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SEX AS AN INSTRUMENT OF EXCHANGE,
AND COMMERCIAL SEX

Baumeister and Vohs argue that because of the interactive nature of sexuality, sex is always a form of trading. Even in its most limited forms, people are trading touching and some degree of sexual pleasure. For the most part, various feelings and wanting to give pleasure to the partner are also part of the exchange. The exchange is of a different nature if sex is used as an item to trade for some other type of benefit or for actual compensation. This is the case in commercial and paid sex. Pornography is included in this same chapter because of the economic values associated with it.

Sex as an instrument of exchange

Recently, commercial sex and economic benefits derived from sex have been hotly debated. From a broader perspective, sex is also an instrument of social exchange that brings certain desired and desirable aspects to intimate relationships, too. Sexual interaction can be viewed thus through the perspective of social exchange theory or sexual economics. This type of analysis was inspired in particular by the Nobel Prize-winning Gary Becker, who has researched the economic foundations of human behaviour. Roy Baumeister in particular has applied social exchange theory in his research on sexual exchange.

The social exchange theory presents a view of how the sexual negotiations and actions that occur in relationships are organized and linked together in a social system. In social exchange theory, people's choices are affected by the costs and benefits they entail. In social interaction, everyone gives something and receives something in return. In this kind of exchange, people try to maximize the benefits for themselves. Social interaction is usually maintained only when all parties are getting more out of the deal than they are losing. Often, sexual services are exchanged for other services, such as gifts or money. Men may also reward women for sex by offering other commodities, caring and appreciation, or by committing to the relationship that the woman wants.

In social interaction, female sexuality has a significant value, whereas male sexuality has been seen as relatively worthless from the standpoint of social exchange. In the case of women, virginity, innocence, a chaste reputation, and other similar

characteristics have been imbued with positive values that are entirely missing from for men. The terminology of economic exchange is particularly apparent in instances where a woman's virginity is called the "gift" that she can confer on a man. Female sexuality has an exceptionally large exchange value in countries and cultures where women have few other opportunities for acquiring substantive resources. One manifestation is the payment of large dowries to a man's family upon negotiations between the two families.

Female sexuality is most restricted in cultures where women are most dependent on the exchange value of sex. Sexual norms loosen when women have more available opportunities to acquire the economic resources they need.

Behind the social exchange theory is the theory of evolution, which defines sex as a particular resource of women. Sex is seen as a female resource especially because of the strategy for reproduction that it encompasses. The consequences of sex for women (pregnancy and the pain related to it) require paying a greater price than men have to. For women, the risk of high costs is significant, even though the sex itself may be enjoyable. For this reason women have been more passive than men in initiating sex.

When a man and a woman start having sex, according to the social exchange theory, the woman is giving the man something that he values. In exchange, the woman obtains commodities that she values. In most cases, men's sexual services cannot be traded in for other commodities. However, it should be noted that the world is changing in this regard as well. All sex that takes place in a community is some way associated with its market for sexual exchange. Sex, then, is not just a private transaction between two people.

According to the social exchange theory, the party in the relationship who is the least interested in sex obtains more power. The person who is more in love and wants more sex is more prepared to make compromises and offer various enticements to get what he or she wants. Because the findings of this study clearly show that, on average, men experience more sexual desire than women, the consequence of this is a sexual power imbalance in Finland, with women ending up with greater power resources than men in their relationships.

In a marriage, economic resources are shared, and men therefore only have limited possibilities of offering women something additional (in cohabiting unions and especially in living-apart relationships this can occur without the marital obligation). It is not possible to negotiate social exchange in the same way as when first starting the relationship. In addition, sexual attraction diminishes in long-term relationships, while the faithfulness required of the relationship (sexual monopoly) prevents alternative ways of seeking sex. The risk that a relationship will end as a result of lack of sex experienced by one partner is lowered. Usually, too, the couple has removed themselves from the market of sexual exchange, where the value of sex is actually determined.

The price of getting sex may vary greatly. For a man, starting a sexual relationship with a particular woman may require taking her out for a wonderful meal, or showering her with compliments, or spending something like a month by giving her attention, or a promise to share with her all earnings and property through life. The price of sex is decided in negotiations between the two people. Community sexual norms also partly determine how the price of sex is formed.

In many sexual relationships women are seen as victims and men as exploiters, as if the mere fact of having sex would rob women of something valuable. In cultures and ideologies that emphasize sexual exchange value, girls are seen as needing protection so that their valuable resource is not threatened or destroyed. Men, on the hand, do not need this kind of protection, because their sexuality does not contain a comparable exchange value.

In a sexually competitive situation a woman may set too high a price for sex, for example, marriage. The pursuer may then turn to another woman who is not asking as high a price for sex. The value of sex declines in situations where there are more women than men, and similarly increases, if there are more men than women.

The low price of sex favours men, while higher prices are rewarding for women. Partly for this reason the ideology of free love has gained greater popularity among men than women. Also the sexual revolution often mentioned in this book was more welcomed by men, because it decreased the price they had to pay for sex. For women, it has been more useful to support values that promote obtaining sex in an acceptable way only through faithful marriage. If women manage to pressure one another into embracing sexual repression, it brings up the price of sex. The attitude and value differences proposed in this hypothesis have also been observed in the present study, even though they are fading.

Some women set a higher price for their sexual services than other women. The higher the demand for a particular woman is, the higher the price she can ask. It is possible to increase sexual demand through dress, make-up, weight loss, and other appearance-boosting methods. Attractiveness can also be enhanced through flirtation, sexy clothes, and giving the impression that sex with this particular woman would be especially enjoyable. The woman must simultaneously give the impression that she is very selective as to her partners.

