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CONTINUUM *Complete*
International
ENCYCLOPEDIA
OF SEXUALITY

Updated, with More Countries

2004

The Continuum International Publishing Group Inc
15 East 26 Street, New York, NY 10010

The Continuum International Publishing Group Ltd
The Tower Building, 11 York Road, London SE1 7NX

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Typography, Graphic Design, and Computer Graphics by
Ray Noonan, ParaGraphic Artists, NYC <http://www.paragraphics.com/>

Printed in the United States of America

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

The Continuum complete international encyclopedia of sexuality / edited
by Robert T. Francoeur ; Raymond J. Noonan ; associate editors, Martha
Cornog . . . [et al.].

p. cm.

A completely updated one-volume edition of the 4-volume International
encyclopedia of sexuality (published 1997-2001), covering more than 60
countries and places, 15 not previously included.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 0-8264-1488-5 (hardcover : alk. paper)

1. Sex—Encyclopedias. 2. Sex customs—Encyclopedias. I. Title:
Complete international encyclopedia of sexuality. II. Francoeur, Robert
T. III. Noonan, Raymond J. IV. Cornog, Martha. V. International
encyclopedia of sexuality.

HQ21.I68 2003

306.7'03—dc21

2003006391

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA1127
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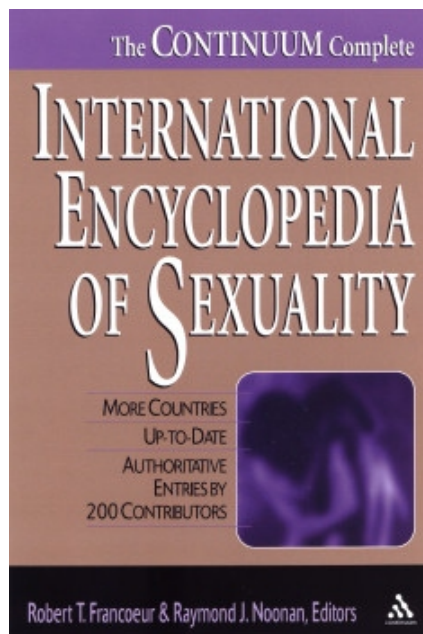
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" . . . a landmark effort to cross-reference vast amounts of information about human sexual behaviors, customs, and cultural attitudes existing in the world. Never before has such a comprehensive undertaking been even remotely available to researchers, scholars, educators, and clinicians active in the field of human sexuality."—Sandra Cole, Professor of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, University of Michigan Medical Center

2. The International Encyclopedia of Sexuality, Vol. 4 (Francoeur & Noonan, 2001)

" . . . a masterpiece of organization. The feat of successfully compiling so much information about so many countries into such a coherent and readable format defies significant negative criticism."—*Sexuality and Culture*, Paul Fedoroff, M.D., Co-Director, Sexual Behaviors Clinic Forensic Program, The Royal Ottawa Hospital, Ottawa, Canada

3. The Continuum Complete International Encyclopedia of Sexuality (Francoeur & Noonan, 2004)

" . . . [a] treasure trove. . . . This unique compilation of specialized knowledge is recommended for research collections in the social sciences . . . as well as a secondary source for cross-cultural research."—*Library Journal*, March 15, 2004, p. 64

" . . . a book that is truly historic, and in many ways comparable to the great sexological surveys of Havelock Ellis and Alfred Kinsey. . . . Many works of undeniable importance are intended to speak about human sexuality. But in this encyclopedia we hear the voices of a multitude of nations and cultures. With coverage of more than a quarter of the countries in the world, . . . not only will the *Continuum Complete International Encyclopedia of Sexuality* remain a standard reference work for years to come, but it has raised the bar of sexological scholarship to a rigorous new level."—John Heidenry, editor, *The Week*, and author of *What Wild Ecstasy: The Rise and Fall of the Sexual Revolution*

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(CIA 2002)

Russia
(*Rossiyskaya Federatsiya*)

Igor S. Kon, Ph.D.
Updates by I. S. Kon

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*Demographics and a Brief
Historical Perspective*

ROBERT T. FRANCOEUR

A. Demographics

Russia's 6.6 million square miles (17.1 million km²), over three quarters of the total area of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, makes it the largest country in the world. Russia stretches from Finland, Poland, Norway, Latvia, Estonia, and Ukraine on the west, to the Pacific Ocean in the east, spanning ten time zones. Its southern neighbors include Georgia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, China, Mongolia, and North Korea.

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In July 2002, Russia had an estimated population of 145 million. (All data are from *The World Factbook 2002* (CIA 2002) unless otherwise stated.)

Age Distribution and Sex Ratios: 0-14 years: 16.7% with 1.04 male(s) per female (sex ratio); 15-64 years: 70.2% with 0.94 male(s) per female; 65 years and over: 13.1% with 0.48 male(s) per female; *Total population sex ratio:* 0.88 male(s) to 1 female

Life Expectancy at Birth: *Total Population:* 67.5 years; *male:* 62.29 years; *female:* 72.97 years. Life expectancy in Russia appears to be decreasing significantly and rapidly because of the deteriorating quality of the country's infrastructure and economics. Russia's healthcare system is in decline because of serious economic troubles since the breakup of the Communist system. Many hospitals are poorly equipped and most are poorly supplied with necessary medicines.

Urban/Rural Distribution: 73% to 27%; Moscow has close to 9 million, St. Petersburg, 5 million, and Samara and Nizhny Novgorod, 1.5 million inhabitants each.

Ethnic Distribution: very socially and culturally heterogeneous, with over 100 distinct ethnic groups. Russian: 81.5%; Tatar: 3.8%; Ukrainian: 3%; Chuvash: 1.2%; Bashkir: 0.9%; Byelorussian: 0.8%; Moldavian: 0.7%; other: 8.1%

Religious Distribution: Russian Orthodox, Muslim, and other

Birth Rate: 9.71 births per 1,000 population

Death Rate: 13.91 per 1,000 population

Infant Mortality Rate: 19.78 deaths per 1,000 live births

Net Migration Rate: 0.94 migrant(s) per 1,000 population

Total Fertility Rate: 1.3 children born per woman

Population Growth Rate: -0.33%

HIV/AIDS (1999 est.): *Adult prevalence:* 0.18%; *Persons living with HIV/AIDS:* 130,000; *Deaths:* 850. (For additional details from www.UNAIDS.org, see end of Section 10B.)

Literacy Rate (*defined as those age 15 and over who can read and write*): 98%; education is free and compulsory from age 7 to 17

Per Capita Gross Domestic Product (*purchasing power parity*): \$8,300 (2001 est.); *Inflation:* 21.9% (2001 est.); *Unemployment:* 8.7% with considerable underem-

ployment (2001 est.); *Living below the poverty line*: 40% (1999 est.)

[*Update 2002*: Since the collapse of communism in 1991, a rapidly growing economic crisis, increasing alcoholism, violence, the lack of and high price of housing, and an increase in infectious diseases and the lack of medicines to treat them have all been factors in a drastic decline in Russian life expectancies, the quality of life, and the rates of marriage, divorce, and birth. In the early 1990s, life expectancies plunged, then rose steadily under Gorbachev from 1995 to 1998, and then again declined. In 1999, the last year for which statistics are available, life expectancy at birth was 59.9 years for males and 72.4 years for females. In the 1990s, Russia's marriage rate decreased by 25% while the divorce rate rose by 50%. In 2002, Russia's rate of HIV infection was almost double that of the United States.

[Meanwhile, after Russia's birthrate crept slowly downwards for decades, it fell by another 10% in the mid-1990s. Russia's birthrate in 1999 was 8.4 births per 1,000 people, compared with 13.4 in 1990. The average number of babies a Russian woman could expect to bear fell from 1.89 in 1990 to 1.17 in 1999. In the 1980s, Russia had Europe's highest fertility rate; in 1999, it ranked with Spain and Italy with the lowest birthrate. A United Nations report estimated that Russia's current population of 145 million would decrease to 121 million by 2050, the level of the country in 1960. In 2001, the Research Public Health Institute predicted a decline to 80 million people in 2050, 10 million fewer than the country had at the time of the 1917 Revolution. (*End of update by I. S. Kon*)]

B. A Brief Historical Perspective

Slavic tribes began migrating into Russia from the west in the 5th century of the Common Era. The first Russian state was founded in the 9th century with centers in Novgorod and Kiev. In the 13th century, Mongols overran the country. The grand dukes of Muscovy (Moscow) led the Russians in recovering their land; by 1480, the Mongols were expelled. Ivan the Terrible (1692-1725) was the first to be formally proclaimed Tsar. Peter the Great (1672-1725) extended the domain and founded the Russian Empire in 1721.

Under the aegis of Empress Catherine the Great (1729-1796), European culture was a dominant influence among the Russian aristocracy, particularly in the years prior to the destruction of the monarchy in the French Revolution. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, Western ideas and the beginnings of modernization spread through the huge Russian empire. Political evolution, however, failed to keep pace.

Military reverses in the war with Japan (1905) and in World War I undermined the Tsarist regime. In 1917, sporadic strikes among factory workers coalesced into a revolution that deposed the Tsar and established two brief-lived provisional governments in sequence. In brief order, a Communist coup placed Vladimir Ilyich Lenin in power. Lenin's death in 1924 led to a struggle from which Joseph Stalin emerged as the leader. Purges, mass executions, mass exiles, and even a famine engineered in the Ukraine marked Stalin's regime and resulted in millions of deaths, according to most estimates.

Although Russia and Germany signed a nonaggression pact in 1939, Germany launched a massive invasion of Russia in June 1941. Counterattacks during the brutal Russian winters of 1941-1942 and 1942-1943, coupled with the Nazi failure to take and hold Stalingrad, started the German retreat and eventual defeat. After Stalin's death in 1953, the "De-Stalinization" of Russia began under Nikita Khrushchev. In 1987, Mikhail Gorbachev began a program of reform that included expanded freedoms and democratizing

the political process. This openness (*glasnost*) and restructuring (*perestroika*) was opposed by some Eastern-bloc countries and hard-line Communists in the U.S.S.R. In August, Gorbachev resigned and recommended dissolution of the Communist Central Committee. By the end of 1991, 74 years of Communist government had ended, with declarations of freedom from the Russian, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan republics, and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was dissolved. This opened the door for the many recent changes in the sexual lives of Russians detailed in this chapter.

1. Basic Sexological Premises

[*Update 2002*: At virtually every moment of its history, Russian sexual culture was described by both foreigners and by Russians in a highly polarized manner, and these contrasting images are reproduced in contemporary scientific literature (Kon 1995, 1997ab, 1999).

[On the one hand, medieval and early modern Russia was a patriarchal society in which women were brutally suppressed, and wife beating was considered an expression and proof of conjugal love even by the women themselves. The attitudes and practices of gender inequality, aggravated by centuries of serfdom, are abundantly reflected in Russian folklore and literature. On the other hand, Russia had always had a "powerful woman syndrome." Since the time of Hegel, German romanticism, and the Russian Slavophiles, philosophical tradition has considered the "Russian soul" or "national character" as feminine rather than masculine.

[Equally contradictory is the Russian bodily canon and body politic, including soul/body opposition, social representation of the body, attitudes to nudity, and the rules of decency. On the one hand, the Russian character, lifestyle, and mentality are often represented as a realm where spirituality is predominant (*dukhovnost*), in sharp contrast to Western materialism, pragmatism, and "body-boundedness" (*telesnost*). This ideology of disembodied spirituality, with a corresponding underestimation and denigration of the body and its physiological functions, is most clearly shown in Russian Orthodox religious art. Russian Orthodox icon painting, when done according to the Byzantine canon, is much stricter and more ascetic than Western art. Secular nude painting also appeared much later in Russia, and was under more stringent social control than in the West. On the other hand, Russian everyday life, popular culture, and language have always been anything but modest. Foreign observers of the 1600s to the 1800s expressed surprise and shock at the Russian custom of nude mixed bathing in bathhouses and rivers, and at the richness and openness of Russian obscene language (*mat*).

[This exaggerated soul/body contrast is further projected into the incompatibility between romantic love and "carnal lust" (sexuality). The normative image of love in classical Russian literature is extremely inhibited, chaste, and opposed to sexual, carnal pleasure. On the other hand, Russian folklore, language, and everyday culture have always been openly and crudely sexual. "Peasant society might be sexually repressive, but it was rarely sexually prudish" (Engel 1990, 700). As Charles-Francois Masson, an early 19th-century French diplomat, wrote:

Nowhere did so many women arrogate to themselves the right of making the first advances, and being the active party, in affairs of love. . . . A Russian youth will never feel his blood boil, and his heart palpitate, at the idea of a rising bosom. He never sighs after secret charms, at which he scarcely dares to guess; for from his infancy he has seen and examined everything. The Russian maiden will never have her cheek overspread with an involuntary blush at an

indiscreet idea or curiosity, and her husband will have nothing new to show or to teach her, nor will marriage have any novelty for her. Love is here a stranger to those delicate and exquisite approaches that constitute its true charms, and to those preludes to pleasure more delightful than pleasure itself. Where poignant sentiments do not ennoble the happiest of human passions, it becomes mere momentary impulse, too easily gratified to be highly prized. (Masson 1805, 263, 266-267)

[The “civilizing process” of cultural modernization and secularization in Russia was also somewhat different from early modern Western Europe. Insofar as it was related to and associated with the development of capitalism, urbanization, and the emergence of the middle classes, the “civilizing process” in Russia was belated and labeled as “Westernization.” Because of the peculiar strength of Russian absolutism, new forms of socializing and etiquette were often introduced from above, by the Imperial court, not as mere examples for more or less voluntary imitation, but as arbitrary and compulsory prescriptions, to be carried out under close administrative supervision, and with the utmost contempt and disregard for individual preferences and tastes. There is a sort of continuity between Peter the Great’s masquerades and compulsory shaving of the *boyars* and the Communist party’s 1950s-to-1980s crusades against long hair, beards, mini-skirts, wide or narrow pants, and so on. Ideologically, these policies were quite opposed—in the first case, this was compulsory Westernization, and in the second—anti-Westernization, but the compulsory administrative methods and social-psychological consequences of both policies were similar. Since it was introduced mainly through external and repressive means, the civilizing process in Russia tended more to rigid conformity and uniformity than to pluralism and diversity.]

