frankfurt a.M.: Peter Lang, 2001); Kurt Starke and Walter Friedrich, *Liebe und Sexualität bis 30* (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften, 1989). For Kurt Starke’s (1938-) statistical survey work and his involvement in the Leipzig institute’s prominent studies on the GDR population, see Walter Friedrich, ed., *Das Zentralinstitut für Jugendforschung Leipzig 1966-1990: Geschichte, Methoden, Erkenntnisse* (Berlin: Edition Ost, 1999); Walter Friedrich, ed., *Jugend und Jugendforschung in der DDR: Gesellschaftspolitische Situationen, Sozialisation und Mentalitätsentwicklung in den Achtziger Jahren* (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2012); Zabel, *Zur Geschichte des Deutschen Pädagogischen Zentralinstituts der DDR*.

This complex approach worked within and outside schools and involved mass media and other institutions to survey the results of the system's activities. However, after 1990, these networks were increasingly forgotten. The unification of East Germany and West Germany had enormous subjective and structural consequences, especially for the East German "new federal states." As far as we know from teacher biographies, personal upheavals, combined with social transformations, had a strong impact on everyone involved. Krause, for example, after returning to Germany in 1990 and failing to secure a position in academia, worked as a teaching assistant in an elementary school.⁴⁰

But when Krause completed her doctoral studies at the University of Rostock in 1983, her network in the GDR was still in place, and the researchers and colleagues Krause often collaborated with in her political and educational activities faced her as members of her dissertation committee. Her dissertation was heavily influenced by the publications of GDR sex experts. She quoted extensively from prominent literature about GDR activities on sex education. She was strongly influenced by the scholarship of Kurt Richard Bach, who served as her primary thesis adviser.⁴¹ Bach was involved in the GDR's expert visits to Cuba, and he even prepared a short guide in Spanish to help foster Krause's program planning.

Nevertheless, when it came to the implementation of socialist sex education, Krause played a bigger role in Cuba than Bach played in the GDR. Bach designed a program only for the schools, whereas Krause went far beyond them. The second member of the dissertation committee was the famous Cuban gynecologist and researcher Celestino Álvarez Lajonchere (1918-1999), whom Krause thanked for sharing his "scientific and political experiences."⁴² Lajonchere also was strongly involved in the sex education working group in Cuba and probably figured as significantly as Krause and Vilma Espín in the implementation of the program. The second group of people she thanked in the introduction of her dissertation were the "interviewed students and young people, who supported me with their willingness to provide information and their practical knowledge," a statement that hints at her emphasis on surveys, feedback, and opinion polls in her research.⁴³

The biography in the opening of Krause's dissertation documents her many roles in Cuba: she was a sex educator, a sex education researcher, and a shaper of sex

⁴⁰Krause, *Cuba - Meine Hölle, mein Paradies*, 23-42. For the results and difficulties of the GDR transformation, see Sabine Reh, *Berufsbiographische Texte Ostdeutscher Lehrer und Lehrerinnen als "Bekanntnisse": Interpretationen und Methodologische Überlegungen zur Erziehungswissenschaftlichen Biographieforschung* (Bad Heilbrunn, Germany: Julius Klinkhardt, 2003); Rolf Reißig, *Die Gespaltene Vereinigungsgesellschaft: Bilanz und Perspektiven der Transformation Ostdeutschlands und der Deutschen Vereinigung* (Berlin: Dietz, 2000).

⁴¹Kurt Bach, *Geschlechterziehung in der Sozialistischen Oberschule: Entwicklung und Realisierung eines Programms zur Systematischen Geschlechterziehung in den Klassen 1 bis 10 der Oberschule der DDR - ein Beitrag zur Vorbereitung der Heranwachsenden auf Ehe und Familie* (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften, 1974).

⁴²Elizabeth Fee and Celestino A. Lajonchere, "Sex Education in Cuba: An Interview with Dr. Celestino Alvarez Lajonchere," *International Journal of Health Services* 18, no. 2 (1988), 343-56; Krause, *Vorbereitung der jungen Generation auf Liebe, Ehe und Familie in der Republik Kuba*, 1.

⁴³Krause, *Vorbereitung der jungen Generation auf Liebe, Ehe und Familie in der Republik Kuba*, 1.

education policy. In contrast to the GDR, in Cuba such diverse roles were filled by one person alone. Krause understood her position as an intermediary between national politics and local realization.⁴⁴ Her multiple roles allowed her to give a broad account of the socialist sex education program in Cuba.

Understanding Socialist Sex Education as a Complex Pedagogic Endeavor

Krause's dissertation presented an amalgamation of different types of narratives. First, she offered a historical overview of the activities in the area of family and sex education in Cuba after the victory of the revolution in 1959. Second, she provided a compendium of all thematically relevant political decisions, citing relevant government papers. Third, drawing from primary sources, she described all sex education activities undertaken in Cuba until 1983. And finally, she presented possible additional measures to further improve sex education in the country.

Krause's socialist approach entailed a specific understanding of Cuba's former sex education and its impact, which she labeled as the "formation of male-centered social norms in Cuba" arising from colonialism, Catholicism, and capitalist influences from the US:

The Constitution of 1940, known for its progressive content, remained in practice a written piece of paper, because given the socio-economic characteristics of an underdeveloped, dependent, colonized country, heavily exploited by U.S. imperialism, where in part the old Spanish-Catholic moral concepts still prevailed, and in part the corrupt, decadent bourgeois double standard of the "American way of life" had asserted itself, neither equality nor justice for the broad masses of the population could exist. [Sex education] requires profound, radical, revolutionary changes, which can only be achieved under the conditions of a socialist society, in which couple relationships no longer depend on the economic factor and can be built on mutual love, respect and solidarity.⁴⁵

Krause applied a Marxist materialist perspective to her context. The coming of socialism would include a path to social transformation based, among other things, on equality between men and women. Sex education was a central aspect of the broader family education activities implemented by the state for reaching this goal. It accordingly should not exclusively focus on sexuality, the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, sexual intercourse, or an understanding of the biological workings of sex, but instead focus on "preparing the Cuban young generation for love, marriage and family." For Krause, such a focus represented "an important chapter in our struggle for the implementation of women's equality and the development of our young generation and for the formation of socialist personalities and family relationships."⁴⁶

Using a common trope in modernist approaches to social change, Krause invoked the modernity-premodernity divide to describe the core advantages of socialist society. Her description presented the era prior to the 1960s as being continuously

⁴⁴Krause, *Vorbereitung der jungen Generation auf Liebe, Ehe und Familie in der Republik Kuba*, 7.

⁴⁵Krause, *Vorbereitung der jungen Generation auf Liebe, Ehe und Familie in der Republik Kuba*, 24–25.

