

# 1 Male sex and male sexuality (sexualities) – past and presence

## 1.1 Sexuality in Germany (1933–2016)

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Sexual cultures in Germany are presented in five *periods of time* – from 1933 to the Present (Table 1). Thus, those social conditions are described, which have influenced today living persons. Disputes over *models* or »*scripts*« of sexuality, as well as the closely related *representation* in media, the *legal framework*, and finally the changing *practice* of subjects are analyzed respectively.

**Table 1: Germany – Steps of development of sexual health 1933–2016**

1933 – Ambivalent sexual policy and war experiences of national socialism
1950 – »Wild« post-war period and sexual conservative 1950s
1965 – Liberalization and commercialization since the mid-1960s
1982 – Risky sexuality and ubiquity of sexuality since the onset of AIDS
2000 – Virtualization of sex and new sexual conservatism

The *Nazi sexual politics of Natalism* (human reproduction philosophy) led to certain easings for heterosexual, healthy comrades (»*Volksgenossen*«) (contraceptives, divorces), whereas the control of the marginalized were intensified: sterilization projects for the »*imbeciles*«, applying stricter criminal laws for homosexuals, racial laws for Jews. The war offered opportunities for sexual violence, particularly within the troops. After the »*wild postwar-era*« conjugal sexuality was established as an exclusive leading model in the *1950s*, notwithstanding the

fact that empirical sexual research had discovered an unexpected variety of sexual practice since the Kinsey Reports. While the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) was promoting the traditional marriage (wife at home – »Hausfrauenehe«), the increased professional activity established more opportunities for women in the German Democratic Republic (GDR). As a matter of fact premarital intercourse was reduced in the FRG. The persecution of homosexuals almost came to an end in the GDR, whereas it was intensified in the FRG. Since the *mid-1960s* left liberal scientists and media provoked liberalization and commercialization of sex, which also entailed strong proliferation of pornography. Sexual counseling services and therapies were booming, followed by a large decriminalization of homosexuality. Finally, it was the »pill« that unlinked sexuality, procreation and marriage. *After Aids (1982)* entered the scene, »safer sex« became a leading model – also favoring heterosexual practice. Commercialization increased in the FRG supported by new media (private television, video, phone sex). The German Reunification led to further legal liberalization – with regard to abortion and homosexuality. *Since 2000*, the virtualization of sex is increasing. Negative perceptions (forced prostitution, pedophilia) becoming more important, as well as fundamentalist criticism of the liberalization. The complete legal equality of homosexuals will be reached in future. The diversity of sexual practice increases also by younger people. Negotiation of sexual practice becomes standard, and auto-sexuality becomes more accepted.

## 1.2 Male Sexuality in the Digital Age: Current Debates, Trends and Data

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Sexual health as a comprehensive concept of well-being in relation to sexuality is an ambitious goal for individuals and society alike: Not only is it necessary to recognize and solve a variety of sexual problems, but also to identify and foster the diverse, potentially positive aspects of sexuality. Focusing specifically on the sexual health of men, this chapter deals with seven main problem areas: 1. sexual violence, 2. sexually-transmitted infections and diseases, 3. unplanned procreation, 4. sexual dysfunctions, 5. sexual marginalization, 6. sexual insecurity, and 7. sexual deficit. These problem areas are complemented by eight positive aspects of male sexuality: 1. sexual pleasure, 2. interpersonal closeness and attachment, 3. spirituality, 4. fatherhood, 5. identity validation, 6. sexual competence, 7. sexual

satisfaction, and 8. physical and mental health benefits of sexual activity. The less men in Germany are affected by the aforementioned sexual problems, and the more positive aspects their sexual lives provide, the better – by definition – is their sexual health.

Although scientific interest in male sexuality has been rising in recent decades, the current state of research is still fragmentary: For many negative and positive aspects of male sexuality in Germany (Table 2) there is no empirical data available.

**Table 2: Current social trends in male sexuality**

- Liberalization and individualization of male sexuality
- Commercialization of sexuality
- Medicalization of sexuality
- Digitization of sexuality via internet

Societal trends like the individualization, commercialization, medicalization and above all the digitalization of sexuality are difficult to evaluate: What opportunities and challenges do they present, and how influential are they? In public debates, male sexuality is often either demonized or glorified, and nearly always represented stereotypically. Against this backdrop, a continued evidence-based analysis of the sexual health of men seems necessary and beneficial. The article ends with practical recommendations for science, health and education systems, media and politics. Selected practical examples and online materials complete the treatment of this topic.

