Sexual Trends in the Baltic Sea Area

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Prologue

It is thanks to a small group of researchers – Kai Sievers, Osmo Koskelainen and Kimmo Leppo – and to the nationally representative data on sexual issues that they collected through interviews as early as 1971, that it has been possible to study the changes in sexual behavior and values that occurred among the adult population in Finland during the 20th century (Sievers, Koskelainen & Leppo, 1974).

In the 1990s, we, the authors of the present volume, collected two new data sets that are largely comparable to the first sex study. In 1992, the Academy of Finland funded our project to interview and survey 2,250 Finnish participants aged 18-74 years. The study’s findings and the comparisons with the 1971 study were published as Suomalainen seksi. Tietoa suomalaisten sukupuolielämän muutoksesta. (Sex in Finland: Information about changes in Finnish sexual life, Kontula & Haavio-Mannila, 1993). Central portions of the book were published in England as Sexual pleasures: Enhancement of sex life in Finland, 1971–1992 (Kontula & Haavio-Mannila, 1995a). This volume is also available on the web, at www.sexology.cjb.net.

The second part of our so-called FINSEX project was a study of sexual topics as they appear in the media. It was published in Seksiä lehtien sivuilla (Sex on the pages of magazines, Kontula & Kosonen, 1994; Kontula & Kosonen, 1996). The aim was to find out how representations of sexuality had changed in the Finnish press in the course of thirty years on the basis of published texts, images and advertisements. This information provided a background for the changes in sexual life that could be observed. This data was used to assess the overall changes that have occurred in Finnish sexual culture, as well as the timing of such changes.

The third part of the larger project consisted of sexual autobiographies that were collected in a writing competition in 1992. On the basis of these competition, we published two volumes in Finnish: Matkalla intohimoon: Nuo-ruuden hurma ja kärsimys seksuaalielämämäkertojen kuvaamana. (Along the way to passion: The joy and suffering of youth revealed in sexual autobiographies, Kontula & Haavio-Mannila, 1995b) and Intohimon hetkiä. Seksuaalisen läheisyden kaipuu ja täyttymys omaelämämäkertojen kuvaamana (Moments of passion: Longing and fulfillment of sexual intimacy described in sexual autobiographies, Kontula & Haavio-Mannila, 1997). The sexual autobiographies have also yielded an English-language volume, Sexual Lifestyles in the Twentieth Century (Haavio-Mannila, Kontula & Rotkirch, 2002). The sexual autobiographies have supported
and provided practical insights into the more profound social changes that have occurred in sexual life – changes that are also apparent in the results of our surveys.

We also cooperated with other European researchers in a venture that was financed by the European Union. The aim was to compile the data collected through national surveys about sexual behavior. Apart from the present project, these studies were financed with funds intended for HIV prevention. Finnish findings were included in a European comparison in a book entitled *Sexual Behaviour and HIV/AIDS in Europe: Comparisons of National Surveys* (edited by Michel Hubert, Nathalie Bajos & Theo Sandfort, 1998). Our contributions were also included in that book.

In the late 1990s, European research cooperation (www.fusl.ac.be/Files/General/ces/rechsida.AC2.html) provided one of the incentives to begin to collect follow-up data on Finnish sexual lifestyles. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health in Finland supplied the funding. Together with Statistics Finland, we compiled the data in late 1998 and early 1999 in order to compare the results with the 1971 and 1992 surveys. The international comparisons are based on the following adult population survey sets: the survey data collected in 1996 in St. Petersburg through Academy of Finland funding (Gronow et al., 1997), the data from a national interview survey on sexual lifestyles conducted in Sweden in 1996 (Lewin et al., 1998), and the survey data from Estonia in 2000 compiled by Elina Haavio-Mannila. Sexual autobiographies from St. Petersburg and Estonia (Rotkirch, 2000; Karusoo, 1997) also provided indirect support for some of our interpretations.

The present English-language volume is based on a more extensive Finnish work *Seksin trendit meillä ja naapureissa* (Trends in sex life: At home and in the neighbouring countries) (Haavio-Mannila & Kontula, 2001) as well as a statistical report *Trends in sexual life* (Haavio-Mannila, Kontula & Kuusi, 2001).

