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Furs: Functionality, Fashion, and Franchise

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Animal furs have been used in various manners through human history. Early humans cut crude shawls for warmth, and with the development of tools such as needles, closer-fitting clothing such as fur pants became possible. As time went on, products such as wool and cotton were used for clothing and, with fur alternatives, furs were reserved for the ultra-wealthy in some cultures. The image of fur as a luxury item has remained ever since, but simultaneously fur has become more accessible to the general public. Meanwhile, animal rights movements have successfully dampened interest in fur in some countries and communities. In the modern day, there is great variety in the ways in which countries in the Global North view fur. Case studies on the United States and Finland provide two different views on the history and progression of fur industries. Economic analysis of fur consumption and spending helps illuminate patterns in income and the demand for fur in these two countries in order to determine whether recent data on furs sales are in keeping with the concept of economic luxury.

Introduction

In early human history, furs, like many other items, were used out of pure necessity for survival, due to a lack of alternatives for keeping warm. As the earliest fur use occurred significantly earlier than the creation of a written language, rare archaeological findings leave scholars to make educated guesses as to whether findings are reflective of all hominids living at that time in the given region. One example of an archaeological finding that is an interesting case (yet not confirmable as to whether it is representative of all hominids living at that time) is from Northern Italy approximately 5,300 years ago. A man was crossing the Tisa Yoke, in the Val Senales region in South Tyrol, Italy when he was crushed by a glacier and died. His body was preserved in the ice, and hikers found the body in 1991.¹ The man, known as "Ötzi the Iceman," was fully clothed at his time of death. Although there was quite a bit of damage due to the melting of the glacier, his clothing was still intact enough to be analyzed by archaeologists. The clothing was made of animal products and grass, with garments sewn together using animal sinews, as well as other plant materials. He wore a coat made of goat and sheep hide, with leggings made of a similar material to that of the coat. His belt and loincloth were made of calfskin, and his shoes were of deer hide on the outside, as well as fur on the inside. Ötzi's head was topped off with a bearskin cap.²

According to the Smithsonian Museum, the earliest hominid clothing made of fur, well before Ötzi's time, was certainly quite crude, as small tools, such as needles for sewing, had not yet been created. Neanderthals (*Homo neanderthalensis*) were one of the first hominid species with the tools to hunt large animals, and are also believed to be the first species to wear clothing. They lived from 400,000 until 40,000 years ago, and so coexisted with the *Homo sapiens* for about 160,000 years.³ That said, these two species were only on the same continent for a few thousand years, as the Neanderthals found their way from their African origins to Eurasia far before *H. sapiens* made that move.⁴ Based on a text by Sara Pendergast on clothing in ancient societies, it seems likely that clothing development, or lack thereof, played a role in the demise of Sapiens' closest evolutionary ancestors. Neanderthals were likely the first species to wear clothing, based on archeological findings, but archaeologists and scientists cannot be absolutely sure as this was so long ago and previous clothing could have been destroyed, or has yet to be discovered. Findings of remains at settlements inhabited by each species suggest that the way in which the two hominid species used animals were quite different. Neanderthals wore quite crude, shawl-like furs from woolly mammoths and oxen for warmth during the ice age⁵. That said, archaeological findings from early Sapiens' settlements boast a greater variety of animal species, including fossilized bones from a variety of species such as those of the Cervidae family (deer), the Bovidae family (buffalo, bison, oxen), the Ursidae family (bears), the Felidae family (cats), the Canidae family (dogs, wolves), and others. Needles made of animal bones and pelt scrapers were also found at many *Homo sapiens* settlement sites⁶, but not at those of *H. neanderthalensis*, suggesting that early Sapiens had the ability to scrape hides down to the skin, and then sew several pelts together. Pendergast

continues by explaining that, without the tools to make anything more protective from harsh weather conditions than a drafty shawl, some archaeologists believe that lack of proper protection from the elements is a valid explanation, albeit only one of several potential explanations, for the demise of the Neanderthals. With the tools that they created, Sapiens were able to create better-fitting garments from large animal hides, as well as sewing together the pelts of smaller animals to create full garments, or even trims.⁷ These garments were likely quite stiff, as hide tanning was not yet created, but they were fitted and could combine the furs of many species, which made them the most advanced of the surviving *Homo* genus.⁸

History of Fur Usage

In the early stages of hominid fur use, the warm pelts of deceased animals were the only available source of bodily protection against the elements, but as time progressed, clothing assembly techniques from different materials were created, and therefore fur was no longer a necessity by default. Pendergast continues by stating that early, highly regarded human civilizations in Mesopotamia and Egypt were some of the first to use materials other than animal skins for clothing. Starting in about 4000 B.C.E., the Egyptians' great civilization began creating linen from flax, thereby creating garments from plant rather than animal sources.⁹ Mahe's text demonstrates that, as early as 7000 B.C.E., animals were domesticated, and by 3000 BCE Mesopotamians started using the wool from domesticated sheep and goats for spinning to make clothing. This did not completely do away with the use of animal skins, it just provided an alternative material, although still animal-based. Since there were now alternatives to fur in making clothing, the fur of some animals became a luxury, reserved for the richest and most powerful people in society. In ancient Egypt, the furs of leopards and lions were reserved

for kings and high priests, to be worn in formal ceremonies.^{10;11} Although there was a geographic shift world power, away from this area now known as the Middle East, the use of fur as a status symbol continued for millennia.

Information on fur use through the Middle Ages in Europe is sparse, but some fur use has been documented, particularly in royalty and higher ends of society. During the Byzantine Empire (330-1453 CE)¹², Constantinople was making work boots for the court society, lining the boots with fur.¹³ With a westward shift of global power throughout time came many innovations and societal changes, but views on and use of fur remained consistent. Mahe goes on to state that, in Western Europe in the 11th century, animals such as chinchillas, ermine, sable, and mink were reserved for royals, nobles, some high-ranking clergymen, and the bourgeoisie. In fact, some barons at this time even mortgaged their homes in order to purchase ermine, a white stoat with a dark-tipped tail, for their wives.¹⁴ In France, for example, a Royal Ordinance passed in 1294 stated that vair, a blueish gray and white squirrel that was prized in the medieval times for its ornamental use, was not to be owned by any middle-class person.^{15,16} Dolin states that, in Eastern Europe, Russians were using fur as bedding. At this time, if poorer people were wearing furs, it was from more common animals. Animals such as cats and dogs may have been killed for their furs for use by these poorer individuals. That said, during these Middle Ages, powerful people such as King Henry IV of England had nearly unlimited access to animal furs. He possessed a “nine-part robe composed [of] no fewer than twelve thousand squirrel and eighty ermine skins”, a true testament to his power and the exploitation of animals at this time. This level of extravagance becomes even clearer upon acknowledging the fact that

it would take a carpenter in this epoch 40 days to earn the money to purchase one rabbit fur lining.¹⁷