⁴⁶Krause, *Vorbereitung der jungen Generation auf Liebe, Ehe und Familie in der Republik Kuba*, 3.

shaped by religious, conservative, and repressive sex education. With the revolution, she explained, a broader liberation of sexuality began. Whereas in the West private actors, political initiatives, and political parties as well as youth and sexual minorities pushed for liberated social norms, Cubans, in her view, experienced a new sexual “liberator”—the socialist nation-state.⁴⁷ Socialist sex education thus became part of a broad state-sponsored education program for the socialist family. While emphasizing a break with previous practices, Krause also highlighted some areas of continuity, such as the practice of organizing leisure time to prevent or delay sexual activity:

We have found that the sexual urge of the young people is much better under control when they are goal-oriented in their work, political tasks, sports, and artistic activities; then the sexual urge, which is very strong at this age, is no longer the only thing... In short, the more they devote themselves to activities and interests, the higher their level of culture, the better they manage their sexuality.⁴⁸

The socialist reading of the past correlated with an imagined future in which relationships would be independent of economic considerations, equal, and based on love, respect, and solidarity. According to Krause, state activities could improve equality between the sexes.

While the first two chapters of her dissertation address the content above, the third chapter covers the challenges of sex education activities in Cuba up to 1983. A lack of resources and objections from some groups, mostly male Cubans, take center stage here. Chapters 4 to 7 describe the political work involved in obtaining a social consensus on the methods of sex education.

In chapter 8, Krause turns to the micro-level of sex education practices and specific activities implemented up to 1983. She and her working group developed popular scientific literature, including “popular scientific publications for children and parents”; “literature for adolescents, their parents and educators”; “popular scientific literature for adults”; and “literature for 3- to 7-year-old children, their parents and educators.”⁴⁹

Chapters 9 and 10 deal with further political steps; chapter 11 presents preliminary results from a survey on the sexual knowledge of the Cuban population. This chapter emphasizes the issue of teenage pregnancy and presents a few results from the collaboration with the IPPF. The chapter also discusses and problematizes public reactions to the abortion question.⁵⁰

The dissertation ends with a concluding chapter in which Krause makes the case for a state-organized complex program for “preparing the young generation for love,

⁴⁷ Lisa M. F. Andersen, “‘Kids Know What They Are Doing’: Peer-Led Sex Education in New York City,” *History of Education Quarterly* 59, no. 4 (2019), 501–27. Civic actors in the gay movement found their way into the discourse comparably late in the GDR and Cuba.

⁴⁸ Krause, *Vorbereitung der jungen Generation auf Liebe, Ehe und Familie in der Republik Kuba*, 37–38.

⁴⁹ Krause, *Vorbereitung der jungen Generation auf Liebe, Ehe und Familie in der Republik Kuba*, 78–86. For Krause’s reflection on some of these achievements involving very specific moments of resistance, see 86–89. For her description of educational and further training measures for various expert groups, see 89–93.

⁵⁰ Cuba was, if one follows Krause’s account here, extremely affected by the problem. Cuba’s response was apparently so successful that the IPPF funded an extra study on it.

marriage and family in the Republic of Cuba.” She describes the aims of the program as follows:

It will be shown how the entire society, in fulfillment of decisions in this regard ... with the involvement of all educational institutions (family, national education, health care, mass organizations and media), continuously and systematically carries out sex education (understood as the preparation of the young generation for love, marriage and family) as a task of society as a whole.⁵¹

The state-led program, delivering information via journals, books, radio, and TV, was intended to reach the entire country. What Krause calls a “complex program” for sex education included proposals for activities to be carried out by the Cuban Ministry of National Education, such as the use of mass media and the preparation of instructions, textbooks, and methodological manuals for schools at all levels, from infant education to higher education and adult education. The complex program also involved tasks for the Ministry of Health, asking for the training and education of specialists on sexual counseling and various medical subtopics. Despite the chronic financial difficulties of the Cuban state, the program seems to have been implemented to a large degree. Its realization, although state-led and centrally coordinated, was locally executed. Hence it was more sustainable, even though it was not organized and controlled by civil society.

Throughout Krause’s dissertation, a pronounced scientism sustains faith in the program. Krause formulates the need to ground all work in rational planning and on statistical knowledge: “In order to arrive at a rational conception of such a complex program, it was necessary to evaluate existing studies, statistics and casuistry in order to be able to survey the real problem as comprehensively as possible.”⁵² More than once Krause complains about the lack of adequate empirical knowledge about the Cuban population. In the case of teenage pregnancies, her interventions led to a shift in Cuba’s national statistics, which started to include the age of the birth mother, thus ending “the period of estimated numbers,” which Krause had heavily criticized. Before the introduction of teenage pregnancies as a category in the national survey, their number could only be guessed.⁵³

Because Krause needed a broader sociological empirical base for her research, she also began to gather data on her own:

In the search for facts and data that could shed light on reality ... the working group took advantage of a series of seminars held on the occasion of the International Year of the Child (1979) ... in all 14 provinces of the country and in the Special District “Isla de la Juventud,” which ended with a national seminar with representatives from all provinces... . We wanted to find out what ideas were

⁵¹Krause, *Vorbereitung der jungen Generation auf Liebe, Ehe und Familie in der Republik Kuba*, 3. Such a “preparation” had been introduced as well in other socialist states, e.g., GDR, Poland, the Soviet Union, and the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. See Ghodsee, *Why Women Have Better Sex Under Socialism*.

⁵²Krause, *Vorbereitung der jungen Generation auf Liebe, Ehe und Familie in der Republik Kuba*, 104.

⁵³Krause, *Vorbereitung der jungen Generation auf Liebe, Ehe und Familie in der Republik Kuba*, 7.

held in the provinces about human sexuality in general, about child and adolescent sexuality in particular, and especially about the implementation of sexual education work, and which problems should be given priority.⁵⁴

It is from these seminars that Krause gathered her empirical data, which served to legitimize all her subsequent activities and plans. During the nine months of seminars, she took part in seventy-three forums about sexuality themes, which were attended by 1,130 pupils, from whom she collected 5,309 handwritten papers with answers to individual or group questions.⁵⁵ She describes those results broadly in her dissertation. For socialist sex education, this material mattered, as it documented the need to base activities not only on Marxist thought and terminology, but also on empirical data. Of course, at the time similar data collection activities occurred in the West, but they were less often federally or state-sponsored and more often indirectly connected to sex education activities.