Studies show that people generally do not start having sex until the woman has expressed a desire for it. A man's desire has had little importance. Women decide when sex starts and it has been left to the man to invest in the woman until she is satisfied. Women have not valued sex as highly as men because it has been more readily available to them. It is, however, true that this study found that it is no longer as easy for women to get the amount of sex that they want, even though it continues to be much easier for women than for men. Men may find it particularly irritating

when some women have first accepted the resources men have invested, and then not offered sex in exchange.

Seduction is a process during which men often persuade women to have sex with him. A man may invest both social and material resources into the woman, including buying gifts, paying for food and entertainment, spending time with her, and making it clear to her that he wants a long-term relationship. A woman frequently abstains from sex until the man has invested in her sufficiently.

Men are generally required to provide a larger economic investment in the relationship than women. For this reason, men with a lower social status have a hard time finding partners. Low-income men, particularly middle-aged men, encompass many more single dwellers than wealthier men. High-status women have the same problem having difficulty finding partners. Mere sexual services from a man have not been enough of an enticement for such women.

When a woman has a higher status than a man, the value of the sex he has to offer may grow. In this case, abstaining from sex may benefit a man economically. There are already signs of this in Finland, as women's education levels surpass men's and relationships in which women have more economic resources than men proliferate. It is symptomatic that women are increasingly complaining of lack of desire on the part of men. This amounts to a determination of the value of the sex that men have to offer.

Women who experience only a little sexual desire consider the price of sex to be high. Women who have a higher level of sexual desire, on the other hand, do not expect as much compensation for sex. Sexual decision-making is more complicated for women than it is for men. Men can make the decision to have sex sooner and more easily, and more frequently regardless of whether the woman they're presently having sex with is the special object of their desire. In this sense, having sex has often been easier for men, though, naturally, not all men.

In their research related to the theory of evolution, Schmidt and Buss have claimed that the most effective method for a woman to obtain the man of another woman is to underscore her attractiveness, put down the appearance of her competitor, and make suggestions about having sex and to actually have sex with the competitor's man. For a man, offering sex to the female partner of another man is not similarly effective. It is more useful for a man to present his resources, grant them to the woman, and form an emotional relationship to her (another resource women desire).

In the market for prostitution and pornography sex has a low price compared to the high stakes that a regular relationship requires. Therefore this market is of interest to men. Women on the other hand oppose it, because it threatens to lower the price of sex. If pornography satisfies part of the sexual desire men feel, their willingness to invest resources toward getting sex from women is reduced. In addition, some women may feel bad for other women who, they think, have sold themselves at too

low a price into pornography. They fear that this may eat away at the exchange price of the sex they themselves have to offer.

Good porn, bad porn

The definition of what constitutes porn or pornography is a deeply personal issue and one connected to a particular moment in history. Originally, pornography referred to writings about prostitutes. Today's porn is more about imagination and fantasy than about people's real sexual lives. The central thrust is the pursuit of sexual arousal through the use of porn. Many consider the sexual expression in porn to be a separate and independent form, a value in itself. For others, it represents a substitute for a missing sex life.

Throughout history, a substantial part of pornography, if not all of it, has been forbidden, restricted or at least labelled indecent or immoral. Today, people who oppose porn seek to justify their bias by making reference to porn's presumed dangerousness to the development of children, its role as a model for sexual violence, and the abuse of the people who appear in porn. In spite of this criticism, run-of-the-mill porn with pictures of sexual intercourse is now marketed completely legally in Finland. Only child porn, violent porn and pictures of sex with animals are criminalized. Pornography is no longer a legal as much as it is a moral question.

The situation as it stands has long been nearly the same: most people are very interested in porn at the same time as a minority that, for one reason or another, views porn with distaste. They have sought justifications for their opposition to it that best fit the time and context. Porn has divided people in two emotional camps a bit like the attitudes toward abortion. According to studies, opposition to pornography is correlated with generally conservative attitudes, whereas accepting it is associated with generally liberal attitudes. In pornography, people focus on such different issues and perspectives that it is difficult for them to understand others who view the issue differently.

Among opponents of porn, the conflict over it has, often unconsciously, relied on the concept of sexual desire as natural and true-to-nature, an idea that has been historically held up on a pedestal. The desire to have sexual intercourse with one's spouse was once interpreted as a healthy impulse, when it was based on natural desire that had not been artificially created or enhanced. Artificiality referred, for instance, to pictures or stories that are sexually stimulating. In this frame of reference, pornography paid too much attention to everyday bodily pleasures and it was therefore deemed dangerous.

Conceptions of pornography are often very personal. The way that people assess and interpret particular sexual materials and whether they are acceptable or indecent are strongly associated with the immediate positive or negative emotional reactions in the viewer or reader. Porn moves people to feel something, because it converts into something visible and public what is most private about a person's life.

These emotional reactions are shaped by how people have been socialized with regard to sexuality; it is common to feel shame upon the public display of sex. We are ashamed not only of the nudity, but also of the emotions that such images evoke within us. It would feel safer to be looking at pictures that do not move us this powerfully. The assessments people make regarding the harmfulness or usefulness of sexually explicit materials they are viewing are then used to justify and explain one's own personal, emotional reactions.

Edward Westermarck has made the claim that shame is a by-product of the disgust that people feel toward incest. According to the teachings of Moses, relatives and family members were under no circumstances allowed to see one another's genitals. The prohibition against incest was strongly associated with the modesty regarding nudity. Up to this day, these moral teachings are conveyed to us in part through the American film industry with its restraint in sexual matters and nudity. Culture does not see nudity as something natural, but as a kind of deviation from what is normal. One example of this cultural labelling of nudity comes from the media, where the slightest glimpse of a celebrity's breast is avidly reported. It is easy to fabricate the illusion of scandal through nudity.