In Western Europe in the 13th and 14th centuries, the growing mercantile class was eventually able to afford some furs that were previously too expensive, now purchasing them for their wives as well as for themselves.¹⁸ That said, there were still restrictions on who could wear which types of furs. For example, there was a law limiting women of lower social ranking from wearing fur of any animal other than otter, fox, and “small burrowing rodents”.¹⁹ Whether or not this was always perfectly followed is unclear²⁰, as some may have still used fur of other animals as lining. Clearly, though, fur was a very important symbol in society if there were this many social rules and regulations in its use. This point is even further proven in the 1600s, when the demand for furs by the nobility became so great that new trade routes were created and fur monopolies formed simply to serve the high demand. For much time leading up to this point, Germany was a leader in fur trade.²¹ This all began to change with the developing trade routes in the so-called New World beginning in the 17th century, which allowed Europeans access to a nearly unlimited supply of, among other things, animals to exploit. Even in this abundance, the furs from some animals such as the lynx, sable, ermine, and even fox and squirrels, were financially unattainable for many people.^{22, 23}

It may seem as though furs were simply used as a social luxury for centuries by this point in history, but they actually served a greater purpose than style and reflection of class. In the third volume of her exploration of the evolution of clothing, Pendergast states that, in Europe in the 16th century, pelts of small animals were draped around the neck as a “flea fur”. As even the wealthiest people in society at this time did not bathe frequently, or wash their

clothing or bedding, humans and their fabric possessions tended to attract fleas. This is where flea furs came in. Flea furs were the pelts of mink, ermine, or ferrets, which were worn over a person's neck in hopes that the thick, odorous fur of these animals would attract the fleas, luring them away from warm, dirty human skin. Flea furs could be worn by anyone in society that had access to furs, but it remains unknown whether the poorest in society wore flea furs. If they did, though, it is likely that they used the furs of rats or other rodents with less desirable pelts. Although the principal purpose of flea furs was to protect people from flea infestations and bites, the wealthiest people still found a way to glamorize their use. Wealthy people would add ornamentation, such as golden chains or jeweled clasps to the furs.²⁴

The flea fur was not the only utility piece that wealthy people turned into a fashion statement in this era, as there were several other pieces popular at this time that combined utility and style. Pendergast goes on to explain that, a bit later, in the 17th century, wealthy people living in large, stone castles had plenty of layers to cover their feet, legs, torso, and arms, but they were struggling to keep their hands warm with a lack of properly-designed garments existing at this time. In northern Europe, including in the United Kingdom, even a fireplace in every room was not enough to warm their hands. There was also a change in the climate at this time towards colder temperatures. For this reason, the fur muff was created to warm the hands of men and women alike. As time went on, though, muffs were used as a functional fashion statement. Even King Louis XIV of France, who ruled from 1643 to 1715, wore fur muffs. His, however, were of tiger, panther, and otter furs. In the 18th century, muffs briefly served as a home for small pets that were a fashionable accessory at the time.²⁵

In the 18th and 19th centuries, the harvest of sea otters for their fur was so ubiquitous that their range, previously covering many parts of the world including the waters surrounding Baja, California and of the Japanese Island of Hokkaido was diminished.²⁶ Sea otters were highly desired due to their thick, water-resistant fur, which made them unique from other popular fur-bearing species exploited for their fur at this time.²⁷

By the 20th century, modern fur use had taken shape. In Great Britain, fur represented fashion, glamour, comfort, and success.²⁸ Dyhouse lays out the state of furs in the 20th century in this region by explaining that fur had been worn throughout history but never by so many as in the affluent West in the first half of the last century fur was viewed as a social luxury just as it had been for centuries. Although there were no longer restrictions in the Western World on who was allowed to wear certain types of furs, current customs around animal fur use were no less shocking. In the early 1900s, hats and muffs affixed with baby squirrels, kittens' heads, and whole birds were worn, and people of any class could be seen wearing coats or stoles with tails or tiny paws sewn onto them. This rather extreme aesthetic use of fur spurred early activism in the animal rights sector, discouraging the use of animals for fashion in such a way. Edith Carrington, an animal rights activist and journal editor, worked to educate people on the cruel ways fur and other animal products were obtained. Unfortunately, this did not change the opinions of many people and animal fur use was still ubiquitous, including in the media. In the first decades of the 20th century, Britain's most expensive fur was that of sable. The 1930s saw London rising as a global fur capital. This era saw the use of fur from monkeys, skunks, hamsters, and housecats, as well as that of many other previously mentioned species. The earliest fur farms developed in Britain at this time, breeding the highly coveted silver fox, which

was becoming rapidly depleted in the wild. The animal of choice following the Second World War shifted to the mink. For those unable to afford a whole coat of mink, mink earrings or a mink brooch may have fulfilled their desires. In the following decades, Britain's fur history becomes quite closely intertwined with that of the United States, and therefore Britain's history recap will stop here, as fur use in the U.S. will be thoroughly laid out in the next section. It is imperative to note, however, that fur farms were banned in the United Kingdom in 2002, yet still exist and persist in the US, many parts of Europe, and around the world.²⁹

The Evolution of the Concept of Luxury

In moving from the deep history of fur use into case studies and then the economics of the fur industry, it is necessary to explain the term "luxury," which is central to my analysis. According to Yves Michaud³⁰, luxury is characterized by "rarity, cost, change, transformation, expenditure, distinction, excess... and... pleasure." It is important to note that the concept of luxury is quite subjective; it varies from region to region and is dependent on the era and corresponding societal beliefs and values.

McNeil lays out luxury as a social concept in explaining that luxury items are those that are in excess of what is expected or deemed necessary. Some goods remain luxurious for centuries, others for a short period of time. Out-of-season flowers, for example, were considered a great luxury for quite some time, until about the 1960s when transportation and improved technology made them much more easily accessible and therefore not considered luxurious.³¹ It may make sense, then, that throughout history, furs from certain animals were considered luxury goods, with very rich people possessing enough excess spending money to purchase a greater quantity of these higher quality, more greatly sought-after furs. As stated

previously, in the history and background review, leopard furs in Ancient Egypt were reserved for royalty. So, not only did their society deem leopard fur as a good to be exclusively used by the richest and most powerful people in society, but there was also a geographical reason why these furs were so special. Leopards were only found in a very small section of Egypt, but more abundantly in more southern parts of Africa and some parts of Saudi Arabia.³² This reflects the difficulty in attaining such goods. Although the incomes of kings may not be able to be assessed in the same way we assess income today, it still seems as though this was a luxury good, as only those with a certain level of power, and therefore money, had access to any amount of the fur.

Luxury is a social concept. Economically, the concept is quite similar, yet is based in quantitative data rather than social perceptions. Luxury goods, as defined in economic terms, are those that consumers purchase in greater proportions as their incomes rise, as opposed to necessity goods which make up a smaller proportion of a person's income as their income rises.³³ In modern US terms, if, say, a person consumed \$100 worth of furs when their income was \$50,000, but \$500 when their income was \$100,000, it could be considered a luxury for them. Fur would be a luxury good in that case because, whereas income doubled, their consumption of furs quintupled, and is now making up a greater percentage of their spending ($\$500/\$100,000$) that was made up by the $\$100/\$50,000$ spent previously. So, in order for a good to be considered a luxury, in the economic sense, for a whole population, it should be the case that the more wealthy individuals in that population are, for the most part, spending a greater *portion* of their wealth on the good than less wealthy individuals.

