

5. Sexual activity

The interest that people feel toward sexual matters inspires thoughts, images and emotions. This pull is also a strong motive to seek physical intimacy, touching and union with another person. The intensity and character of sexual feelings and the opportunities to actualize them vary among individuals. Individual and social differences give sexual expression many forms. This fact was already discussed in connection with different lifetime sexual relationship types.

To act in a sexual way can take place in solitude or with a partner, and can take various forms depending on a person's level of sexual activity and habits. Some of the sexual actions can be rare or even unique during a person's life span.

People have always been interested in the frequency of other people's love-making and in what they do when they do so. Many people worry whether other people's sex lives are much better than their own. Some have found relief in studies that reveal that contrary to their earlier conception other people too have needs and habits that resemble their own. Sometimes this kind of information has increased people's anxiety; for example, when knowledge published in a study has made one's own sex life look quite modest against all expectations. This can turn into dissatisfaction with one's own sex life and sex partner.

This chapter will focus on the frequency and methods of sexual intercourse in the populations studied. In addition, we will also discuss sex with same-sex partners, paid sex, masturbation and use of pornographic materials.

Sexual relationship with a partner

Relationship to the latest partner

As mentioned above, the occurrence of parallel relations is more frequent among Finns than Swedes, though not as frequent as among residents of St. Petersburg and Estonia. It is safe to presume, then, that a Finn is more likely than a Swede to have had 'a stranger' as his/her most recent sexual partner; in other words, someone instead of one's spouse or regular partner. The study addressed this possibility with the question: "Who was the person with whom you last had intercourse?" (The alternatives were: own steady partner or spouse; someone else's steady partner or spouse; an available person (single, divorced, widow); a prostitute or other

paid partner; cannot say.) The studies conducted in St. Petersburg and Estonia did not ask respondents to specify their relationship to the person he or she last had intercourse with, while the Swedish study did.

In 1992, four out of five, and in 1999, three out of four Finnish men reported that their last sexual partner had been a spouse or regular partner. In Sweden, all of nine out of ten men reported the same. In 1992 and 1999, 85 % of Finnish women and 93% of Swedish women reported having last intercourse with a regular partner.

The proportion of Finnish men who last had intercourse with their 'own' partner dropped during the 1990s by several percentage points among married and cohabiting men as well as among men who lived apart from their partners. In 1999, 94 % of married men, 91 % of cohabiting men, and 58 % of men who lived apart from their partner had last had intercourse with a steady partner. The explanation for the increase in the proportion of men whose last sexual partner was not a steady partner is that some men who engaged in parallel relations maintained them more actively in 1999 than in 1992. Among women, changes were minor: 98 % of married women, 97 % of cohabiting women, and 83 % of women who lived apart from their partner had last had intercourse with a steady partner. It was less common among women to have last had sexual relations with someone other than a steady partner.

The 'strangers' with whom some respondents had last had intercourse were more likely to have been free 'on the market', as opposed to someone else's spouse or steady partner. In the 1999 study, the last intercourse partner had been 'free' for 16 % of the men and 10 % of the women. Five percent of men and 4 % of women had been with someone else's partner. Cohabiting and separately living partners had mostly engaged in relationships with people who were available. Married women, on the other hand, had shown a "preference" for engaged men.

In 1992 and 1999 about 1 % of men in Finland had last had sex with a prostitute or other paid partner; no women reported last having sex with a prostitute.

Sex with a same-sex partner

Some people's sexual feelings are directed entirely or in part at members of their own sex. Depending on the 'concentration' of sexual feelings toward one's own sex, it is possible to speak of experimental sex within the sphere of heterosexuality, bisexuality, or homosexuality (men) or lesbianism (women). Often what is involved are sexual images connected to one's own sex, which are then actualized experimentally, if at all. For some, the attraction toward persons of the same sex is so powerful that it becomes an important and permanent guiding force of sexual choice and behavior.

Finnish attitudes toward homosexuality had become significantly more permissive by the 1990s than they had been in 1971. In the early 1970s, slightly more

than 40 % of 18–54-year-old Finns felt that “Homosexual behavior among adults is the private affair of the people concerned, and the authorities or the law should in no way interfere with it.” In both studies conducted during the 1990s, nearly 60 % of men and over 70 % of women held this opinion. There was little change in these attitudes during the 1990s.

Young people were more likely than middle-aged or older people to consider homosexuality a private affair (Figure 5.1). The negative attitudes toward homosexuality among middle-generation men increased somewhat during the 1990s.

The opinion that homosexuality is a person’s private affair was slightly less accepted in Estonia and St. Petersburg than in Finland. Of St. Petersburg’s 18–74-year-old male residents, 53 %, and 56 % of women viewed homosexuality as a private matter. The same was true of 52 % of Estonian men and 65 % of Estonian women. Attitudes among Estonians did not deviate greatly from Finnish attitudes in the same age groups: in 1999, 54 % of Finnish men and 66 % of women were positively inclined toward homosexuality.

We asked about the orientation of respondents’ own sexual interest (or sexual orientation) with the question, “Besides being sexually interested in the opposite sex, people are sometimes also interested in their own sex. At the moment, who are you sexual interested in?” Options included only the male sex; mainly the male sex; both sexes equally; mainly the female sex; or, only the female sex. This question was used for the first time already in 1971, and hence, we will focus on comparing people aged 18–54. In Sweden, 5 % of men and 9 % of women expressed interest in the same sex (Table 5.1). In St. Petersburg, the corresponding figures were 7 % for men and 12 % for women. Eleven percent of Estonians expressed sexual interest in their own sex.

Middle-generation men in Estonia and young women in St. Petersburg were more likely to report a homosexual orientation than any other group. Interest in the same sex remained at the same level in Finland from 1971 to 1999, at approximately 7 %. A majority of those who desired their own sex also felt sexual interest toward the opposite sex. The proportion of people with a homosexual orientation was approximately the same in all birth cohorts (Figure 5.2).

In addition to sexual orientation or identity, the 1992 and 1999 Finnish studies and the Swedish and Estonian study also enquired about homosexual experiences. The Swedish study asked: “If you think about the persons with whom you have been sexually together, which sex have they been?” and the Finnish and Estonian studies asked: “Have you had sexual experiences (arousing fondling or intercourse) with a person of the same sex?”

Only 2,7 % of Swedish men aged 18–74 and 2,1 % of women reported homosexual experiences. In Estonia, same-sex experiences had occurred among 8 % of people of both sexes. Homosexual experiences became slightly more common in Finland during the 1990s. In 1992, only 5 % of each sex had had them, whereas in

Figure 5.1 Accepts homosexuality as a private affair

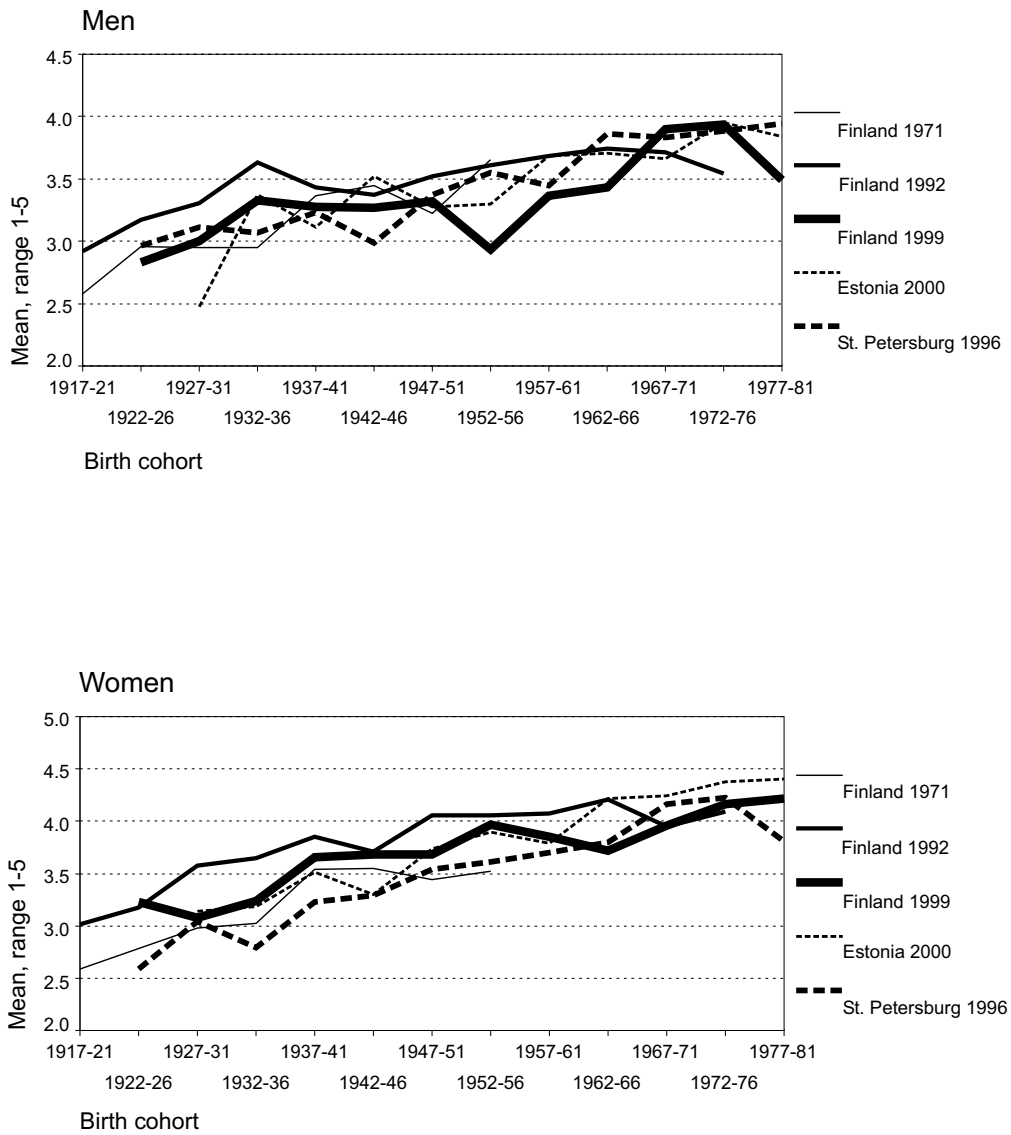


Table 5.1 Sexual orientation, 18–54-year-olds (%)

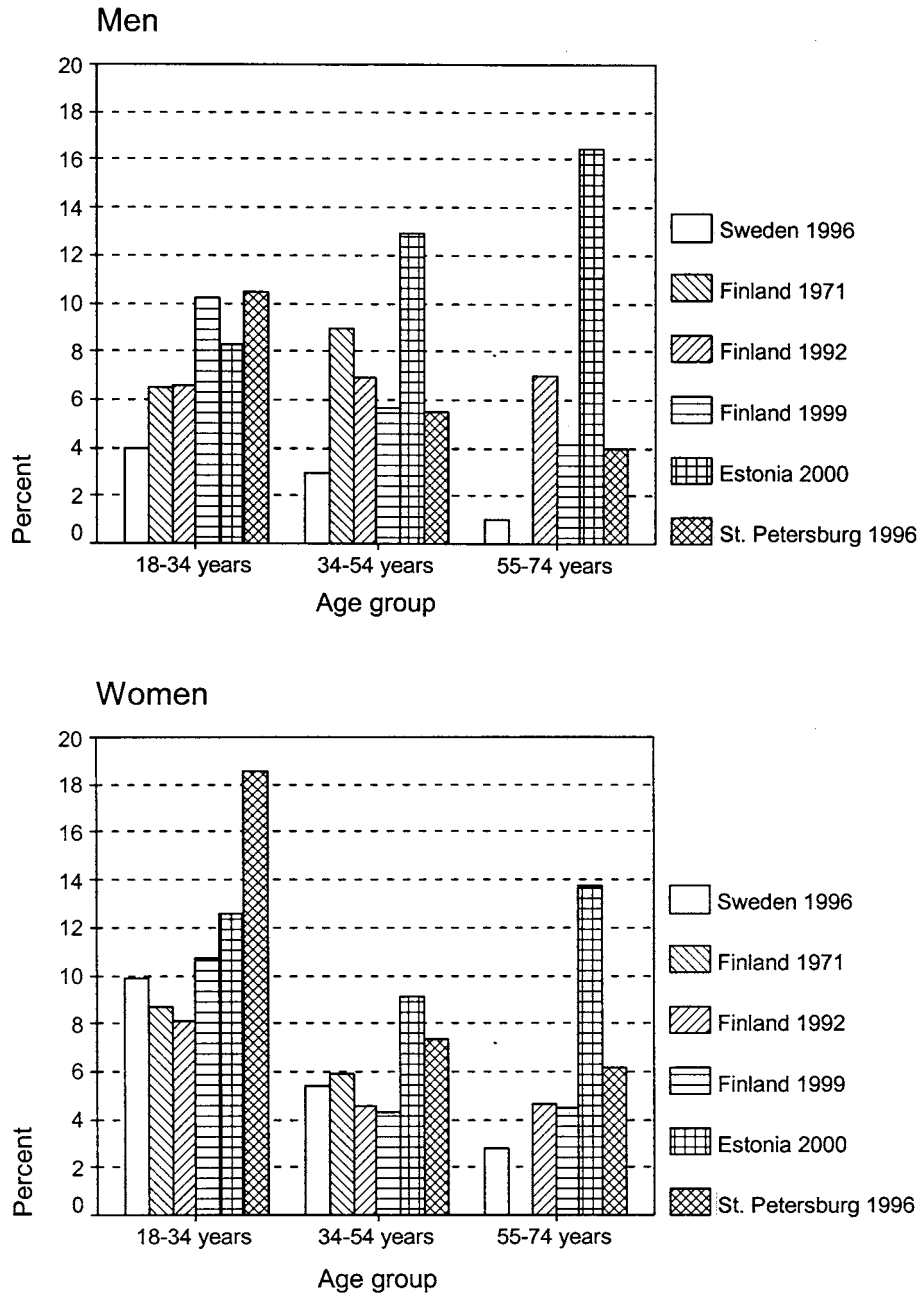
Sexually interested in	Finland 1971	Finland 1992	Finland 1999	Sweden 1996	Estonia 2000	St. Peters- burg 1996
<i>Men</i>						
Only other sex	92.5	93.3	92.4	96.5	89.0	92.1
Mainly other sex	3.4	4.7	5.4	2.8	7.8	5.1
Both sexes equally	3.2	1.2	1.0	0.2	1.4	1.0
Mainly same sex	0.7	0.4	0.4	0.2	1.1	0.2
Only same sex	0.3	0.5	1.0	0.3	0.7	1.6
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
(N)	1 070	845	523	1 154	282	609
<i>Women</i>						
Only other sex	92.3	93.7	93.1	92.4	88.8	87.5
Mainly other sex	3.9	4.7	4.9	7.0	7.8	9.5
Both sexes equally	3.4	1.1	1.0	0.1	2.4	1.5
Mainly same sex	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.1
Only same sex	0.4	0.4	0.8	0.2	0.6	1.3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
(N)	1 010	814	509	1 037	464	819

1999, 7 % of men and 5 % of women reported having sex with a same-sex partner. Approximately one out of two Finnish people who reported homosexual experiences had only had them once, while the other half had had them more frequently. The incidence of same-sex sexual experiences was higher among the young than middle-aged or older people. Particularly men born after 1966 had acquired more sexual experiences with other men between 1992 and 1999.

According to the 1999 Finnish study, 40 % of men who reported homosexual experiences had had sex with another man during the past year, and less than one-fifth had had sex during the past month. There was an increase in these proportions from 1992. One-quarter of the women who reported lesbian sexual experiences had had sex with another woman some time in the past year, and one-tenth had had it in the past month. Figures for 1999 were lower than for 1992. In 1999, nearly every other man who reported homosexual experiences, and less than one-third of the women, had not had a homosexual experience in over five years.

Lesbians were more likely to have long-term monogamous relationships than homosexual men. One out of two of the Finnish men who had at some time had a homosexual experience had only had one such encounter. In this respect, the situation remained the same during the 1990s. Two-thirds of women were of the one lifelong monogamous relationship type. In the 1999 study, 30 % of men with homosexual experiences had had at least three partners, while only 8 % of women had had at least three partners.

Figure 5.2 Sexually interested in same sex



Discussing sex with a partner

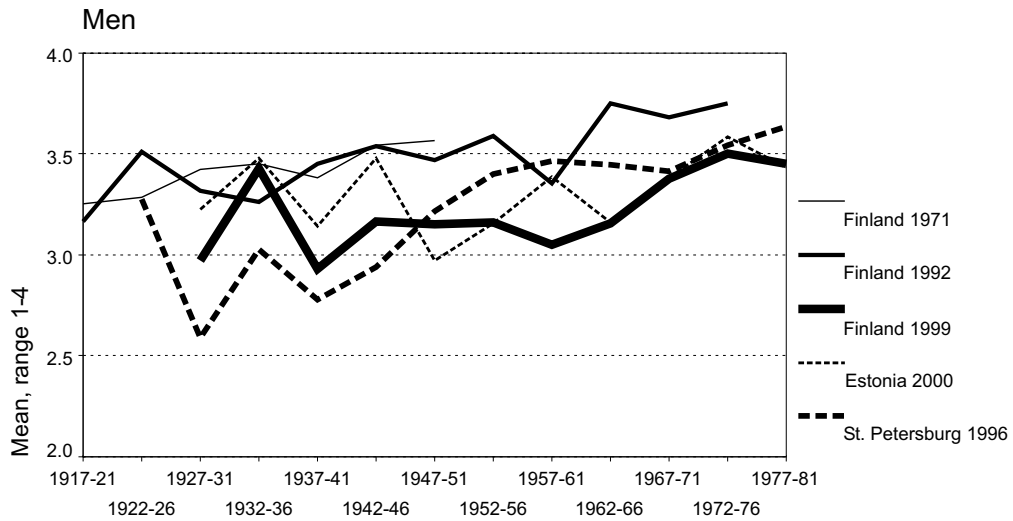
Forming a sexual relationship may involve a discussion between two people during which both or at least one partner expresses his or her willingness to have sexual relations. The ideals of sexual expression that appear in contemporary public discourse often emphasize that people who are in a sexual relationship should open up to each other verbally, to tell the partner what they want and feel. To find out how closely people actually live out this model, we asked respondents in a steady relationship at the time of the study whether it was easy or difficult to discuss sex with their partner. Respondents could choose from among the following answers: very difficult or impossible; somewhat difficult or embarrassing; not very difficult once we get started; or, not at all difficult, open and easy. Below, when the text refers to talking about sex as easy, it means that respondents chose ‘not at all difficult, open and easy’.

Contrary to expectations, Finns aged 18–54 years reported in 1999 that they found talking about sexual matters more difficult than in 1971 or 1992 (Table 5.2, Figure 5.3). In 1992, a greater share of respondents reported that talking about sex with their partner about sex was easy than 1971 respondents. In our estimation, this conceptual change came about because increased sexual awareness had increased people’s expectations about communicating with their partners about sex. The discussions that had actively taken place had not matched these new expectations as often as before.