In assessing the significance of pornography, the question is also about the kind of conception of humanity that we apply in making assumptions about how people's behaviour can be influenced. If we believe that people respond easily to external stimuli, we have reason to be concerned about the effects of pornography. If, on the other hand, we trust people's own logical (cognitive) ability to deduce and make decisions, we need not worry about porn's potentially negative consequences, because people can be expected to distinguish between fact and fiction.

Porn is about products that depict sexual acts and that have commercial significance. Parallels are often drawn between pornography and eroticism, which is a more widely accepted and frequently even idealized portrayal and commodification of human sexual interests. But the way that people interpret and define what is erotic depends fundamentally on the experience and emotions of individual viewers and readers.

A general interpretation has been that eroticism becomes porn when it causes sexual arousal or when a recipient, instead of feeling a more sensual pleasure, instead feels awkward or even anxious. Indeed, porn is characterized by the fact that depending on the recipient, it is seen either as arousing or out-and-out vulgar. It rarely leaves the recipient entirely indifferent. Its powerful effect as well as the pleasure that comes with it is what consumers of porn look for in the products. Many people, though, are content with the mere visual enjoyment that pornography may offer.

Pornography's use and motivation

We never get to see when other people make love. This is in part why the artificial world of pornography attracts so many viewers. It offers impressions of what it looks like to make love. Only the few people who have equipped their love nests with mirrors or cameras have ever seen themselves making love. In pornography, sexual stories and representations are produced which people may then apply in their own relationships if they so wish.

People who use pornography easily recognize its artificial nature. Some of this is due to materials that are cheaply produced, making it difficult to relate to. It feels about as real as science fiction to someone walking down an ordinary street. An entirely different matter is the various love-making scenes in mass-distributed movies that strive to create a sense of credibility and points of recognition that viewers can relate to. Many people use such scenes as models or at least dreams in their own life. Gorgeous, slow-motion sex scenes in movies may make one's own sex life seem rather humdrum. Pornography, on the other hand, is not capable of the same effect.

In addition to asking about people's use of pornography, the FINSEX survey also asked for the first time in 2007 whether respondents had ever visited a sex shop to buy sex toys or other materials. It was assumed that respondents would be familiar with the concept of a sex shop, and there was no further elaboration on the topic.

In relative terms, young men and women had been equally active users of sex shops. Of men, 55 percent and of women 46 percent had visited one at least at some point, and one in four young men and one in five young women had visited one in the last year. The most active sex shop customers were men aged 20–34 and women aged 20–29. About one in four respondents in these age groups had shopped at a sex boutique in the last year. Shopping there was much more frequent among young adults and the middle-aged compared with older respondents.

According to the FINSEX survey, middle-aged men were more likely to frequent sex shops than middle-aged women. Nearly half of the men had at some point visited a sex shop and 14 percent had done so within the last year. One-third of women had visited a sex shop at some point and seven percent had done so within the last year. In this age group men were almost twice as likely as women to have frequented a sex shop. Only one-quarter of older men and six percent of older women had at some point visited a sex shop. Within the last year, only seven percent of men and two percent of women had done so.

Use of pornography was addressed in one question only, asked already in 1971: "Within the last year, have you read or flipped through a magazine or book that in your view could be called pornographic?" The responses to this question in different years reveal the incidence of the use of this type of pornographic materials but also the changes that have taken place in what people consider and define as pornographic.

The issue would take shape even better had respondents in the 2007 survey been asked to evaluate whether what 1971 respondents had identified as porn still met that definition according to 2007 respondents. The hard-core porn of 1971 typically consisted of posed shots of nude women taken from afar. Today, they would be more likely to be considered art-house photographs. It may be that even back then it was possible to obtain isolated pictures of sexual intercourse from under the table, but images of intercourse were banned from publicly sold sex magazines until the 1980s. These days, a magazine without pictures of sexual intercourse could hardly be called a porn magazine.

Another change applies to written pornographic materials. Various types of pornographic literature were available in the early 1970s, having just been given permission to be distributed publicly. Many people read this kind of porn, because it was new and exciting. By now it is hard to come by erotic or pornographic texts, or they have become so common that we rarely pay attention to them. The moving image has monopolized porn and visual depictions of sex.

The structural changes in the market explain why both men and women in 1971 were more likely than later to report reading or looking at a porn magazine or book within the last year. Among men, the level of sex publication use dropped from the early 1970s to the early 1990s from approximately 80 percent to about 60 percent. Among women this change was from approximately 60 to a low of about 30 percent. Thereafter, the use of porn has remained approximately at the same level. In 2007, 58 percent of men and 26 percent of women reported reading or looking at pornographic materials. The use of porn among both genders was about as common in the young and middle-aged age groups. Use of porn among men in the oldest age group had increased, with nearly half using it at some point within the last year. Only one-tenth of women in this age group reported using it. That generation of women was taught that porn was not appropriate for women.

All types of pornography were more popular among men than women. In recent times, men and women converged most in their use of sex videos and DVDs, which had been used within the last year by 56 percent of men and 28 percent of women. Men's use of sex videos was higher in 2007 than eight years before. The proportion of men who viewed them repeatedly increased by five percentage points. Among women, the use of sex videos increased only slightly.