An example of the economic concept of luxury can be seen in the case of King Henry IV of England, discussed previously.³⁴ He owned a robe of, among other skins, at least 12,000

squirrel pelts. His great wealth as a royal meant he had access to a supply of squirrels only limited by the naturally occurring population. Working people, on the other hand, could only allocate a small portion of their income, if any, to such furs. With fur viewed as a social luxury, greater income would increase the percentage of income that could be spent frivolously, on items such as furs. Although this is speculative, squirrel pelts at this time seem to fit today's economic definition of luxury. As discussed previously, poorer people living in the 13th century would only use furs from cats and dogs, if at all, and when flea furs were used in the 16th century, scholars believe that poor people were limited to the fur of rats or other rodents. Fur from rodents may not seem like they would be a necessity in a social context, but in economic terms, it is in keeping with the concept of luxury. If and when these poorer people earned more money, they would almost definitely decrease their use of "lower class furs". In looking into data on the United States and Finland, the two countries that are the focus of my case studies, it is important to note that there is a lack of data on the incomes of those purchasing furs. As stated previously, a good is considered to be an economic luxury if, as their income rises, the percentage of their income spent on that good also increases. Without this specific data on the incomes of fur purchasers to compare with the quantity and price of these goods, I am unable to say definitively either way whether furs are economic luxury goods. That said, I was still able to analyze other economic trends of the fur trade, such as average spending or quantity produced per person in the given country.

Case Studies of Fur Use: The United States and Finland

Introduction

The goal in this section is to illustrate the way in which two different countries, the United States and Finland, have used furs for the past few centuries, including anecdotal evidence, historical and current data, and predictions of the future of fur use in each country. These cases are not comparative, but reflect my experiences- both personal and through my honors research- of the evolution of the use of fur in two different social, cultural, economic, and geographic contexts.

I chose to focus on Finland and their fur trade following a semester spent studying at the University of Helsinki. I found Helsinki, and Finland in general, quite forward-thinking, progressive, and different from my experience of growing up in a suburban area about an hour outside of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The food, social system, language, climate (including lack of definitive seasons), and so many other characteristics of this beautiful country were completely new to me. What stood out the most, though, was the accessibility of furs. At the Helsinki Market Square, among many other unique foods, gifts, and warm weather gear, there was always at least one (and sometimes more than one) fur stand, in my experience there in 2017. The fur stands typically carried pelts of reindeer, mink, and fox, as well as a variety of other products from sable, rabbits, Finnaraccoon (a.k.a. raccoon dog), beaver, and other furry mammals. There were tiny paws and tails on keychains as well as hair ties made of mink. Stockmann, a large department store in the Nordic states, sold reindeer seat covers, the Helsinki-Vantaa Airport sold large reindeer pelts, and other stores around the city sold mink earmuffs, fox scarves, and many other fur items. Few vendors I visited offered full coats made of fur, although I came across several fur coats in some of the nicer vintage and secondhand shops. I saw some Finnish people, who appeared to be mostly 50 years of age or older, walking

around town wearing fur coats, earmuffs, scarves, or other fur accessories. However, not many Finnish people could be seen wearing these fur garments, contrary to what one may expect based on the abundance of these items in shops. Even so, the accessibility of furs in a country that felt progressive was in so many other ways quite surprising to me. This was particularly the case when I compared these experiences to those I had in the United States.

Growing up in Southeastern Pennsylvania, I do not remember having much exposure to people around me owning items made of fur, other than seeing the occasional older adult wearing a fur coat. Since returning home from Finland, though, I have been more aware of fur use and fur sales in my daily life, though I still do not think that fur is used heavily in this part of the country based on the lack of fur items I have seen in fashion stores in the area. Typically, my encounters with vendors selling fur garments are limited to antique and vintage shops in which one can purchase someone's "Grandma Rose's" mink cap that may not have been worn, other than for dress-up by a grandchild, in six decades. Yet, despite a much lower profile than in Finland, the fur industry in the U.S. has its beginnings in the European settlements in the 'New World' and is alive and well today

I begin the Finland case study in the 14th century, and the US case study a century later, in attempt to focus on the use of furs by colonial settlers and U.S. residents of European descent. Although Native Americans have a rich history in their use of animals for food, clothing, medicines, and spiritual practices, a fact that should not be discounted, my discussion will not engage in these topics. For one, the treatment of Native Americans, starting centuries ago and continuing into the modern day, is unjust in my opinion. For another, the cultural and economic history of the treatment of Native Americans relegates their fur use to a minor part

of the modern story, and not one related to the concept of luxury. I therefore chose to focus on the U.S. demographic for which luxury fur use has been documented. In the U.S. case, I will focus on early European interaction with Native Americans as it relates to the fur trade, but my focus is on this progression of people involved in the luxury use of fur. In Finland, on the other hand, the people currently living there are the same—culturally-- that have lived there for many centuries, sharing a common, or at least similar, language with Finland's native Sami people.

Fur in the United States

According to Eric Dolin, furs have played a great social and economic role in this North American country since the first English settlements in the early 1600s. European settlers obtained beaver and otter pelts from the Native Americans through trade, and then shipped these pelts back to London in order to pay off their debts. The demand of English settlers for pelts led to the killing of millions of animals over the next two centuries, and led to the colonization of the east coast of what is now the U.S. The fur trade attracted other European nations as well, although they experienced significant resistance from the English. The fur trade also influenced many important events in the early history of the country, including westward exploration and later expansion, the Revolutionary War, and the War of 1812. Fur-trading settlers were some of the first people to interact with Native Americans, and the high demand for furs depleted populations of many fur-bearing animals nearly to extinction.³⁵

According to John Witthoft, in the early days of the fur trade in the colonies, the white European settlers did not have a set Native American business partner, but rather traded at ports on the Atlantic with the Native Americans they encountered. These more permanent

trading posts and business interactions occurred much later, at the time of the westward expansion of the occupying Europeans. With no sales documentation kept at this time, archaeologists cannot say when exactly fur trade started on the continent, nor can they quantify the magnitude of the sales for the first few centuries of European arrival and settling. From the late 1600s, the Hurons, Iroquois, Susquehanna, Powhatan, and Cherokee tribes trapped and killed or purchased beavers from the Midwest and Great Lakes Region, and brought the items to the coast, which was mostly unpopulated at that time. The lucrativeness of this trade caused wars among the competing tribes, and European settlers also forced out other tribes living in prime beaver hunting regions were.³⁶

Witthoft continues, stating that beaver furs from Native Americans were unique in that they removed the longer, denser hairs from the beaver pelts rather than just cutting those longer strands down. This left only soft underfur, and therefore made the pelts quite desirable. Native American women performed most of this plucking labor. American beaver pelts purchased by Europeans were sold in Moscow and then distributed in Asia as the European beaver, even while the species was still extant, was less desirable for milliners than the American beaver. In the late 17th century, however, the demand in Asian markets for American beaver fell drastically, and the bustling fur trade of centuries past ended forever for the Native Americans.³⁷

Adelman explains, as time went on, other Europeans settled in various regions of the United States, with great exposure to fur sales as the reach of the European fur trade now spanned much of the continent. In the mid-to-late 17th century, the French began settling in the Midwest. As they settled into their new home, they too began interacting with Native

Americans for the fur trade. Fur traders even married Native American women in order to secure fur trade alliances. Continued encroachment on Native American land led to multiple tribes being limited to a small, shared section of hunting land, which also weakened their stakes in the fur trade.³⁸

It was around this time, in 1822, when the United States saw their first campaign in favor of animal welfare. This occurred in New England, and led to the creation of “the English Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals”.³⁹ That said, this early movement had little effect, and it was over a century later before there was a nationwide movement that spread awareness and began to change the way in which fur was used by this country.