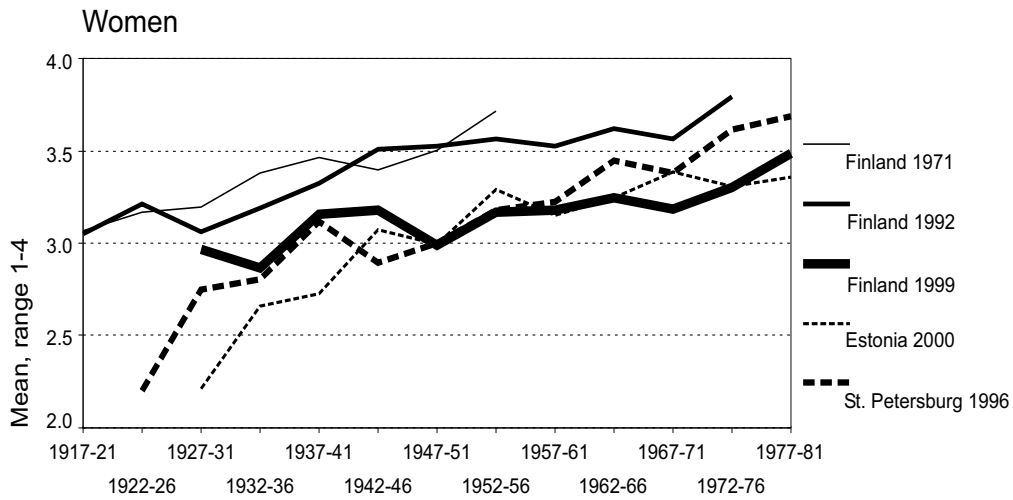
Table 5.2 Easiness of talking about sexuality with steady partner, 18–54-year-olds (%)

Is it easy or difficult to talk sexual matters with your partner?	Finland 1971	Finland 1992	Finland 1999	Estonia 2000	St. Petersburg 1996
<i>Men</i>					
Very difficult or impossible	1	1	2	2	4
Fairly difficult or embarrassing	5	4	14	11	16
Not very difficult once we have started	43	33	43	39	20
Not difficult at all, open and easy	50	62	41	48	60
Total	100	100	100	100	100
(N)	659	698	419	211	480
<i>Women</i>					
Very difficult or impossible	3	0	4	4	4
Fairly difficult or embarrassing	8	6	14	12	19
Not very difficult once we have started	39	34	43	39	22
Not difficult at all, open and easy	50	50	40	45	55
Total	100	100	100	100	100
(N)	715	697	431	345	606

Figure 5.3 Easy sexual communication*



Birth cohort
*considers it easy to discuss sexual matters with the partner



Birth cohort
*considers it easy to discuss sexual matters with the partner

Men and women did not differ in their estimation of the ease of discussing sex with a partner. Young people found talking about sex somewhat easier than older people. People who cohabited with or lived separately from a steady partner were more likely to find it easy to discuss sex with a partner than married respondents. 72 % of people who considered their relationship to be very happy felt that talking about sex was easy and open in their relationship, as compared to 47 % of those who considered their relationship fairly happy, and 22 % of those who were in an unhappy relationship.

The newness of the relationship was correlated with respondents' assessments of open and easy communication about sex between partners: two out of three people who were in a relationship that had lasted less than five years considered it easy to communicate about sex, while less than half of those in longer relationships found it so. The higher the frequency of sexual intercourse, the more open the partners' verbal communication about sex: of those who had had intercourse at least three to four times a week during the past month, 68 % found it easy to talk about sexual matters, as did 55 % of those who had made love one to two times per week, and 40 % of those who had had intercourse less frequently.

International comparisons show that talking about sex was no easier or harder in different locations. In St. Petersburg, people's views about the degree of ease in talking about sex were somewhat more polarized than in Finland and Estonia. On the one hand, there were more people in St. Petersburg who considered talking about sex with their partner difficult, and on the other hand, also more of those who considered it open and easy. Finns and Estonians were more likely than others to choose the response that it was not too difficult 'once we get started.'

Frequency of sexual intercourse

Many people associate sex and sex life with sexual intercourse, though they contain many other elements as well. There are people with very active sex lives, though they never have sexual intercourse. On the other hand, measuring the frequency of intercourse has been one of the central topics of sex research. Some people have seen intercourse as the most important measure of sexual activity, even calling intercourse 'the measure of a man'. Without going this far, the level of sexual activity does reveal something essential about an individual's sex life and of sex in relationships.

We investigated the frequency of intercourse through responses to the question "When did you last have sexual intercourse?" (The Finnish survey asked also about the frequency of intercourse during the last month.) The eleven possible responses on the form ranged from having intercourse in the last 24 hours to not having experienced it in more than 10 years.

A national comparison (Table 5.3) shows that approximately four out of five 18–54-year-old people in Finland, Sweden, St. Petersburg and Estonia had had

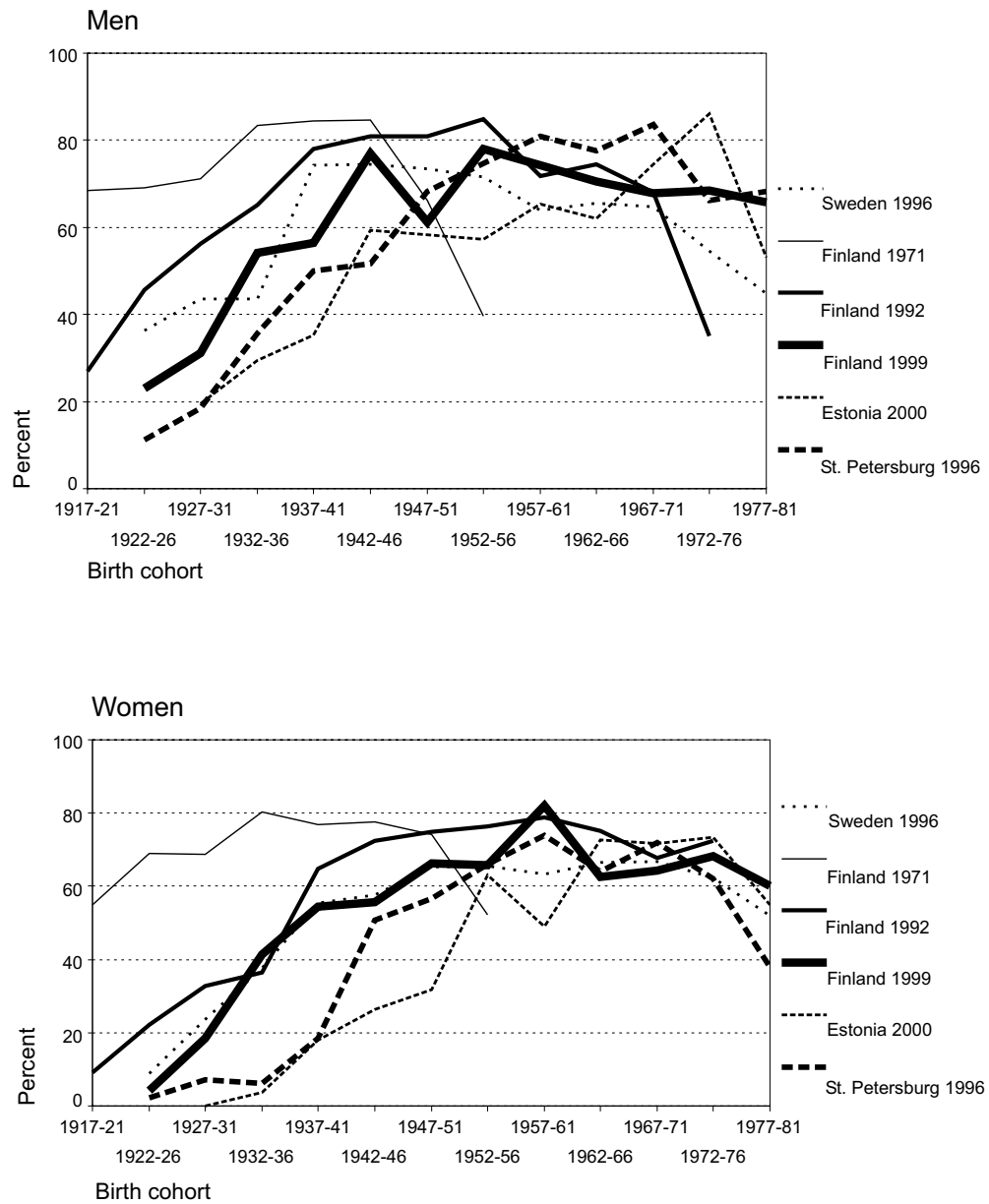
Table 5.3 Time of last sexual intercourse. 18–54-year-old people who have had intercourse (% , means and standard deviations)

Time of last intercourse	Men					Women						
	Finland 1971	Finland 1992	Finland 1999	Sweden 1996	Estonia 2000	St. Petersburg 1996	Finland 1971	Finland 1992	Finland 1999	Sweden 1996	Estonia 2000	St. Petersburg 1996
During last 24 hours	14	15	17	17	22	17	12	11	16	12	17	13
1–2 days ago	26	33	22	24	19	29	25	31	23	25	20	24
3–4 days ago	21	17	18	15	12	17	21	22	18	15	14	18
5–7 days ago	12	10	13	10	13	10	14	10	9	12	10	8
1–2 weeks ago	10	9	9	9	9	8	10	8	12	11	10	8
3–4 weeks ago	3	3	6	6	7	6	4	5	5	6	6	5
1–3 months ago	7	5	8	7	9	5	7	6	7	7	6	8
4–12 months ago	3	4	4	6	4	5	3	4	3	6	6	5
1–2 years ago	1	2	2	4	3	2	1	2	4	3	4	4
3–10 years ago	1	1	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	3	6	5
Over 10 years ago	1	1	1	0	-	0	1	1	1	1	2	2
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Time since last intercourse, weeks	10.2	10.8	11.2	14.7	11.4	0.3	14.7	17.0	17.2	18.8	21.3	31.5
Standard deviation	55.9	55.9	55.7	58.9	47.8	50.6	69.3	74.7	71.7	71.9	87.3	98.0
Times of intercourse in a month ¹	6.6	7.0	6.3	6.2	6.2	6.7	6.4	6.6	6.2	5.9	5.7	5.8
Times of intercourse in a year ²	79	83	76	74	74	81	76	79	75	70	68	70
(N)	981	818	48	1 113	268	594	630	785	490	1 016	436	783

¹ Monthly averages were calculated on the basis of the following estimated averages: During last 24 hours = 11, 1–2 days ago = 10; 3–4 days ago = 7, 5–7 days ago = 5; 11–2 weeks ago = 3; 3–4 weeks ago = 1; at least a month ago = 0.

² Monthly averages times 12.

Figure 5.4 Intercourse during past week



intercourse during the past week (the comparison was conducted in this age group so that the Finnish results of 1971 could be included in the comparison). The oldest respondents in St. Petersburg and Estonia, women in particular, were significantly less likely to have had intercourse during the past week than Finns or Swedes (Figure 5.4). In Estonia, even older people in couple relationships did not have intercourse nearly as frequently as the corresponding groups in Finland and Sweden.

The annual frequency of intercourse was estimated on the basis of the time that had elapsed from the last time respondents had had intercourse. Among men, Swedes proved to have the lowest annual frequency (having intercourse an average of 74 times annually), and the Finns studied in 1992 to have the highest frequency (83 times). Among women, too, Finnish women in the 1992 study had the highest frequency of intercourse (79 times), while the lowest rate was found among Estonian women (68 times).

Gender roles in initiating intercourse

Traditionally, initiating sex has been part of the masculine role. Attitudes have changed, however, and as early as 1971, over 90 % of Finnish male respondents agreed with the statement that “Women have every right to take the initiative when they want sexual contact with men.”

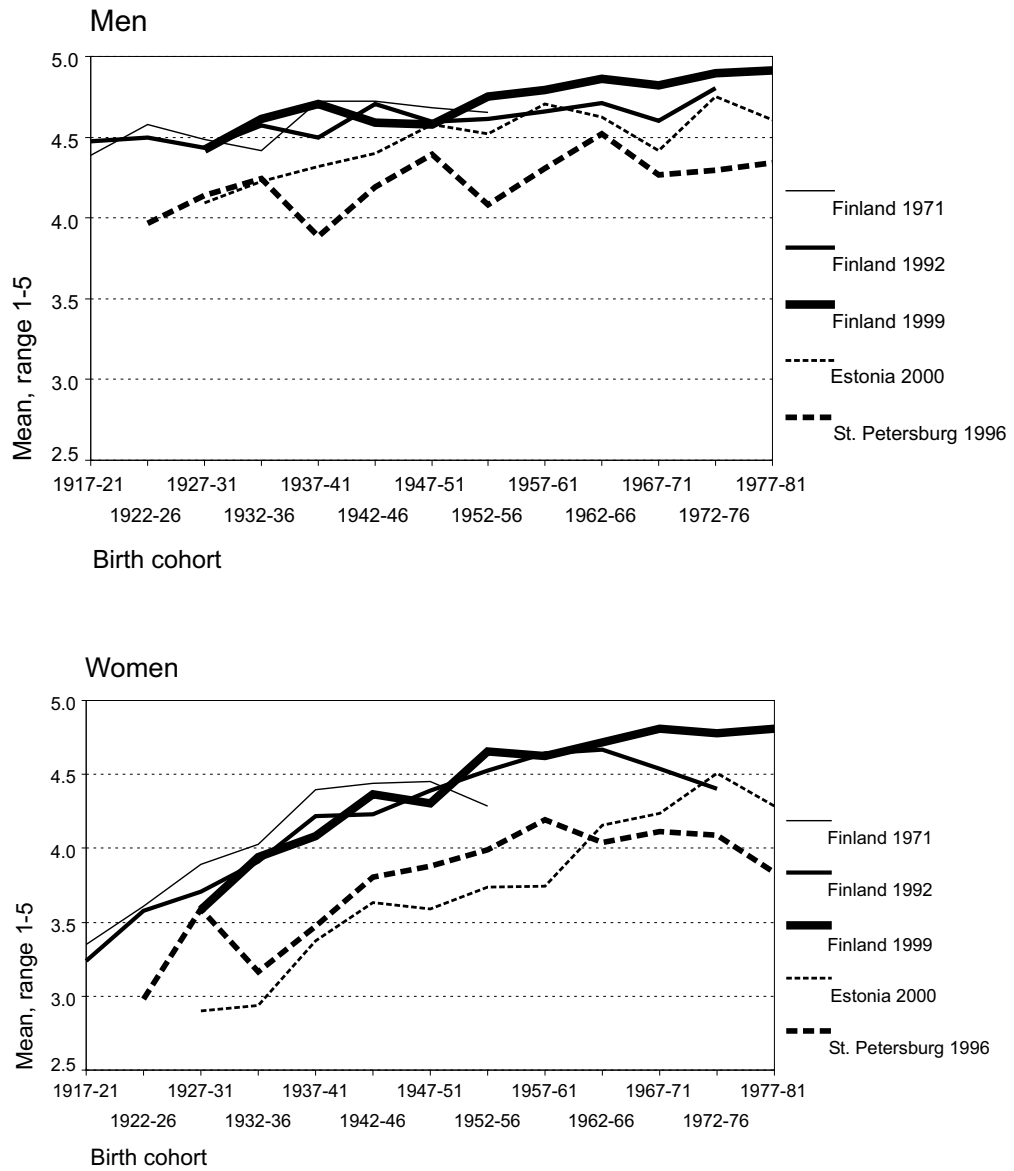
Women themselves did not feel as favorably toward sexual initiative by their own sex at that time. In 1971, 79 % of 18–54-year-old Finnish women supported women’s right to initiate sexual contact, in 1992, 80 % agreed, and by 1999, 91 % already did so. Women have gradually come to accept sexual initiative as part of the female identity.

An international comparison showed that Estonian men were as likely as Finnish men to view women’s sexual initiative-taking positively (90 % supported it). In St. Petersburg, somewhat fewer men (79 %) agreed that women have every right to take the initiative. The attitudes of women in Estonia and St. Petersburg revealed an even more restrictive attitude on women’s initiative taking in sex than the one that prevailed in Finland in 1971. Slightly fewer than 70 % of women in Estonia and St. Petersburg thought that women had every right to take the initiative in sex. The Swedish study did not address this topic.

A birth cohort comparison (Figure 5.5) reveals that all St. Petersburg residents, male and female, of all generations, and all Estonian women of all generations held the most reluctant attitudes toward women’s right to take sexual initiative than any of the other groups in the studies.

Notwithstanding the equality that largely prevails in Finnish attitudes toward sex, men were more likely to initiate sexual relations than women. Women at a very low rate initiated sex alone, though it climbed from 7 % to 14 % among people aged 18–54 between 1971 and 1999.

Figure 5.5 Accepts sexual initiating by women



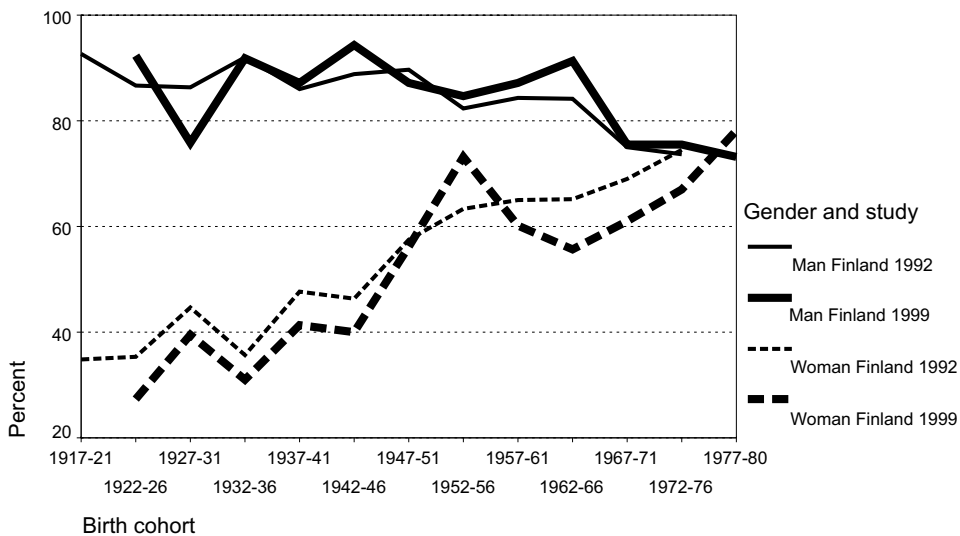
Sexual Trends in the Baltic Sea Area

Forty-five percent of Finnish men experienced sexual encounters as initiated by both partners in each of the three periods studied. In women's responses, the rate of sex that was seen as mutually initiated rose from slightly more than 40 % in 1971 to almost 50 % in the 1990s.

Women and men in all age groups were quite consistent when reporting who had initiated the most recent sexual encounter. The frequency of sex initiated by the man only decreased after the 1970s in all age groups, whereas sex initiated by the woman or by both partners had become more common.

An indication of the increased activism of women as initiators of sex was that when examined by birth cohort, women in the younger generation were significantly more likely than older women to report that they had initiated the most recent sexual encounter either on their own or together with the partner (Figure 5.6). No change occurred in this regard between 1992 and 1999. Approximately 70 % of both men and women of the youngest generation (born in 1972–81) had had a part in initiating their last sexual encounter. Only about 40 % of the women born in the early part of the 1900s reported participation in the initiation of their most recent intercourse. This finding may be viewed as an indication of increased gender equality in sex.

Figure 5.6 Participation in the initiation of last intercourse*



* The respondent made initiative alone or together with the partner

To summarize: Women's sexual initiative taking was viewed most favorably in Finland, where also the gender difference was small. In all areas studied, women were more reserved toward female initiative taking than men. They had adopted the traditional cultural expectations of sexually passive women. However, a transition is in progress: The approval of female sexual initiative taking increased steadily from the older generations to the younger ones. Attitudes regarding women's sexual initiative taking also had practical implications. Finnish women who were accepting of women's sexual initiative taking had themselves initiated their latest intercourse more frequently than other women.

Alcohol and sexual intercourse

Methods of alcohol use have been found to have many connections to the motivation, initiation and performance connected to sex. The significance of alcohol use was studied in Finland and Sweden by asking this question: "Had you consumed any alcohol prior to your most recent sexual intercourse?"

In 1971, only one in five men aged 18–54 years and one in ten women reported alcohol use prior to the most recent sexual encounter. The rate increased during the 1990s – among men, from one-fourth in 1992 to one-third in 1999, and among women, from 15 % to 20 %. The amount of alcohol consumed was usually small. In 1999, only 12 % of men and 6 % of women reported that they had consumed a fair or significant amount of alcohol before their most recent sexual encounter.