[Because of the dual censorship by Church and state, and the conservative public opinion, any artist or writer who attempted to initiate sexual-erotic discourse simultaneously came under withering attack from both right and left. This seriously hampered the emergence in Russia of any lofty, refined erotic art with the appropriate language and vocabulary, without which sexuality inevitably appeared vile and sullied. The predominantly negative social attitudes to sexuality and erotica began to change only in the last years of the 19th century, when “the sexual question” (*polovoi vopros*) suddenly became one of the most urgent issues in philosophy, education, politics, and the arts.]

[Yet “Silver Age” erotica, like its European counterpart, was openly decadent. Its enchantment with unusual, strange, deviant, somber, violent, “perverted” forms of sexuality was liberating, but at the same time repulsive and shocking. Decadent art openly declared itself to be both immoral and amoral, and it was generally regarded as socially and educationally subversive. After 1917, it was very easy to eradicate it.]

[Ultimately, the Bolsheviks had two alternative strategies in regard to sexuality: acceptance or suppression. The first and more liberal viewpoint was formulated by Alexandra Kollontai, but it was always marginal. The second, more rigid and dogmatic stance was taken by Aron Zalkind. Zalkind admitted the existence of a biological sexual drive in human beings and the harm of “sexual self-corking.” At the same time, however, he proposed the wholesale subordination of sexuality to the proletariat’s class interests.]

[The ideological justification of these repressive attitudes varied. In the 1920s, sexophobia had been reinforced by arguments about “class interests” and by mechanistic theories about the need to channel individual “sexual energy” into more-exalted social goals. Later, a moral concern

for marriage and the family was emphasized. Sexual intolerance became an essential aspect of global social intolerance and totalitarian control over the personality; the most important steps here were the recriminalization of homosexuality (1933), and bans on pornography (1935) and abortion (1936). But the liquidation of erotic culture produced not so much a desexualization of public and private life as its impoverishment and vulgarization. Sexuality, driven underground and degraded to the level of a “sex instinct,” became a strong anti-Soviet and anti-Communist symbol, forcing people to make their choice—and their choices were often against the regime. (*End of update by I. S. Kon*)]

A. Character of Gender Roles

Soviet Russian general attitudes to gender roles and sex differences can be defined as a sexless sexism. On the one side, gender/sex differences have been theoretically disregarded and politically underestimated. The notions of sex and gender are conspicuously absent from encyclopedias, social science and psychology dictionaries, and textbooks. On the other side, both public opinion and social practices have been extremely sexist, all empirical sex differences being taken as given by nature.

B. Sociolegal Status of Males and Females

A paramount slogan of the October 1917 Revolution was the liberation of women and the establishment of full legal and social gender equality. The Soviet regime revoked all forms of legal and political discrimination against women. A host of women were attracted into industrial labor, education, and public activities.

Like all other actions by the Bolsheviks, however, the program was naive and unrealistic. Gender equality was interpreted in a mechanical way, as a complete similarity. All historical, cultural, national, and religious-based gender differences were ignored, or viewed merely as “reactionary vestiges of the past,” which could and had to be removed by political means (Kon 1995, 51-127).

Soviet propaganda boasted of the fact that women, for the first time in history, had been drawn into the country’s sociopolitical and cultural life. By the time Soviet history reached its peak, women comprised 51% of the labor force. The percentage of women with university educations was even higher than that of men and, in such professions as teaching and medicine, women absolutely predominated.

Yet, it was not so much an equalization as a feminization of the lower levels of the vocational hierarchy. Women occupy the worst-paid and less-prestigious jobs and they are grossly underrepresented on the higher rungs of labor. Women’s average salary was a third less than that of men. With the transition to a market economy and the overall economic collapse of recent years, the position of women has deteriorated sharply. Entrepreneurs simply do not want to take on pregnant women or mothers with large families.

Russian public life remains dominated and governed by men. Women remain socially dependent. Seventy-three percent of the unemployed population are women, and women receive only about 40% of men’s salaries. Women are also underrepresented in political bodies (Kon 1995, 129-157).

In the family, the situation is more contradictory. About 40% of all Russian families may be considered largely egalitarian. Russian women, especially urban women, are more socially and financially independent of their husbands than at any time in the past. Very often, women bear the main responsibility for the family budget and for resolving the main issues of domestic life. Russian wives and mothers are fre-

quently strong, dominant, and sure of themselves. On the other hand, their family load considerably exceeds that of the man and is sometimes absolutely unbearable. The length of the workweek was the same for women as for men in the 1980s. Yet, women had to spend two or three times more hours than men on household work.

The fair distribution of household duties is a paramount factor in satisfaction with and the stability of marriage. Mutual recrimination and arguments about who is exploiting whom are a typical feature of Russian press comments going back many years. Women passionately and sorrowfully bemoan the lack of "real men," while men complain about the dying breed of women who show feminine tenderness and affection.

The overall trend in Soviet history has been towards the demasculinization of men. Given all the ethnic, religious, and historical variations, the traditional male lifestyle and stereotyped image have always emphasized such virtues as energy, initiative, and independence. These qualities are extremely important for male self-esteem. Yet, the economic inefficiency of the Soviet system, the political despotism, and bureaucracy left little room for individual initiative and autonomy. At any moment in his life, from the cradle to the grave, the Russian boy, adolescent, or man felt socially and sexually dependent and frustrated.

This social dependency was intensified by the global feminization of all institutions and processes of socialization. As a result of the high level of undesired pregnancies and divorces, every fifth child in the U.S.S.R. was brought up without a father or, at least, a stepfather. In the mid-1980s, some 13,500,000 children were being raised in so-called single-mother families. Yet, even where the father was physically present, his influence and authority in the family, and his role in bringing up the children were considerably less than those of the mother.

Thus, from the start of his life, the Russian boy is dependent on a loving but dominant mother. In the nursery and at school, the major authority figures are women; male teachers are extremely rare. In official children's and youth Communist organizations recognized by adults, the Pioneers and the Komsomol, it was also girls who set the tone. Junior and senior boys only found kindred spirits in informal street groups and gangs where the power and the symbols of power were exclusively male. As in the West, many of these male groups exhibit strong antifeminist tendencies.

When a young man marries, he has to deal with a solicitous, but often very dominating wife, much like his mother once was in his youth. The wife knows much better than he how to plan the family budget and what they need for the home and family. The husband ends up merely carrying out her instructions.

Finally, in public life, absolutely everything came under the control of the powerful maternal care of the Communist Party, which knew better than anyone what was best for its citizens and was ever ready to correct a citizen's mistakes by force if necessary.

This has produced three typical reactions: 1. Psychological compensation and overcompensation through the acquisition of a primitive image of a strong and aggressive male, affirming himself through drunkenness, fighting, and both social and sexual abuse; 2. The combination of humility and subservience in public life, with cruel tyranny in the home and family directed at the wife and children; and 3. Social passivity and learned helplessness, a flight from personal responsibility to the careless, play world of eternal boyhood.

All this is equally bad for both men and women. Aggressive sexism as a means of compensating for social helplessness

gives rise to sexual violence. Many Russian women are obligated to withstand patiently the vulgarity, drunkenness, and even physical abuse of their husbands, thinking that it cannot be otherwise. Sometimes, they even see in that the manifestation of love, as it was in Ancient Rus: "A man who doesn't beat his wife doesn't love her." An intelligent and educated woman frequently sacrifices her own professional and public career to maintain the family, but also because she is afraid of surpassing and thereby offending her husband.

As a result, opposition to the idea of gender equality has been mounting and widening since the 1970s. Men find it painful to lose their old privileges and accept the uncertainty of their social status. Women feel themselves deceived because they are under a double yoke. As a consequence, there is a mighty wave of conservative opinion dreaming of turning the clock back to times that were not only pre-Soviet, but prior to the industrial revolution and Peter the Great. Of course, a return to the pre-medieval (*Domostroi*) household rules is a conservative utopia. However tough life is for present-day Russian women, the overwhelming majority would never agree to reduce their social roles to being only a wife and mother. Younger and better-educated men also have more egalitarian social views and take on a greater domestic, including fatherly, responsibility.

[Update 1997: The collapse of Soviet rule changed everything in Russia, except the relationship between the sexes, which has deteriorated significantly. Expectations in heterosexual relationships have been and are low, but divorce rates remain high, and the number of single mothers, either divorced or never married, keeps growing. In contrast with the United States where single mothers have become the hallmark of the poorest urban areas, Russian women from all walks of life, domestic and factory workers, college graduates, university professors, and professionals alike, have grown inured to raising their families without men, relying on a support network of mothers, sisters, and aunts in a kind of matriarchal society with a downward spiral of poverty and limited horizons. Paternal absence and neglect is a reality widely shared by Russian women, regardless of background, aspirations, or income.

[Even in Communist times, the unhappiness of Russian families was hard to hide. The divorce rate in the 1970s was 40%; now it is 51%. In the past, sociologists blamed Soviet life—its regimentation, oppression, and lack of individual freedom—for men's alcoholism and apathy to work and family. Today, the major factor appears to be an economic freefall that humiliates men who cannot provide for their families, to the point where they just walk away with little social censure. An estimated 15% to 20% of all Russian families are now headed by a single parent, 94% of whom are women. This number is not significantly higher than those in Western and Eastern Europe and far lower than in the United States, where sociologists estimate 27% of mothers are single.

[Some Russian sociologists suggest that single mothers are not much worse off than married mothers, because so many single mothers—31%—live with their mothers or relatives. Others point out that single mothers generally do not want to live with relatives, but have no other choice. In a study begun in 1991 comparing Russian single mothers with European single mothers, half of the single mothers in countries like Switzerland were living with boyfriends, whereas only 5% in Russia had found a new partner. In addition, Russian divorce law does not allow joint custody, and child-support payments, while required by law, are difficult to collect and increasing. Given the free-market economy, men are better off hiding their real income from tax collectors and ex-wives. Many single mothers in the larger cities do not have

residency permits and cannot apply for state welfare help, minimal as that is. While Parliament is drafting a new law aimed at providing absent fathers with more-flexible child-support payments, few expect the government to have much impact on this deeply rooted social problem (Stanley 1995). (*End of update by R. T. Francoeur*)

C. General Concepts of Sexuality and Love

Contrary to an opinion widespread in the U.S.A., Russians are very attached to the ideal of romantic love, which is considered a necessary precondition of marriage and even sex. In a 1992 national public opinion poll, 53% of the men and 49% of the women said that they have experienced "real love." "Sex without love" was approved as normal by only 15% of the respondents, while 57% strongly disapproved of it (Kon 1995, 19-25, 52-53, 158-175).

But such attitudes may be unrealistic and reflect the contradictions of a classical Russian excessive romanticism that was formulated in Chekhov's short story "Ariadna" (1895):

We are not satisfied because we are idealists. We want the beings who give us birth and produce our children to be higher than us, higher than anything on earth. When we are young we romanticize and idolize those we fall in love with; love and happiness are synonyms with us. For us in Russia, loveless marriage is scorned, sensuality is mocked and induces revulsion, and those novels and stories where women are beautiful, poetic and elevated enjoy the most success. . . . But the trouble is as follows. Hardly do we marry or hit it off with a woman than, give or take a couple of years, and we feel we've been disappointed, let down; we try other women and again we find disillusion, again horror, and ultimately we convince ourselves that women are liars, petty, vain, unjust, uneducated, cruel—in a word, even immeasurably lower, not simply not higher, than us men.

According to 1990-1992 research of Russian university students, they, especially women, have more-pragmatic and less-romantic attitudes about marriage, particularly a readiness to marry without love, than their American, German, and Japanese counterparts. Nevertheless, as everywhere in the world, their real sexual-erotic motivations are mixed, contradictory, and heterogeneous. Also, general developmental trends in Russia are more or less similar to those occurring in Western countries:

- Earlier maturation and sexual initiation of boys and girls;
- Growing, and more or less universal, social and moral acceptance of premarital sex and cohabitation;
- Weakening of the traditional double standard for men and women;
- Growing recognition of the importance of sexual satisfaction for individual happiness and for marital stability;
- Growing public interest in all kinds of erotica and a demand for sexual freedom;
- Growing generational gap in sexual values, attitudes, and behaviors—many things that were considered deviant, unacceptable, and even unmentionable for parents, are normal and desirable for their children (Kon 1995, 158-175).

As in any other large country, sexual values and attitudes are heterogeneous, depending on gender, age cohort, education level, social milieu (whether the person lives in a large city, a small town, or in the countryside, and where he or she spent childhood and adolescence), ethnic identity, and religious affiliation.

Younger and better-educated people are more prone now to accept sex for pleasure only, without relation to love and

marriage. On the other hand, as a reaction to this new individualism, normative anomie, and the weakening of family ties, some conservative and religious writers and philosophers criticize not only hedonistic eroticism, but even classical romantic, passionate love, which, they claim, should be subjugated to the quiet, conjugal love and traditional family values.

Because of the economic collapse, the institution of marriage is in a deep crisis. In 1992, there were 20% to 30% fewer new marriages concluded in Russia than in 1990. In the same period, the number of divorces has risen by 15%. About half of all Russian men and women have at least one divorce during their lifetime. About a third of the divorced are young couples who live together less than five years.

2. Religious, Ethnic, and Gender Factors Affecting Sexuality

A. Source and Character of Religious Values

Despite the 74-year effort of communism to promote atheism, 25% of the people still adhere to Russian Orthodox Christianity. While approximately 60% of Russians were nonreligious when the communist regime fell, Christianity and Orthodoxy are experiencing a mild revival. Among the non-Russian populations, Islam and Buddhism are widespread.

Ancient Slav paganism was rich with sexual symbols and associations. Sexuality was believed to be a general cosmic force. There were numerous openly sexual rites and orgiastic festivals at which men and women bathed naked together, the men symbolically fertilizing the earth and the women exposing their genitals to heaven in order to invoke the rain. In spite of the Church's efforts to eradicate certain "devilish" pagan sex rituals, some of these survived among Northern Russia peasants until the end of the 19th century (Kon 1995, 11-49).