Shifts and hierarchies in fur value—and thus trade and use—were occurring at this time as well. In 1829, while beavers were still highly valued, sea otter skins were much more costly. Although people in the US were certainly using goods made from sea otters, use expanded across the continent of North America. One sea otter pelt cost about as much as ten beaver pelts.⁴⁰

After 1870, fur trade between the United States and Europe decreased dramatically, to the point at which it was no longer considered a major industry between the two regions. By the early 20th century, an estimated 85% of fur was sourced from fur farms⁴¹, adding further efficiency to the late 19th century invention of new and advanced technology that allowed animal pelts to be processed more quickly, efficiently, and at a lower cost. As time went on, technology began to develop that allowed the texture or color of furs to be altered, even to give furs of one species the appearance of another species.⁴²

Further shifts in the U.S. fur market occurred in the 20th century, from early reliance on domestic beaver in the colonial period, to martens and minks. Minks, which could be found throughout the continuous United States, were quite pricey in earlier times, but were becoming more affordable. The year 1890 saw 362,675 mink pelts from Canada and the United States sold in London alone.⁴³

By the early 20th century, the average US citizen was earning more money and therefore had a greater amount of disposable income than in previous generations. Because of this, the demand for fur increased, including the demand for less expensive furs. The furs of lambs, muskrats, wolves, and raccoons, although not used in making fur coats in the same way mink was, could be used for trim or decoration on hats and coats.⁴⁴ An article in the San Francisco Chronicles in 1912 raves about the “pretty fancy” that is having your “hat, muff, scarf and bag made of or trimmed with the same fur”, although the combination of chinchilla and sealskin apparently was also quite becoming. The article swoons over the beauty that is lynx fur, yet states that it is difficult to obtain and quite pricy as “the little animal has become so nearly extinct”.⁴⁵

Before World War I, the U.S. fur trade was much more heavily intertwined with Europe, but that changed in the post-war period. The Fur Trade Review states that Germany had been responsible for processing and dyeing American furs, but the United States was able to learn quite a bit during the war period about fur processing, and therefore began to process their furs themselves. In fact, they became so capable in fur processing that other countries began sending their furs to the U.S. for processing, although those furs were met with tariffs to make up for differences between the economies of the US and Germany. Tariff money also helped

the US to build up their previously often non-existent fur processing infrastructure. This no doubt hurt Germany's economy, as well as that of Europe as a whole, as the newfound US ability to kill and process their own furs meant a lot less of a need for help with their fur industry and therefore a decreased need for trade help from across the Atlantic.⁴⁶

In the first half of the 20th century, the demand for and marketing of fur increased drastically, especially following the economic situation of the 1930s. The Great Depression saw a decrease in the purchase of furs due to the suffering economy. The end of World War II in the next decade saw fur purchasing increase considerably.⁴⁷ An analysis of Sears catalogs from the 1950s, with mink and similar furs in vogue, showed that furs of animals such as the marmot were dyed the color "mink" and sold at a significantly lower price (1951 marmot cape \$153.30; 1958 mink stole with "let-out pelts" for \$153.30).⁴⁸ In 1951 there were also scarves made of squirrel fur that was dyed the color "sable", and a set of 3 skins, with tails and paws attached, cost just over \$17.00.⁴⁹ Purchasing coats of red fox rather than silver fox, or garments trimmed with lamb fur, allowed the consumer to be fashionable without breaking the bank.⁵⁰ Some early regulation on fur use occurred in 1951, when the Fur Products Labeling Act was instated. This law required fur products to be properly labeled, though products under \$150 do not require this labeling. Although attempts have been made since this period to require the labeling of all fur products, no legislation has been passed yet.⁵¹

It wasn't until the passage of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, the Federal Trade Commission of the United States had to take a closer look at the fur industry. Under this act, it was forbidden to sell the furs of the "leopard, tiger, ocelot, cheetah, jaguar, and a few types of wolf".⁵² Then, in the next two decades, public opinion on furs began to change

drastically, with high-profile anti-fur activists grabbing the attention of many. Starting in the 1980s, profits began to plummet as activists in animal rights and welfare spoke up, environmentalists viewed the killing of animals for fashion to be an ecological crime rather than a commodity that had nothing to do with nature as the fashion industry tried to convince their customers. Much of the middle class supported the anti-fur movement, whereas wealthier people rejected the attack on their fashion statements. Indigenous peoples, such as the Inuit tribe, also spoke out against the anti-fur movement, wishing to continue their traditions of trapping animals.⁵³ In 2000, a law was passed that prohibited the sale, trade, import, or export of cat and dog fur in the United States.

It is difficult to discuss the animal rights movement without discussing People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA). According to their online timeline, PETA was formed in 1980, first focusing on animals used in labs as well as the slaughter of chickens. In 1992, PETA protested a fur expo in Tokyo, Japan, which later led to the campaign entitled “Rather Go Naked Than Wear Fur”. Many people know this as “the campaign with the naked models”. In 1994, they fought back against cruelty among furriers, including a chinchilla farmer in California that uses electrocution, and another fur farmer that killed his minks by injecting them with weed killer. After the backlash caused by PETA, both of these entities agreed to stop killing their animals using such cruel methods. Later in that year, PETA was able to convince Calvin Klein to stop designing with fur, making them the first large-scale fashion company to agree to forego fur. In 1997, PETA protested fox farmers that were killing their foxes via anal electrocution, and were able to seek legal action against the fur rancher for his crimes against the animals. In 2006, PETA discussed the discontinuation of designing with furs with Polo Ralph Lauren and

they agreed, donating their remaining fur products to the poor in Mongolia. After a 2014 investigation into the furriers of the rabbits that produce angora wool showed that the rabbits were being tied down, screaming as their fur was ripped from their bodies, big names such as H&M and Tommy Hilfiger decided to stop selling angora products. PETA is also celebrating the decision of Gucci to terminate the use of fur in their designs in the spring of 2018.⁵⁴

The anti-fur and animal rights movement was certainly impactful, but did not completely do away with U.S. fur use. The number of mink farms in the U.S. decreased from 438 to 318 between 1998 and 2002. At that point, Utah, Wisconsin, and Minnesota were the top three states in number of mink farms. The average annual mink output between 2000 and 2010 was about 2.71 million pelts per year, and has not exceeded 3 million in any year since 1991. That said, the average size of minks has increased over the last 20 years, so mink farmers are able to make up for some of the loss associated with the decrease in quantity demanded by charging more for the larger pelts.⁵⁵

My personal experience with furs in the U.S. was shaped by my experience in Finland. Although I really didn't think about the fur industry in the United States very much before going to Finland, my assumption was that the fur trade in this country was basically a dead industry, or maybe just something that occurred in small pockets in the Midwest. I inaccurately believed that even though there were so many other countries in the world that are much more progressive than the U.S. is, Finland included, at least we can pat ourselves on the back for how forward-thinking we are in terms of animal treatment. With more research, though, I have found that the high horse I had been riding, namely the belief that there was something that placed us on the right side of history as compared to other countries, was not supported by

facts. Through online searches of fur farms and businesses selling fur, I have found that, not only is the fur trade still present, but the industry is present right under my nose- with the closest fur dealers to Collegeville located in Wayne and King of Prussia, both just 10 miles away.