Seventy percent of young men and 62 percent of middle-aged men had used sex videos within the last year. The use of sex videos among young men had declined somewhat, but both the prevalence and frequency of sex video use increased among middle-aged and older men. Nearly half of the men in the oldest age group had also watched sex videos. More than half of young men, nearly half of middle-aged men, and one-third of older men had watched sex videos repeatedly. Men's interest toward sex videos was not affected by age. As the baby-boom generation approaches retirement age, the popularity of sex videos may increase even more significantly.

Among women the younger generation was clearly the most active user group for sex videos. Forty-three percent had used sex videos within the last year. The figure was one-quarter for middle-aged women and approximately 15 percent for older women. One-fifth of younger women reported repeated use of sex videos within the last year, and so did 14 percent of middle-aged women and eight percent of older women. The videos' popularity had increased somewhat over eight years. In the oldest age group, there was a significant gender gap in terms of how commonly men versus women watched sex videos.

The FINSEX survey pointed to a decrease in the use of sex magazines, which have been replaced by Web porn and sex videos. Relatively speaking, sex magazines were used mostly by men much more so than sex videos. One in two men had looked at sex magazines over the last year, compared to only 13 percent of women. One-third of men and five percent of women reported looking at sex magazines repeatedly. Their use had waned over eight years in all other groups except older men, whose use of sex magazines had actually increased. The biggest drop occurred among young men, of whom only one-third still used sex magazines. This is also the group in which the use of Internet sex simultaneously gained in popularity.

Four-fifths of young men had viewed free online porn within the last year. The gender difference here was huge: only one-fifth of young women had viewed free online porn. Women showed a far greater interest in sex videos than sex on the Internet. It is likely that the growing equality in the use of the Internet will bring these figures closer.

Half of middle-aged men and one in ten middle-aged women had used Internet porn within the last year. One in four men in the older age group, but only three percent of women, had viewed sex on the Internet.

Only four percent of men and one percent of women had visited fee-based online sex sites within the last year. Based on this, the commercial porn market seems rather meagre at this point. People are interested in sex in the Internet, but not paying for it. Only seven percent of men and five percent of women who had looked for and viewed sex on the Internet had been willing to pay for it.

Sex chatlines got new customers over the last eight years, although their popularity generally was in clear decline. Thirteen percent of men had called a chatline in previous years, but only two percent had made similar calls within the last year. The proportion of those who had called a chatline at some point previously increased by five percent, but the proportion of respondents who had called within the last year dropped by four percentage points. The popularity of phone sex has collapsed among the young and the middle-aged. In previous years, three percent of women reported calling a chatline, but only half a percent had done so within the last year.

Many of the writers of the sexual autobiographies collected in the 1990s described using pornography together with a partner, and being aroused and making exceptionally

satisfying love. Some people had borrowed new ideas from porn and adopted new sexual techniques. Sometimes porn also sowed disagreement and conflict in the relationship. Usually this was when a woman opposed or disapproved of the use of porn by a male partner, although in one autobiography the situation was reversed. In some cases, men had unsuccessfully tried to persuade their partners to use pornography together with them.

Pornography's influence on attitudes and love-making skills

For sexual activity to be satisfying and beneficial to health requires various types of information, an open mind, and skills accumulated through knowledge and experience. Both skills and knowledge are crucial in sex itself as well as in the interaction between partners.

The sex portrayed in film, video, and literature (including sex guides) is for most people the only tangible model for sexual behaviour. For children in particular it is difficult to observe adult sexual behaviour and form images or models to use in their own life. Erotic literature, sex magazines, and sex videos have therefore been the primary source of sexual information for young people regarding various types of sexual behaviours and activities. Nowadays also women's magazines feature stories about how to become an especially skilled lover.

There has been an assumption that the more public discourse there is around sex, and the greater the detail of that discourse, the easier it will be for people to accept the various manifestations of sexuality in their own lives. As a result of increased, more comprehensive discussions about sex and sex education, attitudes toward sexual matters have become more open-minded, meaning that people now accept an increasing variety of sexual relationships and experiences both for themselves and for others.

The assumption regarding the impact of the media on sexual behaviour correlates well with follow-up findings from the FINSEX survey, which point to a noticeable liberalization in people's opinions regarding sexual matters in the twenty years between the early 1970s and the early 1990s. These changes entailed a greater acceptance in most cases toward sexual intercourse between young people, rating temporary relationships as more satisfying than before, and often accepting sexual intercourse between people who were not necessarily in love.

The attitude changes were particularly remarkable in the age groups whose members were young adults in the early 1970s and thereafter. The more open public discussion of sex that began then made attitudes toward sex increasingly liberal among the respondents in this age group. People who came of age prior to the 1970s were significantly more conservative than subsequent generations. In their youth, media discussions of sexuality had been notably more limited, moralistic, and more tightly bound to the institution of marriage.

Having love-making and sex fantasies publicly displayed as well as seeing practical public advice on the subject widely available has clearly liberalized the sexual lives of the men and women who have been affected by these trends. Based on the FINSEX survey, respondents under the age of 35 were significantly more likely to report feeling that their sexual habits were versatile and satisfying, compared with older generations. Sexual methods became more varied, as people tried out what they had seen or read with a partner. The most important aspect of the dissemination of such inspirational materials was that they gave people permission to act out their sexual needs and desires in a more satisfying way and taught them to take into account the wishes and feelings of their partner better than before.

From the standpoint of the evolution of love-making skills among the general population, sex magazines and other pornographic materials have functioned as public educators in matters of sex. For decades, they have advised men in particular on becoming a better lover and shared much theoretical and practical knowledge about improving communication between partners and making their love lives more versatile. The pioneering work that they have undertaken has been continued in recent years by women's and health magazines. This kind of information dissemination has been made possible as sexual activity and masturbation have come to be understood as beneficial to human health. It had become an important value in women's lives, a value in itself, and not just something that is necessary from the standpoint of relationship formation and maintenance.

