

Transnational Networks of Child Sexual Abuse and Consumerism: Edward Brongersma and the Pedophilia Debate of the 1970s and 1980s

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IN ITS AUGUST 1973 ISSUE, the West German gay magazine *du&ich* reported on the first International Pedophile Meeting in Breda, the Netherlands, which was attended by “about 70 pedophiles and a number of interested listeners from the Netherlands, Belgium, France, the Federal Republic and Switzerland.”¹ The main purpose of the meeting had been to end the isolation of pedophile men, but there had also been two academic lectures on the subject. In a photo attached to the article, one could see the two Dutch lecturers: the psychologist Dr. Frits Bernard and the lawyer and senator of the Partij van de Arbeid Dr. Edward Brongersma. A closer look at Bernard’s hands reveals an issue of the German educational studies journal *betrifft: erziehung* from earlier that year. The title theme of this issue had also been pedophilia and the question of its possible decriminalization. Bernard himself had written the central article, in which he formulated the thesis that “nonviolent and consensual” sexual contact with adults was even conducive to child development. With the choice of the issue’s title, “Pedophilia: Crime without Victims,” the editorial team had positioned itself clearly.² At the meeting in Breda, Bernard distributed

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¹ “Internationales Pädophilentreffen in Breda,” *du&ich*, no. 8 (1973): 58.

² Frits Bernard, “Pädophilie—eine Krankheit? Folgen für die Entwicklung der kindlichen Psyche,” *betrifft: erziehung* 6, no. 4 (1973): 21–23; Meike Sophia Baader, “Blinde Flecken der Disziplin und ihrer Geschichte: Die Involviertheit der Wissenschaft in pädosexuelle Diskurspositionen der 1960er bis 1990er Jahre,” in *Erinnern, Umschreiben, Vergessen: Die Stiftung des disziplinären Gedächtnisses als soziale Praxis*, ed. Karin Amos, Markus Rieger-Ladich, and Anne Rohstock (Weilerswist: Velbrück, 2019), 258–63.

questionnaires to the participants in order to collect the empirical basis for further studies.

This small vignette reveals a multitude of transgressive elements that were characteristic of the debate on pedophilia in the 1970s and 1980s. The meeting is one example of the intertwining of academic discourses and incipient political self-organization of pedophile men in the early 1970s. Common to both was the demand for a decriminalization of “nonviolent and consensual” sexual acts between adults and children. And while academics such as Bernard and Brongersma, both pedophiles themselves, tried to influence political discourse with their publications, the participants of the meeting were in turn called upon to actively participate in the production of knowledge on pedophilia.

The transnational character of both academic discourse and political activism is also clear. The conference participants came from countries where the debate on the decriminalization of sexual acts between adults and minors during the 1970s was particularly intense and open-minded (France, the Netherlands, West Germany) or where political self-organization as pedophiles was particularly pronounced (Switzerland, the Netherlands, West Germany).³ Not only national borders were crossed here but also those between academic disciplines, between different media, between homosexuals and pedophiles, and between academics and activists. Bernard’s contribution for *betrifft: erziehung* is a prime example: here a Dutch psychologist published in a West German pedagogical journal, presented it to an international and largely nonacademic audience in the Netherlands, and was thus again mentioned in a German gay magazine.

That the report appeared in *du&ich* was no coincidence. In general, the gay movement, in its struggle against discriminatory age-of-consent laws, formed the “most important political resonance space” of the pedophile movement.⁴ *Du&ich*, however, was not a left-wing political GayLib

³ In this regard representatives from the United Kingdom were missing; the Paedophile Information Exchange (PIE) and Paedophile Action for Liberation (PAL) had been comparably early attempts to politically organize pedophiles, while an academic debate on the topic was virtually absent in the British context. Until the Deutsche Studien- und Arbeitsgemeinschaft Pädophilie (DSAP) was founded in 1978, West German pedophiles organized themselves under the umbrella of British and Swiss groups; the DSAP, on the other hand, also recruited members from neighboring countries. See Dieter Ullmann[?], “Zur Geschichte der Pädobewegung 1975–1980,” ca. 1980, Pädosexualität und sexueller Missbrauch, 2.2—Geschichte der Pädobewegung, Archiv Schwules Museum, Berlin; Sven Reichardt, “Pädosexualität im linksalternativen Milieu und bei den Grünen in den 1970er bis 1990er Jahren,” in *Tabubruch und Entgrenzung: Kindheit und Sexualität nach 1968*, ed. Meike Sophia Baader et al. (Cologne: Böhlau, 2017), 152.