Figure 1. Mink hat at a kiosk at the King of Prussia Mall in Pennsylvania. Photographed by J. Detweiler, 2017.



Figure 2. Rabbit keychains at a kiosk at the King of Prussia Mall in Pennsylvania. Photographed by J. Detweiler, 2017.

A trip to the King of Prussia Mall in Pennsylvania, for example, showed that this mall with stores oriented to a middle income and upper income clientele sells mink hats (Figure 1), as well as a variety of items made from rabbit fur (Figure 2). This mall boasts several kiosks and shops that sell items made of animal products, although the locations I came across seemed to sell mostly items made of rabbit fur. There is another nearby fur dealer in Wayne, Pennsylvania called Zinman Furs, which sells a variety of fur garments as well as offering cold storage for furs and restoration of old fur items that have not aged gracefully.⁵⁶

As of 2007, there were still 11 mink farms in the state of Pennsylvania alone.⁵⁷ This is confirmed by the Association for the Protection of Fur-Bearing Animals, which also states that 79,530 pelts, mostly of mink, are sold annually in Pennsylvania. Wisconsin appears to be the state with the highest quantity of fur production, selling over one million pelts per year. Utah produces over 850,000 per year, and numerous other states produce over 100,00 per year. This data is current as of 2013.⁵⁸

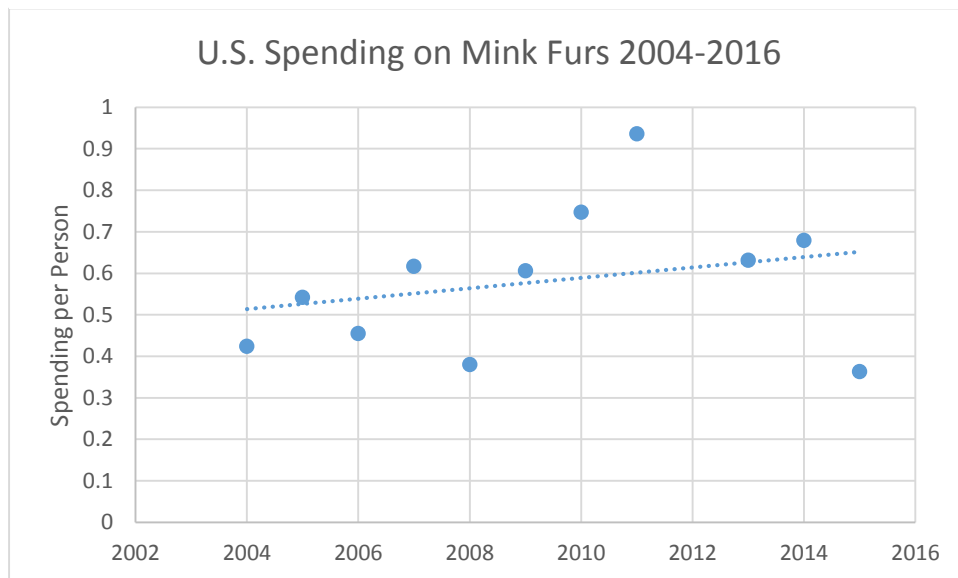
US: Economics

In considering furs within the United States, many people think of luxury, or even frivolously. No matter their stance on the ethicality of fur, they often think of goods that are rather expensive and therefore only attainable by very rich people. Although furs within the United States may still be considered luxurious by social measures stated previously, such as the lack of access to furs due to many stores not carrying goods, analyzing fur as an economic luxury requires significantly more calculation, with the classification a variable from year to year.

In exploring fur as a luxury good in the United States in recent years, I drew on population data from the U.S. Census Bureau via Google⁵⁹, as well as that on US mink farming⁶⁰ to create Figure 3. In looking at this data, it appears that spending on mink furs is rather steady over time, with the average person spending under one dollar per year on mink furs. This, of course, does not mean that every person within the country actually spent around \$.40 on furs in 2004, but rather that the percentage of the population that is buying mink is rather low. It is also necessary to note that spending changes in a similar pattern to the way in which prices change. For example, the greatest point of spending over the time covered on this graph was in 2011. This was also the year with the highest mink pelt prices, at \$94.30.⁶¹ Similarly, in 2015,

when the spending was the lowest over the reviewed timeline, the price was also the lowest, coming in at \$31.10 per pelt.⁶² As expected, quantity also changes in respect to prices, with higher prices resulting in fewer pelts purchased, and lower prices resulting in a greater number purchased.

Figure 3. Spending on mink pelts in the 21st century. Data collected from the US Census Bureau and Fur Commission USA. Data synthesized by J. Detweiler. 2018.



US: A Change in Sight?

It is impossible to predict the future of the fur trade in the United States with complete certainty, but recent decisions suggest that a move away from furs are more than just a move

in favor of ethics: it's the law. On March 20th of this year, 2018, San Francisco became the first major city to ban the sale of furs. They are joined by Berkeley and West Hollywood on the list of Californian cities that have banned the fur trade. This act will go into effect in January of 2019, with current inventories of fur products allowed to be sold until the beginning of 2020. This law does not apply to secondhand and vintage shops. Although the perception of California by some people may be based in an image of eternally warm weather and endless days on the beach, where people are too warm in temperature and too cold in their feelings towards killing animals to desire fur items, the fur trade was significant in San Francisco. The San Francisco Chamber of Commerce estimates that fur sales account for \$40 million per year, with analysis of their most recent census, from 2012, by their Office of Economic Analysis, suggesting that six years ago the totals were coming in around \$11 million per year. Although there is clearly some discretion between reports on the breadth of the city's fur sales, it was clearly a major industry. Animal rights activists are celebrating the San Francisco ruling as a victory, but small fur-selling businesses in San Francisco are frustrated that they did not get a say in the decision, and are worried for the future of their businesses.⁶³ Larger-scale fashion-producing firms, on the other hand, who are making the decision to ban fur on their own accord, can change the products sold to consumers, either directly or through the goods they make available to retailers. The year 2018 has seen Versace decide to stop using fur, now joining corporations such as Gucci and Hugo Boss which already decided to phase out their fur use.⁶⁴

Fur in Finland



Figure 4. A fur stand at the outdoor Helsinki Market Square. Photographed by J. Detweiler, 2017.



Figure 5. A fur accessory stand at the outdoor Helsinki Market Square. Photographed by J. Detweiler, 2017.



Figure 6. Mink tails keychains at a stand at the outdoor Helsinki Market Square. Photographed by J. Detweiler, 2017.



Figure 7. Fox pelts and other fur items at a fur stand at the outdoor Helsinki Market Square. Photographed by J. Detweiler, 2017.



Figure 8. Sweater trimmed with raccoon fur at a store at the Helsinki-Vantaa Airport. Photographed by J. Detweiler, 2017.