The Christianization of Russia, beginning in the 9th century, introduced a new philosophy of sexuality, but this influence has been slow and superficial. The Russian Orthodox Church, *volens nolens*, had to accommodate ancient sexual practices in numerous regional and ethnic diversities. On some issues, like clerical celibacy, it was more lenient, or rather, more realistic, than the medieval Catholic Church. While complete abstinence from sexual relations, even in marriage, was officially classified as a "holy deed," in everyday life, sexual activity in marriage was fully accepted. While celibacy was obligatory for the monks from whom the highest Church leaders were chosen, ordinary priests were obligated to marry and to have children. Unable to eradicate certain ancient pagan customs, the Church concentrated more on matters of social representation and verbalization.

Hence, we have the persistent normative conflict between the naturalistic pagan attitudes to sexuality in the "low" everyday peasant culture and the extreme spiritualism and otherworldly asceticism of the official "high" culture. Everyday life was openly sensual, cruel, and carnal. Debauchery, drunkenness, sexual violence, and rape were quite common. Russian folk tales are filled with polygamous heroes. Various sexual exploits, such as the rape of a sleeping beauty, are sympathetically described. It was permissible and noble, for example, "to dishonor" or rape a virgin girl in just revenge for her refusal to marry the hero. There was no place for modesty and privacy in the lives of peasants, and the nude body was often unwillingly and deliberately (ritually) displayed. Russian communal bathhouses, where men and women often washed together, surprised and shocked more than a few foreign travelers in the 16th and 17th centuries.

At the same time, the limits on symbolic, artistic representation of the body were extremely narrow. In Western religious painting since the Renaissance and even in the late Middle Ages, the entire human body was represented as real, living flesh. Only the genitals were veiled. In the Russian icons, only the face is alive. The body is entirely covered or outlined in an emaciated and ascetic manner. Nothing similar to the paintings or sculpture of Michelangelo, da Vinci, or Raphael was permitted. Secular paintings of nudes did not appear until the end of the 18th century.

Sexually explicit art emerged in Russia only in the middle of the 18th century, under the direct influence of French "libertines." The Imperial Court of Catherine the Great (1729-1796) was highly eroticized. The first explicitly sexual Russian poetry by Ivan Barkov (1732-1768) was deliberately crude and arrogant. It lacked the elegance of French "libertine" literature and was never published legally. Russian nobility took lovers and read pornographic literature (mostly imported) (Kon 1995, 23-38).

In the West, the Church and clerical forces were a major foe of the erotic art and culture of pleasure. In Russia, the Church was particularly powerful because of its close relations with the state. Russian censorship was stricter and more pervasive than in Western countries.

B. Source and Character of Secular and Ethnic Values

Three factors are important for understanding the specific features of Russian eros.

First, the contrast between the official high culture and the low everyday culture of the common people was considerably greater in Russia than in the West. The official high culture was sanctified by the Church and antisexual by its very nature, while the low culture of the common people accorded sexuality a positive value common to all medieval European Christian cultures.

Second, refined, complex erotic art came into being and gained acceptance much later in Russia than in the West. And it is only through the medium of erotic art that sexuality could be included in high culture at all.

Third, the development of civilized forms of everyday social life was, in Russia, more closely associated with state power than with the civil society. Because new rules of propriety were often introduced by political authorities, there was more pressure towards uniformity of everyday conduct than towards individualization and diversification; and without some established and reasonably diverse subcultures, there can be no basis for normative pluralism, one manifestation of which is sexual tolerance.

These three factors are interconnected both historically and functionally.

In addition to the religious influence, one special factor has powerfully influenced sexuality in Russia: 19th-century, left-wing radical revolutionary-democratic literary criticism. Young aristocrats of the early 19th century received a good secular home education from early childhood. Whatever their moral and religious convictions, they tried to distance themselves from official bigotry and were not afraid of their own sexual feelings and experiences. The most revered Russian poet, Alexander Pushkin (1799-1837), wrote some elegant and witty erotic poetry.

For the next generation of Russian intellectuals, who came mainly from a clerical background and were often themselves former seminarists, such freedom was impossible. While breaking with some of their parent's principles and values, they were unable to overcome others. Constant inner battles against their own unconventional sexual practices and feelings, particularly self-pleasuring and homo-

eroticism, turned into a global moral and aesthetic rejection and denunciation of sexuality and hedonism as something vulgar, dangerous, and unworthy. Only broad social objectives, such as liberation of the poor and oppressed, were morally justified. Everything that was private or personal was considered secondary—and egotistical.

These antisexual, antihedonistic attitudes have become an integral part of a definite ideological trend in Russian culture. As in the West, it was a moral expression of the middle-class, bourgeoisie opposition to aristocratic individualism. In Russia, however, this opposition was more radical. While religious bigots condemned eroticism as godless and amoral, populists rejected it as politically incorrect, vulgar, and nonaesthetic.

Any artist or writer who dared to walk up that "slippery slope" came under immediate attack both from the right and from the left. This seriously hampered the birth and development of a lofty, refined erotic art and language, without which sexual discourse inevitably appears base, dirty, and squalid. Inhibitions against sexuality and sensuous pleasure are generally typical for Russian classical literature. Sex is presented as a tragedy or quasi-religious revelation, very rarely as a pleasure.

On the eve of the 20th century, the Russian cultural climate began to change. Leo Tolstoy's *Kreutzer Sonata* (1891) stimulated a philosophical dispute about the nature and relationship of love, sex, marriage, and erotica, with prominent Russian writers like Anton Chekhov and philosophers like Vladimir Solovjev, Nikolai Berdjaev, and Vassilij Rozanov taking part. While this metaphysics of sexuality tried theoretically to rehabilitate eroticism, it had no place for real, everyday, routine sexual pleasure (Kon 1995, 39-49).

While sophisticated erotic art and literature did appear in Russia in the early 20th century, the artists of that era were seeking more a legitimization of eroticism than portraying sexual enjoyment. Exceptions, like the poet Mikhail Kuzmin and the painter Konstantin Somov, only confirm this general pattern. Whatever its aesthetical and moral value, early-20th-century Russian erotic art was marginal both to the official and popular cultures. It was looked upon as decadent and was equally denounced with vehemence by the right and by the left.

In the early 1900s, the first sexual surveys were conducted among students at Moscow and other universities. Sexual concerns were raised within the disciplines of medicine, history, ethnography, and anthropology. The word "sexology" as a name for a special subdivision of science was suggested by Rosanov in 1909.

The October Revolution of 1917 liberated sexuality from its traditional religious, moral, and institutional restraints. No longer was sex a taboo subject. On the contrary, traditional sexual morality and marriage as a social institution were themselves suspect. Everywhere, there were fierce discussions of "free love" and debates over whether the proletariat needed any sexual restrictions whatsoever. The first net result, however, was sexual anarchy, the growth of unwanted pregnancies and births, induced abortions, sexually transmitted diseases, rape, and prostitution (Kon 1995, 39-49).

"The sexual question" being politically important, the Soviet government in the 1920s sponsored some sociological, biomedical, and anthropological sex research, as well as elementary sex education. Yet, the elitist, individualistic, and "decadent" erotic art was absolutely incompatible with the new revolutionary mentality. Sexual pleasure was only a hindrance and distraction from the goals of the Socialist revolution. In the 1920s, a few liberal Communists, like Alexandra Kollontai, suggested "to make way for winged Eros," but that was against the mainstream.

Already in the 1920s, erotica was treated as morally and socially subversive. The only legitimate function of sexuality was reproduction. According to the influential party educator and sexologist, Aaron Zalkind, "sexual selection should proceed according to the line of a class revolutionary-proletarian consciousness. The elements of flirtation, courtship, and coquetry should not be introduced into love relationships" (1924). In the article on "Sexual Life" in the first edition of the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia* (1940), the emphasis is exclusively on social control: The dangers of "unhealthy sexual interest" are discussed, and the aim of sex education is clearly described as the "rational transmission of sex drive into the sphere of labor and cultural interests."

Another historical factor that has affected the sexuality of the Russian people is their rather prudish approach to nudity and bodily functions. Thirty years ago, there was controversy about wearing any kind of shorts in public, including at beach resorts. Now, walking shorts are no longer prohibited in the western regions. The attitudes of Muslims in the eastern republics are even stricter. Body exposure by Muslim women is still strictly forbidden, and violating the taboo can lead to severe punishment. In these regions, shorts even on men are considered indecent.

Bodily functions are not openly acknowledged in Russian culture. Direct reference to the need for a toilet is considered impolite. Russians will just quietly disappear from a meeting or social gathering, or, at most, will simply refer to their intention to walk in a particular direction. Even young people who are dating and know each other well often make up artificial explanations before excusing themselves to find a toilet.

An additional contributor to the avoidance of overt discussion of bodily functions may be the sorry state of the country's plumbing. Part of the general breakdown of material goods and services in Russian society following the 1991 revolution includes the public restroom facilities, which are no longer free and often broken or dirty. Washbasins may stand idle, or may yield only a dribble of cold water. Toilet tissue is scarce; its substitutes include newspaper, magazine pages, used office papers, and even cardboard.

Despite the attention to cleanliness paid by many citizens, the combination of bodily inhibitions and inadequate material resources have combined to threaten their overall health, making personal hygiene difficult. Even the interest in improving physical fitness through better diet and exercise is only beginning, despite a long history of purported government commitment.

The Russian ambivalence toward nakedness, bodily functions, intimate hygiene, and sexuality combined with a history of heavy censorship and the contemporary lack of material resources to make the impact of these factors on everyday life and sexuality even greater.

Sexual enjoyment and freedom have been incompatible with totalitarian state control over personality. As George Orwell put it in 1984:

It was not merely that the sex instinct created a world of its own that was outside the Party's control and which therefore had to be destroyed if possible. What was more important was that sexual [de]privation induced hysteria, which was desirable because it could be transformed into war-fever and leader-worship. . . . For how could the fear, the hatred, and the lunatic credulity which the Party needed in its members be kept at the right pitch, except by bottling up some powerful instinct and using it as a driving force? The sex impulse was dangerous to the Party, and the Party had turned it to account.

The history of the Soviet regime was one of sexual repression. Only the means of legitimation and phraseology of

this suppression was changeable. In the 1920s, sexuality had to be suppressed in the name of the higher interests of the working class and Socialist revolution. In the 1930s, self-discipline was advocated for the sake of the Soviet state and Communist Party. In the 1950s, state administrative control was gradually transformed into moral administrative regulations, this time for the sake of stability of marriage and the family. But with all these ideological differences, the practical message regarding sex remained the same: DON'T DO IT! The Communist image of sexuality was always negative, and the need for strict external social control was always emphasized. The elimination of sexuality was beyond the abilities of the Soviet regime. But the net result of this sexophobia was an extermination of all sorts of erotic culture and the prohibition of sexual discourse, whether in the area of sex research, erotic art, or medical information. No wonder that the breakdown of the Soviet regime in 1991, and even earlier with the advent of *glasnost*, sexuality became one of the most important symbols of social and cultural liberation.

3. Knowledge and Education about Sexuality

A. Government Policies and Programs for Sex Education

As in the former U.S.S.R., Russia today still has virtually no systematic sex education, although some efforts have been made to develop school-based programs since the early 1980s. Table 1 shows the responses in a late-1989 national public opinion poll to the question, "What channels of information on sexual life do you believe are the most acceptable and efficient?"

Clearly, a majority of the Russian people favor organized sex education. But the Communist Soviet government did not want it, and the present Russian government has no money for anything. However, an experimental 12-hour sex-education course for adolescents, based on a program from the Netherlands, was to have begun in eight schools in 1995 (Kon 1995, 75-76, 95-100, 108-110, 117-118, 192-193).

[Sex Education, Religion, the Clergy, and the Anti-Sex Education Crusade

[Update 2002: Naturally, since the collapse of the central Communist government, the new sexual freedom has been used by communists, the clergy, and nationalists as a political scapegoat. The first phase of the clergy/communist coalition's antisexual crusade was an unsuccessful attack on pornography (described below in Section 8C, Significant Unconventional Sexual Behaviors).

[The second crusade aimed at sex education has been much more successful.

Table 1

Preferred Sources of Sexual Information (in Percentages)

Source of Information	Percentage
Special school course	46
Special educational literature	43
Special educational films or TV	29
Conversation with a physician	22
Conversation with parents	21
Personal experience	6
Discussion with peers	5
No need for sex education	3

[Systematic sex education is long overdue in Russia. It has been discussed in the mass media since 1962. An attempt to introduce a special course in the early 1980s was welcomed by parents, but failed because teachers were not ready to teach it.

[The idea that sex education can be done by parents themselves runs counter to all of the international experience (Rademakers 1997). In Russian families, intergenerational taboos on sexuality discourse are very strong. According to the National Center for Public Opinion Research (VTsIOM) representative national survey in 1990, only 13% of parents have ever talked to their children about sexual matters.

[According to our 1997 survey, today's students have much more information about sexuality at their disposal than did their parents. For their parents' cohort, the main source of information about sexuality was conversations with peers. Today, printed materials and electronic media are most important, and the main sources of knowledge of sexuality are newspapers, books, and magazines. However, this often means merely replacing one source of misinformation by another, 'virtual' one.

[Until 1997, Russian public opinion generally favored sex education. In all national public opinion polls conducted by VTsIOM since 1989, the vast majority of adults, between 60% and 90%, depending upon age and social background, strongly supported the idea of systematic sex education in schools. Only 3% to 20% were opposed to it (Kon 2001). But who will, in fact, undertake to do this work? And what exactly should be taught?

[Teachers thought that parents should provide sex education for their children. In our 1997 survey, 78% of the teachers agreed with this. However, this same survey showed that the family cannot take on this responsibility. Only about one out of five teenagers considered it acceptable to discuss problems of sexuality with his or her parents. Parents themselves only reluctantly initiate such topics of conversation with their children. More than half of them never initiated such talks, another quarter had taken the initiative only once or twice, and only one in five mothers had such conversations with their children several times—the fathers did not do so at all. The primary inhibiting factors were a lack of psychological and educational readiness. More than three quarters of the parents said they needed special books explaining what should be told to children and how this should be done. About two thirds of the parents think it would be useful to have seminars for parents about sex education in the schools their children attend.