⁴ Alexander Hensel, Tobias Neef, and Robert Pausch, “Von ‘Knabenliebhabern’ und ‘Power-Pädos’: Zur Entstehung und Entwicklung der westdeutschen Pädophilen-Bewegung,” in *Die Grünen und die Pädosexualität: Eine bundesdeutsche Geschichte*, ed. Alexander Hensel, Stephan Klecha, and Franz Walter (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015), 137.

publication but rather a photo magazine that gave nude photographs and erotic stories at least as much space as discussions of legal and social issues that were relevant to homosexual men. *Du&ich*, one of the most commercially successful gay magazines of the 1970s, was continually accused of (or hailed for) primarily addressing “boy lovers” both with its articles and its photographic motifs.⁵ Thus, the debate on pedophilia also has a hitherto overlooked media and consumer history dimension.

Recent research, including my own, on the question of pedophilia in the larger context of sexual-political developments since the 1960s has either focused on questions of political organization or tried to understand the debate in terms of the history of ideas and historical discourse. The example of Edward Brongersma, however, shows the importance of personal networks that were established through the sphere of consumption, mainly through travel (and travel stories) and child pornography. It also shows, I argue, how Brongersma and others needed to reconcile their wishes for and intellectual claims about the consensual character of pedophile contacts with the apparent exploitative and sexually abusive practices they were engaged in. Edward Brongersma (and his archive) thus appears as an important node in a transnational consumer network that was mainly established through sex tourism and the production, exchange, and consumption of child pornography. This consumer network preceded, accompanied, and continued beyond the existence of the political and academic debate on the possible decriminalization of pedophilia.

After a short discussion of the research literature and Brongersma’s position on pedophilia, I will show how Brongersma and others used travel and stories about it to establish a European pedophile network, arguing that the search for a modern pedophile identity relied heavily on racialized images. This leads me to take a closer look at images and practices in a postcolonial context and the public and private use of erotic and pornographic material, showing how the public image of benevolent “boy lovers” collided with the private practices of Brongersma and his correspondents. Among his many functions, Brongersma served as a contributor and member of the editorial board to the journal *Paidika: The Journal of Paedophilia*. *Paidika* was published in Amsterdam between 1987 and 1995 in an attempt to establish pedophilia as a legitimate subject of cultural studies. An analysis of the journal therefore supplements this article.

The sources on which I base my work are, above all, the bequest and archive of Edward Brongersma, which are kept at the International Institute for Social History in Amsterdam and which I have been able to partially consult after approval by the Fonds Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek Seksualiteit (FWOS), formerly the Brongersma Foundation. In doing so, I rely mainly

⁵ Magdalena Beljan, *Rosa Zeiten? Eine Geschichte der Subjektivierung männlicher Homosexualität in den 1970er und 1980er Jahren der BRD* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2014), 125.

on a sample of Brongersma's correspondence from 1962 to 1995.⁶ Within a discourse analysis framework, I examine cultural practices (such as traveling and letter writing) in general and the use of photographic images in particular.

SEXUAL POLITICS AND THE QUESTION OF PEDOPHILIA

Although Brongersma published and corresponded with people in a number of countries, West Germany took a special place in his life and work. His fluent German-language skills allowed him to communicate directly with men from Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, but Germany in particular also proved to be a valuable sales market. The reception of Brongersma's and Bernard's ideas was arguably nowhere as great outside the Netherlands as in the Federal Republic. It is therefore perhaps no coincidence that the German pedophile movement has received comparatively more attention from scholars.