The photographs above, mostly taken at the Helsinki Market Square between February and May of 2017, show the great access to a variety of furs in Helsinki, as evidenced by the species represented in the pictures. Figure 4 shows a stand that was primarily selling reindeer pelts. Figure 5 shows a variety of accessories, from bag adornments to hair scrunches to hats, made mostly from mink or fox. Figure 6 of mink tail keychains for sale, likely for just a few Euros. Figure depicts fox pelts, which look shockingly lifelike with their plastic bead eyes. The final photo, in Figure 8, was taken at the Helsinki-Vantaa Airport, and it is of a sweater trimmed with raccoon fur. The price tag places it at a not-so-modest 220 Euros.

Early on in my exploration of Finland during the spring of 2017, I came across the National Museum of Finland, in Helsinki. What stood out the most to me and was most pertinent to my research was the little room that had a glass case filled with various products made of animal skins. Particularly, I was drawn to the “bouquet”, if you will, of squirrel pelts hanging by a string. I checked out the description, which stated that they were “*kiihtelys*” and gave a brief but uninformative description of the product.⁶⁵



Figure 9. *Kiihtelys*, or a group of 40 squirrels, on display at the National Museum of Finland. Photographed by J. Detweiler, 2017.

When I returned to my apartment to use the internet, via Wi-Fi from a router that worked about as frequently as the sun shone in beautiful Helsinki (which is just about never, in the winter), I explored the term “*kiihtelys*”, but with limited success. Finally, after returning home to the United States, I reached out to the museum via email to inquire further. They directed me to The Hunting Museum of Finland, located in Riihimäki, about 65 kilometers north of Helsinki. I was able to get in touch with the museum’s Jukka Peltonen, who was able to provide me with some quite interesting information about “*kiihtelys*” as well as other aspects of Finnish fur use history. He explained that “*kiihtelys*” are a group of forty squirrel pelts, and they were used as a form of money. He explained: “For example, in 1550s at the market of the city of

Tornio in Northern Finland, with two kiihtelys you could buy 60 [kilograms] of salt or six axes or one cross-bow or 50 [kilograms of] bread. Two kiihtelys had the same value as, for example, one or two bear-skins at that time. It has also been explained that etymologically the Finnish word raha, meaning money, has originally meant fur-skin, possibly a squirrel pelt.”

Further, he explained the use of squirrel fur throughout time in Finnish society, as it was relevant for centuries. In fact, for quite a bit of Finland’s history, long before their independence in 1917, squirrels were the basis of the country’s fur economy. This continued through to the 20th century, though, with the period from 1933 to 1942 in which squirrel was the most important game species in the country. This amounted to 96 million Finnish Marks. In good hunt years, 2.5 million squirrels could be caught, although at some points there were protection measures taken that decreased the volume of the hunt. The 1950s saw a great decrease in squirrel hunting due to declining demand combined with increases in fur farming. With the farming of larger fur-bearing animals, squirrels, with their thin and fragile skins, were no longer necessary for use as coat linings or on hats. Current squirrel hunt figures are in the neighborhood of a few thousand per year.⁶⁶

Since the Middle Ages, the Sami people of Northern Finland have sold furs of reindeer, beaver, fox, and other fur-bearing species to Finns, Scandinavians, and Slavic people, who then traded them with central Europeans. The 17th century saw this trade of the Sami people with the Swedes and Finns increasing in importance. For this reason, King Carl IX of Sweden regulated the trade, requiring that the fur trade only take place at given times and in given locations, as enforced by crown officials. During these trade markets, the king’s appointees would oversee transactions and collect taxes for the Sami people. The royals and their

appointees also erected churches on market grounds, and priests came to bring Lutheranism to the Samis.⁶⁷ With such high value placed on the fur trade, it is not surprising that the European beaver was nearly extinct by the 18th century.⁶⁸

At the beginning of the 17th century in Finland, the fur trade was regulated by the government rather than by the actual fur traders. As the century progressed, fur traders and fur craftsmen were able to unite under a guild. The guild was specifically for tanners and furriers, and was founded in Turku, Finland in 1675. All of this aided in bringing Finnish furs to the global market, although the expansion took centuries to fully reach the United States. In fact, it was not until the 1970s that Finnish furs were widely available in major US cities. This was due to the fact that, previously, about 98% of furs exported from Finland were pelts rather than the final goods, such as coats, that American women demanded.⁶⁹

In a summary on trade and industry in Finland from the early 20th century, the fur industry is said to possess sufficient infrastructure to product 150,000-200,000 hides per year. At this point the raw materials traded within the country were mostly imported, with their hides coming from the United States, several European countries including Russia and Belgium, and Argentina. Some of these were sold as raw hides, while others were used for leather. The Finnish fur industry sold their best domestic hides abroad, and kept the cheaper raw material within the country. This all took place soon after Finland became independent in 1917, so they were still working to establish their own industries, while also working and trading with other countries.⁷⁰

In 1986, Finland was the world's leading exporter of farmed furs, "accounting for about 1/3 of the global market" for fur. The fur trade also makes up about 3% of the country's

exports. At this point, the country boasted about 5700, mostly family-owned fur farms, amounting to a total of 8 million pelts, of blue fox, mink, Finnaracon, and fitch (*Mustela putorius*, aka European polecat)⁷¹, pelts per year. These pelts were sold at auctions, and although there were fur auctions in London, New York, and around the world, Finnish fur auctions in Vantaa set the prices for other auctions. A fur auction in Vantaa in 1985 sold the most expensive pelt ever sold at this point, the equivalent of \$950 US dollars of buying power in the 1980s, or about \$2,232 today. In this decade, Finland began to see artificial insemination of different species to create novel animal breeds with similarly new and unique fur to eventually harvest and sell. This decade also saw a demand for “pink mink” fur dyeing and other techniques that many farmers felt were extreme.⁷²

The fur trade is still a prominent industry in Finland. As of 2016, there are about a thousand fur farms in Finland, many of which are family-owned and located in Ostrobothnia, in western Finland. They lead the world in the breeding of foxes, and are a significant power in mink and finnaracon breeding. Although there are recommendations and laws in place to ensure the well-being of the animals, many people, in the country and beyond, remain unhappy with the current ways in which fur-bearing animals raised in fur farms are treated.⁷³

Although the fur trade continues in Finland, there have been movements in favor of animal rights and in opposition to current practices around animal treatment in the fur industry. Oikeutta Eläimille is a Finnish animal rights organization that posts statistics and photos as shocking as those posted by PETA. One example of this can be seen with blue foxes that are raised for the fur trade. The site states that the average healthy weight for a male blue fox in the wild is between 3 and 4 kilograms, yet male blue foxes that are caged at fur farms

frequently have a mass of 20 kilograms or above. This increase in size means more sellable fur, but it is quite detrimental to the health of the foxes. Due to the excess mass, their skin tends to fold and be quite loose, and for this reason they often have bent feet, which are trying to balance out and hold up the overweight creature. The Finnish Animal Welfare Law allows for the restriction of selective breeding if it causes the animal harm, yet in practice this law is rarely enforced, and perpetrators are rarely punished.⁷⁴

Finland: Economics

In Finland, in my experience, fur goods are widely available year-round at the outdoor Helsinki Market Square, in clothing boutiques, as well as in most department stores, including Stockmann, and even in the Helsinki-Vantaa Airport. In terms of geographical access to vendors selling fur of rabbits, mink, sable, reindeer, beaver, several varieties of fox, and other fur-bearing species, there is really no issue of scarcity. There is also access to furs that are priced such that they are attainable by most people, taking away the social stigma of furs as an unattainable luxury. For example, one vendor in the Helsinki Market Square sold sable paw keychains (Figure 10) for 5 Euros, or 6.10 U.S. Dollars (as of April 2018), and a reindeer skin chair cushion at Stockmann costing 24.90 Euros (30.42 U.S. Dollars).⁷⁵ The chair cushion may be a bit more expensive than some shoppers would choose to pay for such an item, but both items are likely attainable by the average person. Of course this is not representative of the price of every single good, with the smallest, least expensive full mink pelts coming in around 125 Euros, and reindeer pelts varying from several hundred Euros to over one thousand Euros depending on a variety of factors.