[But the school is also incapable of doing this. Three quarters of the teachers were convinced that form teachers (persons who are primarily responsible for social and moral education) should discuss issues of gender and sexual relations with their students. However, 65% of the teachers reported never having done this, and another 15% had done so only once or twice. It is clear why this is the case: Only 11.5% of teachers feel that they are well prepared for this task. Eighty-five percent were in favor of special courses on the fundamentals of sexology in teachers' colleges.

[In general, respondents in the 1997 survey were unanimous that sex education courses in schools must be launched. It might be expected that such courses would become one of the favorite curriculum subjects for students. Sixty-one percent of 7th grade students and 73% of the 9th graders said that they were eager to attend such classes. Only 5% of students would prefer to avoid them. There were much more serious disagreements among the interested groups, however, with respect to the content of sex education. Teachers would like to offer a detailed treatment of anatomy, physiology, and ethics, whereas students are more interested in practical issues and in sexual pleasure (see Table 2).

[In 1996, at the request of the Russian Ministry of Education, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in collaboration with UNESCO awarded a three-year grant for experimental work in 16 selected schools to develop a workable curriculum and textbooks "for classes 7, 8 and 9, considering the importance of the fact that young people should be able to make informed and responsible decisions before reaching the age for potentially starting sexual activities." There was no cultural imperialism or any attempt to invent something uniform and compulsory for the entire country. The introduction to the project emphasized that "to ensure cultural acceptability, the curricula and textbooks will be developed by Russian experts, making use of knowledge and experience from other countries, and with the input of technical assistance from foreign experts."

[The "UNESCO project" was formally initiated in October 1996. Its first step was a sociological monitoring, an attempt to assess sexual values, attitudes, and information levels of children, parents, and teachers of a few pilot schools on a strictly voluntary basis. Similar monitoring was also planned for the next stages of the experiment. Unfortunately, without consulting the experts, Ministry of Education officials announced the commencement of this sensitive undertaking without any political and psychological preparation. Even worse, the Ministry sent to 30,000

Table 2
Students' Preferences Regarding Topics for a Course in Sex Education
(Those Who Indicated a Topic as 'Very Necessary,'
in Percentages, in the 1997 Survey)

Topic	Grade 7		Grade 8		Grade 9		Total	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Psychology of gender relationships	54.6	60.8	59.8	69.8	62.2	67.0	59.8	66.4
Conception, prenatal development, and childbirth	49.7	64.9	45.5	52.7	39.6	54.3	43.6	56.2
Sexual orientation, homosexuality, etc.	27.9	26.8	27.0	24.4	18.8	24.3	23.3	24.9
Sexual techniques: how to receive more pleasure from sex	44.3	32.5	55.7	41.5	59.9	43.5	55.2	40.4
Sexual anatomy and physiology	45.4	42.8	43.0	46.5	44.4	45.8	44.2	45.3
Marriage and family life	63.4	79.4	58.2	70.2	56.6	66.5	58.6	70.5
Sexual hygiene	58.5	59.8	53.7	52.3	55.6	50.0	55.7	52.9
Methods of birth control	47.5	63.4	51.6	67.4	62.2	69.3	55.8	67.4
Sexual abuse and avoidance of sexual harassment	50.3	72.2	47.5	74.8	51.0	76.8	49.8	75.1
Prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS	72.1	82.5	76.6	83.3	78.7	84.0	76.6	83.5
Improvement of sexual health	55.7	49.0	56.6	52.7	62.4	52.8	59.2	51.9

schools a package of five self-made, sloppily edited, and unrealistic—some of them of them required more than 300 class hours—“alternative” sex education programs. Although these programs had never been tested in the classrooms and had nothing to do with the UNESCO project, they were perceived to be part of it.

[Before it was even born, the project came under fire and was labeled as a “Western ideological plot against Russian children.” An aggressive group of Pro-Life activists complained to the communist-dominated Parliament’s National Security Committee. In some Moscow districts, people in the streets were asked: “Do you want children to be taught in school how to engage in sex? If not, please, sign this petition to ban this demonic project.” Priests and activists told their audiences that all bad things in Western life were rooted in sex education, that Western governments are now trying to promote it, and that the corrupt Russian government, at the instigation of the “world sexological-industrial complex” was acting against the best interests of the country. All this was supported by pseudoscientific data and lies, such as, “In England, boys begin to masturbate at 9 years of age, and at 11 they are already completely impotent.”

[At an important roundtable in the Russian Academy of Education on March 6, 1997, influential priests declared that Russia does not need any sex education whatever in the schools at all, because this had always been successfully done by the Church. Church authorities claimed that up to 80% of the time people spent in the sacrament of confession was dedicated to sexual matters. Some prominent members of the Academy also attacked the “Western” spirit. As Professor Khripkova put it, “We don’t need the Netherlands’ experience, we have our own traditional wisdom.” The President of the Academy, Dr. Arthur Petrovsky, strongly dissociated himself from this nationalist position, as well as from the suggestions to reintroduce moral censorship. But the general decision was to freeze the UNESCO project, and instead of “sexuality education,” to improve moral education “with some elements of sex education” (this opportunistic formula had been used in 1962). Prof. Dmitry Kolessov proclaimed that instead of children’s “right to know,” educators should defend their “right not to know” (*pravo na neznanie*).

[After lengthy debates, a special academic commission for the preparation of a new program was formed (in which I refused to take part), but the new, openly conservative project was equally unacceptable to the clergy, and nothing came of it. In the Academy’s recent program statements on children, neither sexual health nor sex education is even mentioned. The Ministry of Education formally cancelled its previously approved programs. Now it is very dangerous for Russian school principals to introduce any elements of sex education, even at the local level on their own initiative.

[During the 1999 parliamentary elections, the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF) presented this “anti-sex education” campaign as its most important political victory. The official position of the Russian Orthodox Church, which is trying to put itself in the shoes of the former Agitprop, denounces any form of sex education. Any form of sex education is formally denounced by the Russian Orthodox Church. With the help of some prominent scientists, such as the President of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Dr. Yuri Ossipov, and the Rector of Moscow State University, Professor V. A. Sadovnichij, the Moscow Patriarchy is even attempting to introduce the teaching of theology into the state-owned secular universities, which is unconstitutional and opposed by liberal intellectuals.

[For some Russian newspapers, anything that smacks of sex education is like a red flag before a bull. Militant sexophobia is raging not only in the communist, fascist, and

clerical mass media, but also in many liberal and official media outlets. One of their main targets is the Russian Planned Parenthood Association. Since 1991, this is the only organization that took action to reduce the rate of abortion and to promote sexual and contraceptive knowledge. Now, it is being denounced by Christian fundamentalists as a “satanic institution,” propagating abortion and depopulation. The official slogan of RPPA, “The birth of healthy and wanted children, responsible parenthood” was presented in communist *Pravda* and in religious newspapers as *One Child Per Family*. The booklet *Your Friend the Condom*, published for young adults and teens, is described as if it were addressed to first-grade children.

[Since there is no sex education in Russian schools, or even in the universities, the antisexual crusaders created another target: so-called valeology (from Latin *valeo*, meaning good health). I do not know if such a discipline has ever been institutionalized anywhere in the West. Russian valeology looks like a hybrid of social hygiene and preventive medicine, with some strange and even exotic ideas. A serious criticism and discussion of it would certainly be of use. But, for the fundamentalists, any “science of health” which is not approved by the Church is anathema. Like their U.S. allies, they are absolutely indifferent to real issues of public health, social hygiene, and STD or HIV prevention. They claim that “valeology” is simply another name for “sex education,” and violently attack it for being “Western, non-Orthodox and prosexual.”

[Even the medical profession is split. In 1997, the Ministry of Health and the leading experts in gynecology, pediatrics, and other medical disciplines strongly supported the need for family planning, contraception, and sex education. But scholars and state officials are worried about their moral and political reputations. In January 1999, *Meditsinskaya Gazeta* (a professional newspaper for medical doctors) published an open letter to the Minister of Education, signed by 130 medical experts, clergymen, teachers, and writers, against valeology and sex education. The dominant values of its editor-in-chief, Andrei Poltorak, are clearly expressed in the title of his recent interview: “Honor the doctor . . . since it was God who created him” (Poltorak 2000).

[The antisexual crusade is openly nationalistic, xenophobic, sexist, misogynist, and homophobic. Everything Russian is presented as pure, spiritual, and moral, and everything Western as dirty and vile. Sex education is treated as the most serious attempt there is to undermine Russia’s national security, more dangerous than HIV. In the 1980s, Soviet propaganda attributed HIV to the Pentagon.

[The deputy editor-in-chief of *Rossiiskaya Gazeta*, Victoria Molodtsova, quotes a phrase from an unnamed educational program stating that “to become a real man, the male must not only be brave and courageous, but also acquire some traditionally ‘feminine’ qualities . . .,” such as sensitivity, compassion, and understanding. The journalist’s commentary was: “A Vologda peasant male doesn’t need feminization; the educators arguing for the ‘feminization’ of Russian males are really trying to promote homosexuality, and are being paid for their subversive activities by Western secret services.”

[The crusade against sex education is extremely militant and aggressive. The clerical site (orthodoxy.ru) features the slogan: “Attention! Danger! Be prepared for the most energetic means of self-defense!” According to this site, the main dangers for Russian children and their parents are not abortions, HIV, or syphilis, but the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), which expresses the interests of the contraceptive industry and the United Nations Population Fund, which is interested in the depopulation of Russia so

that the West can appropriate its natural resources. Parents are being taught how to sabotage any attempts to introduce sex education, even including taking their children out of the schools. They are told that condoms are inefficient against HIV or STDS and also against pregnancy.

[The Moscow Patriarchy published a special formal address to adolescents, formulated in words, which would be more appropriate for the General Staff or State Security than for a Christian Church:

Children! The enemies of God, enemies of Russia for hundreds of years have tried to conquer our native land with the help of fire and the sword, but each time they were shamefully defeated and sent to their graves in the boundless fields of Russia. Now they have understood that it is impossible to conquer Russia by military force. . . . Now they want to annihilate our people with the help of depravity, pornography, drugs, tobacco and vodka—by the same means by which THEIR forefathers annihilated American Indians. (*Slovok Podrostkam* 2000)

Militant Orthodox fundamentalism is not limited to sex education. There is even a protest movement against the introduction of national social security code numbers (these codes are named INN, so the movement is called “INN jihad”—Muslim sacred war). Its radical wing claimed that “the idea of a compulsory INN code for the total outside control of the population of Russia was born as a result of joint actions of the US secret services, members of Satanist organizations and of international Zionist [Russian euphemism for Jewish] financial groups (Verkhovsky 2001).

As a consequence of recent changes in adolescent sexual behavior, similar to the Western sexual revolution of the 1960s but compounded by the breakdown of state medical services and the general criminalization of the country, there exist some dangerous trends in Russian sexual life. These include but are not limited to the spread of STDs and HIV. The only reasonable answer to this challenge is sex education. But since 1997, all efforts in this direction have been blocked by a powerful antisexual crusade, organized by the Russian Communist Party and Russian Orthodox Church, and supported by “Pro Life.” Its main targets are sex education, women’s reproductive rights, and freedom of sexuality-related information. Especially vicious attacks are aimed at homosexuals. The campaign is openly nationalistic and xenophobic. In the long run, it goes against the dominant values of the young generation, and also has disastrous public health consequences. (*End of update by I. S. Kon*)

B. Informal Sources of Sexual Knowledge

According to a 1992 national survey, only 13% of Russian parents talk with their children about sexuality. The main sources of sexual information for teenagers, therefore, are their peers and the mass media. For adults, some medical and psychological information services are available in the larger cities. Several popular Western books have been translated, and a few have been written by Russian authors after 1987. Sexual issues are now often discussed on television and in the newspapers. But there is neither strategy nor money to do this effectively. The main source of sexual knowledge for many people are pornographic magazines and erotic newspapers. The monthly newspaper *SPID-info* (AIDS-information) has the second-largest print run in the country, 4.5 million. It says little about AIDS, but gives popular information about sexuality and erotic topics.

4. Autoerotic Behaviors and Patterns

Children and adolescents normally have their first sexual experience through self-pleasuring. Boys generally start to

engage in self-pleasuring at the age of 12 or 13, reaching a peak at age 15 to 16. Girls begin to self-pleasure at a later age and do it less frequently. According to a 1982 survey by V. V. Danilov, 22.5% of the girls had engaged in self-pleasuring by age 13.5, 37.4% by age 15.5, 50.2% by age 17.5, and 65.8% by age 18.5.

Until the late 1970s, official attitudes to self-pleasuring were completely negative. Children were told that it results in impotence, deterioration of the memory, and similar harmful consequences. As an antidote, there was a clandestine teen ditty: “Sun, fresh air, and onanism reinforce the organism.” Nevertheless, many Russian teens and adults still have strong anxieties regarding it. Many sexual dysfunctions are attributed to self-pleasuring experiences, and adults are terribly ashamed of it (Kon 1995, 43-44, 189-199).

5. Interpersonal Heterosexual Behaviors

A/B. Children and Adolescents

Puberty

The overall trends in the psychosexual development of Russian children and adolescents are the same as in Western countries. Above all, there has been a substantial acceleration of sexual maturation. The average menarche age fell from 15.1 years to 13 among Muscovite girls over a period of 35 years, from 1935 to 1970. Similar trends are also typical for the boys.

Sexual maturation confronts the teenager with a host of bodily and psychosexual problems. Many boys are worried about delay in emergence of their secondary sexual attributes in relation to their peers—shortness of height or of the penis, gynecomastia (transitory female-breast development), and so on. Girls are concerned about hirsuteness, being overweight, the shape of their breasts, and so on (Kon 1995, 194-209).