Most of the questions in Krause's study were concerned with "contraception, anatomy and physiology of the male and female genital systems, the biology of reproduction, pregnancy and childbirth."⁵⁶ Nearly 13 percent of her questions dealt with "various aspects of ethics, morality, education, love, partnership and marriage," questions that highlighted another core aspect of socialist sex education.⁵⁷

Socialist sex education framed sexuality as socially constructed and changeable, a perspective that in Krause's view was noticeably absent in Western materials.⁵⁸ For Krause and other socialists, this meant that sex education could not be reduced to biological facts, but should, instead, become interdisciplinary. Reducing sexuality to biology would play into the hands of conservative non-socialists and their goals. Hence, Krause discussed teenage pregnancies not only as a problem of the individual mother (and her partner), but also as a social issue:

By declaring the realm of sexuality, love, marriage and family to be an "intimate sphere," "interference" by social forces was deemed inappropriate. Only gradually could the realization take hold that love, marriage and family are both a personal and a social concern, that love, marriage and family are multidimensionally connected with the most diverse areas of social life.⁵⁹

Accordingly, Krause's sex education program involved "the creation of suitable working conditions, including children's facilities, transportation, special opening hours of grocery stores ..."⁶⁰ Even though the initial approaches toward such a solution were not entirely successful, she insisted on the importance of realizing their long-term goal: economic independence.⁶¹ Economic independence was not only a side effect of

⁵⁴Krause, *Vorbereitung der jungen Generation auf Liebe, Ehe und Familie in der Republik Kuba*, 105.

⁵⁵Krause, *Vorbereitung der jungen Generation auf Liebe, Ehe und Familie in der Republik Kuba*, 149–59.

⁵⁶Krause, *Vorbereitung der jungen Generation auf Liebe, Ehe und Familie in der Republik Kuba*, 160.

⁵⁷Krause, *Vorbereitung der jungen Generation auf Liebe, Ehe und Familie in der Republik Kuba*, 166.

⁵⁸Krause, *Vorbereitung der jungen Generation auf Liebe, Ehe und Familie in der Republik Kuba*, 64.

⁵⁹Krause, *Vorbereitung der jungen Generation auf Liebe, Ehe und Familie in der Republik Kuba*, 173.

⁶⁰Krause, *Vorbereitung der jungen Generation auf Liebe, Ehe und Familie in der Republik Kuba*, 55.

⁶¹Krause, *Vorbereitung der jungen Generation auf Liebe, Ehe und Familie in der Republik Kuba*, 55.

other social reforms, but a clear feminist socialist aim that was connected to socialist sex education measures. Hence, Krause included demands for social changes:

Regulations must also be made to enable teenage mothers to resume teaching, school activities or studies. Above all, coherent regulations must be established throughout the country, at every educational institution, so that discriminatory measures that hinder girls' further education and development cannot continue to be implemented arbitrarily by the directors of some educational institutions.⁶²

To alter the economic environment, the population's mentality had to be changed:

The most important condition for reducing teenage pregnancies is the ability and willingness of young people to acquire the necessary knowledge about contraception on the basis of socialist moral attitudes and to use the contraceptives most suitable for them. We want adolescents to have a sense of responsibility, mutual respect and love as the basic elements of intimate relations. This, however, cannot be the result of a spontaneous development, but must be strived for within the framework of a long-term, systematic, society-wide educational process.⁶³

Accordingly, her sex education program was directed against a set of then-prevalent behavioral patterns in Cuban society, such as "frequent change of partners," "leaving educational institution due to unintended pregnancy," "teenage maternity," and "marriage of unprepared youth who are not ready for parenthood." Sex education entailed far more than just the education of the individual. To make socialist families possible, it was necessary to provide education about the family. The imagined families would be socialist partnerships consisting of two (heterosexual) equal, honest, and mutually respectful partners, who understood and maintained their social responsibilities. In this context, the population was sexually free and the state-led sex education program was "sex positive":

The cultivation of sexual-erotic relationships and activities is an important educational task that should not be left to chance or dismissed by referring to the study of existing specialized literature. Only if our adolescents do not head directly for coitus according to the "all or nothing principle," but learn to exhaust the extensive range of other sexual gratification possibilities, can a cultivation of the erotic ability to experience, understood as a complex emotional experience of the whole personality, be expected in adolescents and later adults.⁶⁴

Changing social mentalities involved the usage of mass media, of which Krause's interdisciplinary working group had the task of controlling and assisting.⁶⁵ Simply advising media producers was not sufficient, and Krause, through her frequent

⁶²Krause, *Vorbereitung der jungen Generation auf Liebe, Ehe und Familie in der Republik Kuba*, 178.

⁶³Krause, *Vorbereitung der jungen Generation auf Liebe, Ehe und Familie in der Republik Kuba*, 147.

⁶⁴Krause, *Vorbereitung der jungen Generation auf Liebe, Ehe und Familie in der Republik Kuba*, 193.

⁶⁵Krause, *Vorbereitung der jungen Generation auf Liebe, Ehe und Familie in der Republik Kuba*, 87.

participation in TV and radio shows, soon became a public figure. As a result, sex education in Cuba became very broadly present in the public sphere, transcending the more traditional school-based boundaries of sex education.

Still, sometimes the data showed that fourteen- and eighteen-year-old pupils did not fully understand the social dimension of the “Marxist-Leninist Basic Principles on Sexuality and Education of Youth,” something Krause considered to be a significant problem.⁶⁶ Therefore, to gain the trust of pupils she developed strategies involving principles of transparency and professional honesty in communication. Her dissertation includes some of the methods she and other socialist educators were using at that time, arguing that “adolescents are not attracted to talk or lectures that only moralize.”⁶⁷

The change in mentalities that the sex education program envisioned required state experts to teach tenderness, a pedagogy that aimed to directly influence the interactions between individual partners and teach them techniques and attitudes that would help build longer-lasting bonds. Practices of tenderness were relevant in partnerships as well as parent-child relationships: “As is known, the loving, tender attention of parents to the child is very important for its healthy development.”⁶⁸ Fostering tenderness was the core aim of this complex program:

We were able to determine that traditional moral concepts still dominate among the young people, that most of them are not familiar with ethical-moral sexual norms that should correspond to our socialist society. The male youths believe themselves to be in the right to use the girls as sexual objects, for the “collection of practical experiences” and for the confirmation of their “masculinity.” The girls expressed in many ways the desire [for] tenderness ... [but] sex not infrequently stands for love... . The change of the old habits, of the “machismo,” of the relics of the bourgeois double standard, requires systematic, determined, persistent pedagogical work, which must be attractive not only for the young people, but also for the adults.⁶⁹

Krause and her colleagues believed that tenderness could enable different and more stable partnerships, better connections with the child, and better relations between the sexes. Yet tenderness was not romanticized: fostering it would be achieved by calculated measures and evaluations supported by empirical public opinion research. These considerations, rooted in Marxist scientism, positioned tenderness as a specific socialist aim of sex education. The effort to teach tenderness to the people aspired to connect individuals, couples, families, and social groups and strengthen socialist society.

⁶⁶Krause, *Vorbereitung der jungen Generation auf Liebe, Ehe und Familie in der Republik Kuba*, 166.