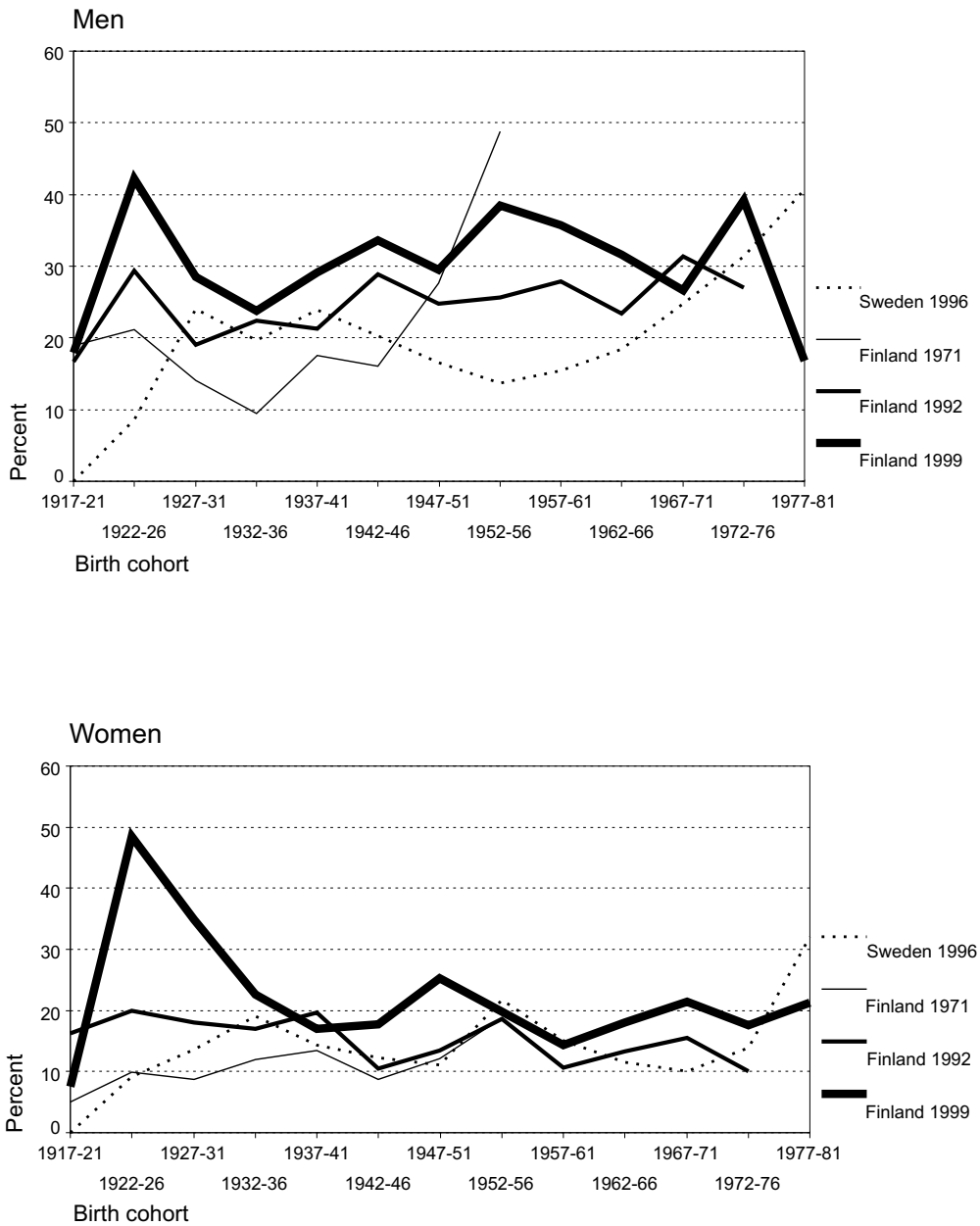
An age cohort comparison reveals that in 1971, one-quarter of young men aged 18-34, and 12 % of the women in the same age group, said that they had consumed alcohol prior to their most recent sexual encounter. In 1999, this proportion had grown only slightly (to 30 % among men and 19 % among women). Conversely, compared to 1971, the middle-aged group of 35–54-year-olds contained an increased number of people who had used alcohol immediately preceding their last sexual encounter. In this group, 15 % of middle-aged men and 10 % of middle-aged women had consumed alcohol before the last time that they had had sexual intercourse. In 1999, the proportion of middle-aged respondents who had consumed alcohol before having sex was more than one-third among men and one-fourth among women. During the 1990s, the oldest age group contained less than one-fourth of men and approximately one in six women who had consumed alcohol before last having sex.

Ageing introduced newcomers to the group of those who had consumed alcohol before their most recent sexual encounter. Alcohol use before the last sexual encounter increased in all birth cohorts from 1971 to 1992, and again to 1999 (Figure 5.7). Pre-sex alcohol use was particularly higher among older women.

An international comparison shows that 21 % of 18–54-year-old Swedish men and 15 % of Swedish women had consumed alcohol prior to the last time they

Sexual Trends in the Baltic Sea Area

Figure 5.7 Consumed alcohol before last intercourse



had sexual intercourse. The proportions were nearly identical with Finns studied in 1971 and 1992. By 1999, however, the proportion of people who combined alcohol use and sex was significantly higher among Finns – one-third among men and one-fourth among women. The difference between Sweden and Finland was the greatest among the middle aged (sexual revolution generation). In particular, Swedish men born in 1947–1961 were notably less likely than Finnish counterparts to have consumed alcohol before their most recent sexual intercourse.

By combining alcohol consumption and sex (and in many other expressions of sexuality detailed in this book), Finnish men of the sexual revolution generation rejected the traditional, ascetic morality that prescribed abstaining from pleasure – a morality that seems to have remained stronger in Sweden than in Finland.

According to the Multiple Classification Analysis on Finland, alcohol consumption in connection with sexual intercourse was related to being middle aged and highly educated. Alcohol use before the most recent sexual encounter was highest among those men (59 %) who were not in a steady couple relationship at the time of the study. Many single women (31 %) had also consumed alcohol before their latest sexual encounter. Among respondents who were in steady couple relationship, 20–30 % of men and 10–20 % of women had consumed alcohol prior to their last sexual encounter. In longer lasting couple relationships, the likelihood of alcohol use before the latest encounter was higher than among newly formed couples. Alcohol and sexual intercourse were particularly correlated among people who had had no sexual intercourse in the last one-month period (35 %), whereas only 14 % of those who had had intercourse several times a week had combined sex and alcohol use.

People whose lifetime relationship type was the one lifelong partner type, hardly anyone had consumed alcohol while more than one-fourth of those with parallel relationships and more than one-third of the seekers had been drinking before their last sexual encounter.

As expected, pre-sex alcohol use was connected to the respondent's overall drinking. Half of all those who got drunk weekly, one-third of those who got drunk monthly, one-fourth of those who got drunk once a year, but only one in ten of those who never drank to intoxication had used alcohol before their last sexual encounter.

Types of sexual expression

Sexual expression can take many forms. Lovemaking does not always include sexual intercourse. Among some couples, sexual intercourse nearly always occurs in the same manner – for example, with the man on top. Others engage in sexual experimentation at least from time to time, and seek out variety in the conditions in which they have sex.

This sub-chapter looks at the different sexual positions that respondents had engaged in sexual intercourse, the proportion of those who had engaged in oral, manual or anal sex, as well as the proportion of those whose sex lives included sadomasochism or bondage. In addition, we will find out how many had paid for sex.

Positions in intercourse

The position used in sexual intercourse has an impact on sexual enjoyment. Naturally, individual preferences play a role, but for women's orgasms in particular, the position can be a determining factor. For many women, 'woman on top' works well because of the stimulation received by the clitoris in this position. For older people, the sideways position may be appropriate for the sake of its low level of strain and effort. For the sake of mutual pleasure, the general observation has been that using multiple positions in sexual intercourse brings good results.

During the 1990s, the variety of sexual positions that prevailed in Finland, Estonia and St. Petersburg was very similar (Table 5.4). The most common position was lying down face-to-face, with the man on top and the woman underneath. The other positions addressed in the study – woman on top and man underneath, sideways (on one's side), or other positions – represented the position that one in ten 18-74-year-old respondents in Finland in the 1990s had chosen in the most recent sexual intercourse. This was also true in Estonia and St. Petersburg. Approximately one third had engaged in several different positions during their last sexual encounter.

The change from the Finland of the 1970s was radical (see Haavio-Mannila et al., 2001, 224). The overwhelmingly most popular position used in the latest sexual encounter in 1971 was with the man on top and the woman on the bottom. The proportion of 18-54-year-old Finnish men who had used only this position in their last sexual encounter dropped from three-fourths in 1971 to one-half by 1992, and down to one-third by 1999. Among female respondents, in 1971, three-fourths had used the 'man-on-top' position the last time they had sex, while slightly more than half had done so in 1992, and more than 40 % in 1999. Women were slightly more likely than men to report that 'man-on-top' was the only position used in their last sexual encounter.

A comparison of birth year cohorts (Figure 5.8) indicates that the popularity of varying positions had increased in Finland in nearly all birth cohorts. Regional differences were minor in all cohorts, though the figure below shows a few exceptions to this trend. Young Estonian men were less likely to engage in multiple positions, compared with young men in Finland and St. Petersburg. Young Finnish women, again, were more likely than young women in Estonia or St. Petersburg to report using varying sexual positions.

Table 5.4 Positions in last intercourse (%)

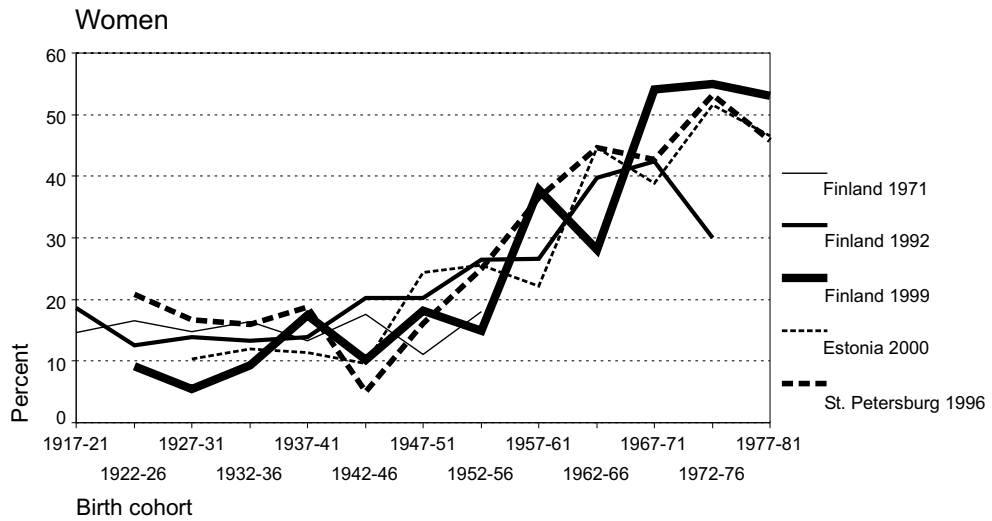
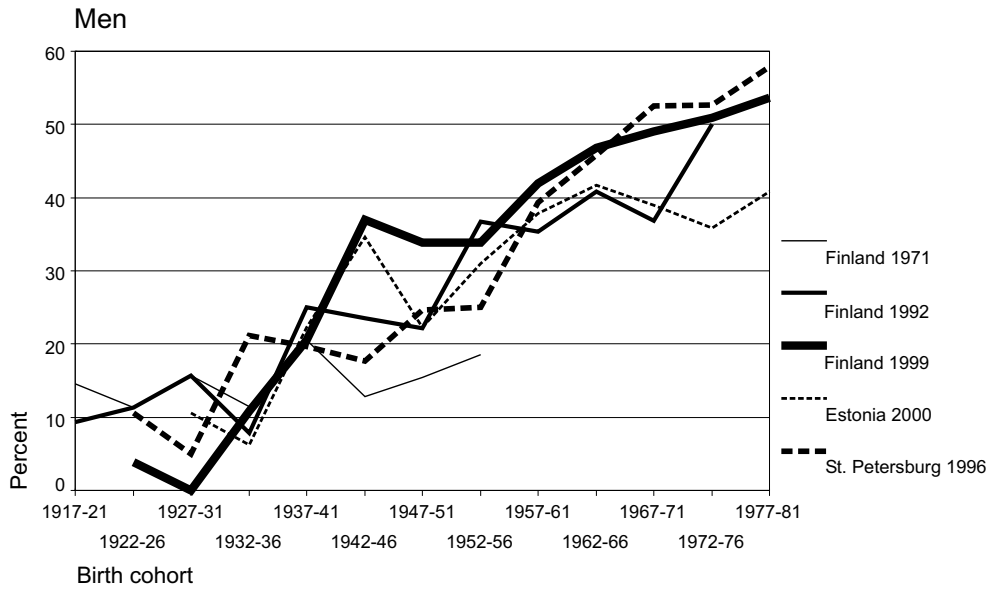
Position in last intercourse	Finland 1992	Finland 1999	Estonia 2000	St. Petersburg 1996
<i>Men</i>				
Lying down face-to-face, man on top and woman underneath	49	32	35	42
Lying down face-to-face, woman on top and man underneath	7	10	12	6
Lying on our sides	11	9	9	5
Some other position	4	7	6	6
Two or more positions	28	40	32	31
Cannot remember	1	2	6	10
Total	100	100	100	100
(N)	984	487	346	708
<i>Women</i>				
Lying down face-to-face, man on top and woman underneath	52	43	38	41
Lying down face-to-face, woman on top and man underneath	8	9	8	6
Lying on our sides	8	9	8	6
Some other position	4	5	8	5
Two or more positions	24	32	30	25
Cannot remember	4	2	8	17
Total	100	100	100	100
(N)	1 013	441	537	981

According to the MCA explaining the use of multiple sexual positions in Finland (accounting for as much as 29 %), they varied much more among young people than middle-aged or older people. Married Finns in the 1990s were less likely to have engaged in multiple sexual positions in their last intercourse than people who were single or in other relationship types. Only one in four married men and one in five married women had used a variety of sexual positions (unadjusted figures). Approximately 40 % of people in a cohabiting relationship, half of the men in LAT relationships and approximately 40 % of women in that group had used multiple sexual positions the last time they had sex. Singles, too, had used multiple sexual positions more frequently than married people.

Nearly half of the people in steady relationships of less than five years' duration had used multiple positions the last time they had sex. The proportion among people whose relationships had lasted 5–14 years was approximately one-third, in relationships lasting 15–24 years it was one-fourth, and in relationships that

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Figure 5.8 Several positions in last intercourse



had lasted 25 years or longer, only about one tenth. The use of multiple positions increased during the 1990s in couple relationships of all lengths.

Multiple positions in the most recent sexual intercourse were also connected to the frequency of sexual intercourse. Among those who had engaged in sexual intercourse at least once a week in the preceding month, four-tenths had used multiple sexual positions. The figure was one-fourth for those who had engaged in sex a few times in the last month and only one-fifth for those who had not engaged in sexual intercourse at all in the last month.

Higher education was correlated with variety in sexual positions. Over one-third of those with 11 or more years of education, one-fourth of those with 9 or 10 years of education, and one in eight of those with a maximum of eight years of education had used multiple positions the last time they engaged in sex.

Among sexual lifestyle types, multiple sexual positions were used more frequently by seekers, the polygamous and people with parallel relationships, compared with people with only one, life-long relationship, the monogamous and people with consecutive relationships.

The growing popularity of multiple sexual positions in Finland between 1992 and 1999 proved significant, even when other social and sexual factors that were connected to this change were taken into account. Public education and the media in the 1990s gave people knowledge about the benefits of using multiple positions and provided the impetus to adopt them. The use of various sexual positions has also been shown to increase sexual satisfaction (Haavio-Mannila & Kontula, 1997). The increased variety of sex has not been shown to increase people's overall satisfaction with their sex lives, however. Changes in people's lives in general played such a major role that sexual satisfaction decreased in spite of the variation in sexual positions that promotes it.

Manual stimulation

Many people associate manual caressing and stimulation as foreplay. It may be part of it, but manual stimulation can also be considered the central element of lovemaking. Manual stimulation can throw the partners into enjoying the pleasurable sensations. Many men in particular enjoy having their penis stimulated, and reaching ejaculation by hand. For many women, on the other hand, sexual penetration is a preliminary of being stimulated and brought to orgasm by their partner's hand. The clitoris usually receives better stimulation from fingers than a penis. A decline in penetration-centered thinking has indeed meant that manual stimulation has increased in popularity.

The 1971 study contained no questions about manual stimulation; nor did the study conducted in St. Petersburg. In the 1992 Finnish study, this question addressed it: "When have you last given your partner satisfaction without sexual

penetration (for example by caressing and stimulating his/her genitals by hand)?” The 1999 studies in Finland and Estonia addressed the issue in even more concrete terms: “When have you last given your partner satisfaction by caressing and stimulating his/her genitals by hand?” The seven responses on the questionnaire form ranged from ‘during the last week’ to ‘never’. In Sweden, the question was: “Have you participated in stimulation of a partner with hands?” Possible responses included ‘no’ and ‘yes’, and in the latter case, a follow-up question inquired whether the caressing resulted in orgasm etc. Because of the slight variation in wording of the questions they are not fully comparable, though they do give a good starting point for evaluating the popularity of manual stimulation.

The stimulation of a partner by hand at least at some point in life was equally common in Finland in 1992 and 1999. Slightly more than four-fifths of Finns of all age groups had at one point or another stimulated their partner manually. Among young and middle-aged respondents, approximately 90 % had used manual stimulation, while approximately two-thirds of older people had done so. In other words, manual stimulation was relatively common even among the older generation. The proportions of men and women who had offered manual stimulation were approximately the same.

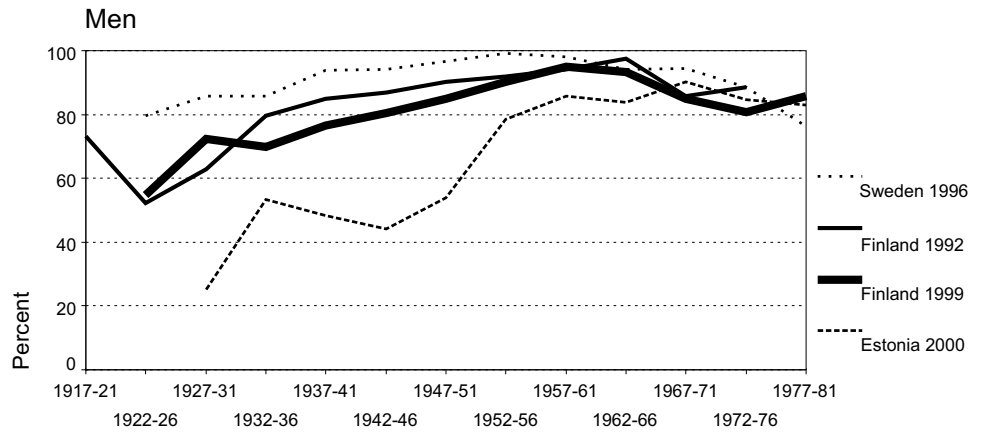
In Sweden, giving manual stimulation at some point in life was much more common (92 %) than in Finland (approximately 80 %) or Estonia (less than 40 %). Compared with the older generations, where national differences were significant, differences among the younger generation were quite minor. Sexual stimulation by hand became popular in Sweden earlier than in Finland. In Estonia, older people had generally refrained from manual stimulation, had little awareness of it, and were ashamed to ask a partner to manually stimulate them.

Analyzed by birth cohort, the proportion of people who had given their partners manual stimulation did not increase with age in Finland (Figure 5.9). In this respect, it seems that people continued the sexual habits they had once adopted regardless of the passage of time.

According to the MCA (accounting for 15 %), in Finland in the 1990s, men and women in LAT relationships were the most likely to provide manual stimulation to their sexual partners. Two-thirds of the men had done so in the last month, as had half of the women (unadjusted figures). Another group where manual stimulation was common was among people in cohabiting relationships: more than half of the men and approximately 40 % of the women had given manual stimulation to their partner. Among married people the proportions were approximately 40 % and 30 %, respectively. In other words, men were more likely than women to provide manual stimulation in all relationship types.

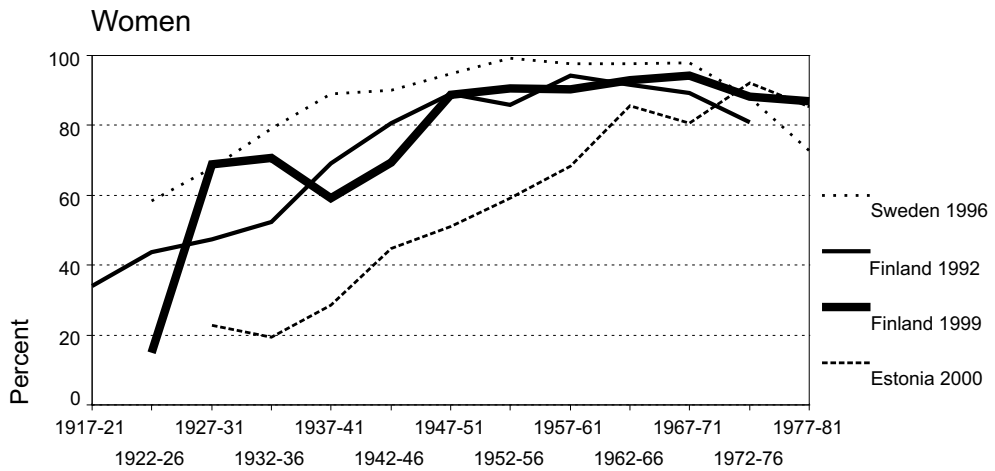
The frequency of manual stimulation was higher in steady couple relationships of a short duration, as opposed to longer relationships. In the first years of the relationship, two-thirds of men and four-fifths of women had given manual stimula-

Figure 5.9 Manual stimulation*



Birth cohort

*in past five years (Sweden: during lifetime)



Birth cohort

*in past five years (Sweden: during lifetime)

tion to their partner during the last month. Subsequently, the proportion of people who had used manual stimulation in the last month dropped to half among men and two-thirds among women.