Pornography depicts sexual activities and tendencies. It is clear that the people most interested in porn are those with the greatest interest in and desire for sexual experiences. In France, for example, men who read pornographic texts reported more frequent and versatile sexual activities compared to other men. Their sexual habits were more varied; they had more sexual partners, masturbated more often, and experienced orgasms more frequently compared with others. Porn users also had more numerous sexual fantasies. In spite of these activities, they were less satisfied with their current sex lives than others. The dissatisfaction seems linked to their craving for sex, which was difficult or impossible to satisfy.

In Finland, too, it has been shown that the greater a person's sexual motivation, the more actively he or she has generally used pornographic products. On the other hand, also people with a lesser interest in sex have in many cases used porn. Interestingly enough, porn users in Finland have been shown to have better sexual self-esteem than other people. The users of porn are in no way a group of sexual loners, merely compensating for a lack of sex or partners by using porn.

Both men and women expressed a desire for more frequent and better sex to feel satisfied with their sex lives and relationships. Sex has a greater presence in mass media and people's minds than ever before, people are readier to engage in various kinds of sexual experimentation, and sexual fantasies have become more public and less inhibited.

With this trend, it is clear that the demand for pornography will continue to grow in the future. How this demand will be manifested will depend on the available forms of pornography and the quality at which it is marketed. Particular problems of the porn now available are its monotony and lack of imagination. Stories that repeat the same images and storylines have pushed people away from porn's sphere of influence.

Young people will always be the special target group for pornography. Young people long to get acquainted with the details of the naked body especially of the opposite sex and to be able to preview what different love-making techniques and positions look like in practice. This is important for young people's ability to take charge of their own sexuality. The demand for this type of knowledge will be met and fulfilled as long as it is not available, for example, through school sex education. Criticism directed at the use of pornography by young people is self-righteous, as long as educators are unwilling to offer young people the information they most want to discover about sexuality.

The sale and purchase of sexual services

Sex appears in its most naked form when it is a commodity in social or sexual exchange – in the sale or purchase of paid sexual services or prostitution. In this kind of activity, sex is assigned a definite price that may be negotiable, like the price of many other things that are traded. The price varies according to the estimated price for the object of the purchase or the price that he or she has set. People are willing to pay extremely high prices for the best and most desirable services. A price may be based on more than just the provision of sexual services, for example the exceptional quality of those services or the guaranteed trustworthiness of the service provider.

When talking about the purchase of sexual services, the focus is often on one question: why men (who make up the majority of buyers) want to pay for sex in the first place. Isn't it enough to have sex with a regular sex partner, if there is one? What is it that men expect to get from paying for sex? Another question is why women so rarely buy sexual services. Is it so easy for them to get sex that they do not have to resort to paying for it?

Numerous Nordic studies have examined men's motivation in furnishing the demand for the purchase of sexual services. Sven-Axel Månsson has compiled a summary of his own and other researchers' studies focusing on this issue. Emerging from the studies is a key cluster of five images or fantasies men harbour about prostitutes, of what they represent for men, and what men think they can get from them.

The “whore” fantasy

For many men, the fantasy of the “whore” is sexually arousing. This is in part associated with the contradictory nature of soliciting sex – it is unpleasant and tempting at the same time. The unpleasantness comes from the self-hatred that men feel toward their own secret, forbidden sexual impulses. Nevertheless, men are well aware that when this kind of secrecy is melded with sexual fantasy, the result is heightened arousal.

At the same time as many men profess contempt for “whores”, the concept also fascinates them. “Whores” are intimately close to men’s most private, masculine erotic dreams and fantasies. Many men are curious to see for themselves at least once what it would be like to be involved with a “whore”. It is a kind of male rite of initiation and a form of sexual experimentation. After an initial experience, many men continue to pay for sex. Also closely associated with the phenomenon is the idea of prostitutes as sexual guides who lead men into sexual adulthood and make men out of boys.

The sphere of life that prostitutes occupy also provokes curiosity and excitement in men. The milieu of red light districts or other areas where sex is sold serve as a kind of invitation to sex. This is underscored by the frequent proximity of sex clubs and porn shops. There is no other area of life where men can find women who openly display themselves sexually. The availability of the women as well as local conditions and situational factors seem to be important factors in the use of prostitution. Many men report not having been able to resist a woman who presented herself in a sexually provocative manner.

From the standpoint of the man’s decision, the most important contributing factor is the availability of the woman in combination with the man’s belief that he will be able to retain his anonymity. This also explains the use of such services via the Internet in particular.

A different kind of sex

In their fantasies of prostitutes men hope to encounter a sexually skilled, experienced woman. This woman is presumably willing to have some new or special kind of sex that they are for various reasons unable to engage in with a wife or regular partner. Pornography may have spurred these hopes. Men who purchase sex act out these hopes and fantasies with sex workers. In most cases, however, they request and receive sex that is not especially exotic compared with their experiences to date.

In paid sex it is noteworthy that some men use it to be able to assume a different, more submissive role than they normally occupy with a regular partner. Men are buying themselves the right to be passive, to experience being seduced by an active woman. No doubt men have had too few of these experiences with their usual partners, to the point that they are willing to pay for the experience.