⁶⁷Krause, *Vorbereitung der jungen Generation auf Liebe, Ehe und Familie in der Republik Kuba*, 152–53, 202.

⁶⁸Krause, *Vorbereitung der jungen Generation auf Liebe, Ehe und Familie in der Republik Kuba*, 146.

⁶⁹Krause, *Vorbereitung der jungen Generation auf Liebe, Ehe und Familie in der Republik Kuba*, 169–71.

Tenderness Going Global—Socialist Activities and Transnational Entanglements

From a transnational perspective, the case of Monika Krause and sex education in Cuba is interesting for several reasons. First, it involved a certain amount of knowledge transfer and created a strong binational exchange corridor between the GDR and Cuba. The exchange primarily consisted of the transfer of GDR knowledge to Cuba, but through her participation in international conferences, Krause also transferred knowledge from Cuba to the GDR as well as to the United Nations. The activities financed by the UN and IPFF, particularly those related to teenage pregnancies, provide an example of this circulation of knowledge. In other words, Krause partook in both socialist and Western transnational networks. On this basis, she was able to offer a reading of the socialist, Western, and neutral models of sex education alike.

Krause contrasted socialist and Western sex education policies and practices at that time in her description of the state of research. Her insights certainly were influenced by her language skills and ideological training in Eastern Europe and Cuba, yet in her writing she refers to mutual visits and conversations with Western experts. According to Krause, “Such exchanges of information and experience were and are mainly limited to medical aspects of contraception, surgical techniques of interruption and therapy of sexual disorders.”⁷⁰ In the field of pedagogical models, Krause discussed the “neutral” Swedish model that she had observed in-person: “In 1970, the president of the National Working Group for Sex Education was delegated to Sweden for a seminar organized by SIDA (Swedish International Development Agency). So, we got to know the Swedish ‘model’ of sex education.”⁷¹ She indicated that there were also exchanges and observations within Latin America.⁷² But she deemed all those approaches insufficient.

As Krause explained, “None of the programs or models mentioned could be adopted by Cuba, because in our country ... sex education must be understood and carried out as the preparation of the young generation for love, marriage and family, and not just as education about biological processes.” Cuba required a socialist program of sex education, in contrast to the kinds of programs implemented in capitalist countries:

In the sense we advocate, sexual education is a part of general education, thus has a class character, must correspond to our socialist base in every respect as a part of the superstructure, the basic principle being equality between men and women. Consequently, it cannot be taken over schematically and uncritically from a capitalist system. In our opinion, the Swedish model is too biologicistic in its orientation. It is also based on pluralistic views in the bourgeois sense. The programs that are widespread in Latin America are almost always permeated by Catholicism, neo-Malthusianism and the bourgeois double standard, or do not take a concrete stand on these aspects. They are almost exclusively elaborated by

⁷⁰Krause, *Vorbereitung der jungen Generation auf Liebe, Ehe und Familie in der Republik Kuba*, 64.

⁷¹Krause, *Vorbereitung der jungen Generation auf Liebe, Ehe und Familie in der Republik Kuba*, 64.

⁷²Krause, *Vorbereitung der jungen Generation auf Liebe, Ehe und Familie in der Republik Kuba*, 64.

private groups, associations or institutes, not infrequently dictated by mercantile interests ... often dependent on foreign funding.⁷³

It is worthwhile to pause here for a moment and go beyond Krause's reading of sex education in socialist and Western countries. Although, as discussed above, there has been little literature on socialist models of sex education,⁷⁴ a comparison with the Swedish case helps to make the distinction between these models clearer.⁷⁵ This is possible because the Swedish case is prominent in Eastern as well as Western discourses, and is the most famous among the Nordic models of sex education. With Scandinavia, there continued to be a strong circulation of knowledge on educational issues during socialism.⁷⁶ Similar to the GDR's model, the Swedish sex education model not only had an established tradition, but it was also relatively elaborate. It also involved state resources and state agency, to a greater extent than in other socialist states.⁷⁷ In the Russian case, for example, sex education was—according to Kon—nearly inexistent before as well as after 1990.⁷⁸

Sweden, as was recently described by Lindgren and Backman Prytz, started a sex education program in the 1930s, though at first it mostly existed on paper. Only in

⁷³Krause, *Vorbereitung der jungen Generation auf Liebe, Ehe und Familie in der Republik Kuba*, 65.

⁷⁴Magdalena Gawin, "The Sex Reform Movement and Eugenics in Interwar Poland," *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences* 39, no. 2 (2008), 181–86; Věra Sokolova, *Queer Encounters with Communist Power: Non-heterosexual Lives and the State in Czechoslovakia, 1948–1989* (Prague: Charles University Karolinum Press, 2021); Věra Sokolova and Libora Oates-Indruchová, "Eine feministische Brücke zwischen Ost und West: In Memoriam Hana Havelková, 18. September 1949 bis 31. Oktober 2020," *L'homme* 32, no. 2 (2021), 137–38; Vera Sokolová, "State Approaches to Homosexuality and Non-heterosexual Lives in Czechoslovakia during State Socialism," *The Politics of Gender Culture under State Socialism: An Expropriated Voice*, ed. Hana Havelková and Libora Oates-Indruchová (London: Routledge, 2015), 82–108; Igor Semenovič Kon, *The Sexual Revolution in Russia: From the Age of the Czars to Today* (New York: The Free Press, 1995); Robert Kulpa and Joanna Mizielinska, eds., *De-Centering Western Sexualities: Central and Eastern European Perspectives* (Abingdon, Oxon, UK: Routledge, 2016); Richard C. M. Mole, *Soviet and Post-Soviet Sexualities* (Abingdon, Oxon, UK: Routledge, 2019); Francesca Stella, *Lesbian Lives in Soviet and Post-Soviet Russia: Post/Socialism and Gendered Sexualities* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Lukasz Szulc, *Transnational Homosexuals in Communist Poland: Cross-Border Flows in Gay and Lesbian Magazines* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018); Conor O'Dwyer, *Coming Out of Communism: The Emergence of LGBT Activism in Eastern Europe* (New York: New York University Press, 2018).

⁷⁵Zimmerman, *Too Hot to Handle*, 8. For the Swedish case, see Anne-Li Lindgren and Sara Backman Prytz, "History of state school sex education in Sweden (20th and early 21st Centuries)," *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Sexuality Education*, ed. Louisa Allen and Mary Lou Rasmussen (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-95352-2_31-2; Katharina Woellert, "'Sittlich rein und erbgesund': Die Einführung des Aufklärungsunterrichtes an schwedischen Schulen," *Zeitschrift für Politik, Wirtschaft und Kultur* 15, no. 2 (2005), 25–42. For the limitations of the biologicistic emphasis in Swedish curriculum, see also Carl G. Boethius, "Sex Education in Swedish Schools: The Facts and the Fiction," *Family Planning Perspectives* 17, no. 6 (1985), 276–79.