This book has two aims. First of all, we analyze the changes that occurred in Finnish sexual lifestyles from 1971 to 1992 and 1999. A sexual lifestyle study that has been repeated three times is unique worldwide. The oldest interviewees were born in 1917 and the youngest in 1981, and their sexual experiences thus span nearly the entire last century.

The second aim is to compare sexual lifestyles in four cultural areas in the Baltic region: Finland, Sweden, Estonia and St. Petersburg. The first two represent Nordic countries, while the latter two represent areas that were part of the former Soviet Union. A comparison of Nordic countries and former Soviet areas illustrates the impact of economic, political and cultural factors on sexual lifestyle. Each of the four areas is geographically adjacent to the Baltic Sea, and the histories are intertwined in many ways. Each of the four areas has its own language, and the ethnic background and culture of each region’s population is different.
We would like to express our gratitude to the Population Research Institute of the Family Federation of Finland, and its Director Ismo Söderling, as well as to the Department of Sociology of the University of Helsinki, for providing the essential resources that made it possible to bring forth this book. We would also like to thank Statistics Finland, and particularly Päivi Hokka, for compiling the 1999 data. Additional thanks to Elina Kuusi for her assistance with the tables and figures, and to Tapani Alkula for his invaluable assistance in statistical data processing.

We would also like to thank our international partners. The St. Petersburg and Estonia surveys were designed together with Anna Temkina, Elena Zdravomyslova, Anna Rotkirch and Krista Papp. Roman Magilevski and Oleg Dempo from St. Petersburg Gallup, Olli Perheentupa from the Finnish Consulate in St. Petersburg, and Erkki Rannik from the Estonian Academy of Sciences participated in the collection of the St. Petersburg data. The data on Estonia was compiled by the Emor research center, where Mari Tarum-Seilenthal’s input was invaluable. Thank you to Bo Lewin, who graciously allowed us to use the Swedish data.

Since the 1960s, the release of data concerning sexual lifestyles for public use has contributed to the happiness of people’s relationships and sexual well-being. In recent years, there has occurred an international trend to promote sexual rights and sexual health (Lottes & Kontula, 2000). Sexual research and new information about sex have played an important role in this development. We hope that the new data in this book will help to promote sexual wellbeing and sexual health also in the personal lives of our readers.

Helsinki, November 2003

*Elina Haavio-Mannila and Osmo Kontula*
The mystery of the Baltic Sea Anomaly may have finally been solved following frenzied speculation over the origins of the mysterious object. Research undertaken by scientists from Stockholm University has revealed the Baltic Sea Anomaly is leftovers from that process. A map of the Baltic Sea (Image: GOOGLE MAPS). Volker Brüchert, an associate professor of geology at Stockholm University, said: “I was surprised when I researched the material I found a great black stone that could be a volcanic rock. My hypothesis is that this object, this structure was formed during the Ice Age many thousands of years ago. Current trends in the development of the Baltic region, whose academic analysis is impossible without considering earlier cases of successful interactions between the peoples of the Baltic Sea region, necessitate political, economic, and historical research on the strengths and weaknesses of the Hanseatic League. Unfortunately, in the XXI century, the Baltic Sea region turned into a stage for geopolitical controversies. Current trends in the development of the Baltic region, whose academic analysis is impossible without considering earlier cases of successful interactions between the peoples of the Baltic Sea region, necessitate political, economic, and historical research on the strengths and weaknesses of the Hanseatic League. The amount of carbon transported via Finnish rivers to the Baltic Sea has risen substantially in the past few decades. The researchers don't know the exact effects yet. Share: FULL STORY. The amount of carbon transported via Finnish rivers to the Baltic Sea has risen substantially in the past few decades. This was found in a collaborative study by the University of Helsinki, Aarhus University and the Finnish Environment Institute. The researchers don't know the exact effects yet. Multiple anthropogenic drivers behind upward trends in organic carbon concentrations in boreal rivers. Environmental Research Letters, 2019; 14 (12): 124018 DOI: 10.1088/1748-9326/ab4fa9.