Premarital Sexual Activities and Relationships

There is clear evidence that sexual activity is beginning earlier for today’s Russian adolescents than in past generations. The mean age for first coitus dropped in the last ten years from 19.2 to 18.4 for males, and from 21.8 to 20.6 for females. According to the only survey of teenagers ages 12 to 17 (Chervyakov, Kon, & Shapiro 1993), sexual experience was reported by 15% of the girls and by 22% of the boys. Among 16- to 17-year-olds, 36% were sexually experienced; among 14- to 15-year-olds, 13%; and under 14 years, only 2%. Boys are generally more sexually experienced than girls, but the difference gradually disappears with age. Just as it was in the West in the late 1960s, early sexual experience is related to some form of deviant or counter-normative behavior: drinking, smoking, drug use, lower academic grades, poor school discipline, and closer association with peer group. Psychologically, sexually active 16-year-olds are more prone to be involved in different sorts of risky behavior, and some of them are from socially underprivileged families (Kon 1995, 62-63, 166-169).

The largest percentage of young people become sexually active between ages 16 and 18, with the incidence of intercourse reported in various studies ranging from 22 to 38% of the boys and 11 to 35% of the girls. “Love” is reported by many young people to be the primary motivator for sexual activity, about 30% of males and 45% of females. “Desire for enjoyment” or “pleasure” are reported by 20% of males and 10% of females. Many young people separate sexual motives from those involving marriage and engagement.

[The Sexual Revolution and Russia’s Young Adults

[Update 2002: In the former Soviet Union, sexuality was a taboo, almost nonexistent topic. After 1987, the taboo was broken and sex became a fashionable subject for both

private and public discourse (Kon 1995, 1997ab, 1999ab). Despite the official silence, general trends in Russian sexual behavior have been similar to those in Western countries.

[According to our 1993, 1995, and 1997 surveys (the first of which took place in 1993 with 1,615 secondary school and vocational school students aged 12 to 17 in Moscow and St. Petersburg), the sexual behaviors and attitudes of urban adolescents are changing rapidly (Chervyakov & Kon 1998, 2000; Kon 2001). In 1993, 25% of 16-year-old girls and 38% of boys had coital experience; in 1995, the respective figures were already 33% and 50%. Among 17-year-olds, the respective increase is from 46% to 52% (for females) and from 49% to 57% (for males) (see Table 3). Similar overall changes took place both in secondary and in vocational schools (see Table 4).

[Similar overall changes occurred in both the secondary and vocational schools. This suggests that changes in the age of sexual debut cannot be treated as an artifact caused by changes in the sample design. We found further evidence of a dramatic change in sexual behavior between 1993 and 1995 when we analyzed answers to the question about age at first intercourse independently for different age groups within one and the same sample (survey of 1995). Among 16-year-old women, there were twice as many sexually experienced girls than among the 19-year-old respondents when they were 16 (23% vs. 11%). The same difference was found between the 17-year-old and 19-year-old women who were sexually experienced at 17 (45% vs. 24%, respectively). The same tendencies were observed among male students, although the changes were not as large.

[The absolute figures are not surprising and are quite comparable to the U.S. and West European data. But in Russia, the change is occurring very rapidly, and adolescent sexuality, which is strongly related to social class, is often violent and aggressive. Uncivilized and uncontrollable early sexual activity has serious moral and epidemiological consequences.

[Thanks to medical efforts, the abortion rate has declined in recent years. According to official figures, in

1990, women aged 15 to 49 reported having 114 abortions per 1,000 women; in 1992, 98 abortions, and in 1995, 74 abortions. Yet the figure is still very high. Child prostitution and sexual violence are flourishing. For about 10% of teenage girls, their first sexual initiation is associated with some degree of coercion. (*End of update by I. S. Kon*)]

C. Adults

Premarital Courtship, Dating, and Relationships

The overall trend is towards a reduction in age and a rise in moral toleration of premarital sex and cohabitation. Among the university students surveyed by Golod in the 1978-1979 academic year, four out of every five men and every second woman had had sexual experience by the time they were surveyed. A total of 3,741 students from 18 colleges and universities were asked why they thought young men and women entered into sexual relations nowadays. The responses are shown in Table 5 (Golod 1984).

[*Update 2002:* The liberalization of Soviet sexual morality began long before *perestroika*, back in the 1960s and 1970s (Bocharova 1994; Kon 1997a; Haavio-Mannila & Rotkirch 1997). According to Sergey Golod's surveys in Leningrad-St. Petersburg, in 1965, only 5.3% of sexually experienced university students reported having first had intercourse before the age of 16; in 1972, this figure was 8%, and in 1995, it had risen to 12% (see Table 6) (Golod 1996, 59).

[The breakdown of the Soviet regime brought the Russian people their long-desired sexual liberation. But, as was also the case with the economy and politics, sexual freedom was immediately transformed into anomie and anarchy, and became a controversial symbol of social and personal liberation and the object of political speculation. By the 1980s, there were two poles: conservative traditionalists, nationalists, and communists, which blended together sexophobia,

Table 3

Proportion of Sexually Active Respondents by Age and Gender, 1993 and 1995 Surveys (in Percent)

Survey	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Male								
1993	2.3	4.1	11.4	17	38.2	49.3	—	—
1995	—	—	—	—	50.5	57.1	69.8	77.5
Female								
1993	0	1.8	3.7	11.8	25.5	45.8	—	—
1995	—	—	—	—	33.3	52.4	50.8	54.8

Table 4

Proportion of Sexually Experienced Secondary School and Vocational School Students, by Age and Gender, 1993 and 1995 Survey Samples (in Percent)

Survey Year	Secondary School		Vocational School	
	16-Year-Olds	17-Year-Olds	16-Year-Olds	17-Year-Olds
Male				
1993	35.7	42.9	41.2	55.9
1995	44.1	44.1	62.7	71.9
Female				
1993	16.4	29.0	39.3	58.5
1995	23.9	40.3	46.0	60.8

Table 5

Motivations for Sexual Relationships (in Percentages)

Motives	Men (N = 1,829)	Women (N = 1,892)
Mutual love	28.8	46.1
Enjoyable pursuit	20.2	11.4
Desire to obtain pleasure	18.1	9.2
Desire for emotional contact	10.6	7.7
Intended marriage	6.6	9.4
Self-affirmation	5.5	3.6
Prestige, fashion	4.1	4.8
Curiosity	4.9	5.6
Extending sense of freedom, independence	1.8	2.2

Table 6

Age of the Sexual Debut of the Leningrad/St. Petersburg University Students (Percent of Those Who Have Had Sexual Experience)

Age	Year of Survey		
	1965	1972	1995
Younger than 16	5.3	8.2	12.2
16-18	33.0	30.8	52.8
19-21	39.5	43.8	30.7
22-24	19.5	16.0	3.2
Later	2.7	1.2	1.1

(from Serguei Golod's surveys)

homophobia, anti-Semitism, and anti-Americanism, on the one hand, and liberal "Westerners" on the other side.

[The first and undeniable achievement of the current Russian sexual revolution is that sexuality has become visible. It is openly discussed and represented in the mass media and advertising. A lot of erotic publications are available. Sexuality is recognized as an important element in culture and individual life. Questions about sexual attitudes and behaviors are included in national public opinion polls. People have become much more outspoken about sexual issues. Sexual tolerance is growing. After a long debate, homosexuality was decriminalized in 1993. Despite high levels of homophobia, same-sex love is no longer a taboo topic, and public tolerance, as reflected in the polls, is growing, especially among younger, better-educated, and urban people. Several voluntary associations for the promotion of sexual knowledge and safe-sex practices, including a Russian Planned Parenthood Association and a few local centers for sex education, have been formed (with Western financial help).

[At the same time, sexual liberation entails many difficult social problems. Contemporary Russian sexual culture is completely commercialized, and this is highly frustrating for parents, teachers, and intellectuals.

[There is also tension between the processes of liberalization and gender equality in sexual values and practices. "In Russia, liberalization began during the Soviet Union and was speeded up by the free press and the commercialization of the 1980s and 1990s. In the Nordic countries, liberalization reached its height in the 1970s. Today, liberalism and permissiveness are sometimes questioned from the perspective of gender equality and/or a new morality. In Russia, on the contrary, liberalism has undermined the arguments for gender equality from the Soviet era" (Haavio-Mannila & Rotkirch 2001, 13). (*End of update by I. S. Kon*)]

It is clear from these data that certain gender differences still persist in sexual behavior and motivation; men are more likely than women to justify sex merely for pleasure and to engage in premarital sex, not only with the beloved one, but also with some occasional partners. And, in fact, the men do have more sexual partners than the women (Kon 1995, 158-177).

Marriage and the Family

As in the West, individualization and intimization of the marital relationship have been taking place in Russia over recent decades. Sexual harmony is playing an increasingly important role here. According to Golod's (1984) surveys, sexual harmony invariably takes third place among factors contributing to perceived marital success and stability, after spiritual and psychological compatibility among spouses who have been married for up to 10 years, and after spiritual and domestic compatibility for those who have been living together for between 10 and 15 years. Sexual satisfaction and general satisfaction with the marriage are closely interrelated. Practically all couples maximally satisfied with their marriages believed they were sexually compatible, while only 63% were sexually compatible among the maritally dissatisfied (Kon 1995, 158-177).

Gender inequality and sexism manifest themselves in the marital bed as well (Kon 1995, 129-157). The natural and widespread disharmony of sexual-erotic needs and desires between wives and husbands, which should be the subject of exploration and discussion, is often seen by Russian spouses and those about them as a manifestation of an ineradicable organic sexual incompatibility; the only way out is divorce. Even in the professional literature, this problem is often discussed not in process terms—how the spouses adapt and grow accustomed to each other—but in

essentialist terms—whether spouses and their individual traits are compatible to each other.

The woman is almost always the first to suffer from poor sexual adaptation. The lack of a common language and the sexological ignorance create a mass of communication difficulties among married couples. Instead of exploring their problems together or going to a doctor, the spouses run off to their same-sex friends.

Another major problem is the lack of privacy, the shortage of housing, and poor housing conditions. Millions of Russians spend many years, or their whole lifetime, living in dormitories or communal flats, sometimes several families in one room, where every movement is seen or heard by others. Among 140 Soviet immigrants living in the U.S.A. asked by Mark Popovsky in 1984, "What hindered your sexual life in the Soviet Union?" the absence of a separate apartment was mentioned by 126 (90%), the absence of a separate bedroom by 122 (87%), and the excessive attention from the neighbors living in the same apartment by 93 respondents (66%). The lack of privacy is an even worse problem for nonmarital sex. "Where?" is the desperately important and difficult question to answer. Lack of privacy is detrimental for the quality of the sexual experience and produces anxieties and neuroses.

The divorce rate is very high; approximately one marriage of three ends in divorce. More than half of all divorces are initiated by the wife.

Cohabitation is more and more widespread among younger couples. Sometimes, it is a first stage of marriage, until children are born, and sometimes an alternative form of marriage. Public opinion, especially among younger people, is gradually becoming more and more tolerant of cohabitation.

Extramarital sex, both casual and long-term, is quite common; according to S. Golod (1984), more than three quarters of the people surveyed had extramarital contacts in 1989, whereas in 1969, the figure was less than half. But public opinion is critical of extramarital sex. In the VTsIOM 1992 survey directed by Professor Yurt Levada (Kon 1995, 275), only 23% agreed that it is okay to have a lover as well as a husband or wife, while 50% disagreed. Extramarital affairs seem to be morally more acceptable for men than for women (Kon 1995, 21, 45, 63, 166-167).

Sexuality and the Physically Disabled and Aged

Because of poverty and poor medical services, the sexuality of the physically disabled and the aged person has not so far attracted professional or public attention. Nothing is done to help these people.

Incidence of Oral and Anal Sex

Younger and better educated Russians often complain about the poverty of their sexual techniques. Anal and oral sex are legal and quite widespread, though some people believe these behaviors are sexual perversions. In some legal documents, both anal and oral sex are referred to as unnatural forms of sexual satisfaction.

6. Homoerotic, Homosexual, and Bisexual Behaviors

Although the Russian Orthodox Church has always severely condemned sodomy and other forms of male and female homosexuality—especially when it threatened the monasteries—the state tended to turn a blind eye to such things in everyday life. In 16th- and 17th-century Russia, homosexuality was not an unmentionable subject; it was, in fact, often the subject of very frank discussion and ribald jokes.

The first state laws against *muzhelozhstve* (male lechery, buggery) appeared in military statutes drawn up on the

Swedish model during the 18th-century reign of Peter the Great. The initial punishment of burning at the stake was changed to corporal punishment. The criminal code of 1832 based on the German model punished sodomy (buggery) with deprivation of all rights and exile to Siberia for four to five years. New criminal legislation adopted in 1903 reduced punishment to incarceration for no less than three months or, in aggravating circumstances, to three to eight years.

This legislation, however, was employed extremely rarely. Many Russian aristocrats, including members of the imperial family, as well as eminent artistic figures of the turn of the century openly led homosexual or bisexual lifestyles. A few lesbian couples were also quite well known at the time. Homoerotic poetry, literature, and painting began to appear. Same-sex love began to be debated seriously and sympathetically in philosophical, scientific, and artistic literature.

After the February 1917 Revolution and the demise of the old criminal code, the legal persecution of homosexuals ceased. In the Soviet Russian Criminal Codes of 1922 and 1926, homosexuality is not referred to at all, but in those parts of the old Russian Empire where it was most widespread—the Islamic republics of Azerbaijan, Turkmenia, and Uzbekistan, as well as in Christian Georgia—the legislation remained in force. In the 1920s, homosexuality was treated as a sickness rather than a crime.

Up to the 1930s, the situation of Soviet homosexuals, who frequently called themselves “blues,” was reasonably bearable and many played a prominent part in Soviet culture. However, the opportunity for an open, philosophical and artistic discussion of the theme, which began at the turn of the century, gradually diminished.

In 1933, male homosexuality (*muzhelozhstve*) again became a criminal offense and literally an unmentionable, even in scientific literature, vice in the U.S.S.R. Conviction of this crime was punishable by deprivation of freedom for up to five years, or up to eight years if compulsion, violence, a minor, or abuse of a dependent was involved. This law (Article 121 of the RSFS Criminal Code) was frequently used up until the 1980s against dissidents and to extend terms in labor camps. Application of the law has always been selective. As long as they did not fall foul of the authorities, certain homosexual cultural and artistic celebrities enjoyed relative immunity. If they overstepped the mark, however, the law descended upon them with a vengeance.