⁷⁶Jane Weiß, "30 Jahre Freundschaft, Partnerschaft Und Austausch: Die Verflochtene Mythologisierung Der Bildungs Kooperationen Von Finnland Und DDR," *Beiheft Zeitschrift für Pädagogik* 69, no. 1 (2023), 127–44.

⁷⁷Similar trends are evident in the scholarship on Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia, where the central role of the state is a common core feature. See Sokolova, *Queer Encounters with Communist Power*, 16, 181; Lišková, *Sexual Liberation, Socialist Style*; Lišková, Jarska, and Szegedi, "Sexuality and Gender in School-Based Sex Education in Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland."

⁷⁸Kon, *The Sexual Revolution in Russia*, 265–72.

the postwar period was sex education content in the curriculum declared mandatory. It was then that some sexual counseling centers were founded. After 1950 the Swedish government, in support of the teachers who would provide sex education in schools, produced teacher handbooks and specific courses for teacher education. In the following decades, the official handbooks and curricula were regularly revised, updated, and elaborated. Sweden's sex education was based on research, which after the 1970s involved surveys of pupils to better understand their needs and demands. The survey responses reveal that the pupils often critiqued the conservative nature of the sex education curriculum. And, as both the surveys and state evaluations reveal, this conservative orientation originated partly from the public debate on the implemented sex education measures that involved conservative and religious, as well as non-government, actors.⁷⁹

This observation points to an important difference between the Cuban and Swedish models. In Sweden, there seemed to be a specific focus on schools. Sex education was provided by school doctors, school psychologists, sex counseling centers, and popular media, but government activities and public debate focused mainly on the schools and less directly addressed other social actors. And the discourse, which was conducted in an open public manner, seemingly aimed to achieve a consensual social agreement on how to deal with sexuality in school education.

In contrast, Krause's account of Cuba describes sex education as a universal and homogeneously oriented endeavor of the state, in which various scientific disciplines and social institutions sought to involve families. Instead of a public discourse, there was an internal discourse that prescribed the obligatory aims. Although Sweden for most of the twentieth century was governed by a social-democratic labor party, it still did not follow the socialist nation-state model of one leading central party prescribing and controlling the "right" approach to achieve a socialist society and socialist goals.

In Sweden, there was an open public discourse and there were independent non-governmental organizations that—like the women's organizations in the 1930s and later—could initiate social change or disagree with and resist any existing norms and orders of the state.

The transnational entanglements between Cuba and the GDR led to a consensus about the aims and goals of socialist sex education. In the Cuban and GDR cases and related materials, the scientists and social actors articulate the same phrases and objectives with striking frequency, reflecting their connection to state ideological guidelines and recognized standard interpretations of them. Such a "consensus" accordingly led to the possibility that a wide range of social actors would pursue the same goals.

In contrast, in the absence of such an ideological consensus, Sweden pursued a narrower solution. Within the Swedish debates, religious, conservative, and parental voices could take up more space than in Cuba and the GDR, where the public discourse was less open. Ultimately, the social dispute about the right sort and amount of sex education to provide the population was outsourced to the Swedish schools, which introduced a curriculum representing the lowest common denominator on which public discourse could agree.

⁷⁹Lindgren and Backmann Prytz, "History of State School Sex Education in Sweden."

Still, Krause's writing suggests that in Cuba and the GDR, reservations and resistances found other ways to tackle the prescribed progressive sex education and sexual norms. While the Swedish sex education debate happened on the front stage of public discourse, in Cuba and the GDR the negotiations occurred on the backstage of political deliberation. Having an internal consensus, as Krause describes, allowed for an ideologically unified coordination of different comprehensive measures. It is likely that a careful analysis of the sex education materials that have been used in Sweden and Cuba would reveal differences that are connected to each country's political circumstances.

Lastly, what Krause criticizes as "biologistic orientation" in the Swedish curriculum and materials might be similar to what Winkler has described as the "monotonous biologist approach" in West German sex education films.⁸⁰ Sex education materials in Western countries had to balance the different expectations and needs of a wide range of social groups, and, as a result, Western sex educators had to avoid ideological content that favored one group over another. But for Krause, sex education involved actively altering social structures to align with socialist goals, and the Swedish curriculum did not meet her requirements.

Krause concluded that because of their biologistic orientation, Swedish materials simply reproduced established sexual and partnership structures.⁸¹ She ascribes these perceived shortcomings to Sweden's public discourse, which she refers to as "bourgeois pluralism," a form of public discussion that maintains established social structures and thus benefits the reigning bourgeois class.

Krause may have disliked how public discourse worked in Sweden, but the two cases certainly illustrate similarities and differences in the implementation of sex education programs. Both countries relied on scientific knowledge to legitimize their results. In Sweden, during public debates, supporters of sex education highlighted the scientific nature of the curriculum and the empirical evaluation of educational outcomes to legitimize program procedures.⁸² Cuba also experienced internal debates and critique that demanded scientific procedures to validate and legitimize its sex education program. In a sense, both countries required scientifically validated acceptance, but the manner in which that acceptance was achieved and the venue in which the scientific evidence was presented differed. The application of scientific rationality in the two countries differed in one important aspect. In Cuba, the Marxist-Leninist researcher could openly argue "scientifically" for social change that entailed altering the sexual attitudes and

⁸⁰Winkler, "Biology, Morality and Gender: East and West German Sex Education in Films, 1945-70," 172.

⁸¹Krause's discussion of the Western approaches draws from the work of Hans-Joachim Schille, *Untersuchungen zur Vorbereitung der Jugend auf Liebe, Ehe Und Familie in Der DDR, in anderen Sozialistischen Ländern und zur Auseinandersetzung mit Der Theorie und Praxis dieser Vorbereitung in Der BRD* (Berlin: Akademie der Pädagogischen Wissenschaften der DDR, 1977). In Schille's description of the GDR, the Federal Republic of Germany, and other socialist countries' approaches, he claims that in contrast to other socialist countries, which focused solely on schooling, the GDR approach included activities both within and outside the school. The core problem Schille sees with Western approaches is the assumption that sex education can exist independently of social politics. He argues that in Western countries, "the social problems of love, marriage and family ... were thus turned into individual matters" (243).