Among men and women in relationships spanning over 30 years, one in four had given manual stimulation to their partner in the last month, and half had done so in the last year. In relationships that had lasted more than 40 years, one-fifth of men and one in ten women had given manual stimulation in the last month, and one-third of the men and one-fifth of the women had given it in the last year. Manual stimulation became quite infrequent in marriages of longer duration.

If we examine manual stimulation by lifetime sexual relationship type, people with parallel relations, the polygamous and the seekers were more likely than other sexual lifestyle types to stimulate and caress their partner's genitals by hands. Those who began to have sexual intercourse at a younger age were more active in using manual stimulation in sex than those who had started when they were older. Longer education was correlated with an increased prevalence of manual stimulation of the partner, compared with a lower prevalence among those with less education.

Oral sex

Oral sex has received more public attention than manual sex – thanks, in recent years, to President Clinton in America. According to some studies (Bogart et al., 2000), more than half of young Americans do not even consider oral sex as de facto sex. Nonetheless, oral sex is central in the sexual desires and dreams of many men and women. It often represents a parallel or alternative method to manual stimulation. The increased interest toward oral sex accounts for one of the most significant sexual trends since the 1970s.

In the 1990s, respondents in Finland, Estonia and St. Petersburg were asked how often, in the last five years, they had been the recipient or provider of oral sex in their sexual relationships – either oral stimulation of the penis (fellatio) or oral stimulation of the vagina (cunnilingus). In Sweden, the question concerned a respondent's entire lifetime.

Men were somewhat more likely than women to report engaging in oral sex. In an international comparison, oral sex was significantly more popular in Finland than in St. Petersburg or Estonia (Table 5.5). In Finland in 1999, three-fourths of both men and women had received oral sex. In terms of receiving oral sex from their partner during the same study period, 61–64 % of men in Estonia and St. Petersburg had been the recipient of oral sex, as had 55 % of Estonian women, though only 40 % of women in St. Petersburg. The proportion of those who had given oral stimulation to their partner was roughly the same as the proportion of recipients. Only 3 %–5 % of men and 1 %–2 % of women had given oral sex to

Table 5.5 Oral stimulation (caressing a man's penis or a woman's genitals orally) in last five years (%)

Oral sex	Men				Women			
	Finland 1992	Finland 1999	Estonia 2000	St. Petersburg 1996	Finland 1992	Finland 1999	Estonia 1996	St. Petersburg 2000
Not at all	20	20	36	34	29	23	43	56
Receiver only	1	3	3	7	5	8	2	4
Giver only	3	5	4	2	1	2	2	1
Mutual	76	72	58	57	65	66	53	39
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
(N)	793	648	302	636	57	662	412	817

the partner but not received it. The proportions of those who had received oral sex but not reciprocated ranged among men from 1 % to 7 % and among women from 2 % to 8 %. Men were thus slightly more likely to be givers only, whereas women were somewhat more likely to be receivers only. In the Baltic region, women were rarely the one-sided 'providers' of oral stimulation – an indicator that is internationally seen as a sign of women's subjugation in sexual life.

The studies conducted in Finland, Estonia and St. Petersburg asked about oral sex in the last five years, while the Swedish study addressed a respondent's entire lifespan. It was therefore not possible to carry out direct comparisons between the four regions. It should be mentioned, however, that approximately 85 % of all Swedes had both given and received oral sex during their lifetime. This figure coincides relatively well with Finnish data for the last five years.

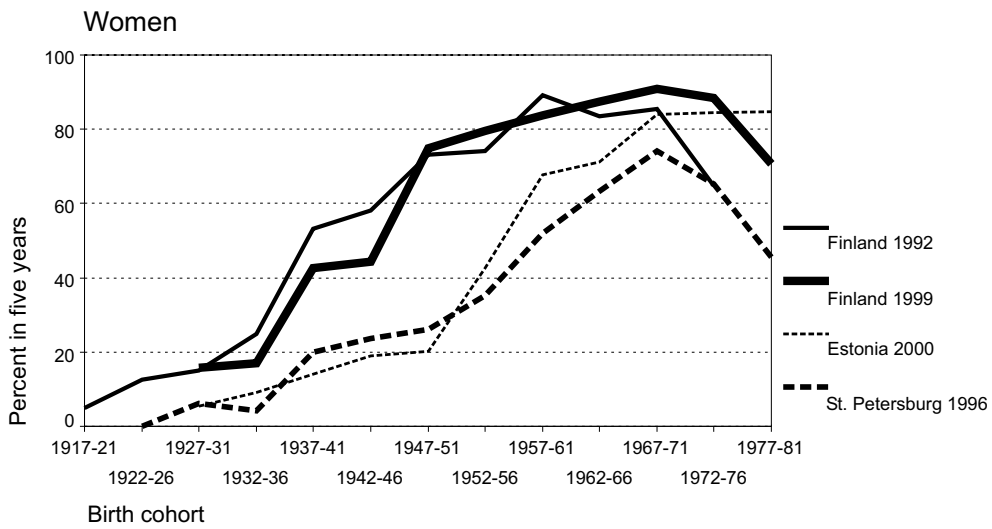
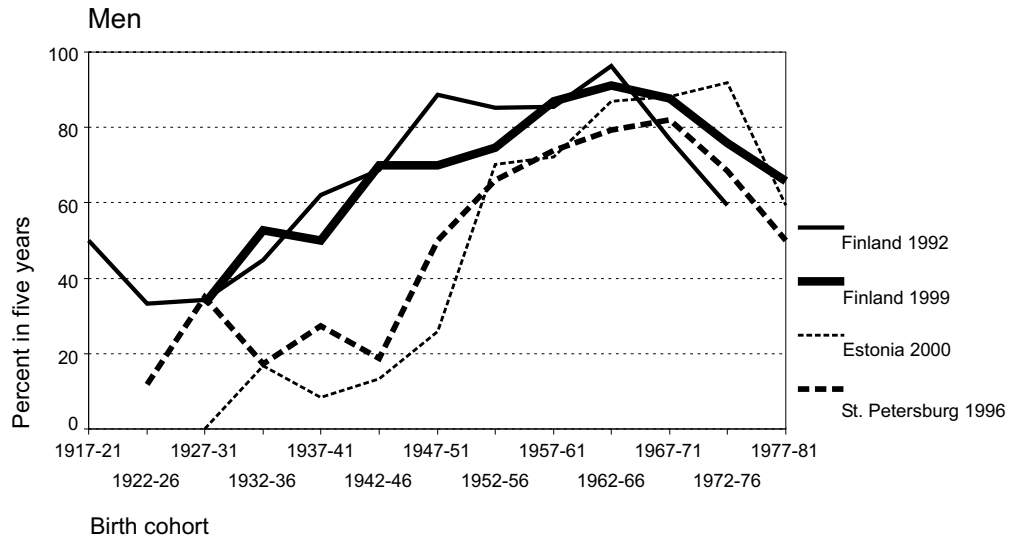
The popularity of oral sex was directly in proportion to the youth of the birth cohort – the younger the cohort, the more popular (Figure 5.10). In the same manner as in the case of manual sexual stimulation, as they aged, people of different generations retained the oral sex habits they had once adopted.

According to a MCA on Finland (in 1992 and 1999), Estonia and St. Petersburg, 35 % of the deviation was explained through the predictors describing demographic and sexual activity. The strongest predictor was a late birth cohort (beta coefficient .33). The study group had a significant impact on the incidence of oral sex: the proportion of people who engaged in oral sex was higher in Finland than in Estonia and St. Petersburg (.20). Judging from the fact that the incidence of oral sex is higher among those with higher education (.04), oral sex seems to be a modern and trendy sexual habit.

In addition to demographic factors, reciprocal oral sex was also connected to sexual relationships and other sexual habits. A large number of partners as well as parallel relationships increased the likelihood of oral sex (.14 and .08). The incidence of oral sex was higher among people who had started their sex lives early

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Figure 5.10 Mutual oral sex



than among those who had started later (.06). The frequency of sexual intercourse, in other words, the time elapsed from the last sexual intercourse, was a strong indicator of the practice of oral sex (.15). Respondents who used multiple sexual positions were also more likely to report engaging in oral sex than those who had only used one position in intercourse (.11).

According to unadjusted values, respondents who lived in cohabiting or living-apart-together were more likely to report reciprocal oral sex than married or single respondents. After an adjustment of other factors, however, the relationship type did not statistically significantly explain the practice of oral sex; the value of the beta coefficient was only .03. The reason for this absence of a significant difference is that the demographic characteristics and other sexual habits of married and single subjects differ from those who were in a cohabiting or living-apart-together relationship. Had they been the same, our findings would indicate that married and single people practice oral sex as frequently as people who cohabit or have a steady partner with whom they do not live. Marriage or being single did not in themselves signify avoidance of oral sex – rather, it was the different characteristics and activities of the people in these relationship types. Thus, we can say that the unadjusted figures tell the truth in practice.

The St. Petersburg data did not contain information with regard to the duration of couple relationships or of manual sexual stimulation. A MCA on Finland and Estonia only showed that the incidence of oral sex among respondents in recently formed couple relationships was higher than among those whose relationships had already lasted longer. Oral sex was also connected to another trendy sexual behavior, i.e. manual stimulation.

In the following, we will use a bar diagram to illustrate the correlation between demographics and some other factors that determine sexual activity to the incidence of reciprocal oral sex. In all research groups, subjects who had begun their sexual lives at a younger age practiced oral sex significantly more actively than those who had started later (Figure 5.11). The break-off point in nearly all groups seems to be the age of 20. Respondents who began to have sexual intercourse at that age or later were significantly less likely to practice oral sex than those who had begun to have intercourse before the age of 20. This is largely a result of the fact that respondents who began to have sexual intercourse when older are also part of the older generations, though it should be noted that the impact of age at first intercourse on the practice of oral sex remained even when adjusting for age.

The level of sexual activity when the questionnaire was administered also strongly determined the practice of oral sex. The shorter the time that had lapsed from the most recent instance of intercourse, the more frequent was the practice of reciprocal oral sex (Figure 5.12). Oral sex was, then, correlated with an otherwise active sex life. As mentioned above, respondents who used multiple positions and manual stimulation in sexual intercourse were more likely to also engage in oral sex.

Figure 5.11 Mutual oral sex by age at first intercourse

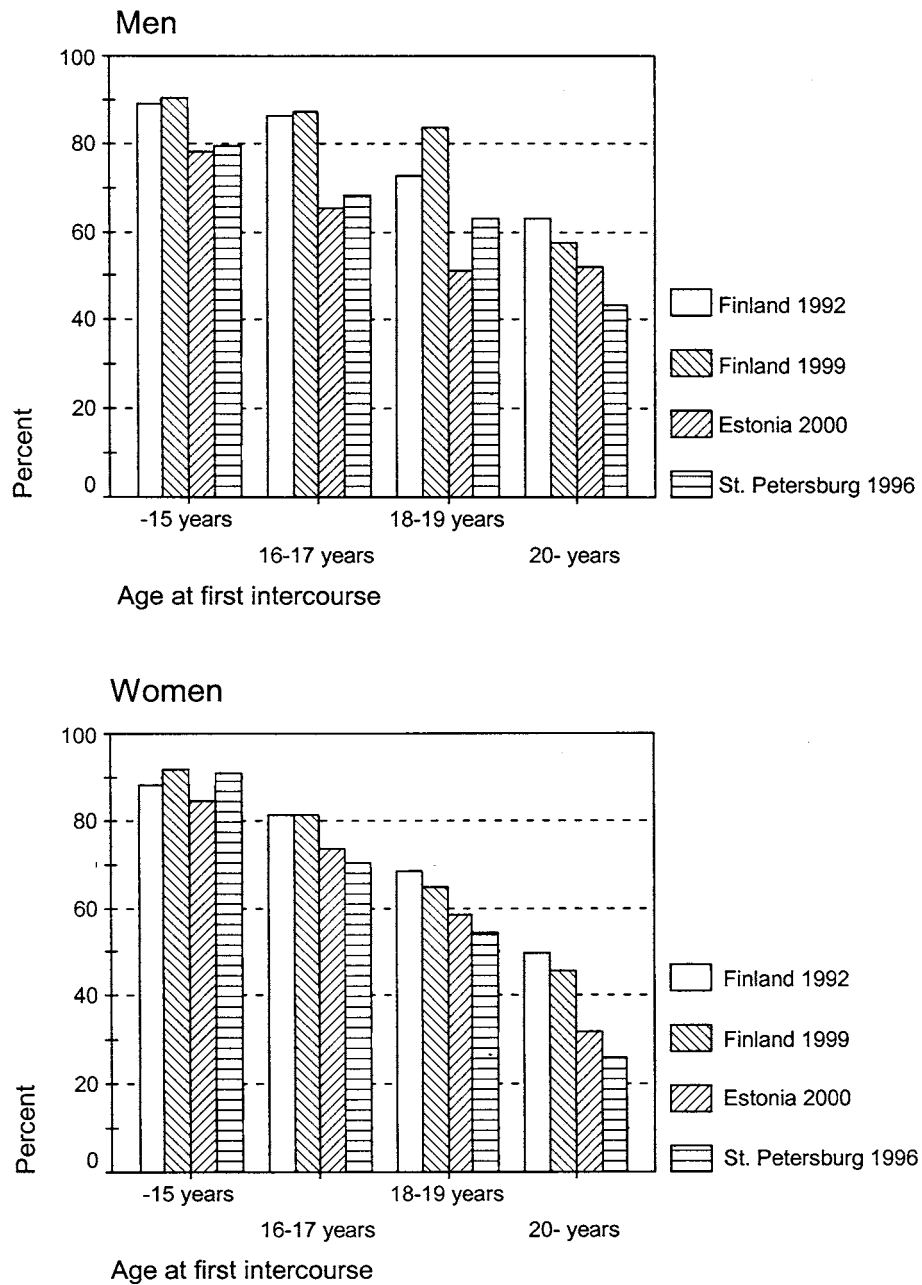


Figure 5.12 Mutual oral sex by time of last intercourse

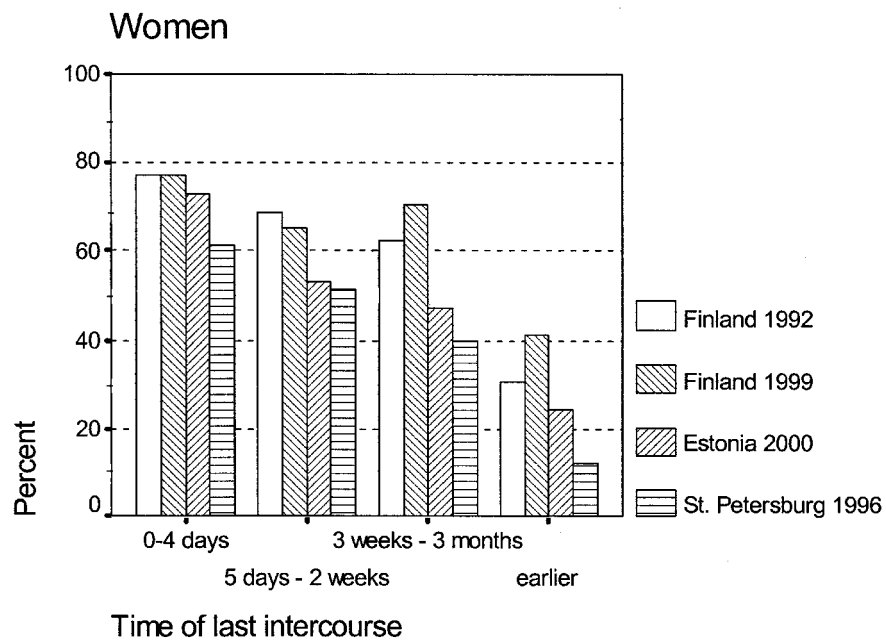
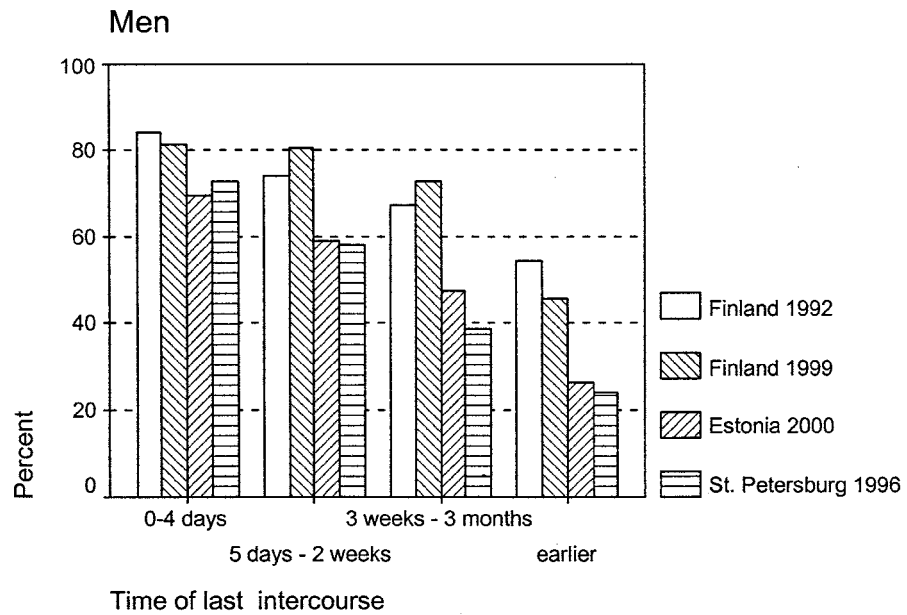
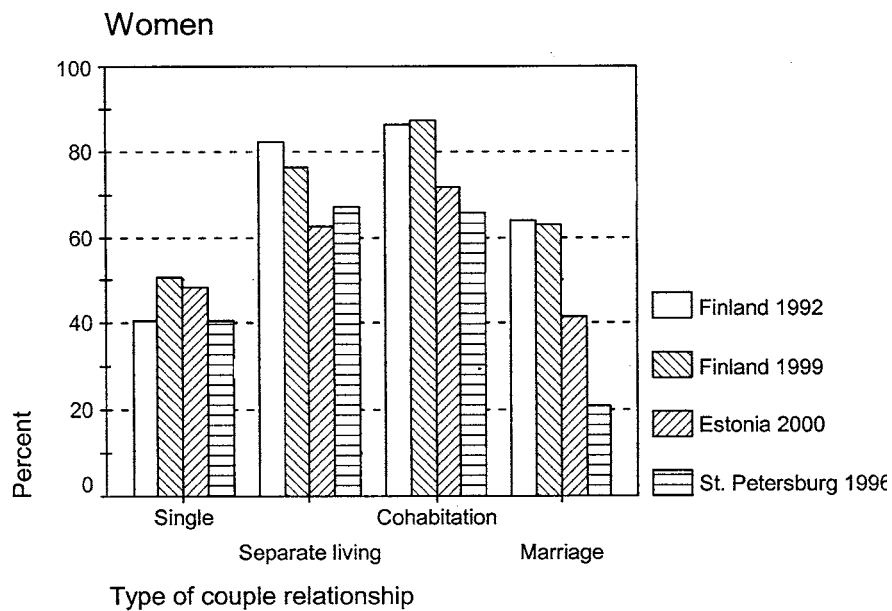
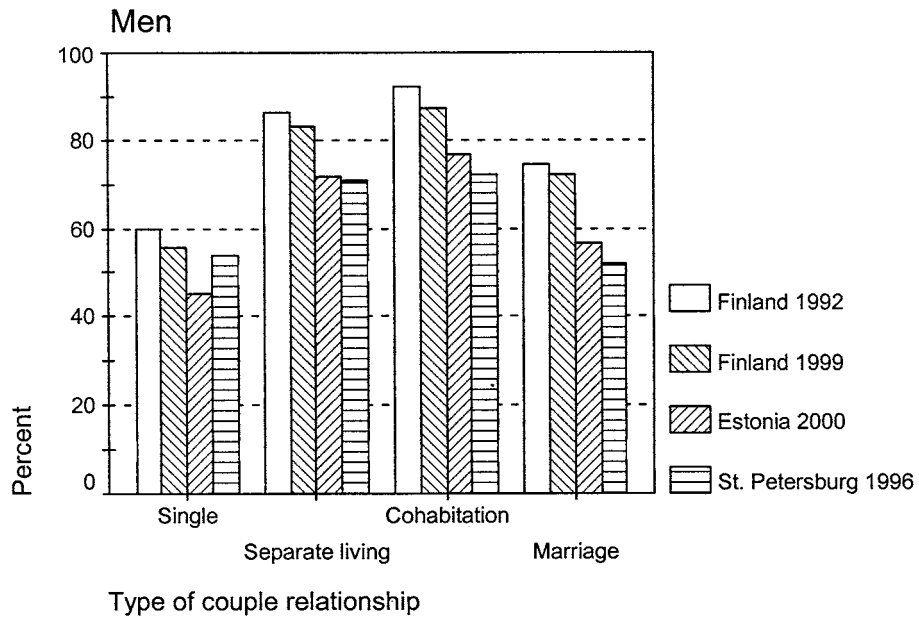


Figure 5.13 Mutual oral sex by type of couple relationship



In all study groups, the practice of reciprocal oral sex was more prevalent among respondents in cohabiting and living-apart-together than among respondents who were married or single (Figure 5.13). As noted above, the adjustment of other simultaneous predictors rendered the relationship type statistically insignificant as an independent predictor of the practice of oral sex. The finding is that respondents in cohabiting and living-apart-together relationships practiced oral sex more frequently than married or single respondents, because their demographic characteristics and sexual activities promoted the practice of oral sex.