Gay men in confinement have to endure absolutely unbearable conditions. A person who ended up in prison or labor camp under Article 121 usually became straightaway a “no-rights odd-bod” and recipient of constant taunts and persecution from other prisoners. Further, the rape of adolescents and young men is widespread in both prisons and labor camps; after such assaults, the victims forfeit all human rights, become “degraded,” and have to act submissively to their violators. The status of the “degraded” is even worse than that of voluntarily passive homosexuals, who, to a certain degree, select their own partners and protectors (who perform an active, “male” sexual role that is not stigmatized and is even encouraged). The “degraded,” on the other hand, are fair game for anyone. (Some Russian medical experts still make a “fundamental” division of homosexuals into “active” and “passive,” depending on preferred sexual positions; moreover, they associate “passive” with “inborn” and “genuine,” and “active” with “acquired” homosexuality.)

In the 1980s, the AIDS epidemic worsened matters for homosexuals. When AIDS arrived in the U.S.S.R., health officials referred to morality and risk groups, especially gays, portraying them as carriers, not only of the dreaded virus, but of just about every other vice. This hypocritical moralizing and the search for scapegoats instead of a real

sociohygienic policy helped to increase HIV infection already at a high level because of contaminated blood transfusions for hemophiliacs.

While the possibility of decriminalization of homosexuality has been debated by lawyers since 1973, these arguments have been secret and did not spill over into the newspapers until 1987. Since 1987, the popular press, particularly youth papers, radio, and TV, have discussed homosexuality: What is it? How should one relate to “blues”? Should they be treated as sick, criminal, or as victims of fate? From journalistic articles and letters from gay men and lesbians and their parents, ordinary Soviet people have, for the first time, come to recognize the scarred destinies, the police cruelty, the legal repression, the sexual violence in prison, labor camps, and armed forces and, finally, the tragic, inescapable loneliness experienced by people living in constant fear and unable to meet any of their own sort. Each publication has provoked a whole stream of contradictory responses that the newspaper editors have just not known how to handle.

After the breakup of the Soviet Union, some republics, beginning with Ukraine, Estonia, Latvia, Moldova, and Armenia, revoked their antihomosexual legislation. On April 29, 1993, Russian President Boris Yeltsin signed, and lawmakers approved, a decree repealing Article 121.1 dealing with consenting adult relations. Article 121.2 regarding minors and force remains in effect. The repeal did not address gay women since lesbianism was not acknowledged by previous Soviet governments (Kon 1995, 239–264). A new 1997 criminal code may well restore the former repression of gays.

Nevertheless, homosexuals remain the most hated and stigmatized social minority. In the VTsIOM 1992 survey directed by Levada (Kon 1995, 275), the question “How ought we to act with homosexuals?” produced the following spread of answers: 33% favored exterminating homosexuals, 30% favored isolating them from society, and 10% said leave them alone. Only 6% favored helping homosexuals.

The Communist, chauvinist, and fascist media methodically and consistently lumps together Zionism, democracy, and homosexuality. With few exceptions, Russian sexopathologists and psychiatrists still regard homosexuality as a disease, and repeat in their writings the negative stereotypes prevalent in the mass consciousness. Thus, parents are likely to be both worried and defensive when they confront behavior in one of their children that might lead to questions about homosexuality. If an adolescent appears to have a “crush” on a classmate or peer of the same gender, his or her parents may consult a physician or psychiatrist who is almost certain to discourage it directly, or attempt to eradicate the feelings and prevent any erotic activity.

Most gay and lesbian adults attempt to keep their orientation a secret from family, friends, and colleagues in the workplace. The risks of public scandal and humiliation, loss of a job, and other complications are too great. Gay men and lesbian women are often physically assaulted in the streets, beaten, and even murdered.

Nevertheless, the situation is rapidly changing. By 1989, after public discussions of homosexuality began in the mass media, on television and radio, sometimes quite sympathetic, gays and lesbians themselves initiated a struggle against discrimination. In 1990, the first openly gay and lesbian organization was formed in Moscow. As of mid-1994, there were several such organizations. In 1993, the National Union of Gays, Lesbians, and Bisexuals was formed. Gay activists take part in the AIDS-prevention work. Gay themes are now represented in the theater and movies. Several legally registered gay and lesbian newspapers (*Tema*, *Risk*, *1/10*, and others) are published. In Moscow and St. Petersburg, there are gay discos, bars, and restaurants. Special

consulting services are being organized. But all these effects suffer from the shortage of both money and professional personnel, as well as the lack of internal cooperation. Political activists quarrel among themselves and have little influence in the mainstream culture and mass media.

[Update 2002: In April 2002, the People's Deputy bloc introduced legislation that would reinstate an old Soviet law that provided for prison terms for gay and lesbian sex. A phone-in poll (2,813 calls recorded in a five-minute period) by Moscow's Ekho Moskvy radio station found most people divided on the idea, with 53% of those polled opposed to the People's Deputy proposal; 47% said that homosexual acts should be illegal.

[Oleg Mironov, a Russian human rights commissioner, called the proposal to return to Soviet sexuality laws "ridiculous. The Criminal Code does in fact contain criminal provisions for homosexual acts, where they constitute rape or they involve a minor and adult. However, I do not think that we should return to the old Criminal Code in which voluntary relations of this type were punishable in law." However, Mironov did support raising the age of consent for homosexual relations to 16 rather than its current 14 years. At the moment, it is legal to have such relations if a person is 14 years old.

[The new antisexual crusade is extremely homophobic. Despite the decriminalization of homosexuality in 1993 and its formal "depathologization" in 1999, some leading Russian psychiatrists still believe that homosexuality is an illness (Tkachenko 1999, 355). (End of update by I. S. Kon)]

7. Gender Diversity and Transgender Issues

Among the native populations of Siberia and the Far East regions of Russia, the tradition of the *berdach*, a spiritual leader who is neither male nor female but a third gender, was widespread in the beginning of the 20th century as an aspect of shaman behavior. The present situation of this custom is unknown.

In 1960, Professor Aron Belkin began biomedical (psychoendocrinological) research on transgenderists and transsexuals. However, the psychological and social factors of gender dysphoria are largely ignored. An Association of Transsexuals was formed in 1992 in Moscow to work for the human rights of transsexuals.

8. Significant Unconventional Sexual Behaviors

A. Coercive Sex

Child Sexual Abuse, Incest, and Pedophilia

Reports of child sexual abuse were extremely uncommon in the Soviet press. Officially, incest did not exist as a societal problem. Indeed, any kind of child abuse and violence in the family—and it is very widespread—is only beginning to come to the attention of authorities and the professional community (Kon 1995, 215-218).

Some health professionals and others have begun to uncover evidence of various kinds of sexual activity between adults and children, as well as between children of different ages in orphanages, youth camps, and even families. The data on sexual harassment, child abuse, and violence in Moscow and St. Petersburg are largely anecdotal and unreliable, but the problem is serious. In the 1993 adolescent sexuality survey conducted by Vladimir Shapiro and Valery Chervyakov of 1,615 students aged 12 to 17 years in Moscow and St. Petersburg, 24% of the teenage girls and 11% of the boys said they had experienced some sort of sexual pressure, someone pushing them to go further sexually than

they themselves wanted to go. Six percent of those under the age of 14 years reported such pressure, as did more than 27% of the 16- to 17-year-olds. Sometimes the perpetrators are older youths, sometimes parents and other adults. Professional medical and psychological help for the victims is at its very beginnings (Kon 1995, 276).

[Update 1997: While sexism was admittedly common during the Communist regime, sexual harassment, defined as a boss demanding sexual favors from subordinates, was a crime; it was a seldom-prosecuted offense. The current lack of laws protecting employees from exploitation and harassment, coupled with the heady sense of permissiveness fed by pornographic videos, sexy advertising, nightclubs, casinos, beauty contests (Waters 1993), nude pinups, and open prostitution, have raised the level of sexual harassment to epidemic proportions, according to aggravated feminists. Some male observers counter that women simply view their bodies as a way of furthering their careers, while most Russian men, including husbands, dismiss the issue of sexual harassment as yet another silly Western hang-up. Most employers stress youth and sex appeal in advertising for office help; some include as a prerequisite *bez kompleksov* or "without inhibitions" in their advertisements. Despite a few attempts to battle sexual harassment and initiate lawsuits in 1994, an unemployment rate for women three times higher than for men, and a decline in their wages from 75% of male salaries in 1991 to 40% in 1997 have provided fertile ground for sexual harassment (Stanley 1994). (End of update by R. T. Francoeur)]

Rape

The number of rapes and attempted rapes is growing very fast. Since 1961, the increase in reported assaults has been 60%; since 1986, the increase has been 21.3% (Kon 1995, 207-222).

Most recorded rapes occur on the street or are gang rapes. Most date and marital rapes are not recorded in criminal statistics and remain unpunished. Of 333 persons who applied in 1992 to the St. Petersburg Helping Center for rape victims, only four also reported the crime to the police. The reasons for this unwillingness have been fear of the psychological trauma of investigation and trial; fear of information being spread in school and among acquaintances; doubts about the possibility of legal help; and fear of personal safety. All of these fears and doubts are quite justified. Even when the victims are children, the police are often unwilling to open a criminal investigation or even to initiate a medical examination.

According to criminal statistics—and these are unreliable—male youths between ages 14 and 17 commit 30% of all reported rapes; 37% of perpetrators are between ages 18 and 24; 19% between 25 and 29, and 15% over age 30. Two thirds of rapists are under age 22, with the most dangerous age being 16 to 17. Every fourth reported rape is a group or gang rape. The younger the rapists, the more often their assaults are carried out in a group. Some 40% of rapists have previous criminal records, and two thirds had been drinking prior to the attack.

The global socioeconomic, political, and spiritual crisis that Russia is now experiencing invariably causes a rise in violence and crime. Sexual violence is just one of its aspects, closely related also to the sexist psychology and cult of aggressive masculinity.

The psychological profiles of rapists are very similar to those provided by Western researchers. Sixty-one percent of convicted rapists are psychologically normal, but they perceive women as hostile, aggressive, and dominating figures towards whom they experience an unwanted sense of passivity and dependence. Sexual aggression and rape are

often a manifestation of “adolescent rebellion” against women in general.

Much of the male rape that occurs in correctional institutions is carried on to establish and maintain a social hierarchy. Coercive sexual activity is also widespread in the military, at schools, and in the arts.

At this time, Russian society is not equipped materially or attitudinally to confront these problems in a creative manner. Many Russian citizens simply lament the liberalization of traditional morality and blame the influence of “Western capitalism” and pornography. The current state of the Russian economy precludes economic or technical support for remedial services or preventive programs. The very first telephone “hotline” service for rape victims was established in 1992 in St. Petersburg. Specialized professional help focusing on sexuality is largely unavailable for sex offenders. The first registered rape recovery center and a crisis hotline for abused women opened in Moscow in 1994.

B. Prostitution

Until 1987, the existence of prostitution in the U.S.S.R. was often publicly denied. Now, it is one of the most popular professions. It is highly stratified, beginning with those working exclusively with foreigners for hard currency, and ending at the very bottom of social life. Some prostitutes are professionals. For others, it means additional income for a family budget. Male prostitution is increasing. Prostitution is closely linked with organized crime. [Update 1997: Entrepreneurs have been quick to take advantage of the economic plight of young women in the former U.S.S.R., recruiting them to service the sexual needs and fantasies of middle- and upper-class males in some of the relatively affluent Middle Eastern countries. See parallel discussion in the chapter on Ukraine. (End of update by R. T. Francoeur)]

The legal status of prostitutes is unclear. Attempts to fight it with administrative measures have failed, but at least now, the issue can be discussed (Kon 1995, 42-43, 62-64, 222-229).

C. Pornography and Erotica

Stalinist sexophobia had practically exterminated all Russian erotic art. Now there are two trends: 1. the revival of genuine erotic art and literature, including translations of classical novels of D. H. Lawrence, Vladimir Nabokov, Henry Miller, and others, old Chinese and Hindu treatises, and erotic films from the West, and 2. a torrent of pornographic and semipornographic books, films, and videos. All of this is very new and unusual for the Russian people (Kon 1995, 113-116).

In the spring of 1991, the Communist Party tried to use this situation for its own political purposes, initiating a big antipornography crusade. In whipping up a moral panic in the country, the Communist Party pursued very clear political goals. The antipornography campaign was used to divert popular attention from the pressing political issues and to blunt awareness of the government's economic failures. In flagging its defense of morality and the family, the Party was deflecting blame from itself for the weakening and destruction of both morals and the family. On that basis, the Party leaders were able to cement the developing alliance between the Party and conservative organizations, including the Russian Orthodox Church and blatantly fascist groups. Antipornography slogans have been used by the Party to direct popular fury and frenzy against *glasnost* that was so hated by the Party *apparatchiks*, by branding the democratic mass media as being part of a Jewish-Masonic conspiracy intended to corrupt the morals of young people, destroy traditional values, and so on. Under the pretext of concern for young people, the Party was endeavoring to restore its lost control over them.

However, the campaign failed when the people did not swallow the bait (see Kon 1995, 1997a). Public opinion polls show that the majority of Russians do not like pornography, but are positive about erotica. But to differentiate between the two is difficult, and there is a deep generation gap on this issue. Purely repressive police measures taken by some local authorities are ineffective. Instead of the former taboos on sexuality, it is now vulgarized, commercialized, and Americanized. The current Russian government is trying to bring the situation under control, but without much success.

9. Contraception, Abortion, and Population Planning

A. Contraception

One of the most disturbing consequences of the lack of sexual culture in Soviet society has been the exceedingly limited contraception culture, as a result of which induced abortion was, and remains today, the major method of birth control and family planning (Kon 1995, 61-62, 178-193).

Already in the early part of the 20th century, Russian doctors officially recognized that the development of effective contraceptive methods was the only alternative to induced abortion with all its dangerous consequences. Soviet medicine also understood this. In 1920, induced abortion was legalized. Until the end of the 1920s, the U.S.S.R. was a leading world country in its family policies.