Many men want to be orally stimulated by a woman. The next item on the list of the most popular requests is sexual intercourse with the woman on top. According to one study, up to one in two men wanted the sex worker to take all the initiative and take charge of everything that happened. This way the men could seek relief from the sexual demands directed at them. Some men pay for women to dominate them and force them to do things that in certain other contexts could be viewed as shameful, degrading, or even sexually abusive. This speaks to how complicated sexuality truly is from a psychological standpoint. Public discussions of the subject have been rather simplistic and shown a lack of understanding of many essential aspects of sexuality.

Sex as a commodity

Sex may also be experienced as just one more commercially available product among other products. For those who can afford it, buying sex is another way of consuming. Money can buy positive, enjoyable experiences, in this case, sex. The commercial transaction is relatively easy to arrange and does not require the contemplation of any moral questions. Money can buy a “product” matching one’s tastes whenever the time or need arises.

The idea of this type of consumption may have to do with a certain biological approach to the nature of sex. It is viewed as a kind of periodic need for sexual release that can in part be taken care of by paying for the appropriate service. This way the man need not invest his time or resources into his sexual needs in the rest of his life.

The image of a sympathetic comfort giver

Some of the customers of sex workers pay for sex to fulfil their general longing for a woman. They want to be close to a woman and are able to achieve it by paying a prostitute. These men are single dwellers who may have problems entering into relationships with women because of shyness, appearance, illness, disability, social status, or lifestyle. They may feel that they have no other way of being close to a woman.

In male illusions, a sex worker can make a man feel wanted and sexually accomplished for at least a moment, and at the same time feel like he is in control of his own life. The function of women in this case is to maintain and bolster men’s virility.

Fantasies about a different kind of woman

Men fantasize about what it would feel like to have sex with a woman who is different from and looks different than the woman they are currently with. A sex worker represents a different kind of woman already in the sense that she sells her services straightforwardly for money. In addition, she takes charge more, is more knowledgeable and more experienced in sexual matters. Cultural exoticism may offer an added bonus. Different skin colour and language and possibly an exotic

environment help create a particular sexual atmosphere. Various generalized sexual imagery and expectations are also associated with women who come from different cultural backgrounds.

There are also men who pay for sex to look for a more traditional woman who would be suitable as a partner of a traditional man. A woman like this accentuates her femininity through her dress and manner of communication, and she seems to appreciate the manliness of her customers. To meet this need, many men seek spouses from exotic environments. A man may feel that such women can fulfil his longing to find a woman who knows how to give men what they need.

This kind of longing among men can be contrasted to women's longing for exotic men who are upfrontly, basically masculine, sexually virile, and "know how to treat a woman" as a real, traditional woman. Next to men like these, "well-educated" Finnish men may seem a little tame and too nice. A professional woman in a leading position may enjoy the change offered by a man who dominates at home.

Sex workers and sexual enjoyment

When sex workers and prostitutes are mentioned in public discourse, they are frequently spoken of dismissively as objects and victims who do not understand their own good. According to Finnish researcher Anna Kontula, this approach invalidates the Finnish sex workers' own experiences and their efforts to control their own lives. It also completely bypasses the issue of how successfully some sex workers are able to manage their lives, their customers, and even the enjoyment they derive out of selling their sexual services. There has been a desire to invalidate this perspective so that the carefully constructed image of a victim would not come into question.

Are sex workers really able to enjoy the sex they have with their clients? It seems to be so. A large part of the sex workers interviewed by Anna Kontula reported having orgasms in their work. Some sex workers reported feeling sexual pleasure in nearly all client encounters. Some women had simply decided to use their clients to satisfy themselves sexually and viewed clients as something that was there just to serve the prostitute's needs. Studies on male prostitutes also found that while some had sold sex purely for money, for others the primary motive was their own sexual enjoyment. Nonetheless, the most common word used to describe client encounters is probably "insignificant".

When sex work does not entail any enjoyment on the part of the sex worker, some of the background factors may include the same issues that hamper sexual pleasure in a dissatisfying regular relationship, for example lack of self-esteem, lack of skills in the partner, or the moment not being right for feeling enjoyment.

When sex workers become increasingly professional, however, as they gain more experience, this has often led to a distancing from one's own sexual needs. Sex workers may feel responsible for the sexual encounter and thus place the client's

enjoyment first. Professionalism in sex work means controlling the situation, maintaining a distance, and minimizing the amount of work one must do.

According to some sex workers, sex is better when they get paid for it, because men appreciate sex more when they have to pay for it. One woman said that at work, she was responsible for making sure the clients enjoyed themselves, but that in her private relationship she let the man serve her needs.

A good sex worker is cordial, friendly, and able to make the client (a man) feel like he is special, even when the worker herself is not having the best possible day. Professionalism means the ability to create for the client an emotional illusion. The customer receives a service that makes him feel like he is the only one, there is enough time, and there is no hurry. The professional ability to furnish a sufficiently intimate atmosphere with someone who is a stranger is key for the sex to even be possible.

The more solidly a sex worker feels professionally responsible for the experience that the client will have, the more likely she will push her own enjoyment to the background even when the moment and the partner tempt her to focus on herself. Sometimes orgasms happen regardless, without the sex worker being able to stop it. According to sex workers, many clients consider an orgasm (either a genuine or well-acted one) on the seller's part the criteria for successful sex.

In Finland, independent sex workers were found in Anna Kontula's study to have reasonably good opportunities for choosing their clients, decide on pricing, and influence their working conditions. According to sex workers, the Finnish sex market is typically overwhelmed by demand that is many times higher than supply, and is in this way a seller's market. Customers have to compete for appointments. A seller's market means that sex workers are able to choose their customers. Many workers feel that they have an equal right to choose their customers as their customers have to choose a sex worker.