Anal intercourse

There is no risk of pregnancy in anal intercourse, but it has remained a taboo until recently. Images of anal intercourse were accepted in Finnish pornographic publications only in the 1990s. Anal intercourse became a topic of wider discussion, however, already in the 1980s, when it was found to be associated with a higher rate of HIV infection among homosexual men. Recently, anal intercourse has been presented as a normal alternative to traditional intercourse for heterosexual couples as well.

Among Finnish men between the ages of 18 and 74 in the 1992 study, 20 %, and of women, 17 %, had at some time practiced anal intercourse. The figure for both sexes in 1999 was 27 %. Approximately half of the Finns who had engaged in anal intercourse had only tried it once, while the rest had engaged in it multiple times. The proportion of both groups increased from one study period to another. The studies conducted in Estonia and St. Petersburg did not address anal sex.

One-third of young and middle-aged respondents had experienced anal sex in the 1999 study, whereas only one in ten older respondents had tried it. The proportion of those who had experienced anal sex increased during the 1990s in post-1941 birth cohorts.

Among respondents who lived in cohabiting or living-apart-together relationships, 42 % had experienced anal sex at the time of the 1999 study. Only one in four married and single respondents had engaged in anal intercourse. When other factors related to anal intercourse were included, differences between relationship types were eliminated. The other factors that promoted anal intercourse included young age at first intercourse, high number of sexual partners, parallel relationships, varying intercourse positions, oral sex and homosexual interest. In 1999, 43 % of those interested in the same sex, but only 27 % of those who were only heterosexually inclined had experienced anal intercourse. In 1999, these factors predicted 18 % of the variation in anal intercourse in Finland. Anal intercourse seems to be part of the new sexual trend that started in the 1990s, characterized by reciprocal and experimental sexual actualization.

Bondage and sadomasochism

Beyond the regular sexual modes presented above (apart from anal intercourse), people exhibit various sexual proclivities or fantasies that can be included within the realm of experimental sex. In the 1992 study, we examined phenomena such as partner swapping and group sex. In many circles, it is also common to engage in various sexual games and role-play. In role-play, it has been popular to assume roles of domination and submission. In certain cases, these roles may become an essential and oft-repeated element of love making, and we can then speak of sado-masochist sex (SM). Others prefer bondage (BD), where the sensation of helplessness or domination is titillating in itself, without including other characteristics that may be part of sadomasochism.

In the 1999 study, we posed this question: “Have you ever tried bondage or voluntary sadomasochistic games (domination/submission, chains, punishment/thrashing etc.)?” This data is only available for Finland in 1999.

Eight percent of men and 7 % of women reported that they had at some point engaged in bondage. Three percent of men and 1,5 % of women had tried sadomasochism. 2 % of men and 1,5 % of women had tried both bondage and sadomasochism.

The incidence of bondage and sadomasochism was much higher among young people (15 %) than among other generations (2–5 %), thus representing a new sexual trend. One in seven (15 %) young men and women (the highest proportion, 19 %, was among women aged 20–24) had experimented with bondage, and 6 % of men and 2 % of women had tried sadomasochism. Among the middle aged, 7 % of men and 3 % of women had engaged in bondage. Among the older group, 2 % had engaged in bondage and 2 % in sadomasochism.

In accordance with the relationship type, the incidence of bondage was highest among men in cohabiting relationships (15 %) and women in living-apart-together relationships (13 %). The highest incidence of sadomasochistic experiences also occurred among men in cohabiting relationships (7 %) and women in living-apart-together relationships (4 %), while the lowest incidence of bondage and sadomasochism occurred in marriage, where the respondents were older than average. Education did not predict bondage or SM inclinations for men, but women who had matriculated from high-school (13 %) were more likely to engage in these sexual practices than women who had only finished intermediate school (11 %) or primary school (6 %).

Bondage and sadomasochism were also correlated with other sexual habits. Respondents who engaged in them had had numerous sexual partners and had experimented with different sexual positions as well as oral and anal sex.

Sex for money

Sex for money, or prostitution, became a topic of public discussion in Finland following the new renaissance of sex clubs and the spread of prostitution from the area of the former Soviet Union. The debate became very heated, with both sides expressing strong opinions on the issue. An increased supply also offered new possibilities to use paid sex services.

During the 1990s, attitudes among Finnish men toward paid sex had become increasingly permissive. While in 1992, one out of two Finnish men agreed with the statement “I have nothing against people earning money by selling sexual services in Finland”, by 1999, the percentage of men who agreed had climbed to 63. In both studies (1992 and 1999), women’s attitudes toward prostitution were much more negative than those of men. Women’s attitudes changed only slightly in terms of becoming more liberal in accepting prostitution.

The acceptance of prostitution was more common among young and middle-aged respondents compared with the older generation (Figure 5.14). In both cases, more than two-thirds of Finnish men and nearly one-third of women approved of selling sex for money. Among the older generation, the same figures were approximately half among men and a little over one in ten among women. The younger the men, the more acceptance prostitution had gained in the 1990s. Acceptance also grew among the youngest women.

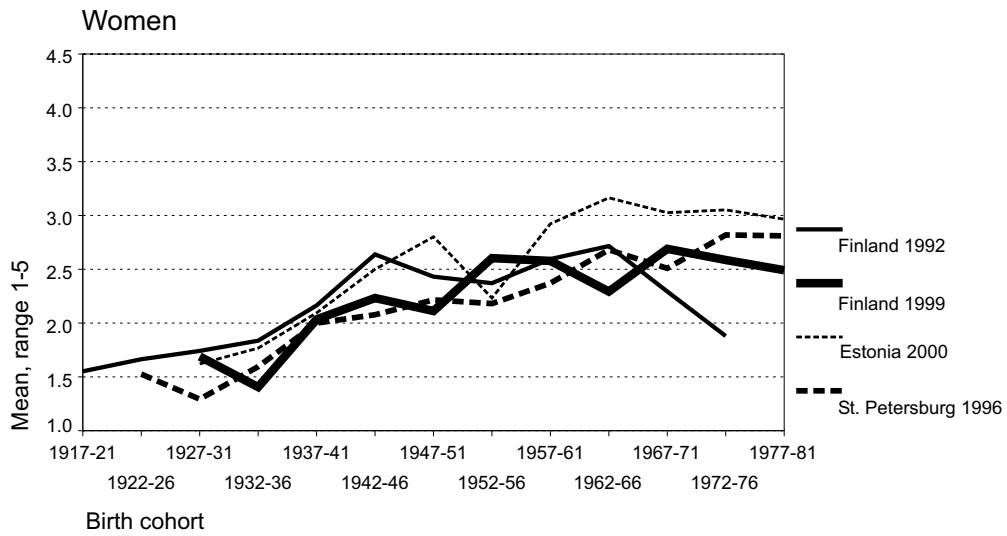
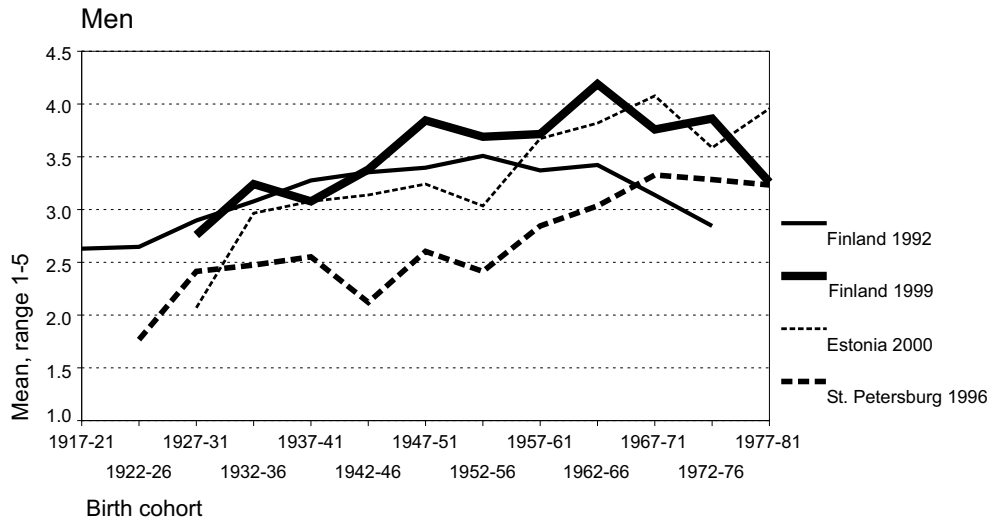
Men in St. Petersburg were significantly more negatively inclined than Finnish or Estonian men toward earning a living by selling sex. Only 34 % of St. Petersburg men and 21 % of the women approved. In Estonia, 57 % of men and 31 % of women accepted prostitution. Estonian men were nearly as likely to approve of prostitution as Finnish men or Estonian women; young women in particular were somewhat more likely to approve than were Finnish women. In Estonia, attitudes among both sexes toward sex for money were more positive than in St. Petersburg.

When examining attitudes toward prostitution by type of couple relationship, men in cohabiting or living-apart-together relationships (in other words, young men) were the most accepting. These male groupings in Finland also underwent the greatest increase in acceptance of prostitution during the 1990s. The rate of acceptance was the same among married and single men. Women in cohabiting or living-apart-together relationships were also more likely to be accepting of prostitution, and their attitudes had become the most favorable toward prostitution in all of Finland.

According to the MCA, acceptance of prostitution was not only connected to study group, gender and type of couple relationship, but also to the number of lifetime sexual partners (beta coefficient .18), parallel relationships (.06) and use of multiple positions in most recent sexual intercourse (.04). The beta coefficients

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Figure 5.14 Accepts prostitution



of the previously mentioned predictors were as follows: male gender (.23), young birth cohort (.18), and specific study group (Finland 1992 or 1999, Estonia, and St. Petersburg, .09). When other factors in the model were controlled for, the independent effect of type of couple relationship on attitude toward prostitution was eliminated. The factors mentioned here explained 22 % of the variation in attitudes toward prostitution. Acceptance of prostitution was a characteristic of men, young people, those with multiple relationships and those who engaged in experimental sex.

The buying of sexual services was examined in Finland in both 1992 and 1999, and in Estonia and St. Petersburg, by asking: “Have you ever offered money or similar economic advantages in exchange for intercourse?” Possible responses included “Yes, but the object(s) did not agree”; “Yes, and one object agreed”; and, “Yes, and several object have agreed.” The only comparable data available from Sweden concerns transactions that actually came to pass. The question was formulated like this: “Has it occurred that you with money or other compensation have paid for being sexually together with somebody?”

The proportion of people who had offered money in exchange for sex increased in the 1990s in Finland among men from 11 % (1992) to 15 % (1999). One percent of men responded that the object had declined sexual intercourse, even though the men had offered money or other economic benefits (these men are included in the above figures). In other words, 10 % of male respondents had actually paid for sex in 1992, and 14 % had done so in 1999.

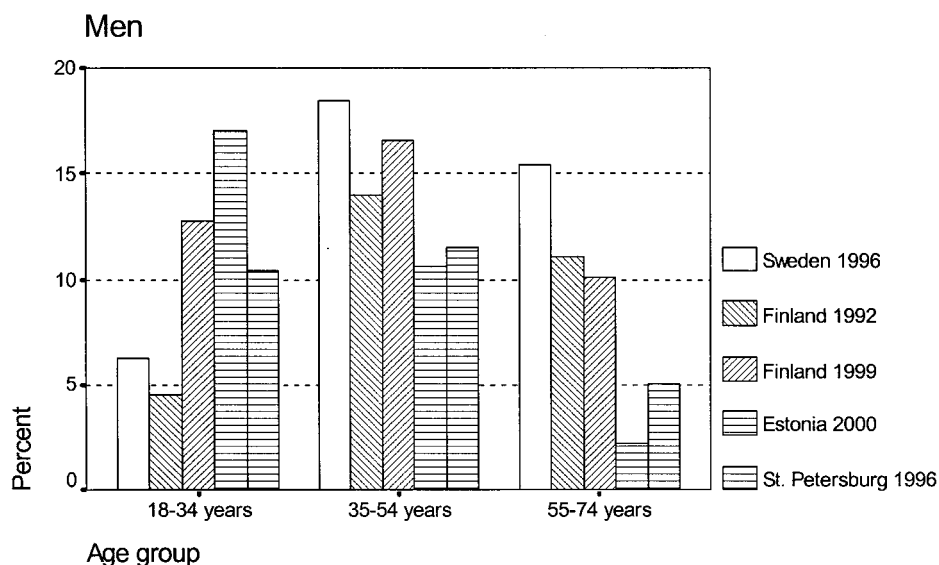
Paying for the services of prostitutes was as common among Swedish men as among Finnish men in 1999 (Table 5.6), but somewhat less frequent in St. Petersburg and Estonia (approximately 10 %). Around 2 % of men in St. Petersburg and 1 % in Estonia had attempted to offer money and been rejected.

Middle-aged men had paid for sex in their lifetime more frequently than younger or older men (Figure 5.15). The highest proportion of men who had purchased sexual services was among Swedish and Finnish middle-aged men (14–18 %), but young Estonian and Finnish men in 1999 had purchased sex at the same rate

Table 5.6 Sex trade (% , N)

Sex trade	Sweden 1996	Finland 1992	Finland 1999	Estonia 2000	St. Peters- burg 1996
<i>Has taken money for sex</i>					
Men	0.5 (1 455)	1.5 (1 045)	2.6 (691)	2.4 (369)	2.3 (771)
Women	0.3 (1 312)	0.2 (1 096)	0.4 (713)	3.1 (609)	3.5 (1 113)
<i>Has paid for sex</i>					
Men	13.0 (1 436)	9.8 (1 051)	13.8 (690)	11.4 (370)	9.9 (774)
Women	- (1 296)	- (1 094)	0.3 (710)	0.3 (609)	0.6 (1 114)

Figure 5.15 Has paid for sex



(13–17 %). The lowest proportion of men to purchase sex with money or other economic advantages was among young men in Sweden and in Finland 1992 as well as among the oldest male respondents in Estonia and St. Petersburg (2–6 %).

In Finland, among the men who had at some point in their lives paid for sex, one in four had done so within the last 12 months. This means that four percent of all men had used the services of a prostitute within the last year. Few among the older men who had at some point purchased sex had done so within the last year. For more than half of all men, the last time they had paid for sex had occurred more than five years ago, or they were unable to recall how much time had elapsed since the last time.

Finnish men were most likely to have purchased sex during travel abroad. In 72 % of the cases, the men had paid a foreign prostitute abroad, 11 % had paid a foreign prostitute in Finland, and only 14 % had paid a Finnish prostitute in Finland. Only one in four men had acquired their experience of paid sex in Finland. Three percent of the respondents were unable to describe the type of companion he had last paid to have sexual intercourse with.

Among Finnish men who had purchased sexual services at some point in their lives, 71 % reported using a condom in his most recent encounter with a prostitute. One-fourth had not used a condom, and 5 % were unable to recall whether they had done so or not.

In St. Petersburg, 0,6 % of women had bought sexual services. Also in other countries included in this survey, the result remained below 1 %.

Very few respondents admitted to agreeing to sexual intercourse in exchange for money. This became apparent in responses to the question, “Have you ever been persuaded to have intercourse by an offer of money or similar economic advantages?” The questionnaire included the following possible responses: “Yes, but I refused”; “Yes, and I said yes once”; and “Yes, and I have said yes several times”. In Sweden, as in the case of paying for sex, the survey only asked about ‘successful’ transactions: “Has it occurred that you have taken money or other compensation for being sexually together with somebody?”

Slightly less than 0,5 % of Finnish and Swedish women admitted to accepting money or other economic benefits in exchange for sex. In Estonia and St. Petersburg, 3 % of women reported that they had received payment for sexual services. Age had a clear impact on accepting money for sex. Young women in St. Petersburg were the most likely to have accepted money or other economic benefits in exchange for sex – 6 % had done so. Also, young Estonian men and women reported that they had accepted money for sexual services (Figure 5.16). The political and economic transition in Eastern Europe seems to have legitimized prostitution among young people in particular. This can be seen in attitudes toward the sex trade as well as in the participation therein.

Masturbation

Autoeroticism and masturbation

Sexual activity that occurs without a partner is called autoeroticism. Broadly speaking, this covers all types of self-reliant sexual activity, both mental and physical, which is typically carried out alone. When the objective is sexual release, an orgasm, the word commonly used is masturbation. Sometimes people masturbate while the partner is watching, or secretly in a public space. Masturbation can become an arousing element of a couple’s sexual play. When one partner satisfies another with his or her hands, this is considered manual stimulation.

Autoeroticism and masturbation in particular have been considered taboo subjects for exceptionally long. Much like other sexual activities that do not lead to pregnancy, masturbation has been historically thought to be unnecessary and even harmful. Reproductive morality required that semen be reserved for the procreative act. This stance is expressed in many Eastern religions, for example in Taoism. And as ‘respectable’ women were not thought to have any sexual needs, it was not appropriate for women to satisfy themselves.

Figure 5.16 Has taken money for sex



Fears connected to masturbation

Earlier, masturbation was even seen as harmful to health. Literature advocating this view was disseminated as a form of public sex education in Finland as late as the 1950s. The sexual revolution of the 1960s released sexual information that was based on research and experience, and overturned the baseless fear-mongering surrounding masturbation. Subsequently, sexual counselors have recommended masturbation as a good way to become familiar with one's own body and sexual reactions. Masturbation has become a valuable, though still very private, part of sexual expression.

The warnings against masturbation in text books and media have had an impact on the individual cognition and feelings related to masturbation. This can be seen in the Finnish sex surveys in 1992 and 1999 where responses to the statement "Masturbation does not endanger health" were studied. Respondents could entirely or somewhat agree or disagree with the statement, or respond 'difficult to say'.

The proportion of respondents entirely agreeing with the statement was 52 % for both genders in 1992 and for men 63 % and women 59 % in 1999. These persons were not at all worried about the unhealthiness of masturbation. Roughly one third of the respondents born before 1940 agreed entirely with the statement. Among the respondents who were born after the beginning of the 1950s, the proportion was much higher: about two thirds. The ideas concerning the healthiness of masturbation had 'revolutionarily' changed for men who were teenagers in the 1950s. For teenage women, the change toward not being worried about the health hazards of masturbation happened in the beginning of the 1960s. A second turning point for men was in the late 1960s and for women in the early 1970s. On average, men had adopted more positive ideas about of masturbation 5–10 years earlier than women. However, for people who were adolescents after the 1970s, the ideas of masturbation have remained fairly similar.