A project at Hildesheim University under the supervision of Meike Baader studied, within a discourse analysis approach, the contributions of educationalists and social scientists to the debate, with a strong focus on gendered and generational power hierarchies.⁷ Their findings highlight the pivotal role of the empirical search for "normal" sexual behavior by sexual scientists. Unless it could be empirically proven that pedophile contacts cause serious harm to children, the argument went, there was no reason to criminalize them. Most often, however, psychological trauma was attributed to secondary harms, such as insensitive parents or judges. Only after David Finkelhor objected in 1979 that children were not capable of "informed consent" to such acts and as feminist activists exerted increasing political pressure starting in the mid-1980s did this line of argument lose support.⁸

Another research project, at the Institut für Demokratieforschung, focused from a political science perspective on the Green Party's involvement in the pedophilia debate while also discussing the history of ideas surrounding concepts of pedophilia.⁹ Strong currents within the historic homophile movement since the early twentieth century had proclaimed a relationship model between adult men and young boys based on the ancient Greek model of pederasty. This model was open to misogynist, conservative, even fascist concepts of *Männerbund* politics. In the course of progressive liberalization and a new gay identity politics, this concept

⁶ Archief Edward Brongersma, ARCH02596, Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis, Amsterdam. The names of all correspondent partners have been anonymized unless they published on the topic under their real names.

⁷ Meike Sophia Baader, "Tabubruch und Entgrenzung: Pädosexualität und Wissenschaft in den 1960er bis 1990er Jahren," *Zeitschrift für Pädagogik* 64, no. 1 (2018): 28–39.

⁸ Jan-Henrik Friedrichs, "Delinquenz, Geschlecht und die Grenzen des Sagbaren: Sexualwissenschaftliche Diskursstränge zur Pädophilie in ausgewählten Periodika, 1960–1995," *Zeitschrift für Sexualforschung* 30, no. 2 (2017): 161–82.

⁹ Hensel, Klecha, and Walter, *Die Grünen*.

increasingly lost its persuasiveness. Instead, pedophile activists engaged in identity politics within the framework of “liberation.” Through their claim to liberate both themselves as an oppressed sexual minority and children’s oppressed sexuality they were able to forge alliances with gay activists and within the alternative political Left.

Likewise, Joachim Häberlen attributes the fascination of parts of the German alternative milieu with pedophilia to leftists’ taking “children’s allegedly boundless and complete sexuality as an ideal.”¹⁰ In regard to France, Julian Bourg has argued similarly, stating that the supposed “liberation” of child sexuality led leading intellectuals of the New Left to support pedophile activities and engage in “an eccentric masculinist rhetoric of ‘intergenerational’ relations.”¹¹

Several authors emphasize the central role of the gay movement in debates about pedophilia since the 1970s.¹² Focusing on the International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA), David Paternotte shows that support for pedophiles was especially strong in Germany, the Netherlands, and southern Europe. Only in the 1990s, under pressure from lesbian and newly founded gay youth groups and as the ILGA turned away from liberationist rhetoric toward a discourse of gay identity and human rights, was the question of pedophilia met with disapproval.¹³ In Denmark, where since the 1960s police had made a distinction between pedophiles and “good gays,” gay support for pedophile positions was comparably sparse, as Peter Edelberg has shown. Even before the 1970s and in stark contrast to, for instance, the Netherlands or France, gay identity and gay desire were quickly separated from those of pedophiles.¹⁴

¹⁰ Joachim C. Häberlen, “Feeling Like a Child: Dreams and Practices of Sexuality in the West German Alternative Left during the Long 1970s,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 25, no. 2 (2016): 225.

¹¹ Julian Bourg, “Boy Trouble: French Pedophilic Discourse of the 1970s,” in *Between Marx and Coca-Cola: Youth Cultures in Changing European Societies, 1960–1980*, ed. Axel Schildt and Detlef Siegfried (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006), 288.

¹² Beljan, *Rosa Zeiten*, 123–71; Jan-Henrik Friedrichs, “‘Verbrechen ohne Opfer’? Die ‘Pädophiliendebatte’ der 1970er Jahre in Sozialwissenschaft und Schwulenbewegung aus machttheoretischer Perspektive,” *Jahrbuch Sexualitäten* (2021): 62–84; Alexis Jay et al., *Allegations of Child Sexual Abuse Linked to Westminster*, Independent Inquiry Child Sexual Abuse, Investigation Report, 2020, 87–106, <https://www.iicsa.org.uk/document/allegations-child-sexual-abuse-linked-westminster-investigation-report>, accessed 28 September 2021; Lucy Robinson, *Gay Men and the Left in Post-war Britain: How the Personal Got Political* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 123–53; for a focus on literary motifs, see Kadji Amin, *Disturbing Attachments: Genet, Modern Pederasty, and Queer History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017).