Nevertheless, in 1936, induced abortion was banned and no other means of birth control introduced. After the ban was lifted in 1955, induced abortion remained the principal form of birth control.

According to Andrei Popov (1992), Soviet family planning was distinguished by the following general traits right up to 1988:

- Although the right to family planning was formally proclaimed *de jure* in accordance with international conventions, this right was never *de facto* realized;
- Services were inaccessible or nonexistent owing to a total lack of information, an absence of qualified personnel and specialized medical services, and the unavailability of modern contraceptives;
- The only easily accessible method of family planning was and continues to be induced abortion; and
- Family planning behavior varies widely by region, according to the ethnographic, demographic, and socioeconomic realities within each region.

Without the necessary scientific information, modern contraceptives, and the ability to use them, the Soviet public was doomed to employ traditional and largely ineffective methods (see Table 7).

Until 1987, the Soviet Ministry of Health conducted a major propaganda campaign against oral contraceptives. Most Soviet citizens are relatively ignorant about the more sophisticated forms of contraception.

Since 1987, the negative consequences of this situation have begun to be officially acknowledged, highlighting two obvious problems: the material shortage of modern hormonal, chemical, and barrier contraceptives, and the lack of information and psychological sophistication regarding sexual and reproductive practices.

In 1993, experts of the World Health Organization (WHO) found that both physicians and women in St. Petersburg were convinced that hormonal pills are terribly dangerous. And only 11% of Russian gynecologists recognized the right of teenagers to confidentiality, a condition *sine qua non* of the effective contraceptive services for teenagers.

The government survey in 1990 demonstrated that 30.5% of all girls under age 15 had no knowledge whatsoever about contraception. In the 16- to 17-year-old age group, this percentage was 24.6, and among 18 to 23 year olds, 11%. Over 96% of 16- to 17-year-old girls never used any contraceptives. Most teenage sex—and their sexual activity is growing—still goes unprotected.

B. Teenage Unmarried Pregnancies

As a consequence of the lack of contraceptives, the number of unplanned pregnancies and unwanted births is growing, despite the prevalence of abortion. According to national statistics, the rate of extramarital births was about 10% in 1987; in 1992, it was 17%. The rates are even higher in the largest cities. The rate of premarital conception of firstborn children among married couples in Leningrad rose from 27% in 1963 to 38% in 1978. Similarly, one study in the early 1980s found that, of 1,000 first pregnancies reported in a large Russian city, 272 were aborted, 140 births occurred out of wedlock, and 271 births took place in the first months of marriage—leaving only 317 children actually conceived within marriage (Kon 1995, 169, 181-182).

[Update 2002: As a consequence, in 1989, Russia was a world champion as far as unwanted pregnancies and induced abortions were concerned. Thanks to efforts by medical personnel, the abortion rate has declined in recent years. According to official figures, in 1990, women aged 15 to 49 reported having 114 abortions per 1,000 women, compared with 98 in 1992 and 74 in 1995. Despite the significant decrease, the figure is still very high. Child prostitution and sexual violence are flourishing. For about 10% of teenage girls, their first sexual initiation is associated with some degree of coercion. No more than 5% to 7% of rapes are formally reported, and even these cases are often ignored. (*End of update by I. S. Kon*)]

C. Abortion

The total annual number of abortions in the late 1980s, according to official data, amounted to 6 to 7 million. That was virtually a fifth or even a fourth of all abortions performed in the world. The number of “backstreet abortions” was estimated at 12% of the total, according to official estimates, but at 50% to 70% according to independent experts. Thus, the aggregate number of abortions in the U.S.S.R. came to 10 to 11 million a year. Even without these adjustments, the number of abortions per 1,000 women of reproductive age in 1985 surpassed by six to ten times the analogous figures for Western Europe. On average, every woman

in Russia has four to five abortions during her lifetime (Kon 1995, 61-62, 73-75, 178-193).

In 1989, a voluntary association, the Family and Health, was organized and affiliated with International Planned Parenthood World Federation to raise public awareness of family-planning options and to improve the image of contraceptive methods other than abortion. Since 1991, it is supplemented by the Russian Family Planning Association. Mass media, particularly television, have begun to deal directly and positively with birth-control issues.

Unfortunately, but not surprisingly, this work is not very effective. According to the VTsIOM 1992 survey, most women indicated that they had used some form of contraception during the last five years (Kon 1995, 275). Only 18% did not use any contraception. Most likely not to use contraception are women between the ages of 15 and 20 (40%), the unmarried (29%), the poorly educated (24%), and those living in rural areas (22%) (see Table 8).

Modern contraception tends to be popular largely with the younger (under age 25) and better-educated women, while the rest commonly employ traditional, less reliable, but more-accessible methods. A 1990 survey of Soviet-German students (average age 25) showed that 15% of the female students had already had an abortion, 6% more than once. In 1992, 297,029 Russian teenage girls had an abortion; of these 16,320 were illegal.

The most-preferred contraceptive method was the IUD, most favored by half of the women and the second choice for 25%. The pill was less popular, favored by 18% as first choice and 25% as second choice. The pill is still believed to be unsafe and unreliable. The condom was the third-ranking first choice.

If the current plans of the government to make women pay for abortions, except when medically indicated, materialize, this situation will become much worse. Even now, according to the St. Petersburg Yuventa Reproduction Center, in spite of the general availability of professional abortion services, 80% of women who contact the abortion clinics do so only after they have tried to do something, often dangerous, themselves.

10. Sexually Transmitted Diseases and HIV/AIDS

A. Sexually Transmitted Diseases

The customary hypocrisy did not allow the Soviet people to talk openly about STDs. STDs have been consistently regarded throughout the 20th century as shameful. This attitude has hampered health education, especially when new infections are confronted (Kon 1995, 229-231).

Table 7

Percentage of Users of Specific Contraceptive Methods (Moscow Sample Surveys, 1965-1983)

Method	Year of Survey Publication			
	1965-1966	1978	1982	1983
Withdrawal	32	34	14	25
Rhythm (calendar)	—	18	28	27
Condom	46	42	22	24
Diaphragm	—	1	1	1
IUD	—	8	11	10
Oral contraceptives	—	4	4	2
Spermicides	1	—	3	3
Rhythm (temperature)	—	—	2	—
Douche	—	23	17	8
Combinations	12	—	—	12

Note: Respondents were allowed to indicate more than one method used.

Table 8

Contraceptive Methods Used During the Last Five Years (in Percentages)

Method	Frequency Used		
	Always	Sometimes	Not Used
IUD	37	11	52
Condom	18	51	31
Rhythm	17	31	52
Coitus interruptus	14	46	40
Vaginal douche	10	29	61
Pill	10	19	71
Spermicidal	2	14	84
Spermicidal + condom	1	4	95
Diaphragm	0	1	99

Nonetheless, free state medicine provided treatment in special dermatological and venereological clinics, with mandatory official registration identifying the source of infection, and doctors assisted by police endeavored to follow the entire chain of dangerous contacts. Treatment was compulsory, and any infringement of that, or willful infection of anyone with an STD, was punishable under the Russian Criminal Code. This policy enabled the state to confine the danger within certain limits.

In the early 1980s, physicians noted a substantial rise, especially among young people, in the so-called minor venereal diseases that often occur without symptoms. Russians had practically no knowledge of genital herpes or chlamydia until they encountered it in their own experience.

The demise of the Soviet system has acutely affected the epidemiological situation for the worse. Extensive sexual contacts with different partners, given the ignorance and lack of observance of elementary safety and hygiene rules, is dangerous in itself. State medicine is now debilitated, and in some areas collapsed, because of lack of funds, medicine, and equipment. Private medicine is not available to all, and, when available, it is less effective, especially when it comes to maladies requiring lengthy treatment with subsequent supervision. Administrative supervision is now worse, and official statistics have become even less reliable.

So there is an increase in sexually transmitted disease, particularly among young people. People are becoming infected at a younger age. A sharp increase in the incidence of syphilis began in 1988, followed by gonorrhea in 1991. In large cities, such as Moscow, these diseases have already reached epidemic proportions. Virtually half of that increase is accounted for by children and adolescents. According to the U.S.S.R. Health Ministry figures for 1985-1987, the number of under-17 women infected by STDs increased by virtually a third throughout the country.

The overall STD picture is still not as bad as it is in many other countries. According to Russian statistics, the rate of syphilis infection is on the increase, with 9,873 cases in 1991 and 7,178 cases in the first six months of 1992. The gonorrhea rate has fallen slightly, from 180,883 in 1990, to 175,020 in 1991, and 87,724 in the first six months of 1992. These statistics do not take into account that many people use home treatment or seek help from a variety of private practitioners who are not part of the official statistical records.

A special epidemiological investigation by Olga Loseva shows that in 1991, the number of registered syphilis sufferers in Russia rose by almost 34%, in Moscow by 17% in 1991, and by another 50% in the first quarter of 1992 (Kon 1995, 277). This is primarily because of the rise in child and teenage prostitution that often begins between ages 10 and 12 for girls and age 14 for boys. No less than half of the infected go to unregistered medics for treatment.

What is to be done? There are two competing strategies. The first demands more stringent administrative measures, namely enforcement of the law prohibiting private doctors from treating STDs. The second strategy would take the social and psychological reality into account. Patients should have the right to choose whether to go to a private doctor or use the state medical system. But the private doctor must report disease cases to the epidemiological services so the epidemiological situation can be correctly evaluated, trends forecast, and preparation made for future needs.

[*Update 2002:* There has been an enormous growth of STDs and AIDS. Between 1990 and 1996, the incidence of syphilis increased 50-fold in Russia, and 78-fold among young people. In 1996, 265 new cases of syphilis were diagnosed per 100,000 of population. The 1999 figures for syphilis were lower (185.4 per 100,000), but those for gonorrhea

rose to 14.5% since 1998. Fourteen percent of the syphilis and 19% of the gonorrhea sufferers were 15- to 19-year-olds. See also the updates in the following section on HIV/AIDS. Both show the importance of a sex education strategy. (*End of update by I. S. Kon*)]

B. HIV/AIDS

Because of its relative social isolation in the past, the former Soviet Union, for a number of years, was spared the effects of the HIV-related diseases. Even now, the number of people infected and ill is much lower than in most Western countries (Kon 1995, 203-38, 261-62).

On April 1, 1994, the number of HIV-positive persons in the Russian Federation was 740, of whom 286 were children infected in hospitals and maternity homes. The number of AIDS sufferers was 124, of whom 96 were children.

However, this lead-time on the HIV epidemic has been wasted by government authorities and medical professionals. Instead of preparing the country for the inevitable increase in infection rates, the Soviet Ministry of Health and government-sponsored mass media waged an ideological campaign in the early 1980s—even accusing the Pentagon and CIA of inventing the virus as a form of germ warfare! Next, the blame was put on homosexuals and drug addicts. Hopes for control of the disease were placed on the prisons (for homosexuals) and on moral exhortations in favor of monogamy (for the addicts and the remainder of the population). Unfortunately, this strategy continued even after the disease had claimed its first victims. As late as 1988, an appeal to explore the social and psychological aspects of AIDS, including the dangers of an AIDS-induced public hysteria, brought violent attacks in the conservative media.

The major high-risk group in Russia turned out not to be gays, drug addicts, or prostitutes, but newborn children infected in maternity homes through lack of disposable syringes and the negligence of medical staff. Now the children and their families have become victims, not only of this terrible disease, but also of an AIDS-phobia. Medical personnel are scared of treating them, coworkers do not want to work with members of their families, and some schools are demanding their removal.

Since AIDS-prevention politics are completely in the hands of epidemiologists, millions of rubles are spent on diagnostics, HIV-tests—25 million were tested in 1993, and so on, but there is no money for prevention programs and sex education. Education and prevention programs are mainly in the hands of different voluntary organizations.

[*Update 2002:* In addition to the increases in STDs (see update in the previous section), the incidence of HIV has also begun to grow nearly exponentially. The cumulative number of HIV-infected persons reached 24,600 in 1999. The total number of registered HIV infections more than doubled to 177,354 in 2001 from 87,177 in 2000. Experts believe that the real figures are much higher, perhaps double. In some districts, like Irkutsk, HIV has already attained epidemic proportions. These facts suggest that something must be done, and that the first step could be sex education. (*End of update by I. S. Kon*)]

[*Update 2002:* The spread of the HIV virus did not reach epidemic proportions in Russia until the mid-1990s, when the social and economic ills associated with the collapse of communism fed an explosion of intravenous drug use. By 2002, it was clear that sexual transmission of the virus was starting to rival and overtake IV transmission. In Kaliningrad, a Russian enclave between Lithuania, Poland, and the Baltic Sea, only 4% of new infections were because of sexual contact in 1996. Five years later, in 2001, the percentage of new infections in Kaliningrad attributed to sexual contact

jumped to nearly 30%. In the same year, in all of Russia, sexually transmitted HIV infections accounted for little more than 5%. Epidemiologists believe that Kaliningrad is a bellwether, marking a shift from transmission by IV-drug use to infections spread by prostitution and sexual contact. The projection is that sexual transmission will easily overtake transmission by needles through all of Russia by 2006, as young women drug addicts increasingly depend on prostitution to support their drug addiction. In 2001, an estimated 3,000 women work as prostitutes in Kaliningrad, but new clusters of prostitution have appeared on Kaliningrad's borders with Poland and Lithuania, where they serve long lines of motorists and truckers waiting to cross. Money from the World Health Organization, the French, and private donors is supporting new clinics that distribute condoms and pamphlets on safer sex to the prostitutes (Myers 2002). (End of update by R. T. Francoeur)]

[Update 2002: UNAIDS Epidemiological Assessment: During 2000-2001, the country experienced a further dramatic increase of HIV incidence. By the end of 2001, a cumulative total of 173,068 cases of HIV infection had been reported, of which 86,000 were reported in 2001. Prevalence at the end of 2001 was 118.2 per 100,000 population. Large outbreaks of HIV in injection drug users have occurred since 1996. In 1998, 42% of the cases reported were among injection drug users and 48% were reported with undetermined transmission mode.