⁸²See Stine H. Bang Svendsen, "The Cultural Politics of Sex Education in the Nordics," in Allen and Rasmussen, *The Palgrave Handbook of Sexuality Education*, 137-56.

behaviors of the population. This was not possible in pluralistic Sweden.⁸³ Both countries presupposed a strong and active state that could and should employ “sex education as a governing tool,” but the political nature and goals of the states differed in detail as well as in the way they approached the task.⁸⁴

As a socialist scientist, Krause advocated for an approach that involved altering society. At that point in time, as she argued, only in the GDR was there a program of sex education based on explicit socialist principles, tested in practice and extending beyond the school curriculum.⁸⁵ Her assessment was correct in terms of the breadth of Cuba’s approach. As can be seen from the work of Schille, Lišková, and others on Poland, Hungary, and the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic (CSSR), there were activities in other socialist states, but these also usually focused mostly on schooling.

It seems that the adoption of the GDR approach, led by Krause, started with an exchange between the different socialist national women’s organizations in 1974. That year, Cuba sent a study group composed of members of the Cuban women’s council to the GDR to observe its sex education activities, including counseling programs, the propaganda work of the Urania Society and the Hygiene Museum, and the “marriage schools.” The study group learned about educational media, educational planning, and training workshops conducted by GDR experts:

After evaluating various experiences and reviewing the relevant scientific literature received from the GDR, we found that both the popular scientific publications and the practical work done in the GDR largely coincided with our ideas... . Above all, we found that the content of the popular scientific literature existing in the GDR for practically all strata of the population also corresponded to a large extent to our circumstances.⁸⁶

Krause and Kurt Bach participated in further exchanges between the two countries.⁸⁷ They also produced media content, for which Krause surveyed Cuban pupils and adults to evaluate their reception of the educational materials.⁸⁸ While the Cuban working group also cooperated with other Latin American countries, most of the experts, whose travels were paid for by UN funds, came from the GDR.⁸⁹

⁸³There were voices from the political left in Sweden as well early advocates for the possibilities of social change via sex education. These aimed to overcome “repressive attitudes,” develop an understanding of the “mutuality of sexual relations,” and emancipate gender roles, as pointed out by Maj-Briht Bergström-Walan. Still, the left and liberal perspectives were not as prevalent in the public discourse as some people believed they were, and conservative teachers, parents, and church officials could openly articulate resistance. See Maj-Briht Bergström-Walan, *Modellfall Skandinavien? Sexualität und Sexualpolitik in Dänemark und Schweden* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1970), 34–35.

⁸⁴Svendsen, “The Cultural Politics of Sex Education in the Nordics.” One aspect that would be interesting to investigate is the role of the party and party youth organizations in sex education activities. In this context, it is possible that continuities could be traced and analyzed (in the GDR case, traced also to the National Socialist regime).

⁸⁵Bach, *Geschlechterziehung in der sozialistischen Oberschule*.

⁸⁶Krause, *Vorbereitung der jungen Generation auf Liebe, Ehe und Familie in der Republik Kuba*, 68.

⁸⁷Krause, *Vorbereitung der jungen Generation auf Liebe, Ehe und Familie in der Republik Kuba*, 73.

⁸⁸Krause, *Vorbereitung der jungen Generation auf Liebe, Ehe und Familie in der Republik Kuba*, 82–83.

⁸⁹Krause, *Vorbereitung der jungen Generation auf Liebe, Ehe und Familie in der Republik Kuba*, 90.

For her transnational work, Krause took part in different exchanges over the following years. She participated in the World Congress of Sexology in Mexico in 1979, the X. Rostock Advanced Training Days for Sexual Counseling (1979), a Section Conference on Disability Sexuality in Leipzig (1981), an International Seminar of Socialist Countries in Leipzig (1982), and research trips to the USSR and the CSSR.⁹⁰ On these occasions she acted “partly as a delegation member” and partly as “political functionary and ... specialist interpreter at all the seminars held with GDR consultants.”⁹¹ Such consultations occurred regularly after 1978.

Despite her international connections and the accumulation of knowledge that came with them, GDR sources remained the central point of reference in Krause’s writing and thinking. For example, she quoted only once from the best-known research on human sexual behavior of her time, the famous Kinsey Reports, in contrast to the many repeated GDR quotes in her work. While she mostly looked to the GDR as a model, she presented Cuba as a model, too, especially in terms of its programs to reduce the high number of teenage pregnancies in the country. Still, even in Krause’s discussion of the teenage pregnancy problem, the GDR remains her main case for comparison, even though teenage pregnancy seemingly was not as big a problem there as it was elsewhere.⁹²

Krause knew about sex education in different socialist countries, but she did not provide detailed descriptions or specifics about their programs; nevertheless, she had some concerns about the approaches in the People’s Republic of Poland and the Soviet Union. In the case of Soviet sex education, apparently, the country’s approaches were initiated later and had less success:

During a study visit ... to the Soviet Union in April 1982, we received confirmation from several central authorities ... that the preparation of adolescents for love, marriage, and family is still inadequate even in the Soviet Union... . In my opinion, the experimental programs starting in all of Moscow’s secondary schools (9th and 10th grade) are too abstract, take too little account of the biological aspects of sexuality, and would deepen the existing role stereotypes between boys and girls in our milieu.⁹³

Krause found an overemphasis on hygiene and morality in both countries’ programs. She writes:

The pedagogues, psychologists and physicians of the GDR warn against overemphasizing biology in sex education... . In the People’s Republic of Poland and in the Soviet Union programs have been developed whose realization avoids such

⁹⁰Krause, *Vorbereitung der jungen Generation auf Liebe, Ehe und Familie in der Republik Kuba*, 93.

⁹¹Krause, *Vorbereitung der jungen Generation auf Liebe, Ehe und Familie in der Republik Kuba*, 93.

⁹²Krause, *Vorbereitung der jungen Generation auf Liebe, Ehe und Familie in der Republik Kuba*, 89–93. She quotes from Alfred Kinsey his major work *Sexual behavior in the human male* (Philadelphia: Saunders, 1948). She uses the Spanish translation from Mexiko “La conducta sexual del varón” from 1949. In the texts on the GDR, teenage pregnancy was nowhere framed as an urgent problem, therefore it is unusual to refer here to the GDR.

⁹³Krause, *Vorbereitung der jungen Generation auf Liebe, Ehe und Familie in der Republik Kuba*, 172.

an overemphasis, but where too little sexual-biological information is included, because little (hardly anything) concrete is said about concrete sexual problems of young people. Instead, one seems to have fallen into other extremes: Overloading the programs with hygienic instruction, but above all with moral discussions.⁹⁴

All in all, Monika Krause's writings reveal that Cuba's sex education program was embedded in multiple ways in a transnational setting. While relying strongly on the GDR, Krause received and combined various experiences from other nations and developed a nationally specific program that was globally disseminated and discussed in a transnational socialist discourse. The main difference between the Cuban approach and that of other socialist states seems to have been its complex structure, which integrated different disciplines and professions and went well beyond school-based education.