¹³ David Paternotte, “The International (Lesbian and) Gay Association and the Question of Pedophilia: Tracking the Demise of Gay Liberation Ideals,” *Sexualities* 17, no. 1/2 (2014): 121–38; David Paternotte, “Pedophilia, Homosexuality and Gay and Lesbian Activism,” in *Sexual Revolutions*, ed. Alain Giami and Gert Hekma (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 264–78.

¹⁴ Peter Edelberg, “The Long Sexual Revolution: The Police and the New Gay Man,” in Giami and Hekma, *Sexual Revolutions*, 46–59.

The support of many gay liberation activists for propedophile positions influences some of the current scholarship regarding the “sexual revolution” and sexual politics of the 1970s, especially when scholars were themselves involved in the debates of the time. Jeffrey Weeks, arguably one of the most renowned scholars in the field of (homo)sexual history, evaluates the separation of the gay movement from pedophile groups as a deplorable break “with the libertarian tradition” of the sexual revolution.¹⁵ Gert Hekma, one of the leading researchers on the sexual revolutions of the 1960s and the history of homosexuality in the Netherlands, agrees: a prudish society has since exchanged the ideal of sexual liberation for one of egalitarian relationships, an ideal of equality that might be good in politics “but not for sexuality.”¹⁶ Whereas children experiencing sex with adults figure only as “supposed victims,” for Hekma, who published a eulogy on Frits Bernard in *Sexualities* in 2007, pedophilia itself became the “victim” of a moral panic surrounding child sexuality.¹⁷

Sociologist and former gay liberation activist Ken Plummer has written extensively on sexualities, yet he touches on the problematic entanglement of the GayLib movement with pedophile pressure groups such as the Paedophile Information Exchange (PIE) only anecdotally.¹⁸ Plummer had joined PIE in the 1970s and had also published on the subject of pedophilia; reacting to “some interest and controversy,” he removed these articles from his website in 2014, as “their conclusions [were] no longer tenable.”¹⁹ Referencing Gayle Rubin, Plummer views attempts to control sexuality as the core problem in sexual politics.²⁰ Rubin herself, author of the highly received essay “Thinking Sex,” saw “cross-generational sex” merely as a possibility for “bad sex”—a conviction that led her to support the pedophile movement.²¹ The history of the pedophilia discourse is therefore inextricably linked to a history of the historiography of sexuality.

Celebrating the “sexual revolution” and fitting it into an overarching narrative of liberalization runs the danger of interpreting propedophile

¹⁵ Jeffrey Weeks, *Sexuelle Gleichberechtigung* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2014), 56.

¹⁶ Gert Hekma, “Kinderen, seks en zelfbepaling: Praten over pedofilie,” *Sociologie* 9, no. 3/4 (2013): 290–92.

¹⁷ Gert Hekma, “Frits Bernard [Obituary],” *Sexualities* 10, no. 1 (2007): 127–28, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460706075843>; Hekma, “Kinderen,” 280, 284, 291.

¹⁸ Kenneth Plummer, *Cosmopolitan Sexualities: Hope and the Humanist Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 2015), 132.

¹⁹ Kenneth Plummer, “Child Abuse and Paedophilia: An Open Letter,” 2014, <https://kenplummer.com/2014/07/27/child-abuse-and-paedophilia-an-open-letter/>, accessed 28 September 2021.

²⁰ Plummer, *Cosmopolitan*, 146.