Uncertainty regarding the health effects of masturbation was related to a lack of other kind of relevant information and education. This can be seen by examining attitudes toward masturbation in relation to the respondents' level of education. Finns with fewer years of education were most often uncertain or unsure of the unhealthiness of masturbation. The proportions of uncertain respondents were two to five times as high among those who had a low level of education as opposed to those with higher education who were more likely to be certain that masturbation was not unhealthy. This was true for both genders and both surveys in Finland in the 1990s.

Still in 1999, one fourth of the Finnish respondents in the younger generation (18–34 years of age) were not absolutely sure if masturbation was healthy or not (Haavio-Mannila et al., 2001, 121–122). The fears and guilt related to masturba-

tion were evident even though some decrease in the ignorance was found. According to the U.S. sex survey (Laumann et al., 1994), every second man and woman reported feeling guilty after masturbating. These feelings existed quite similarly in different age groups, and not even the younger generations had succeeded in getting rid of the fears and guilt related to masturbation.

The sexual autobiographies of Finns (Haavio-Mannila et al., 2002) indicate that many people took these claims so seriously that they worried about the possible frightening consequences of masturbation.

Differences in masturbation frequency

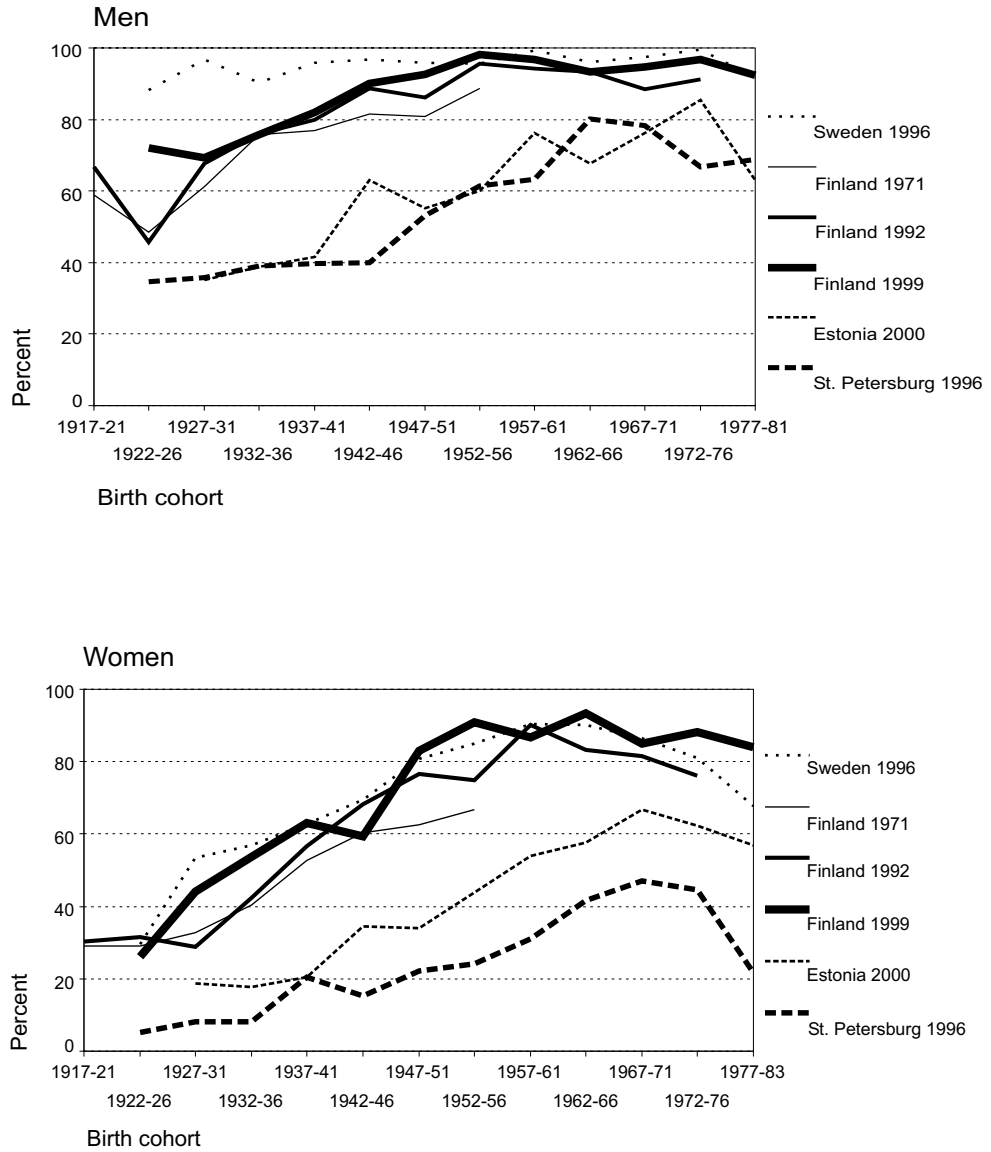
The frequency of masturbation was measured in the Finnish, Estonian and St. Petersburg surveys by using a question with the exact same wording. It covers both lifetime and current masturbation activity. In Sweden masturbation habits were studied, for instance, by asking “How old were you when you masturbated (satisfied yourself) for the first time?” “How many times have you masturbated during the last 30 days?” On the basis of these two questions we can compare the Swedish data on lifetime and monthly masturbation with the data from the other areas.

Anxiety about masturbation has had a major impact on actual behavior. A high proportion of people have abstained from masturbation their entire lives. The difference between Finland/Sweden and the former Soviet Union is significant. The frequency of masturbation in Estonia in 2000 resembled Finland in 1971. In St. Petersburg in 1996 masturbation was even more rare than in Finland in 1971. Most St. Petersburg women had never masturbated. The women born before the Second World War in St. Petersburg abstained from masturbation almost completely (Figure 5.17). Even in the young generation only a half of the women in St. Petersburg had masturbated in their lifetime.

In the generations born before the 1930s, most women in Finland, Sweden and Estonia had abstained from masturbation. In Estonia, until those born in the 1960s, half of the women avoided masturbation. In the youngest Estonian generations, the proportions of women not reporting masturbation were still about one-third. Looking at trends in the different generations, it seems that the increase in female masturbation had taken place in St. Petersburg 40 years and in Estonia 30 years later than in Finland and Sweden. We assume that to a great extent this difference is due to the more negative information provided about masturbation in the former Soviet Union than in the Nordic countries.

Comparing Finland and Sweden, the proportions of women who had experienced masturbation were fairly similar in each generation. In the younger generations only around 10 % of women had abstained from masturbation. In these countries, the turning point for women seems to have been in the generation who were teenagers in the early 1960s and later. This is consistent with the results on

Figure 5.17 Has masturbated



the change of ideas related to the healthiness of masturbation that took place at the same time. The misinformation of the health hazards of masturbation had apparently had a strong impact on masturbation habits in the generations of women who were teenagers before 1960s.

The proportions of men who had experienced masturbation were higher than those of women. In St. Petersburg and Estonia around one-half of men born before the 1950s had never masturbated. In the young generations, still 20–30 % of the Estonian and St. Petersburg men had never masturbated. Except for Sweden where almost all men admitted to masturbating, there was a fairly steady increase in the rates of people with experiences of masturbation from the older to the younger birth cohorts. This increase started among men who were teenagers after the beginning of the 1960s. The Western sexual revolution seems to have had some impact on sexual habits also in the former Soviet Union but the timing of the trends differs significantly from that in the Nordic countries (Kon, 1995; Rotkirch, 2000). The Gorbachev policy of *glasnost* eventually led to the liberalization of the printed word and a Russian public sexual revolution in 1989, when topics such as abortion, birth clinics, contraceptives, and young people's sexuality entered into public debate (Kon, 1995, 267).

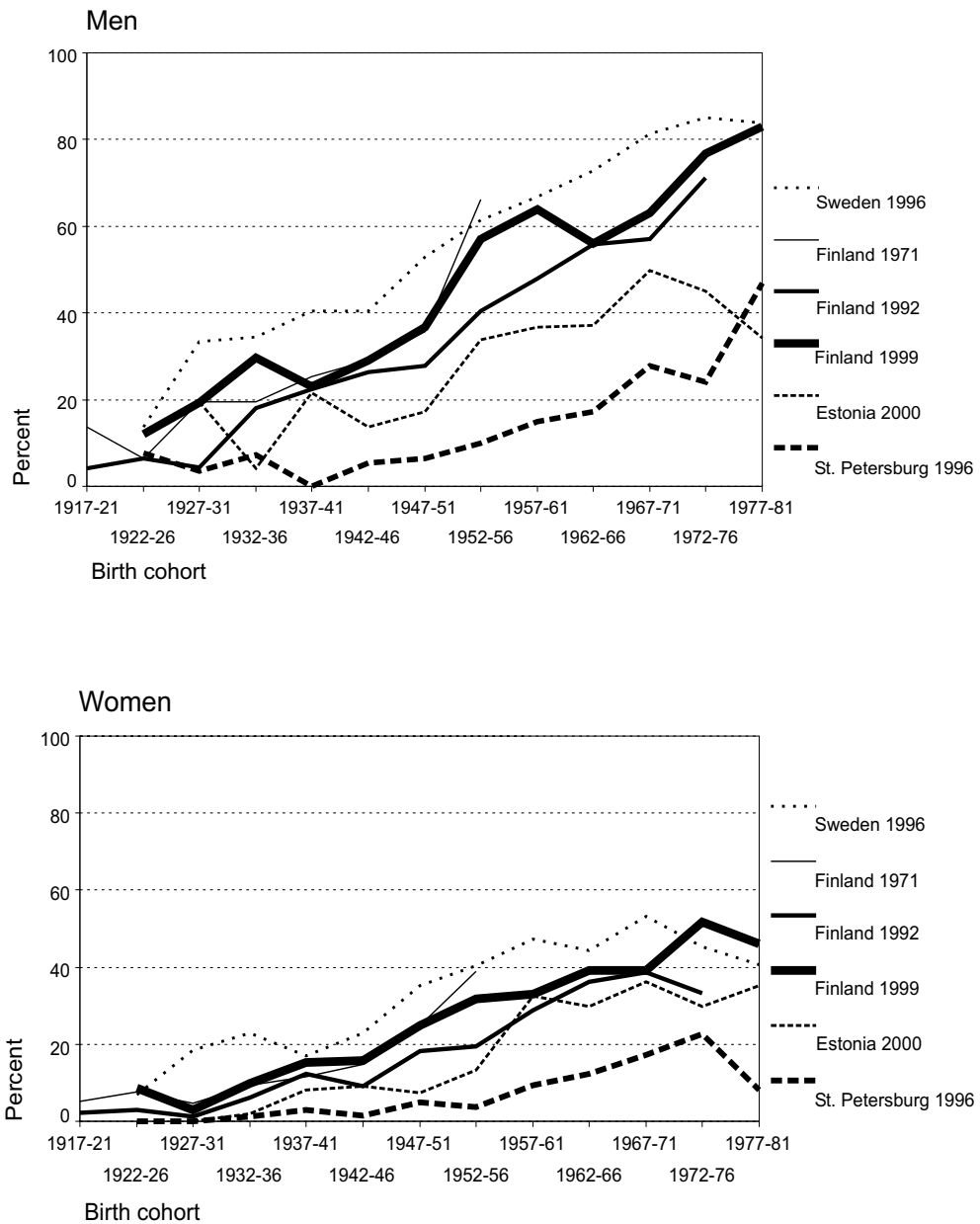
In Finland, a quarter of the men born before the 1940s had never masturbated. In this age group men were more active in masturbation in Sweden than in Finland. In the younger generations, only a few percent of men had never masturbated either in Finland or in Sweden. Younger Nordic men were not afraid of experimenting with masturbation.

A look at current masturbation habits (i.e., masturbation during the last month) reveals that the younger generations have been much more active masturbators than the older generations (Figure 5.18). Among the older people, 20–30 % of men and a few percent of women had masturbated during the last month. In St. Petersburg, the oldest men had masturbated as seldom as women in Estonia and Finland. Of the youngest men, about 80 % in Finland and Sweden, one-half in Estonia, but only one-quarter in St. Petersburg had masturbated during the last month. Among women, the respective proportions of masturbators were about one-half in Finland and Sweden, one-third in Estonia, and one-fifth in St. Petersburg.

In Sweden both men and women of all generations had masturbated somewhat more often than men and women in Finland. Estonians had masturbated less than Finns but more than people in St. Petersburg. Estonian women resembled Finnish women more than Estonian men resembled Finnish men. On the average, in all the areas studied, the rate of monthly masturbation of women was almost 40 % units lower than that of men.

Masturbation activities remained very stable in Finland from one generation or birth cohort to another. For instance, the proportion of people who had masturbated during the last month was almost identical in every birth cohort and between

Figure 5.18 Masturbation during past month



both genders, according to all three sex surveys, in spite of the fact that the respondents of the last survey were on the average 27 years older than those in the first survey. The masturbation habits that every generation adopted during its teenage years seemed to have remained unchanged throughout people's life course. People who were not interested in masturbation when they were young were also not interested in masturbation throughout the rest of their life. This means that aging in and of itself does not seem to have much effect on the practice of masturbation. Instead of the biological age, the quality of sex education and public opinion about masturbation in society during the teenage period of each generation seem to be of high importance for the future masturbation habits of each generation.

Masturbation and the couple relationship

Some people view masturbation as a substitute for sexual intercourse or lovemaking, and do not engage in it if they have a steady sex partner. Once they lose the partner, masturbation becomes an active part of their sex life again. This does not apply nearly to all people. Some masturbate actively, even though they may otherwise have an active sex life, while others do not masturbate even when they do not have a partner.

Two-thirds of Swedish men and Finnish men (surveyed in 1999), more than one-third of Estonian men, but only less than one-fourth of St. Petersburg's male residents without a steady relationship reported masturbating within the last month (Table 5.7). Among single women the proportions were much lower: in Sweden and Finland, approximately one-third, one-fifth in Estonia, but only 6 % of women respondents in St. Petersburg had masturbated within the last month. Among women in living-apart-together or cohabiting relationships masturbation

Table 5.7 Monthly masturbation in different types of couple relationships (% , N)

Type of couple relationship	Finland 1992	Finland 1999	Sweden 1996	Estonia 2000	St. Petersburg 1996
<i>Men</i>					
Marriage	26 (584)	45 (319)	46 (378)	31 (182)	9 (436)
Cohabitation	41 (140)	51 (83)	63 (377)	28 (78)	16 (58)
LAT	50 (112)	56 (96)	70 (206)	36 (62)	24 (92)
Single	55 (197)	65 (137)	69 (360)	39 (93)	26 (120)
<i>Women</i>					
Marriage	13 (568)	25 (335)	38 (793)	21 (193)	8 (542)
Cohabitation	29 (146)	35 (107)	34 (131)	22 (94)	18 (71)
LAT	25 (130)	39 (85)	36 (62)	34 (67)	14 (120)
Single	25 (228)	36 (129)	34 (188)	19 (139)	6 (311)

was only slightly less frequent. In St. Petersburg, however, masturbation was more common among women in living-apart-together or cohabiting relationships than among single women, among whom many were much older.

Married men were less likely than others to engage in masturbation. To a large degree, this has to do with the fact that marriages involve plenty of older-generation people, who as members of their generation 'learned' to be less active in terms of masturbation. Among women, differences between those who were in different types of couple relationships and those who were single were negligible. The findings indicate that masturbation can be an active element of sex life regardless of whether an individual is involved in a steady sexual relationship. Masturbation can be an added element of sex life, not a substitute for one.

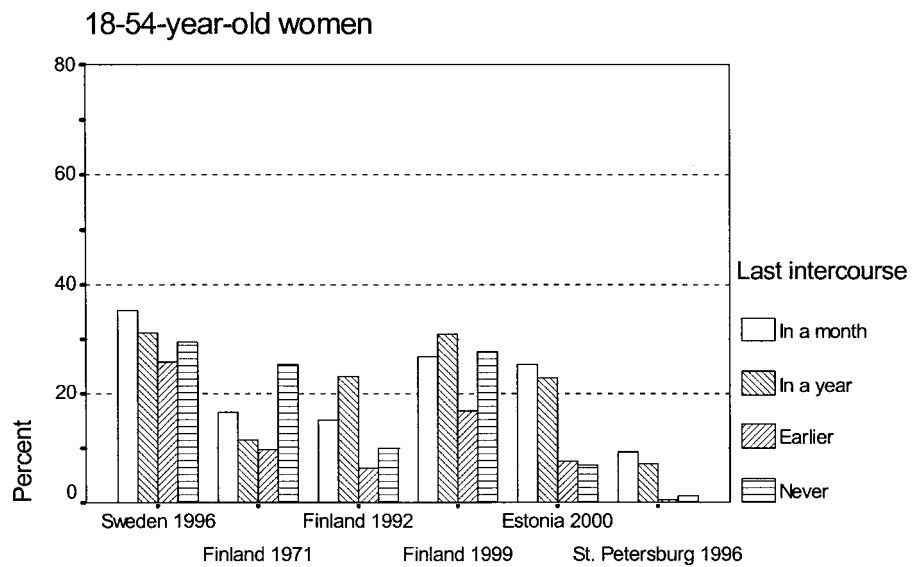
Who has the highest motivation to masturbate?

There are many reasons behind differences in masturbation frequency. One reason that has been presented is the sexual instinct or need, which requires release and satisfaction, when people's need for sexual intercourse is not being met to a sufficient degree.

The connection between the frequency of sexual intercourse and masturbation was studied in all of the regions included in this survey. Because both masturbation and the frequency of intercourse were connected to age, its effect was controlled for. Masturbation was common in three groups. First, men in Sweden, Estonia and in Finland in 1971 had the highest rate of masturbation within the last month among those who had never experienced sexual intercourse (Figure 5.19). For them, masturbation was an obvious substitute or alternative to sexual intercourse. The second group to stand apart from others was made up of people who had had no sexual intercourse in the last one to twelve months (in the Figure marked as 'In a year'). They were characterized by substituting for the temporary lack of sexual intercourse by masturbating. There were particularly many such people of both sexes in Finland in the 1990s. The third group of active masturbators consisted of those who had had sexual intercourse within the last month, but for whom masturbation seems to represent a supplement to intercourse. The proportion of these people was high in Sweden, Finland in 1971, and Estonia and St. Petersburg. The most passive group of people in terms of masturbation were those who had had no sexual intercourse in at least one year, but who experienced sexual intercourse in their lifetime. They had not engaged in any kind of sexual activity within the last month.

A majority of respondents had either had sexual intercourse or masturbated, or both, within the last month (Table 5.8). In all of the studied regions, 15–32 % of 18–54-year-old men and 27–43 % of women had abstained from both sexual

Figure 5.19 Masturbation in a month by time of last intercourse



activities altogether within the last month. Men who had only masturbated accounted for 6–28 %, and women for 4–19 %. Those who had only engaged in sexual intercourse formed the largest group – among men, 21–54 %, and among women, 32–52 %. The proportions of those who had practiced both types of sex, i.e., both masturbation and sexual intercourse, fluctuated among men between 8 % and 34 %, and among women, between 5 % and 30 %. The significant percentage differences between regions indicate that the level of sexual activity varies greatly between cultures. Sweden and Finland in 1999 had clearly the highest proportion of people who had engaged in both types of sexual activity within the last month, while the lowest proportions occurred in St. Petersburg and in Finland in 1971. The sexual lives of St. Petersburg residents in the 1996 study closely resembled the situation in Finland 25 years earlier.

The more sexual partners respondents had had, the more likely they were to have masturbated in the last month (Figure 5.20). Masturbation is a part of a sexually active lifestyle.

In all of the regions we are looking at, satisfaction with one's sex life was correlated with the small amount of masturbation in the last month. In our cultures, sex in a couple is considered a fundamental prerequisite to a satisfactory sex life. Indeed, the lack of sexual satisfaction among people who masturbate may be a result of not having a partner with whom to practice couple sex, or sex with the partner is unsatisfactory. To more closely examine this connection, we will analyze how masturbation and couple sex together, or each as separate and sole sexual activity, predict sexual satisfaction.

We will first look at respondents who had not had sexual intercourse in the last month. Among the people who had not had intercourse, those who had abstained from masturbation were more satisfied with their sex lives than those who masturbated (Figure 5.21). Sexually passive respondents did not perhaps have the same expectations in terms of their sex lives than those who had masturbated but not engaged in sexual intercourse, and perhaps suffered from the lack of intercourse.