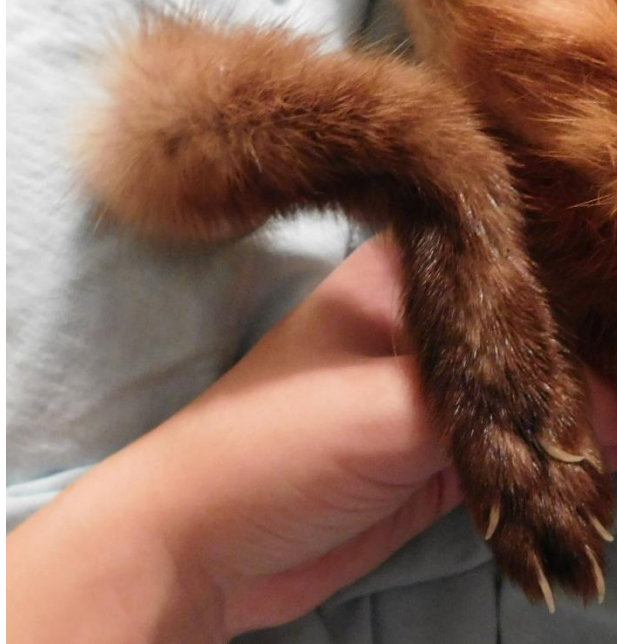


Figure 10. Sable paw keychain purchased at a fur accessory stand at the outdoor Helsinki Market Square. Photographed by J. Detweiler, 2017.

In exploring the concept of luxury as it relates to fur from an economics prospective, the trends in fur consumption vary based on the type of fur. In looking at species such as the mink and fitch, consumption is certainly decreasing. Figure 11, as well as Figure 12, is a synthesis of findings from the *Statistical Yearbook of Finland 2008*⁷⁶, *The Statistical Yearbook of Finland 2014*⁷⁷, and Finnish population data⁷⁸. In the graph, there is a drop in consumption from 1980, when each citizen purchased about .8 of a mink or fitch fur garment per year. In 1990, each person purchased about 0.6 an item made of fur of one of these animals, and the number has been under 0.4 per person since 1991, dropping below 0.3 per person in the early 2000s. Although I was unable to acquire Finnish statistics data collected more recently than 2008, the trend was still towards an overall decrease in 2014. The situation in regards to fox and raccoon dog furs is a bit different. As seen in Figure 12, 1980 saw each Finnish person purchasing the

equivalent of 0.25 raccoon dog or fox pelts per year. In 1990 it was 0.4 per person, 1998 saw a peak at 0.5 per person, and for the next 10 years the data reflects roughly 0.4 of these pelts per person. From 2011-2014, the data reflects that less than 0.4 of a pelt from these animals were purchased per person. Of course a person cannot actually purchase half of a pelt, but this allows us to look at the trends such that we can see the breakdown of purchasing among all people within the country. Certainly there are many people that, in looking at this data from a more relatable sense, purchase a ten-person share of pelts. It is also necessary to note that there is a huge decrease in consumption of furs between 1990 and 1991. A report by Animalia, an animal rights organization, states that the hunting of wild animals for fur was banned in 1991, which explains this dramatic change.⁷⁹ Based on these findings, the fur industry does not necessarily appear to be shrinking in production, but rather shifting the animals that are presumably more popular due to the increase in the consumption of the latter over the former. Although the case studies on the United States and Finland are not meant to be comparative, I feel it is important to note that the economic analysis is a bit different between the two countries. Whereas I analyzed the US using data on population, quantity of consumption, and average prices to find the average spending per person, the lack of available price data for Finland meant that this country could only be analyzed in terms of quantity consumed, versus spending per person per fur pelt as was the case for the United States.

Figure 11. Consumption of mink and fitch pelts per capita. Data collected from the *Statistical Yearbook of Finland 2008* and *2014*. Synthesized by J. Detweiler, 2018.

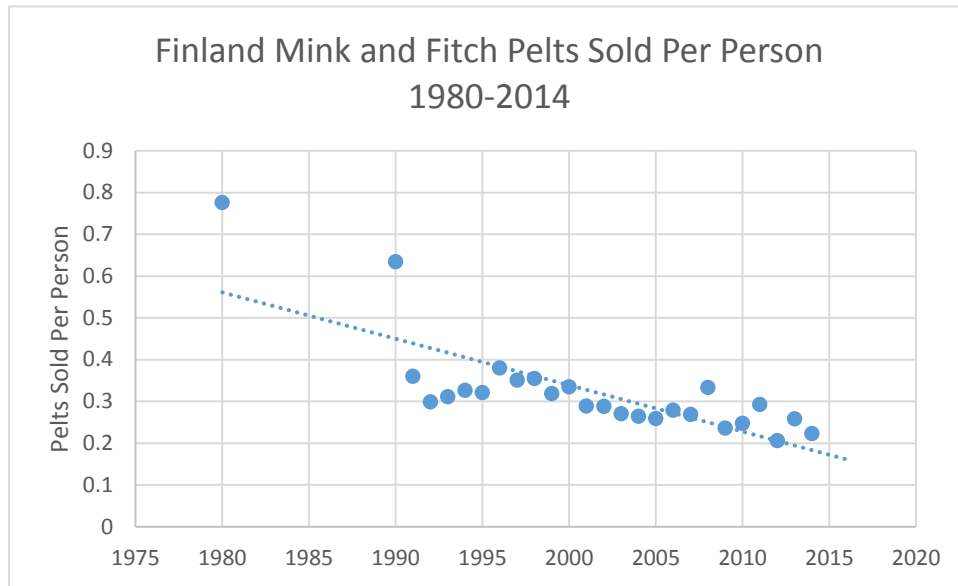
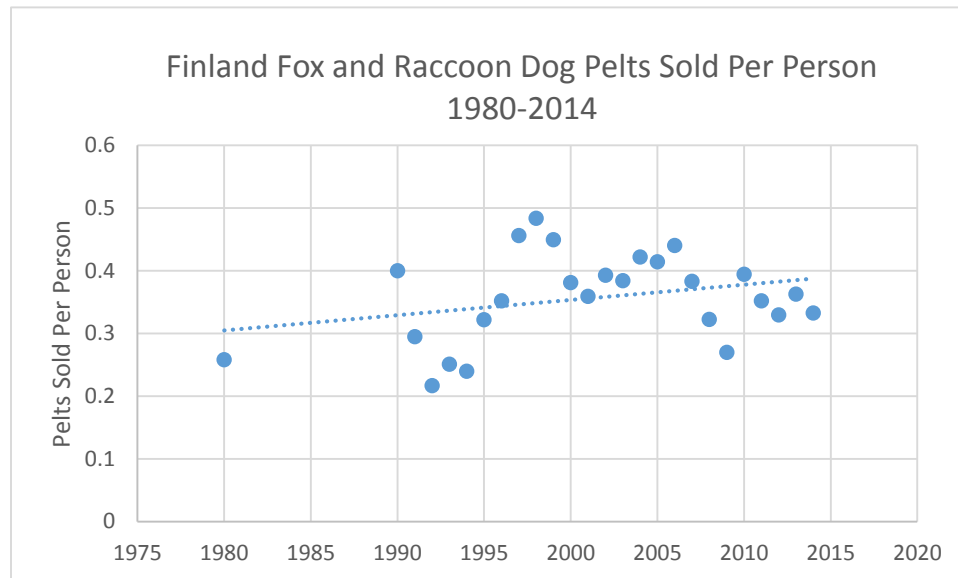