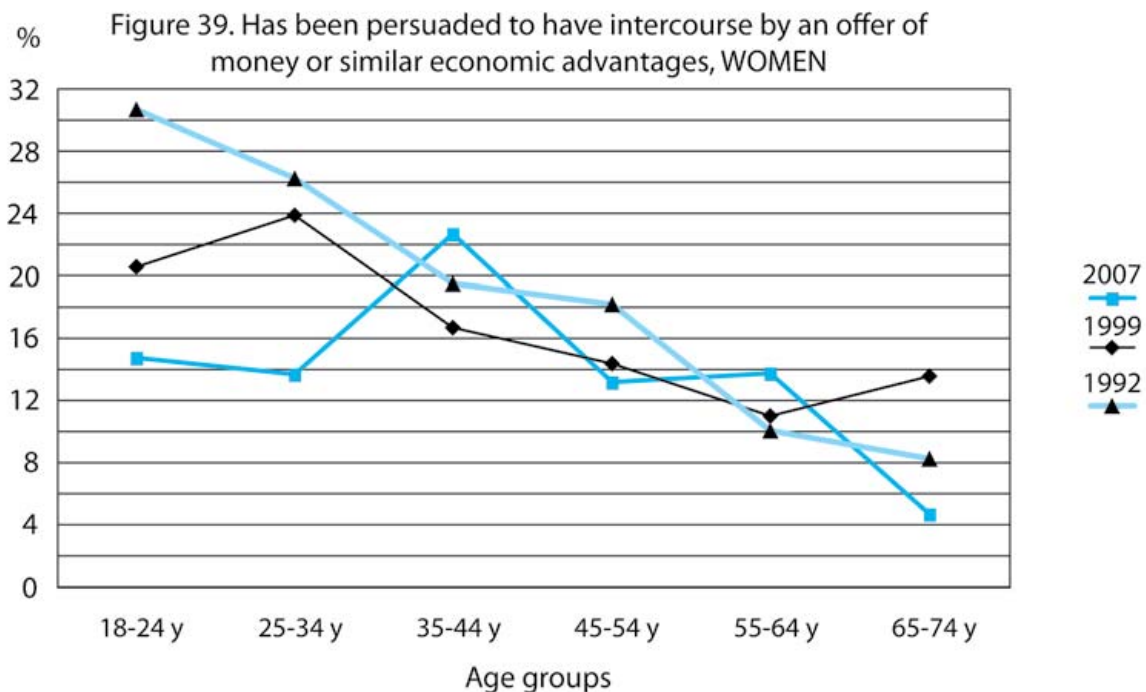
The market for paid sex in Finland

The market for paid sex can be divided into supply and demand. The present study addresses demand by asking, "Has anyone ever persuaded you to have sexual intercourse by offering money or similar economic incentives?" This question, or the one addressing the supply side, was not included in the 1971 study. There were, however, lively discussion in the early 1970s about the market for prostitution and male sex tourism. A lot of domestic prostitution was already available, although the market for paid sex is of course much older than this in Finland. One illustration of this is that in the 19th century, authorities were already exercising oversight on the practice of prostitution through compulsory health check-ups and other measures.

The study's findings strongly suggest that the demand for prostitution in Finland has declined in recent years. Among all adult women, 14 percent reported that they had

been offered money or other economic incentives in exchange for sex. Nine in ten women had turned down the offers. In 2007, one percent of women said they had agreed to such a proposition one or more times, i.e. had sold sex.

When asking all adult women, demand for paid sex dropped over eight years by three percentage points and among young women, fell by as much as half, from 28 to 14 percent. The demand for sex reported by middle-aged and older women was around the same level as for young women, and also resembled the previous study's findings. The latest result is an indication of a new kind of interaction between young women and men, where the pursuit of paid sex occupies a much lesser role. In part, the lower demand for paid sex directed at young women may mean that young men channelled the demand out of the country or to foreigners working as prostitutes in Finland.



The survey showed that demand for paid sex was relatively often targeted at men as well. Six percent of men reported in 2007 that someone had offered them money or other incentives for having sex. Men of all ages were similarly likely to report being propositioned in this way. The proportion was lower than in the previous study. Two percent of men reported agreeing to the offer, a proportion that was higher than among women. Information regarding the extent to which the offers were made by women or other men is not available.

The other side of the demand reported by respondents is the proportion of men who reported offering women money for sex, and supply is reflected in the proportion of women who had accepted the offers. The issue was addressed by asking, "Have you ever offered money or similar economic incentives to anyone in exchange for sexual intercourse?" Respondents were also asked whether the propositioned person had accepted their offer.

Following the 1990s, demand among men for paid sex increased in part as a result of an increase in the supply of foreign prostitution in Finland. In 1992, 11 percent of all adult male respondents reported offering someone money for sex at some time. In 1999, the same proportion jumped to 19 percent. By 2007 the figure eased to 18 percent, because younger men were no longer offering women money for sex at earlier rates. The proportion of men propositioning women for paid sex fell in the space of eight years by several percentage points among young and middle-aged men. Men in the oldest age group were still more active in making offers of money-for-sex.

In 1999, two percent and in 2007, more than one percent of women reported offering someone money in exchange for sex. Most offers had found acceptance.

Based on 2007 data, nine in ten people offered money for sex by men had accepted the offers. Hence, the proportion of men who had at some point purchased sex was similar to the figures already presented above. There is a conflict between what men and women have reported in response to this question, with women claiming to have rejected most offers and men claiming most of their offers had been accepted. This gap probably ensues from women counting all such situations that had come up in their lives, whereas men had focused more exclusively on the bona fide market for paid sex.