Table 5.8 Monthly masturbation according frequency of intercourse, 18–54-year-olds (% , N)

Frequency of intercourse during past month	<i>Men</i>			<i>Women</i>		
	Finland 1971	Finland 1992	Finland 1999	Finland 1971	Finland 1992	Finland 1999
Almost daily	24 (99)	36 (107)	44 (67)	11 (159)	30 (73)	34 (51)
2–3 times a week	20 (146)	30 (241)	49 (122)	8 (281)	19 (221)	29 (119)
Once a week	20 (131)	40 (169)	56 (90)	14 (283)	19 (164)	32 (94)
1–3 times a month	28 (179)	47 (195)	69 (135)	16 (291)	24 (209)	41 (131)
No intercourse	46 (80)	67 (93)	75 (67)	25 (162)	35 (102)	47 (80)

Figure 5.20 Masturbation in a month by number of partners

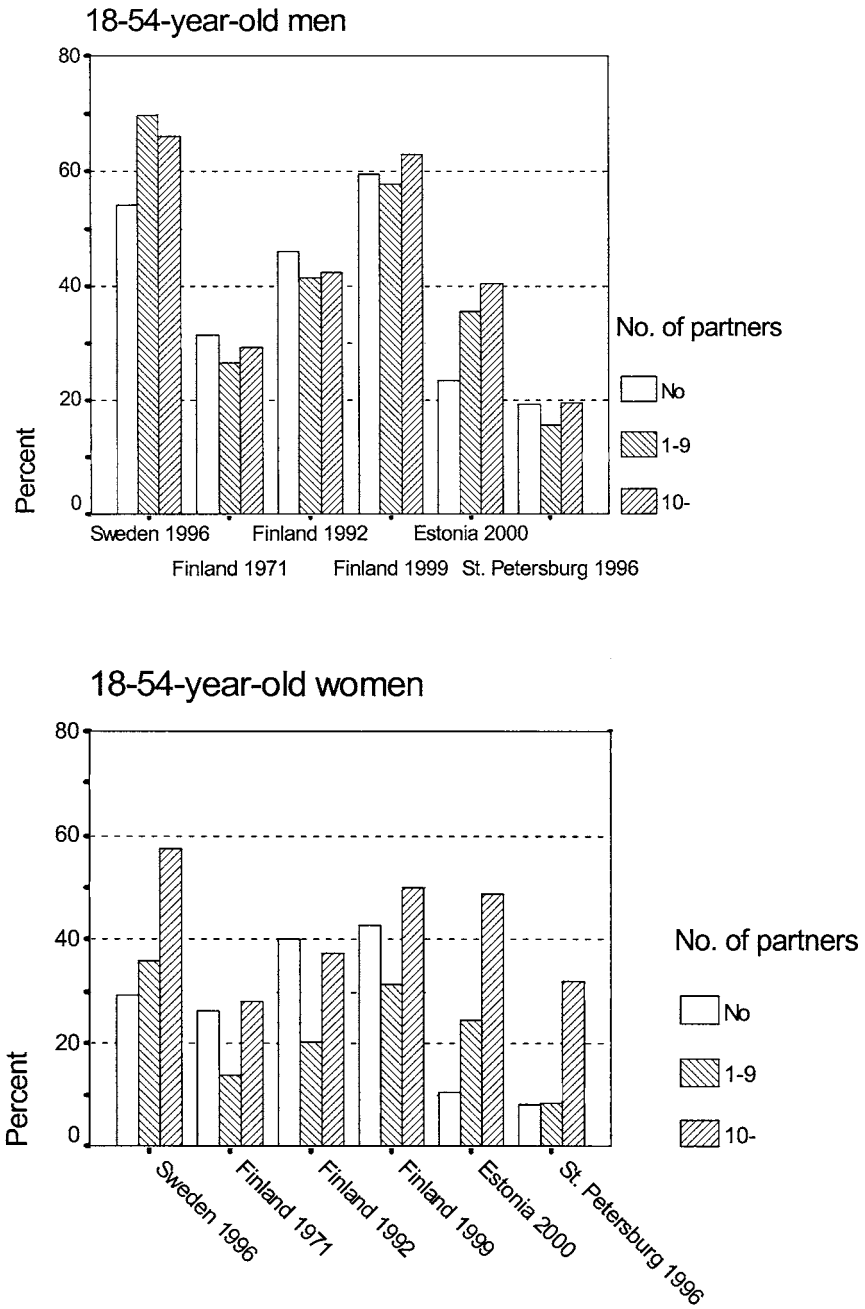
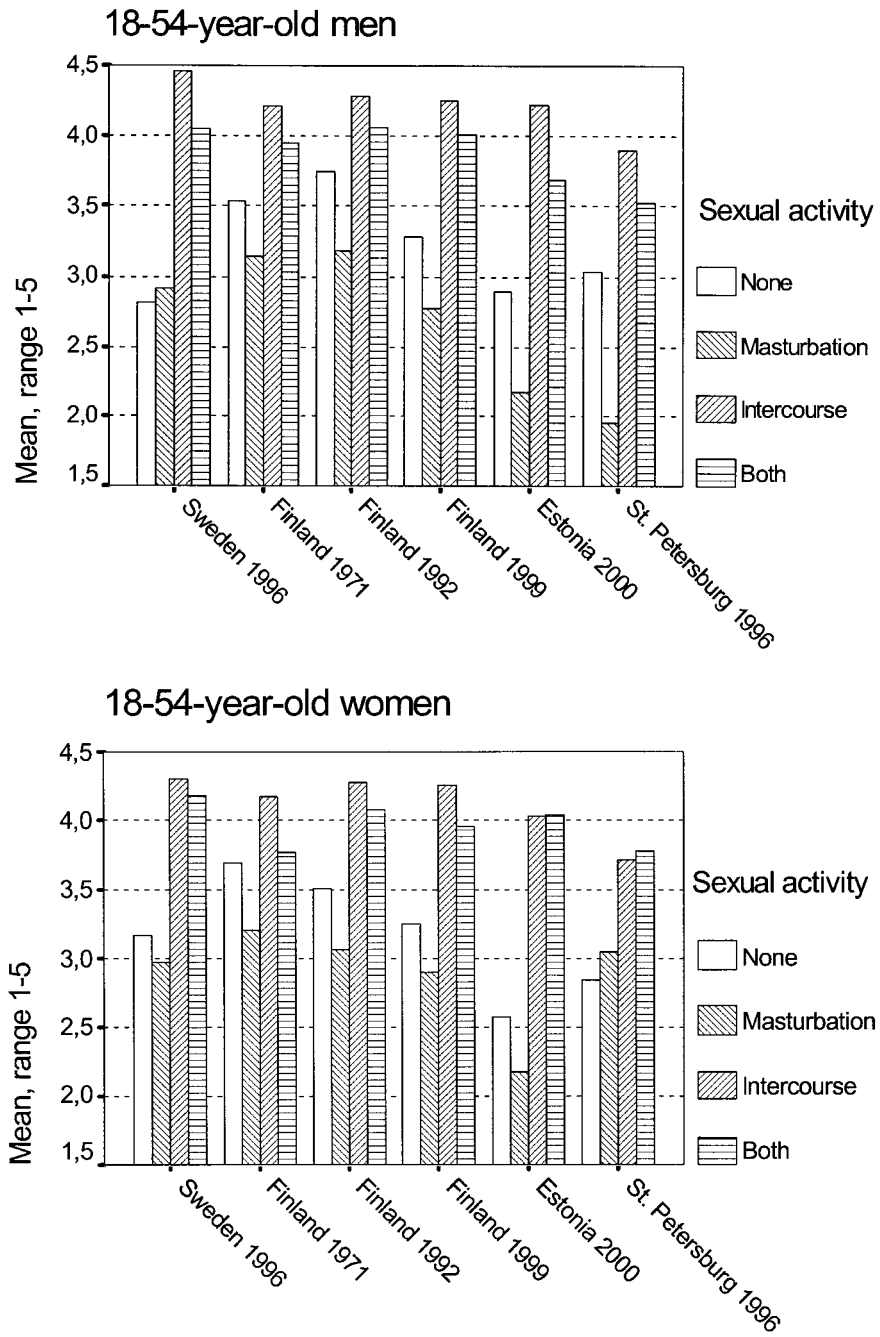


Figure 5.21 Satisfaction with sexual life by sexual activity in past month



Secondly, we will look at the respondents who had engaged in sexual intercourse. Among men, those who had practiced couple sex but abstained from masturbating were happier with their sex lives, in particular in Sweden, Estonia and St. Petersburg – than were those who had also masturbated. The reason may be that sexual intercourse did not bring enough sexual satisfaction, and the men had perhaps ‘had to’ masturbate to compensate for unsatisfactory couple sex. Among women who had had sexual intercourse, the only difference between women who had masturbated and those who had not was in Finland in 1971. The Finnish women who had had sexual intercourse but had not masturbated were – like the men – more satisfied with their sex lives than those who had also masturbated. In the other groups of women who had had sex, masturbation did not decrease sexual satisfaction in the same way as among men.

The relative significance of factors that predict masturbation

Unfortunately, there is not sufficient comparable data on sex from all of the areas studied. Nonetheless, we conducted a Multiple Classification Analysis on the basis of available data, in order to attempt to predict the significance of the social and sexual factors that affect the masturbation that occurred within the last month in respondents’ sex lives in the data from the 1990s. The findings indicate that the western study area, male gender, young age, lack of sexual intercourse, number of sexual partners and dissatisfaction with one’s sex life accounted for 23 % of the variation in sexual satisfaction. The impact of regional differences was the strongest: masturbation declined going west to east (beta coefficient .30). The subsequent factors that ‘increased’ masturbation, in order of significance, were: young age (.29), dissatisfaction with one’s sex life (.15), male gender (.15), large number of sex partners (.10), and infrequent sexual intercourse (.04). Cultural and demographic factors are better predictors of masturbation than issues related to sex life, though these too play a role.

In Finland, it was possible to examine the incidence of masturbation simultaneously through several factors. The MCA, conducted on the basis of 1990s data, accounted for all of 39 % of the variation in the time elapsed from the most recent masturbation experience.³ The study year, age and gender were treated as background factors in the MCA, so that more predictors could be included in the actual analysis than would have been the case had background factors been included as actual predictors. No beta coefficients could be calculated for background factors.

³ The time elapsed from last masturbation was used as the dependent variable, because it is a better differential of people than is the dichotomy between those who have or have not masturbated in the last month, which had to be used in the international comparison as a result of the different classification system utilized in Sweden. The time elapsed from the last masturbation experience was estimated in weeks on the basis of the categories of questionnaire responses. Respondents who had never masturbated were tagged ‘520 weeks’.

Some of the findings for Finland have already emerged earlier in this chapter, but we will now compile the findings and compare the strength of the different predictors of masturbation by using the beta coefficients.

In Finland, masturbation was correlated with high level of education (beta coefficient .12). This was also the case in Estonia, but not the case in Sweden or St. Petersburg (Kontula & Haavio-Mannila, 2002). The reason for these national differences remained unclear. In any case, it may be stated that in Finland, masturbation was part of the sexual repertoire of economically and socially advantaged people.

Type of couple relationship also somewhat predicted the frequency of masturbation (.05): less time had elapsed from the last masturbation experience of single and LAT than was the case for cohabiting or married respondents. It seems that it is easier to practice masturbation when not living with one's sex partner.

Respondents who had had numerous lifetime sexual partners were more likely to masturbate than those who had had few partners (.06). A tendency toward parallel relationships also increased to probability of masturbating (.07). Masturbation was also correlated with a drinking-oriented lifestyle (.06).

Above, it was stated that the correlation between masturbation and frequency of intercourse was not direct, and according to the MCA, it was not statistically significant in Finland, even though the beta coefficient was .05. This is connected to use of masturbation, on the one hand, as a supplement to sexual intercourse, and on the other hand, as a substitute for sexual intercourse. It was also noted earlier that respondents who experienced dissatisfaction with their sex lives masturbated more actively than those who were sexually satisfied; this was also revealed in the analysis of Finland only (beta coefficient .13).

The consistency in attitudes and behavior is apparent in that respondents who masturbated frequently possessed a positive view of masturbation, viewing it as something that carried no adverse health effects (.21).

Particularly for men, masturbation and sex without a partner may include the use of pornography, particularly for men. Attitudes toward porn as well as its use are strongly correlated with masturbation frequency. Feeling aroused by watching porn predicted masturbation frequency (.13), as did the reading or looking through a pornographic book or magazine in the last 12 months (.14). We will examine the correlation between masturbation and pornography in more detail in the following sub-chapter.

Use of pornography

What is pornography?

Some types of pornographic materials have always been available, but the sexual revolution that began in the 1960 changed the offerings radically. Pornography

became available to the entire population, and its content changed gradually to more and more openly deal with various sexual issues.

It is difficult to assign a universal definition for pornography. Primarily this is because pornography is in part connected to individual emotions and sensations. Different people will view different things as pornographic. Secondly, pornography is a concept that changes with the times. Only very few people would now view much of 1970s porn as such. Bare breasts are no longer necessarily considered pornographic images, as such images have been accompanied with much more frank sexual imagery.

It is characteristic of pornography that it contains images or descriptions of naked or at least near-naked bodies and their contact and coming together, that are intended to be sexually pleasing or arousing. Consumers of pornography acquire porn to experience pleasure or to become aroused (often in connection with masturbation). Previously unseen images may excite the viewer because of their attractive novelty. In this context, a rather 'rough' image may be experienced as especially arousing. Categorizing a certain type of imagery as porn peaks the interest of its users.

Critics of pornography often draw the line of what is pornography and what is not in materials that exceed their own personal sexual preferences and experiences. Viewed thus, everything that deviates from what is 'normal' is porn. According to the strictest definition, all imagery that contains nudity or refers to the sexual interaction is despicable porn, because it is seen as involving sexual communication and activity that belongs within the private realm only. Making a presentation of other people's privacy may psychologically threaten one's own privacy.

It is problematic to compare the 1990s findings to those of the 1970s, because pornographic content changed so completely in the interim. Up until 1971, the most daring sex publications (called 'men's magazines') displayed pictures of bared breasts and women's naked bodies photographed from afar. There were no close-ups of genital organs, not to mention pictures of sexual intercourse. Genitals began to appear in porn magazines gradually in the course of the 1970s, while pictures of people having intercourse did not emerge until the mid-1980s (Kontula & Kosonen, 1996). Sex videos, on the other hand, became available slowly during the 1980s, as VCRs became more common. Increased demand also increased the supply.

More exciting porn, but less of it

Pornography is mostly visual material that includes images of genital organs and sexual intercourse. The Finnish studies attempted to measure the prevalence of its use in all three studies in 1971, 1992 and 1999 by asking respondents: "During the last year, have you read or glanced at a magazine or book that in your opinion could be seen as pornographic?" The change that the concept of 'pornography' has

undergone becomes apparent when comparing responses in the 1971 sex study to those in the 1990s. It was significantly more common to read or watch pornography in the early 1970s than it was in the 1990s. Before, 82 % of men aged 18-54 had engaged in those activities, as had 59 % of women. The early 1970s 'porn', however, looks quite innocent when viewed through the lens of the present time, and the viewing of it was laced with a special sense of novelty for several generations. In the wake of the 1960s sexual revolution, people were 'legally' permitted for the first time to view naked female bodies – an excitement that showed in the wide circulation of men's magazines.

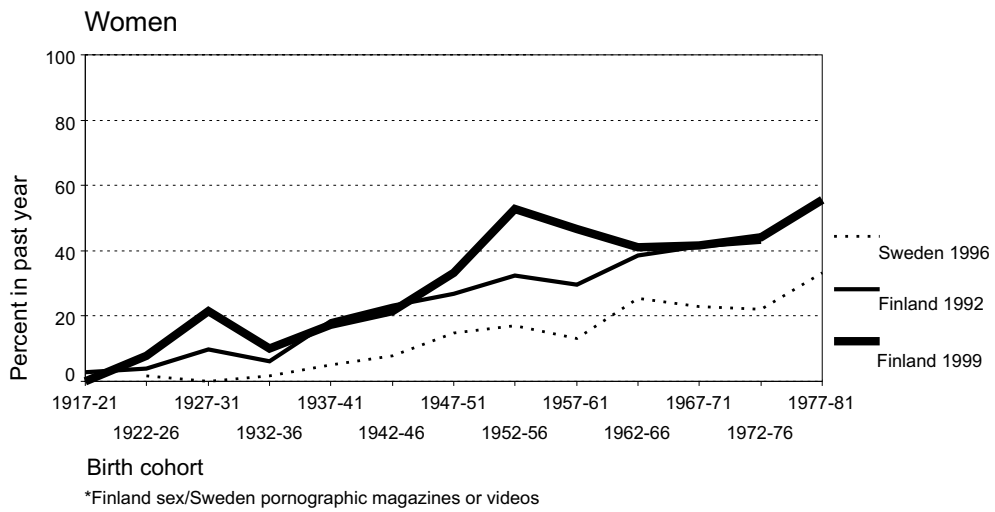
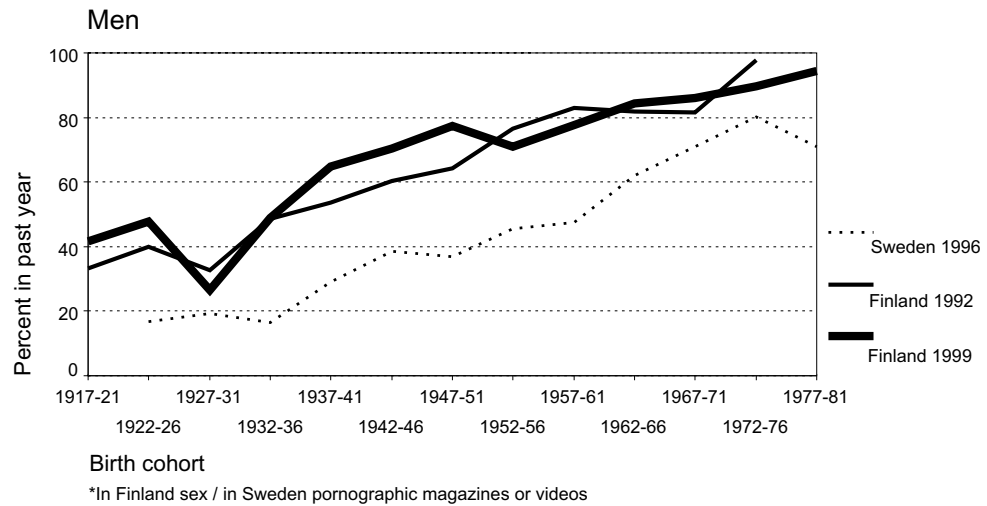
The consumption of pornographic books and magazines declined in Finland during the 1980s and 1990s. By 1992, 64 % of Finnish men aged 18-54 and 30 % of women had read or watched porn during the last year, and in 1999 the numbers were 70 % and 34 % respectively. Pornographic consumption, then, has been twice as common among men compared to women. The fact that the gender difference has remained this significant probably has a lot to do with the kind of pornography that is available: it is designed more for the eyes of men than of women. In addition, men are more likely than women to use pornography for increased arousal in masturbation.

Pornographic consumption was studied in Sweden by asking two questions that differ somewhat from the one used in the earlier Finnish questionnaire. These questions were included in the Finnish studies in the 1990s, and they asked respondents whether they used sex or porn magazines, and whether they used pornographic videos. The question regarding the consumption of porn magazines was formulated like this: "Have you sometimes read a pornographic magazine?" The Finnish study asked: "During the last year, have you read or glanced at a magazine or book that in your opinion could be seen as pornographic?" The prefixes 'porn' (Sweden) and 'sex' (Finland) may have evoked slightly differing images in respondents, and thus we must use caution when interpreting the findings derived from the comparisons below. The term 'sex magazine' may sound much more innocent than 'porn magazine'.

Among men, the reading or viewing of sex magazines was more prevalent in Finland than in Sweden in the 1990s. The percentage of Finnish men aged 18-74 that had read or looked through sex magazines in the last year was 61-63, but only 16-20 % among women. In Sweden, 43 % of men and 11 % of women reported having read a porn magazine in the last year. The Swedish study also asked how the respondent had obtained the magazine. Among men reading porn, 40 % and among women, 6 %, had purchased the magazine, 25 % and 46 %, respectively, said someone else had purchased it, and 39 % and 29 % said that the magazine just happened to be available.

The reading and viewing of sex magazines has increased steadily in popularity from the older birth cohorts to the younger cohorts (Figure 5.22). Swedes are less

Figure 5.22 Watching sex/porno materials*



likely to read pornographic magazines than Finns; among men in particular, the difference is notable. Differences were less notable among younger Swedish men, when compared to young Finnish respondents: the youngest Swedish men were nearly as likely as Finnish men in the same age group to have looked through sex magazines.