²¹ Gayle Rubin, “Thinking Sex: Notes towards a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality” (1984), in *The Routledge Critical and Cultural Theory Reader*, ed. Neil Badmington (London: Routledge, 2008), 281–323; Rubin, “Sexual Politics, the New Right and the Sexual Fringe,” in *The Age Taboo: Gay Male Sexuality, Power and Consent*, ed. Daniel Tsang (Boston: Alyson Publications, 1981), 108–15.

positions of the 1970s and 1980s as evidence of a progressive liberal discursive climate—and the heightened sensibility regarding child sexual abuse as a conservative “prudish” (Hekma) backlash or “moral purity crusade” (Plummer).²² Conceptualizing sexuality without a theory of power cannot properly address the issues at hand.²³ It is exactly the friction between a rhetoric of liberation and practices of exploitation and violence that are at the center of this article.

ESTABLISHING PEDOPHILIA AS AN ACADEMIC SUBJECT:
BRONGERSMA AS PUBLICIST AND ACTIVIST

Edward Brongersma was born on 31 August 1911 in Haarlem and studied law at the University of Amsterdam.²⁴ After obtaining his doctorate at the Catholic University of Nijmegen (1940), he initially worked as a lawyer. In 1946 he was sent to the First Chamber of the Dutch States General as a senator by the Partij van de Arbeid, which he had joined the previous year. He had to resign from this office in 1950: health problems were officially cited, but Brongersma had to stand trial for sexual relations with a minor and was sentenced to a short prison term. Afterward, he worked for the *Volkscrant* newspaper and in 1959, under his pseudonym, Otto Bruno, he published his first article on the topic of pedophilia in a homophile magazine.²⁵ From 1963 to 1977 Brongersma returned to the First Chamber as a senator, without any protests. Two years after his resignation from parliament he founded the Edward Brongersma Foundation under his chairmanship to ensure the continued existence of his library and extensive archives for research purposes. At this point Brongersma also openly described himself as a pedophile both in his works and in the mass media.²⁶

From 1970 onward Brongersma had developed an intensive publishing activity on the subject of pedophilia. In that year his main work, *Das verfemte Geschlecht: Dokumentation über Knabenliebe* (The ostracized sex:

²² Jennifer Crane argues against this notion in *Child Protection in England, 1960–2000: Expertise, Experience, and Emotion* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

²³ In this regard I follow Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990); see also Friedrichs, “Verbrechen,” 63.

²⁴ The following is mainly based on Jan Schuijjer, “In Memoriam: Edward Brongersma August 31, 1911–April 22, 1998,” *Journal of Homosexuality* 37, no. 4 (1999): xxi–xxv; Bastiaan Westerhout, “‘The Past Is a Foreign Country’: Edward Brongersma en artikel 248bis,” in *Bewaar me voor de waanzin van het recht: Homoseksualiteit en strafrecht in Nederland*, ed. Gert Hekma and Theo van der Meer (Diemen: AMB, 2011), 159–68; Edward Brongersma, CV, 1981, no. 114, Archief Edward Brongersma, Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis, Amsterdam (hereafter cited as AEB); “Wie is wie in Nederland. 1984–1988,” n.d., no. 123, AEB.

²⁵ Otto Bruno [E. Brongersma], “Pedofilie I: Een begripsbepaling,” *Vriendschap* 14 (1959): 87–88.

²⁶ Mirjam Bartelsman, “Kinderporno voor de wetenschap,” *Zembla*, TV show aired on the Dutch network VARA (October 2001).

A documentation on boy love), was published in Germany, an indication of the importance of transnational connections for the pedophilia debate.²⁷ In his publications Brongersma represented positions that were exemplary of the overall discourse.²⁸ For example, he trivialized pedophile contacts by claiming that these were predominantly limited to tender caressing and to children shortly before or during puberty. Moreover, he claimed that sexual contacts were most often initiated by the younger “partners” and that a ban on these contacts was therefore based on the oppression of sexuality and of children. In contrast to the hierarchical pederasty model of ancient Greece, Brongersma proposed an allegedly egalitarian model of “nonviolent and consensual” sexual relationships. He denied that possible harm to children through these acts could be proven empirically, which would hence remove, he argued, the basis for any legal prosecution. Analogous to homosexuality, pedophilia was therefore a victimless crime and its prohibition an anachronism. As mentioned before, such positions were met with sympathy in progressive milieus and were received, in part benevolently, in sexual science and educational studies and the gay movement, as well as among some feminists and political organizations.²⁹