[Until 1995, HIV/AIDS surveillance was organized mostly through mandatory screening in most subgroups of the population, together with contact tracing. Since then, testing has remained mandatory only for blood donors, prisoners, and professionals exposed to HIV. The number of tests done has decreased by 43% between 1994 and 1996, in part because of the change in testing policies and reduced funding; there was a decrease of 33% and 54% among blood donors and prisoners for whom testing policies remained the same. Diagnosed HIV infections are reported by name in a national HIV case-reporting system.

[Prevalence data come mostly from the ongoing screening programs. Incidence of syphilis cases increased dramatically from less than 30 cases per 100,000 in 1978 to 92 to 172 per 100,000 in 1995. Incidence of gonorrhea cases increased from 75 cases per 100,000 in 1987 to 236 cases per 100,000 in 1993, and then decreased to 165 cases per 100,000 in 1995; underreporting of gonorrhea is estimated to be substantial.

[The estimated number of adults and children living with HIV/AIDS on January 1, 2002, were:

Adults ages 15-49:	700,000 (rate: 0.9%)
Women ages 15-49:	180,000
Children ages 0-15:	NA

[An estimated 9,000 adults and children died of AIDS during 2001.

[No estimate is available for the number of Russian children who had lost one or both parents to AIDS and were under age 15 at the end of 2001. (End of update by the Editors)]

11. Sexual Dysfunctions, Counseling, and Therapies

The traditions of pre-1917 Russian sex research were completely lost in the 1930s and 1940s. Revival of medical sexology (sexopathology) as an area of clinical medicine that studies the functional (behavioral, personal, and social) aspects of sexual disorders began in the 1960s with a series of seminars under the leadership of Professor N. V. Ivanov in the city of Gorky (Nizhny Novgorod) and later in Moscow at the Sexopathology Department of the Moscow Psychiatry

Research Institute. In 1973, this department gained the status of an All-Union Scientific Center on Sexopathology.

Initially, a monodisciplinary approach dominated Soviet sexopathology. Urologists, and to a lesser extent the gynecologists and endocrinologists, set the tone. Subsequently, however, when the neuropathologist Professor Georgi Vasilchenko took charge of the center, the picture changed. Vasilchenko maintained that sexopathology should not take the "brigade" approach, where the urologist treats "his" pathology, the psychiatrist "his," and the endocrinologist "his," while the sexopathologist operates as a transport controller. His approach viewed sexopathology as an independent, interdisciplinary clinical discipline. It was in this spirit that the first Russian handbooks for doctors were written under his editorship—*General Sexopathology* (1977) and *Special Sexopathology* (1983).

Professor Abram Svyadoshch set up the first Sexological Center in Leningrad. His book *Female Sexopathology* (1974) enjoyed three editions and became a genuine bestseller. The Leningrad psychiatrists Professor Dmitri Isayev and Dr. Victor Kagan began to study the formation of sexual identity and problems in juvenile and adolescent sexuality. They published the first Soviet guide for doctors *The Psycho-Hygiene of Sex among Children* (1986).

Soviet sexological service was based on the principle of ambulatory assistance, preserving a normal living pattern, carrying on normal work, and sexual activity. The need for hospitalization arises only in cases of acute psychopathological disorder (where a patient will be placed in a neurosis unit or a daytime inpatient psychoneurological clinic), vascular insufficiency of the genitalia (admission to an angi-surgical unit), acute urological illness (a urological unit), and specific endocrinopathy (an endocrinological unit). Inpatient treatment is normally followed by a period of ambulatory sexual readaptation by the partners.

Analysis of visits to sexological clinics reveals that the bulk (70 to 75%) of patients have sexual problems of a psychological nature. Women's visits to a sexopathologist account for no more than 10% of the total number of patients. The percentage of patients who come because of misinformation or distorted knowledge about sex is fairly high, up to 10 or 15%.

In 1988, in the large cities, special family medical-psychological consultation units were introduced for:

- consultative-diagnostic selection of patients needing observation and treatment in the unit;
- comprehensive therapy of patients with sexual disorders through psychotherapy, physiotherapy, reflex-therapy, pharmacotherapy, and specialized procedures;
- psychological diagnosis and correction methods for family relationship disorders; and
- hygiene-educative and psychotherapeutic work with the public and, first and foremost, with people just entering marriage and couples divorcing.

12. Sex Research and Advanced Professional Education

A. Russian Sexology

Historically, the professional training of sexopathologists was delayed in favor of other priorities. The first department of sexology was organized in the Leningrad (St. Petersburg) Institute for Advanced Medical Training only in 1989. Students at other medical colleges receive no sexological training at all.

The beginning of the 1990s saw extensive promotion of individual medical activity and group work. Numerous

medical cooperatives and profit-making centers are increasingly advertising the services of sexopathologists. The development of this type of medical practice reflects the public's demand for it. The professional level of this practice is sometimes problematic.

The Russian Sexological Association Health and Culture was established in February 1991, to promote an interdisciplinary investigation of sexual behavior, sex education, and sex culture. But, like many other post-Soviet voluntary organizations, it exists only on paper and serves as a cover for private commercial activities like sex shops. Somewhat more efficient is the medically oriented Soviet Sexological Association.

B. Recent Soviet and Russian Sexual Surveys

Because not one Soviet or Russian sexual survey was ever published in the normal scientific way, with all tables, questionnaires, and methodological discussions, sexologists, such as the present author, are forced to rely on published papers and summaries, as well as whatever unpublished data, raw tables, and so on they can obtain from colleagues (Kon 1995, 275-277). Below is a short description of the most important recent Russian surveys.

1. The VTsIOM "Culture" Poll of June 1992, was conducted by Vsesoyuznyi (since 1992, Vserossiiskii) Tsentr Izucheniya Obshchestvennogo Mneniya (VTsIOM, All-Union [since 1992, All-Russia] Center for Public Opinion Research), with Professor Yun Levada as director.

This poll involved a representative sample of about 3,500 persons in three different areas: Slav (Russia and Ukraine); Baltic (Estonia and Lithuania); and Asiatic (Uzbekistan and Tadzhikistan). In the Slav area, the population was surveyed without regard to ethnic origins or "nationality" (that is, not only ethnic Russians, but also Tatars, Jews, Germans, and others were questioned), while in the other two regions, only members of indigenous nationalities were surveyed (that is, in Estonia, Estonians but not Russians).

Questionnaires were completed by the respondents in the presence of a professional interviewer. Among many other questions, some were related to sexuality: Are people happy in love and family life? What are their family values, their attitudes to premarital and extramarital sex, conjugal fidelity, erotica, sex education, and so on?

2. The VTsIOM "The Fact" June 1993 Survey involved a representative sample for the Russian Federation, 1,665 persons. Demographics for this survey included 746 men and 909 women, aged from 16 to 84 (16-25 years, 285; 24-40 years, 546; 40-55 years, 383; and 55-84 years, 461), from 13 different regions. The subjects' educational level was: 235, university level; 803, high (secondary) school; and 616, fewer than 9 years of secondary school. The occupational demography was: nonworking pensioners, 409; manual workers, 330; professionals, 284; technicians, 136; other employees, 120; and students, 87. The subjects' place of residence included: capitals and regional cities, 604; towns, 614; and villages, 344. All standard procedures normally used in public opinion polls were used.

Some of the questions concerned attitudes toward the following aspects of sexual behavior (on 5-point scales, from "It deserves censure" to "I don't see anything wrong in it"): masturbation, premarital sex, frequent change of sexual partners, marital infidelity, viewing of pornographic films, group sex, homosexual contacts, induced abortions, and so on. There were also a few questions about personal sexual experience,

such as age at the first sexual contact, number of lifetime sexual partners, and present sexual activities. About 40% of respondents did not answer these personal questions.

3. The Adolescent Sexuality Survey published in 1993 and conducted by Vladimir Shapiro and Valery Chervyakov, Institute of Sociology, Russian Academy of Sciences, with Igor Kon as a consultant and Mana Gerasimova as the research organizer. This survey used an adapted version of American sociologist Stan Weed's questionnaire. The data were collected in late 1992 and early of 1993. The sample involved 1,615 students (50.4% boys and 49.6% girls) from 16 high (secondary) schools and eight vocational schools in Moscow and St. Petersburg. The students' ages ranged from 12 to 17 years, and their grade levels from the 7th to 11th grades.

The questionnaire contained 135 questions about aspects of sexual experience and attitudes: dating, going steady, age at, and the motives for, the first sexual intercourse, sources of sexual information, communications with parents and peers, moral and religious values, involvement in deviant behavior, and some personal psychological characteristics. The schools were selected to represent different social strata of the two cities' populations. Questionnaires were completed in the classrooms, anonymously, voluntarily, and individually, in the presence of a professional interviewer. The permission of the school administration was obtained, but none of them had access to this confidential information. There were no refusals from students to take part in the research, but some respondents did not answer certain questions. Detailed statistical analysis may be available by the time this chapter is published; however, a general popular overview of the results was published by Igor Kon, Valery Chervyakov, and Vladimir Shapiro in 1994.

4. A second survey of adolescent sexual attitudes, representations, and practices was conducted by Igor Lunin (1994) of the St. Petersburg Crisis Prevention Service for Children and Adolescents between May and September of 1993. The sample population for this survey was 370, (185 boys and 185 girls, secondary (high) school 10th graders and vocational school students from three socially and economically different districts of St. Petersburg). The average age was 15.9 years.

In this study, an anonymous questionnaire was preliminarily reviewed in teenage discussion groups. Participation, on the school premises, was individual and voluntary. Questions concerned sexual values and behavior, main sources of sexual and contraceptive information and the evaluation of its availability and reliability, sexual harassment, violence, and rape experience, and attitudes to condoms and to different forms of sex education. (In addition to Lunin (1994), see also Igor Lunin, Thomas L. Hall, Jeffrey S. Mandel, Julia Kay, and Norman Hearst, *Adolescent Sexuality in St. Petersburg: Russia in the Era of AIDS* (in press).) A detailed statistical analysis is also in progress.

5. A telephone survey was conducted by Dmitri. D. Isayev in St. Petersburg between September and December 1993. The sample for this survey was 435 people, 16 to 55 years old; 155 men (average age, 35.4 years and 67.5% married), and 280 women (average age, 37.3 years with 67% married). Questions were asked about personal sexual experience and attitudes, number of partners, safe-sex practices, and AIDS-prevention measures.

6. An epidemiological study was conducted in 1991 by Olga Loseva, a Moscow venereologist. This unpublished dissertation summarized 15 years of research of sexual behavior and sexual values of syphilitics. Loseva collected data on 3,273 heterosexual men and women at a venereological clinic in Moscow: 300 medical histories and about 3,000 questionnaires. The data came from 1,782 infected patients and 1,191 in a control group of persons without sexually transmitted diseases, plus 120 teenage girls. Sociologically, the samples were not representative, but a comparison of three control groups, divided by five-year intervals, is informative for the shifts in sexual attitudes and practices.

Conclusion

Sexuality is just beginning to be thought of as a subject worthy of consideration and study by Russian researchers. Clearly, sexual behavior is diverse in societies as large and heterogeneous as Russia and the other republics of the former Soviet Union. Although certain values are strong within and between these societies, there is no single standard of "normal" sexuality for family members. Marriage is valued as a primary arena for sexual expression; however, sex-related ideas, attitudes, and activities are extremely diverse. Citizens are exposed to sexual information and images from a variety of public sources. Naturally, their reactions to these differ, and the impact upon their behavior is varied. Parents seem concerned about the proper sexual development of their children. Yet, some of these same parents respond by suppressing expressions of sexuality in the family, others by obsessively explicating sexual guidelines, and still others by supporting social programs of sex education in schools and community institutions (Kon 1995, 265-272).

To develop effective public policies that encourage responsible sexual expression by citizens without reactionary negativism, and to accommodate pluralistic diversity without succumbing to crippling ambivalence—these will be the challenges common to our countries as they enter the 21st century.

[Update 1997: A March 1997 Russian Academy of Education conference clearly indicated the Russian Orthodox Church is rapidly assuming the Communist ideological mantle of sexual repression. Attacking all sex education in schools and any expression of sexuality as "satanic," Orthodox clergy have demanded a United Nations-sponsored sex education project be stopped immediately because it is a Western conspiracy to depopulate Russia. Although a few medical efforts and the Russian Planned Parenthood helped reduce the abortion rate since 1991 by 50%, teen syphilis rates increased 30-fold and teenage coital experience increased and began earlier. Orthodox clergy preach that they alone can provide proper sex education for the people, claiming that Westerners are trying to exterminate Russian culture by reducing its birthrate with abortion, contraception, sexual excesses, masturbation, and homosexuality. Mass media freedom is also threatened as legislators seek to outlaw "any products of mass media, other printed and audiovisual products, including advertising, messages and materials transmitted and received by computer networks, as well as things and means satisfying needs related to the sexual drive, except for medical drugs and products." (End of update by I. S. Kon)]

[Update 2002: What may be the possible results of the current Russian sexual counterrevolution?

[Basically, this is only the tip of the iceberg. Under the guise of a moral renaissance, these people want to restore

censorship and administrative control over private life. In the long run, this goal is virtually unattainable. Sexual attitudes and practices in Russia are already highly diversified by age, gender, education, and regional, ethnic, and social background. In the near future, this heterogeneity will probably increase and may produce new cultural tensions. But in the long run, it is the younger, urban, and better-educated people who will have the upper hand in defining what is right and what is wrong. Any attempts by the state, Church, or local community to forcibly limit their sexual freedom is doomed to failure, and will be detrimental to the authority of the institutions making such an attempt.

[The Communist Party, which has waged this new holy war, belongs to the past; it is a party of old men. The militant position of the Orthodox clergy also may have a boomerang effect. They seem to have forgotten an old Soviet joke: "How can you make art flourish and religion decay? It is very easy, you simply disconnect art from the State and make religion compulsory."

[Yet, the crusade against sex research and sex education has very dangerous practical social consequences. Without professional sex education, it is impossible to solve such urgent public health issues as teen pregnancy and STD-HIV prevention. Effective family planning is equally impossible without sexual knowledge. And, last but not least, the antisexual crusade widens the generation gap, which is already vast and yawning. (End of update by I. S. Kon)]

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