The contrast between Cuba's approach and Western approaches—which rarely went beyond schooling—was twofold: First, Krause was a member of the reigning political party and held several and different roles within the state structures that gave her a centralized form of authority and enabled and influenced her work. Second, unlike Sweden, Cuba lacked the kind of open public discourse that could have diversified political positions on the content and methods of sex education. As a result, Cuba's content dealt with the social conditions of sexuality, aiming to invoke broad social change in line with Communist ideological goals. In contrast, the governments of capitalist Western countries did not aim to effect broad ideological and social change through their sex education policies and programs.

Just Tenderness? The Significance of Krause's Work in Cuba

Did socialists have *better* sex? Perhaps, if one considers only the heterosexual population, yet even then, researchers have struggled to make a valid comparison and assessment of actual sexual behavior.⁹⁵ What we do know, based on the case of Monika Krause, is that there were some distinct differences in the sex education programs of socialist and Western countries.

Sexuality, sex education, and sex education-focused media in socialist and Western countries, as scholars have shown, often differed from one another. There was a more coherent sex education in some socialist countries than in many of their capitalist counterparts. In Communist countries, altering the population's behavior and ideology was part of state policy. Countries like Cuba and the GDR intentionally aimed to influence their populations to have more tender (intimate) relations, and as a

⁹⁴Krause, *Vorbereitung der jungen Generation auf Liebe, Ehe und Familie in der Republik Kuba*, 201–2.

⁹⁵Some of Kurt Starke's works after 1990, as well as the public discourse in the unified Germany, hinted strongly at the existence of perceptible differences in sexual behavior and experience, the continuity of which is difficult to trace to this day, primarily because research on sex education does not involve comparisons between East and West Germany anymore. See Kurt Starke, *Varianten der Sexualität. Studien in Ost- und Westdeutschland* (Lengerich: Pabst Science Publishers, 2017); Weller, *Das Sexuelle in der deutsch-deutschen Vereinigung*.

result, a relatively broad proportion of the society was enabled to consume educational materials designed to prepare them to experience *better* sexual relations.

That said, there were certainly analogies between modern sex education in the East and the West. For example, seemingly everywhere, new curricular guidelines were followed by scientific research, which subsequently informed the development of new pedagogical measures conforming with official guidelines. Nevertheless, the relationship between research and state guidelines was regulated differently in East and West. For example, as discussed earlier, non-government actors in Sweden were able to publicly debate, criticize, and influence the existing policies, whereas in Cuba, despite the fact that there were multiple actors at work behind the scenes, only the state could publicly advance, implement, or alter a policy agenda on sexuality and sex education.

Does that mean, then, that Cubans had better sex? Krause's rather pessimistic retrospective, in which she laments resistance, resource scarcity, and fickle political support gives us reason to doubt this claim.⁹⁶ Last, but not least, the short duration of the "complex" approach also plays a role, as it lasted only around twenty years. It certainly produced some results, but it is important to not overestimate its effects. Still, Krause matters for a history of sex education as well as a history of gender relations in Cuba and beyond.⁹⁷

One gets a glimpse of the scope of Krause's work in the above-mentioned film, in which Krause's son retraces her work in Cuba.⁹⁸ When he visits Havana's broadcast station, where Krause recorded her show, one sees that the hosts remember and preserve her understanding of sex education quite well. In fact, the show that airs today still follows the format she used. The research institution she headed and institutionalized is still operational, and even in the sphere of everyday culture her work is remembered. Her son brings one of her sex education books to some of the interviews, and some people on the street not only recognize them, but also acknowledge them as symbolic of a societal shift toward more public discussions on sexual themes.

⁹⁶Here I reference the popular memoirs Krause wrote after 1990, in which she laments the difficult circumstances after the reunification of Germany. For example, see Krause, *Cuba - Meine Hölle, mein Paradies: 30 Jahre Fidel Castro und ein Ende* (Norderstedt, Germany: Books on Demand, 2015), 493.

⁹⁷Even after 1990, Krause remained an acknowledged expert on sexual politics in general and on Cuba, as several interviews, articles, and works on Cuban sexual politics indicate. See Emily J. Kirk, Anna Clayfield, and Isabel Story, eds., *Cuba's Forgotten Decade: How the 1970s Shaped the Revolution* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2020); Emily J. Kirk, *Cuba's Gay Revolution: Normalizing Sexual Diversity through a Health-Based Approach* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2017); DDC, "Muere Monika Krause, Precursora del CENESEX y Defensora del Derecho de la Mujer Sobre Su Cuerpo: La Doctora Alemana Vivió en Cuba, Pero Su Labor Educativa Sexual Chocó con la Maquinaria del Poder," *DIARIO DE CUBA*, May 21, 2019, https://diariodecuba.com/cuba/1558434215_46467.html; Carlos Ferrera Torres, "Adiós, Querida Mónica Krause: Pionera de la Educación Sexual en Cuba," *CiberCuba*, May 21, 2019, <https://www.cibercuba.com/noticias/2019-05-21-u124419-e42839-s27061-adios-querida-monika-krause-pionera-educacion-sexual-cuba>; DDC, "Directora del CENESEX Antes Que Mariela Castro, la Sexóloga Alemana Monika Krause Opina sobre la Homofobia Cubana, la Primera Operación de Cambio de Sexo, la Censura de Literatura Científica y Otros Temas," *DIARIO DE CUBA*, April 3, 2020, https://diariodecuba.com/cuba/1558448675_46474.html. In 1999 the last of her translations was published: Heinrich Brückner, *Del Óvulo a Los Primeros Pasos* (Habana: Editorial Científico-Técnica, 1999). See also Krause, *¿Machismo? No, gracias*, 287–91.

⁹⁸Ceschi and Stamm, *La Reina del Condón*.

But there is more to Krause's work than its influence on the sex life of Cuban society. Her work depicts some of the core features of the socialist approach to sex education. This approach comes into view as a state-led, broadly anchored, empirically based research endeavor. It combined social and biological understandings of sexuality and addressed sexual knowledge, social and economic structures, and mentalities alike, for the purpose of achieving social change. What distinguished Krause's socialist approach from sex education activities in Western countries was the centralized and systematic interrelation of different activities.

In the West, the various activities of research, knowledge transfer, social outreach, and media design were conducted more independently and were only loosely connected. Unlike what was implemented in Cuba, there was no comparable uniform and ideologically, politically, and financially centralized sex education program. Western sex education was supported by the state, but that support was influenced by social movements, civil society, church officials, business groups, and other organizations in the pluralistic private sector.

Krause embodied the connection between research, knowledge transfer, and political involvement, thereby symbolizing the systematic, interrelated approach to sex education in the socialist nation-state. Sex education was interwoven with the state's political structure and, accordingly, was intertwined with its undemocratic nature. The resulting sexualities in Cuba may have been better or more progressive, but such benefits came at a price. This is particularly evident at the margins, where there was a lack of opportunities for civil society participation and debate.