The prevalence of sex video use could also be measured in both Finland and Sweden. The Swedish questionnaire asked, "Have you sometimes watched a pornographic film? When did it happen last?" Follow-up questions concerned type of movie, and the location where it was viewed. Most Swedes had watched a sex video on television or on video, while only approximately 2 % had seen one in a movie theater. The Finnish questionnaire only asked about videos: "Have you seen any sex videos in the last 12 months?" Our comparison thus applies to watching porn or sex videos in the last 12-month period, and television and movie theater porn is excluded, because they were not addressed in the Finnish questionnaire.

In Sweden, 24 % of men and 8 % of women had watched porn films within the last 12-month period that they had either purchased or rented. Thirty-two percent of men and 14 % of women had watched porn films on television. The proportion of Finnish respondents who had watched sex videos in the 1990s was much higher: 53–55 % of men and 22–26 % of women had watched them. The Finnish questionnaire did not inquire about television porn.

The viewing of sex videos was more common in the younger birth cohorts. In Finland, four out of five among the youngest male respondents and 40 % of the youngest women had watched sex videos in the last year. The biggest increase in watching sex videos occurred in the 1990s among Finnish women born in 1952–61. Nearly half of the female respondents born in 1977–81 had watched sex videos.

The viewing of porn videos has become more popular in Sweden as well, as we look at the younger generations, though the increase is not as radical as it has been in Finland.

Half of Finnish young men, one-third of middle-aged men and one in five older men had watched sex videos at least a few times (more than once or twice) in the last year. Fifteen percent of young and middle-aged women and 5 % of older women had watched sex videos at least a few times in the last year. One-fourth of young men had watched sex videos on numerous occasions, while the proportion of young women who had done so was 5 %.

When the proportion of respondents who had viewed either porn magazines or videos (or both) are added together, the differences between Finland and Sweden remain significant. In Sweden, 49 % of men and 15 % of women had watched or read porn in either category in the last year. These proportions grew in Finland between 1992 and 1999, from 70 % to 74 % among men and from 27 % to 35 % among women. The different wording ('sex' vs. 'porn') in the studies may have had an impact, as described above.

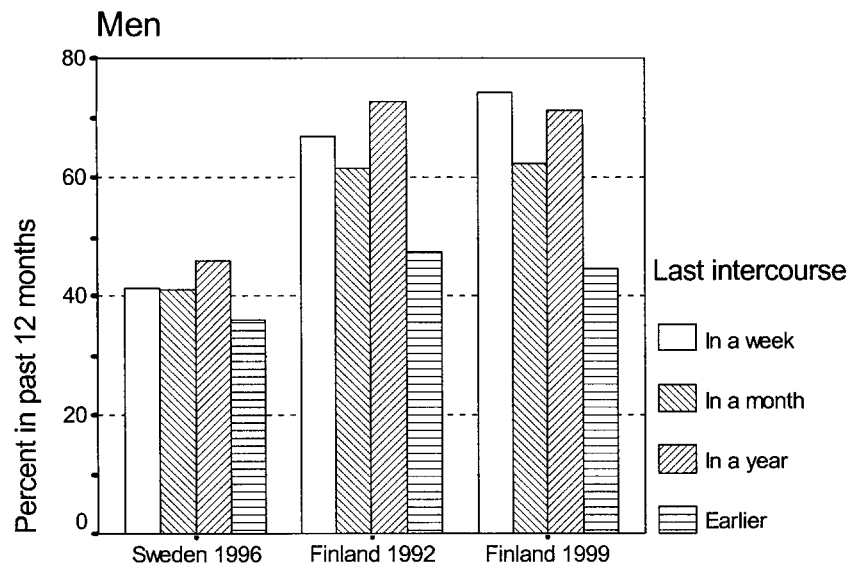
In Sweden and Finland in the 1990s, the time since their last sexual encounter had almost no effect on whether or not men had watched porn videos or read porn magazines (Figure 5.23). Those Finnish respondents who had had no sex in more than 12 months or had never experienced sexual intercourse were less likely to use porn than those who engaged in sexual intercourse. For women, though, there was a direct connection between these two factors: the higher their frequency of sexual intercourse, the higher their rate of porn use. It is possible that women view porn in particular when they have an active relationship with a man, as men are active consumers of porn compared to women. In 1971, this connection did not emerge, not even among women who actively read publications they considered pornographic, regardless of the frequency of their sexual intercourse.

Attitudes toward pornography turned significantly more liberal in Finland during the 1990s (attitudes were not measured in 1971). When in 1992, 55 % of men and 33 % of women agreed with the statement that ‘watching pornography can be sexually very arousing’, the same proportions had climbed to 78 % and 59 %, respectively, by 1999. Finns were more positively inclined toward porn than Swedes, among whom 58 % of men and 28 % of women thought that pornography can be ‘very arousing’. The Swedish question did not use the word ‘watching’, although this should have no significant impact on the comparability of the findings. In Estonia, the proportion of respondents who found pornography arousing was somewhere between Finland and Sweden: 69 % of men and 55 % of women agreed.

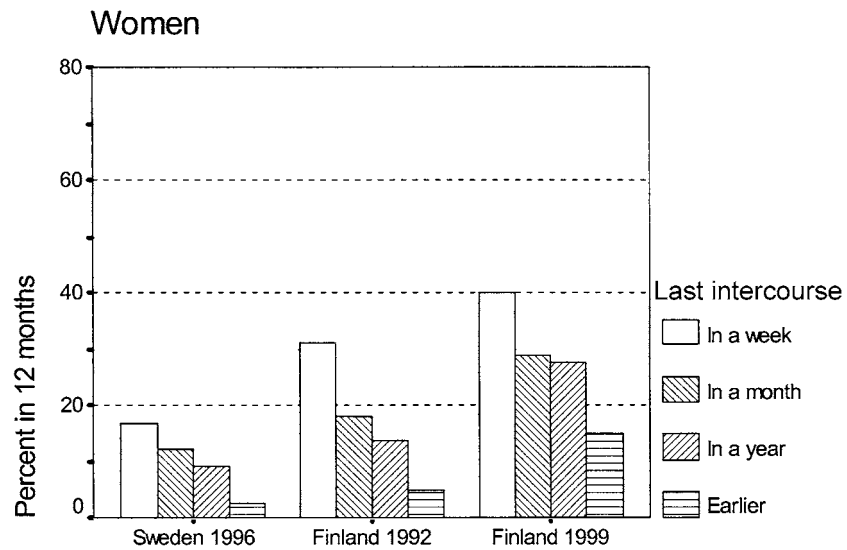
The most outstanding geographic difference in terms of finding pornography very arousing occurred among young women. Compared to Sweden, there was close to a 40-percentage-point difference with Finland and Estonia, where women found pornography ‘very arousing’ that much more frequently. There must be differences in the public discourses on pornography and sexual issues in these countries that would explain this notable difference. In Sweden, the tone of the public discussions surrounding pornography has been clearly more negative in the 1990s than in Finland or Estonia. Two-thirds of young Finnish and Estonian women, and the same proportion of young Swedish men of the same age group, found watching pornography ‘very arousing’.

Although attitudes among Finnish men too became more positive with regard to pornography in the 1990s, the changes that occurred in the group of female respondents born after 1956 were even more staggering. In 1999, the proportion of women who found pornography ‘very arousing’ was 26 % units higher than in 1992. With the exception of elderly women, gender differences in Finland in terms of attitude toward porn are much less significant than in Sweden. Attitudes toward pornography among older Finnish women did not change much with time (Figure 5.24) – they held onto opinions they had adopted earlier in life, according to which porn was mostly not ‘very arousing’.

Figure 5.23 Watching sex or porno materials* by time of last intercourse

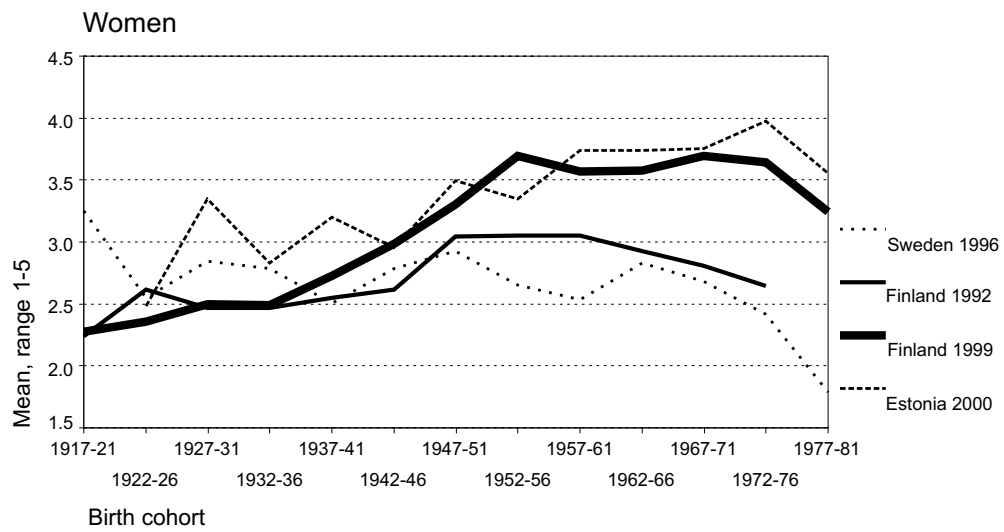
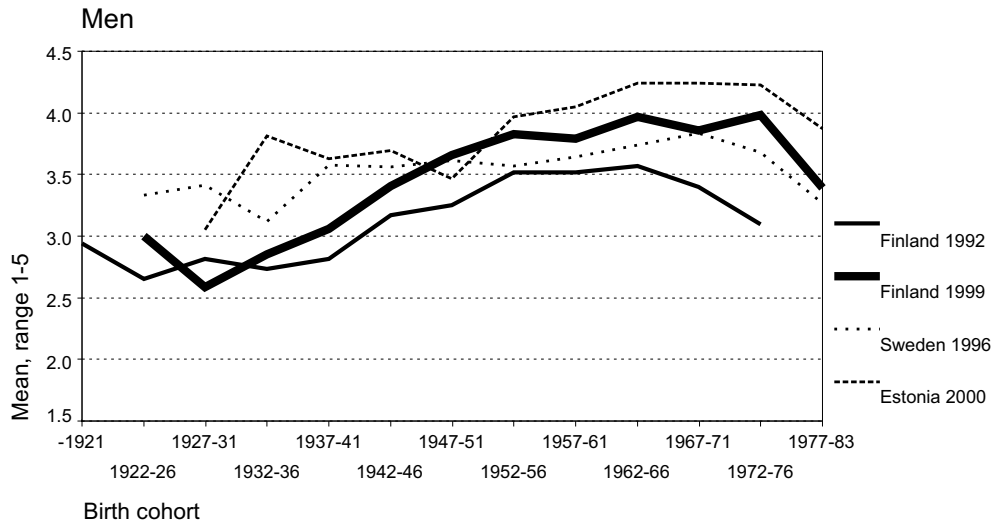


*video or magazine during past year



*video or magazine during past year

Figure 5.24 Finds pornography arousing



Masturbation and pornography

The desire to masturbate was aroused by sexual images or something that the respondent saw or heard. Some people were more highly attuned to things that titillated them sexually – we can say that they have a greater need to experience sexual arousal and release.

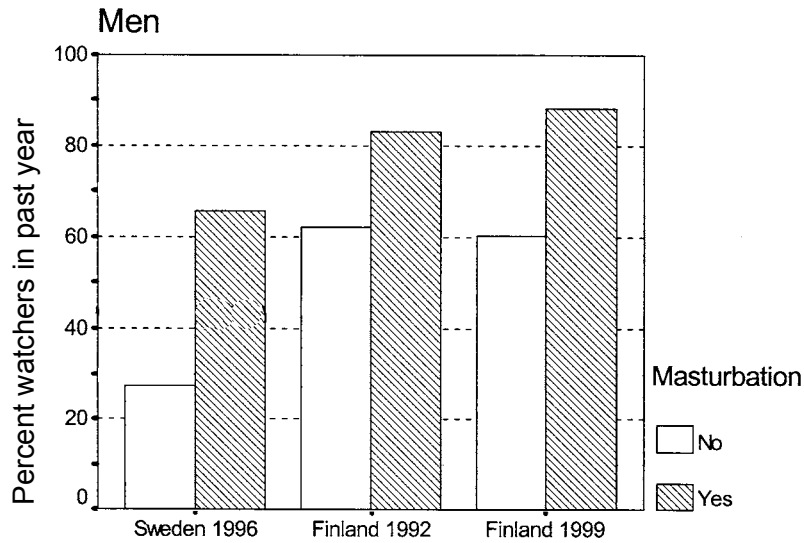
Many people want to become aroused even in situations where they are not fully aroused. They will then use various aids or pornographic materials to become aroused. The sexual images that are evoked or recollected through the use of such ‘inspirational’ materials intensify arousal. People may, for example, imagine themselves making love to the sexy man or woman in a picture, imagining how that would feel. Becoming fully aroused enhances the pleasure derived from masturbation.

It was therefore not unexpected that respondents who practiced masturbation had in the last year read or looked at a pornographic publication that they considered pornographic. In 1971, it was very common in Finland to read pornographic books and magazines. The difference between those who had recently masturbated and those who had not was minor, because ‘everyone’ wanted to get acquainted with the newly available porn. In 1971, 89 % of men and 64 % of women who had masturbated in the last month had also used porn, while 80 % of men and 59 % of women who had not masturbated in the last month had also looked at pornographic materials. In the 1990s, a differentiation took place, so that those who masturbated habitually were among the biggest consumers of porn. About 80 % of the men and more than 45 % of the women who had masturbated in the last month had read or looked through a book or magazine that they considered pornographic. However, if more than one month had elapsed from the last masturbation experience, only about 45 % of men and 20 % of women had looked at pornographic materials.

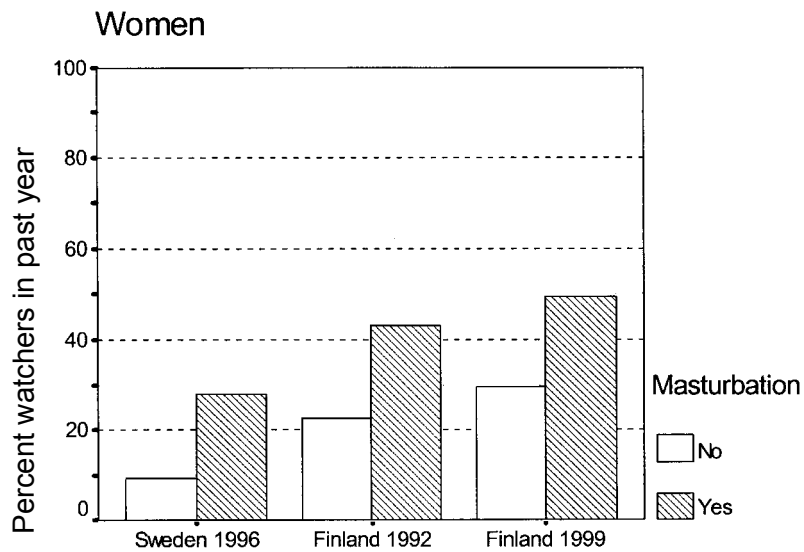
In Sweden, too, those who masturbated were more likely than other people to watch and read pornographic materials on either video or in a magazine, or both (Figure 5.25). The difference between those who had masturbated in the last month and those who had not was greater in relative terms in Sweden than in Finland in the 1990s. Nonetheless, the practice of masturbation and the use of pornography largely went hand in hand in both countries, though not all active porn users were active masturbators, and masturbation also seemed to occur frequently without the aid of pornography.

The opinion that pornography was ‘very arousing’ fluctuated in Sweden, Finland and Estonia among both men and women depending on when the respondents had last masturbated. People who had done so in the last week were more likely to report that they were aroused by pornography than those who had masturbated in the last month, though these people were still more likely to find pornography

Figure 5.25 Watching sex/porno materials* by having masturbated during past month



*Finland sex/Sweden pornographic magazines or videos



*Finland sex/Sweden pornographic magazines or videos

arousing than those who had not masturbated for over a month. Our findings indicate that masturbation was both associated with the use of actual porn as well as the experience of finding it arousing.

Factors that explain the use of porn

Some of the differences observed in the proportion of respondents who used porn may be traced to the negative images disseminated concerning its use, for example, the claim that the use of porn causes violent sexual behavior. In this respect, avoiding the use of porn would represent a kind of defense mechanism – by rejecting porn, one can avoid the temptations and possible harmfulness that its use may result in.

The above supposition is based on our findings concerning masturbation: Finns who were uncertain about or fearful of the adverse health effects resulting from masturbation were (also) less likely to use porn. Nearly half of the men in this group and three-quarters of the women had not viewed porn at all in the last 12-month period. Porn use had occurred among four-fifths of the men and half of the women who had no fears regarding the harmful effects of masturbation.

According to the MCA conducted from Finnish data of the 1990s, the use of pornography was promoted by demographic, lifestyle and sexual-life factors. The dependent sum variable was how many of the three types of pornography the respondent had viewed in the last 12 months: magazines or books, sex videos, and sex magazines that the respondent considered pornographic.

As noted above, men use porn more than women. The combined effect of gender and type of couple relationship was as follows: married men and women as well as single females were less likely to use pornographic materials than single men or men or women who were in a different type of relationship. The effects of type of couple relationship and gender were very strong (beta coefficient .28). The low use of pornography among single women indicates that for women, the male partner plays a central role in introducing the woman to pornography.

Use of pornography was correlated with relatively high education levels, (porn use was especially high among people with 11–13 years of education; beta coefficient .05), and a secularized lifestyle: respondents who frequently consumed alcohol to the point of intoxication (.07), and those for whom religion was not important (.05), used pornographic materials above the average. Use of pornographic materials was also associated with other sexual activity factors: starting intercourse at a young age (.07), high intercourse frequency per month (.08), short time lapsed since last intercourse (.19), and being aroused by porn (.28) were all factors that predicted its use. These factors predicted all of 43 % of the variation in the use of pornography in Finland, making it porno, then, particularly associated with the secularized lifestyle of young, unmarried men. It was not a substitute

for other forms of sexual expression – after all, porn users were sexually quite active.

Phone sex

The 1999 Finnish questionnaire included a question about calling phone sex lines in the years preceding the study as well as in the last 12-month period. Eight percent of men had called these numbers in the years preceding the study, and 6 % had done so within the last 12 months. Two percent of women had engaged in phone sex in preceding years and 1 % had done so within the last 12 months.

The highest prevalence of phone sex occurred among young men: 15 % under the age of 35 had called such numbers in the years preceding the study, while 8 % had one so within the last 12 months. The same figures for middle-aged men were 7 % on each count. Elderly men were extremely unlikely to call phone sex lines. Four percent of young women had tried phone sex in the years preceding the study, and 1 % had done so within the last 12 months. Middle-aged women had called sex phones at the rate of 2 % and 1 %. Four percent of young men and 2 % of middle-aged men had called phone sex lines both in the years preceding the study as well as within the last 12 months.

Eleven percent of men without a sexual partner had called a phone sex line in the last year, while 7 % of men in cohabiting or LAT relationships had done so. Only 3 % of married men had engaged in phone sex. Two percent of women in living-apart-together relationships had called a sex phone line. The most active phone sex users were to be found among men who were in a newly formed relationship (less than one year) – 16 % had called a sex phone. Otherwise, the proportion of sex phone users did not vary much in terms of duration of relationship.

High intercourse frequency and heavy use of sex phones were correlated: those who had intercourse almost daily were the biggest users of sex phones (17 %) – also among the biggest users were men who had had intercourse a maximum of one time in the last month (12 %). For men, calling a sex phone either represented a supplement to a very active sex life or compensation for a very inactive sex life.

The same phenomenon emerged when examining the relationship between calling a sex phone and relative satisfaction with the frequency of sexual intercourse. More phone calls were made, on the one hand, by men who had had no sex (10 %), and on the other hand, by men who clearly craved more sexual intercourse in their couple relationship (7 %). Among women, too, calling a sex phone was clearly associated with women who wanted more sex than they were getting (5 %).

Lack of a partner's sexual desire was not connected to the use of phone sex among men. Among women, however, women who felt that their partner was lacking in sexual desire frequently made the calls.