In the early 1990s, 10 percent of men reported that they had bought sex at some point in their lives. By the end of the 90s the figure was already 18 percent, and in 2007, a slightly lower 17 percent. The drop is a result of a decline in the proportion of young men who had purchased sex, from 15 to 12 percent, and among the middle-aged from 23 to 18 percent. Among older men, conversely, experiences of paid sex increased from 15 to 19 percent. These figures match reporting by women indicating that the demand for paid sex was heading down among young adults. This is correlated by the study's finding that relationship faithfulness was on the rise.

Based on a comparison with the NEM results, buying sex was not very common in Finland. Countries of comparison were England, Switzerland, Spain, Italy, Greece, Norway, Portugal, and France. Of them, only in England was the proportion of men who had paid for sex in the 18–49 age group lower than in Finland, where its highest proportion was among the middle-aged at approximately 15 percent. The largest proportion of sex buyers was in Greece, where figures were between 40 and 50 percent and in Italy with 30–40 percent. In the other countries figures hovered slightly above 20 percent. Norway's figures were very close to Finnish ones – in this sense, too, the Nordic countries looked similar.

Because the previous data from the FINSEX study are for respondents' entire lifespan, many of the experiences of paid sex were from much earlier in life. Approximately three percent of men had paid for sex within the last year in all three age groups.

In some other European countries participating in the NEM survey this figure was approximately five percent. In Finland, one-third of these men were single and the rest in a committed relationship. The proportion of single people had grown clearly over eight years. This, too, fit in with the increasing faithfulness of relationships.

There was a small decline in the proportion of young men who had purchased sex within the last year, and the figure for middle-aged men was down by as much as half at the end of the eight years compared with what it had been. An increase of one percentage point was found among older men. As a whole, the figures tell a story of a decline in the purchase of sex among men, and none of the age group data suggested that the trend would turn in the years to come.

Nearly all of the demand by men for paid sex was directed at women. Only two percent of men's latest paid-sex partner had been another man.

Based on the data for the past year and most recent paid-sex partner, three in four partners had been foreign women. Half of all experiences of paid sex took place abroad with a foreign woman. This was the typical prostitution-related experience among Finns. Sex services that were purchased in Finland were evenly distributed between Finnish and foreign sex providers. This finding is inconsistent with the previous, lively public debate that painted a picture of all prostitution occurring in Finland being in the hands of foreigners.

In a historical sense, the study's findings suggest a structural shift from when men in earlier decades bought the majority of sexual services from foreign women on their trips abroad. Print journalism featured stories of men who had travelled to the Reberbahn, Germany and to Tallinn, Estonia. Later, men headed much farther for such travel. The situation changed when the supply of sex services began to grow in Finland in the 1990s. There was a significant increase in sex purchased at home. The growth occurred at approximately the same ratio in services purchased from Finnish and foreign women. The proportion of sex services purchase abroad, though, still accounted for as much as the domestic market combined.

For sexual services purchased within the last year, nine in ten men reported using a condom. The use of condoms had increased by ten percentage points compared with 1999. Practically everyone engaging in sex with a foreign-born woman in Finland had used a condom. Finnish women had apparently seemed safer, because one in four men omitted the condom in sexual contact with them. Nine in ten men purchasing sex abroad from a foreign woman had used a condom. Based on this, men had successfully internalized the necessity of condom use in preventing infectious diseases entering Finland.

In the sexual autobiographies collected in the 1990s, men described the pressures connected to having paid sex with a prostitute. In some cases the event had been a kind of initiation rite and test of manhood that had earned them approval in certain

male groups. Chickening out, on the other hand, had been seen as shameful. A main worry among men was being able to perform. Many men had either experienced or feared experiencing the inability to achieve an erection in the crucial moment.

For some men, women purchased abroad represented the highpoint of the year, a refreshing change from numbing marital routine. As soon as the price had been negotiated, fear and tension had been key aspects of the experience. Especially abroad, men had feared being scammed or robbed. For many of them, a paid woman had apparently been more thrilling than sexually enjoyable.

Who buys sex in Finland?

Who are the Finnish men who have bought sex? The following offers a detailed list of the most commonly occurring characteristics in the men who were more likely to buy sexual services than other people, as reported in the FINSEX survey.

Social background:

- Secularized from religion (although a few percent of the most religious men had also purchased sexual services)
- Weekly use of alcohol, drinking to intoxication
- Unhappy in life
- Experiences of loneliness
- Experiences of several loves
- Significantly less likely to feel that anyone could love him
- High earners
- Being in an unhappy relationship
- Infidelity in the current relationship

The people who bought sex came from all relationship durations, but the highest concentration occurred among those who had been in the relationships slightly more or less than ten years. Education, present symptoms, children, difficulty finding a partner, and the number of relationships in a lifetime had no bearing on the purchase of sex.

Characteristics associated with paid sex:

- Numerous sexual partners in a lifetime, if more than 30 partners, 40 percent had purchased sex
- Craves several relationships instead of just one, one in two has paid for sex (however, one in ten of those who view faithfulness in marriage as the best alternative has purchased sexual services)
- Accepts the sale of sex and brothels
- Finds short-term relationships satisfying
- Has masturbated within the last week

- Is aroused by watching porn
- Has watched sex videos fairly often
- Experiences sexual desire more frequently
- Would prefer intercourse more often in his relationship
- Finds his sex life very unsatisfying

Lack of desire on the part of a partner was not correlated to paying for sex, nor were possible difficulties in discussing sex with one's partner, own assessment of one's sexual skills, or age at first intercourse (except in the case of buying sex within the last year).