Figure 12. Consumption of fox and raccoon dog (Finnaraccoon) pelts per capita. Data collected from the *Statistical Yearbook of Finland 2008* and *2014*. Synthesized by J. Detweiler, 2018.



A Change in Sight: Finland

It is difficult to say with certainty how any industry will look years down the road. That said, after an email conversation with Dr. Elisa Aaltola, a Finnish philosopher and author who has committed much of her time to and published works in matters relating to animal rights, I was able to gain some insight into possible changes in Finland in the coming years. She suggested that fur consumption among Finns was in decline, but was unable to provide figures on the actual consumption of fur by Finnish people. She stated that garments made fully of fur, such as fur coats, are quite uncommon among Finns, but other garments that are trimmed or lined with fur, such as the lining in the hood of a coat, are sometimes worn by Finnish people. That said, she suggests that the fur in some of these garments is included in such small amounts that the Finnish people that purchase them may not even be aware that they are buying a garment lined with real fur. Dr. Aaltola explains that wearing or generally owning items made of fur is not especially fashionable in Finland, with the exception of exceptionally wealthy people that may still wittingly wear fur garments. Finland's fur market is mostly kept afloat financially through tourists purchasing the fur goods at outdoor markets or in shops, with exports of fur goods also playing a huge role in Finland's economic situation surrounding fur goods. She stated that a considerable proportion of Finns, between 65 and 69% of the population, are in support of ethical fur farming and the selling or wearing of fur garments. Of course, the term "ethical" is rather subjective in this case, as many people think that killing animals for fashion is unethical no matter the method of killing. As is the case in many parts of the world, feelings towards fur are very much generational. Older people tend to be more accepting of fur farming and of people wearing furs, whereas younger people are more likely to be in opposition to this

practice. Opinions also differ between rural and urban areas, and between males and females. It is widely agreed upon that it will be a very long time before the Finnish government makes any moves towards banning fur farming, yet a social change away from furs and in the direction of animal rights is predicted to occur in Finland within the next 10-15 years.⁸⁰

Summary and Conclusions

In looking back at this last academic year spent compiling data on furs, as well as previous time spent preparing for the research, I have gained cultural insight into both my own country of residence, the U.S., and a country in which I was a student resident: Finland. There are several aspects of my learning process that require retrospection. I began my research project attempting to look into all non-food-related animal products. Shortly into my research period, I realized that this was not all that feasible to do successfully in the course of an academic year. The choice to focus on furs still allowed me to synthesize my time abroad with my academic interests and concentrations in environmental studies, biology, and economics without overwhelming myself or limiting the level of detail at which to explore any one concept. This focus was the best call for me.

In terms of the material itself, the history of furs is quite interesting. It molded societies and potentially even meant the survival for one species at the expense of another due to lack of ability by the latter to use furs as efficiently as the former. In this case, one of the archaeological predictions as to why the Neanderthals died off (whereas Sapiens survived) has to do with the clothing-making abilities of our species, which allowed for protection from the elements during the Ice Age. Many early societies restricted fur use, or the use of the furs of certain animals, to royalty or the very wealthy. Royals sometimes abused this luxury, by some

standards, by combining thousands of dead animals to make the most opulent of garments. So, while many aspects of societies have changed globally over the past millennia, this idea of furs being social luxuries restricted to high societies still remains in the United States and other parts of the world.

The use of fur was the basis of many modern societies' economic development, such as squirrel pelts being traded as currency in Finland over 500 years ago. The fur trade was also one of the earliest connections between Native Americans and Europeans in the "New World", and part of the structure of early European-Native American interaction, which contributed to the growth of the European fur trade. For several centuries in the United States, fur was considered especially luxurious, beautiful, and, when worn by a woman, reflected that she had a man that loved her deeply. In Finland, with their cold temperatures nearly year-round, fur could be used for both warmth and style. Although both countries still have an active fur trade, social movements have increased awareness of the treatment of fur-bearing animals on farms. However, these social movements may not yet have, in either country, drastically changed behaviors in purchasing furs.

So what is all this talk about luxury? Many people think of a luxury as something that is difficult to access, rare, and out of the ordinary. This is in keeping with the social definition of luxury, and by this definition, fur is still likely considered a luxury in many parts of the US. Furs in Finland are much more ubiquitous than they are in the United States, and inexpensive items made of fur can be found easily at street markets. From my understanding of Finnish perceptions as gained from conversations with scholars and fellow students, the culture around fur is related more closely to their family history or to wealthy people than to them. That said,

the ease of affordable access suggests that furs in Finland may not be viewed by the average Finn as a social luxury as compared to common perceptions in the US. As far as I am aware, no research exists to confirm this, it is simply my educated guess based on my experience and research. Economically, the consumption of fur in Finland has decreased with the mink and fitch and increased with the fox and raccoon dog, making it difficult to make any overarching judgements on furs as a whole within the country. That said, the view of certain animals as a luxury may have changed, causing a shift in the desirability, and therefore the economic decisions, of fur buyers. In terms of the US and economic luxury, the consumption of mink, which seems to be among the most commonly consumed fur within this country, is rather steady in recent years. Although organizations such as PETA have certainly raised awareness of U.S. and European fur use, their activism does not seem to have led to an obvious change in purchasing behavior in recent decades. It is important to note that international trade is a considerable contributing factor in fur sales in the fur trade in both the US and in Finland, and therefore the purchasing decisions are not just from those within the country but rather from fur buyers around the world.

In moving forward, it seems as though the phasing out of fur use is possible in both countries, although it will likely be a slow process. The economic dependence of fur-selling business owners, and their employees, on the proliferation of the fur trade makes the immediate banning of fur farms or fur sales impossible. The reduction of the size of the fur trade requires changes such as consumers refusing to purchase items made of fur, firms refusing to sell these items, or policy change through the government. There are many working pieces in any decision that impacts livelihoods and a feeling of need for freedom to choose

what goods we can access as consumers. It does not seem to me, at this point in time, that there will ever be a world in which animals are not killed for their fur. That said, policy change and an alteration in consumer behavior could greatly alter the global fur trade in years to come.

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