To bring about more equal relationships among couples, Krause's complex sex education program taught individuals, couples, and families to embrace the concept of tenderness in intimate relationships. A tender population presumably would be more useful for the state and better support itself, its partners, and the collective social fabric. As an inspiring social goal, this is interesting, but without additional means of political participation, the implemented program should be critically evaluated. This article's analysis of Krause's systematic approach and its results should not be misunderstood as an uncritical affirmation of the program itself. The program was situated in an undemocratic, repressive political structure and continued, in the GDR case, with at least some ideological aspects from the National Socialist past.⁹⁹

Still, the core innovation of that time was the usage of state resources to finance a systematic program of sex education. While the Cuban program's activities and content included ideological aspects from the socialist traditions, existing books, and advisory literature, they should be interpreted as arising from genuinely new educational

⁹⁹This type of structure was not accidentally labeled by some as an "authoritarian welfare-state" (see Stephan Leifried, *Zeit der Armut. Lebensläufe im Sozialstaat* [Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1995]) or "caring dictatorship" (Konrad Jarausch, "Care and Coercion: The GDR as Welfare Dictatorship," in *Dictatorship as Experience*, ed. Konrad Jarausch [Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999], 47–70). Other scholars like Harsch, McClellan, and Winkler, as discussed above, have focused on the potential problems, resistance, and habitual and cultural results that followed from these activities.

policies, to which there were neither nationalist nor socialist traditions.¹⁰⁰ Admittedly, more research is needed. To understand how these new measures interacted with the conceptual socialist traditions, we need a better understanding of what happened, especially after 1970, when possibilities for socialist endeavors opened up and state resources became available. The socialist state used and integrated existing traditions into its emerging systematic approach, but the systematic approach cannot be reduced to the socialist tradition alone. By 1975, after weighing for some time the political dangers and opportunities of state sex education, concrete practices and a systematic, coordinated, interdisciplinary state practice emerged.

Conclusion

Krause's role in the history of international entanglements in the field of socialist sex education, as reported in her dissertation, is complex. Her work constituted a knot in a wider network of knowledge, policies, and contacts, a particular "bricolage" of a nationally and transnationally shared sex education history.¹⁰¹ The focus on her individual work in this article reveals her embeddedness in discourses and structures of socialist educational cooperation.¹⁰²

Although Krause rose to a position of central oversight in Cuba, historians have largely overlooked her work. That her astonishing career has not attracted much scholarly attention can be explained as a side effect of the end of the Cold War on educational historiography. Particularly in Germany, all things socialist coming from the GDR had to be rejected. That rejection placed a kind of historiographical freeze on any scholarly attempts to interpret connections, ideas, and projects coming from the GDR as part of a mobilizing and modernizing effort. Krause's story, together with the extensive educational cooperation the GDR launched with several countries, indicates that the GDR was in the forefront in addressing sexology, sexual media, and reproductive rights and was a progressive case within the socialist block.

Why does looking at state-level pedagogic approaches to "teach tenderness to the people" matter for a transnational history of sex education? Writing the history of modernist approaches to sex education as a history of knowledge and including transnational dynamics may constitute one of the most promising topics in the compelling field of sex education.

¹⁰⁰For example, in the GDR, while the advice books by the physician Rudolf Neubert, who worked in Nazi Germany as well as in the GDR, remained available, they probably had less influence than the writings of Rolf Bormann, Heinz Grassel, Siegfried Schnabel, and other experts who took part in the state-lead sex education measures, were part of the scientific expert networks on sex education, and sometimes—like Bormann, who authored the advice column in the youth magazine *Neues Leben*—became public figures.

¹⁰¹Reh, *Berufsbiographische Texte ostdeutscher Lehrer und Lehrerinnen*; Reißig, *Die gespaltene Vereinigungsgesellschaft*.

¹⁰²On networks of GDR scholars after 1990, see, e.g., Christa Uhlig, "Die Herausbildung nichtinstitutionalisierter, informeller Wissenskulturen in Ostdeutschland am Beispiel der Erziehungswissenschaften," in *Kritik Der Transformation - Erziehungswissenschaft Im Vereinten Deutschland*, ed. Wolfgang Keim, Dieter Kirchhöfer and Christa Uhlig (Frankfurt a.M.: Peter Lang, 2003), 271–88.

Understanding the sex education programs of socialist countries reveals new nuances, allowing us to better compare socialist with Western approaches. As discussed in this article, the agency of socialist experts and scientists was intertwined with the state's social goals. Ideology about equality between the sexes, upon which the state rested its legitimacy, allowed female scientists like Monika Krause to pursue their professions in contexts that supported socialist goals. Of course, sexual equality was “aspirational,” insofar as it described a society that the educators wanted to create, rather than one that already existed. The phrase “teach tenderness to the people” came to represent the effort to prepare the population for love, marriage, and family in socialist society. It was a fitting phrase that helped to justify measures scientists and educators believed necessary to achieve both the state's goals and their own.

A comparative analysis of sex education history reveals important distinctions between socialist and Western countries. Socialist debates over sex education occurred within the non-transparent circles of government power. In contrast, debates in the West often unfolded in the public sphere, as non-government agencies and social movements aimed to create public support for desired reforms. In the West, the desired changes needed public approval, whereas in the East, the government's internal consent came first and was then proclaimed to the outside world. When we understand Krause as an activist, we can see that her activism was not positioned outside and independent of the state but came from within. She attempted to create sexual equality by educating people to form functioning relationships (i.e., that were long-lasting and included successful parenting). Such aims were less central to non-government organizations in the West.

I shall close with a little anecdote about East and West in Germany. After unification, conferences were organized to bring feminists from the East and West together. Among the discussions and arguments that ensued, one was about the involvement of male partners in these conferences. While Eastern feminists intended to bring their partners, because they thought that their learning together would be essential for achieving equality within their relationships, Western feminists insisted strictly on gender-homogeneous rooms and the exclusion of male partners, because the liberation of the individual woman was at the center of their struggle. Both Eastern and Western feminist movements aimed for change, but the way to achieve change and the intended results were indeed different. To put it pointedly: both groups sought better sexual relations, but one group focused on the individual, the other on the couple. Both social movements were bound in their own way to the social structures in which their struggles were located. The fact that they did not know and understand each other's struggles was yet another obstacle that hampered their desired connection after 1990 in Germany.¹⁰³

¹⁰³This anecdote is based on a podcast interview with Hildegard Maria Nickel, professor emeritus of Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, who was involved in the described exchange. For the podcast, see, “#19 - Umbruch an der Humboldt-Universität - mit Hildegard Maria Nickel,” Projekt Umbruch, November 26, 2023, <https://projektumbruch.podigee.io/22-der-umbruch-an-der-humboldt-universitaet>.

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