In addition, especially toward the end of the 1970s, a small but quite noticeable political pedophile movement emerged that was oriented toward the gay liberation movement in terms of content and organization. It was particularly strong in the Netherlands and West Germany, where it could hope for a comparatively high level of understanding among sexual and social scientists, in the left-wing alternative milieu, and in the gay scene. But in all other western European countries there were similar attempts at self-organization, with varying degrees of success.³⁰

Brongersma himself appeared at events of these political interest groups, such as the Paedophile Information Exchange.³¹ He also sat, along with

²⁷ The book had originally been published in 1960 under Brongersma’s pseudonym, Otto Bruno. The German translation was a highly extended version of the Dutch original and featured his actual name. Edward Brongersma, *Das verfeimte Geschlecht: Dokumentation über Knabenliebe* (Munich: Lichtenberg, 1970); Otto Bruno, *Pedofilie* (Amsterdam: COC, 1960).

²⁸ See Friedrichs, “Delinquenz.”

²⁹ On sexual science and educational studies, see Friedrichs, “Delinquenz”; Baader, “Blinde Flecken.” For the gay movement, see Paternotte, “Pedophilia”; Jay, *Allegations*, 90–94. For the reception among feminists, see Edward Brongersma, “Feministen en pedofilie,” *Opzij* 9, no. 2 (1981): 10–13; Marjan Sax and Sjuul Deckwitz, “When You Change the Gender, Reality Changes Too,” *Paidika*, no. 8 (1992): 2–13; Rubin, “Sexual Politics”; Baader, “Blinde Flecken,” 268. Political organizations included mainly, though not exclusively, the German Green Party; see Stephan Klecha and Alexander Hensel, “Irrungen oder Zeitgeist? Die Pädophilie-Debatte und die Grünen,” in Hensel, Klecha, and Walter, *Die Grünen*, 7–22.

³⁰ Frits Bernard, “Pädophile Gruppen der Welt: Ein Überblick von Frits Bernard,” in *Der pädosexuelle Komplex*, ed. Joachim S. Hohmann (Berlin: Foerster, 1988), 313–23.

³¹ David Grove, introduction to *Childhood Rights* 1, no. 2 (1977): 1; Brenda Parry, “Paedophilia Meeting Goes Ahead,” *Daily Telegraph*, 29 August 1977, 9; Brongersma to Anthony Grey, 12 February 1978, HCA/Grey Papers/4/17-263, London School of Economics.

other academics, on the board of trustees of the Deutsche Studien- und Arbeitsgemeinschaft Pädophilie (DSAP), whose members in turn endeavored to organize lectures with Brongersma to support their concerns.³² Pedophile organizations had also repeatedly sought to have Brongersma's work translated into their respective national languages. Whereas Frits Bernard tried to empirically prove the harmlessness of pedophile contacts, Brongersma used a wide range of sources—from novels to ethnology—to argue that pedophilia was merely a benevolent reaction to boys' own natural (homo)sexual desires. With this approach he found an audience among gay publicists and scholars, as well as in sex education journals, while Bernard successfully published in medical and sexological journals such as *Sexualmedizin* and the *Journal of Sex Research*.³³

POSTCARDS FROM TANGIER:
NETWORK BUILDING THROUGH TRAVEL (STORIES)

Brongersma and Bernard rose in the course of time “to international icons of the pedophile movements.”³⁴ The two had probably met at the beginning of the 1960s during their work as editors for the journal of the Nederlandse Vereniging voor Integratie van Homoseksualiteit.³⁵ They associated with each other due to their personal affliction as pedophiles and the convictions they derived from it, convictions that led to their dismissal from the journal in 1962.³⁶ Afterward they undertook a journey to Spain and Morocco together.³⁷ Such a journey was nothing unusual in itself: Bernard traveled again via Spain to Tangier in 1963, Brongersma the following year.³⁸ But three aspects are important: where Brongersma and Bernard went; the fact that they informed each other about these trips and drew on common travel experiences in their letters; and what they did on these journeys.

After his conviction for sexual acts on an underage boy, Brongersma apparently refrained from acting out his pedophilic inclination in the Netherlands and shifted such contacts abroad.³⁹ Brongersma's travels led him first to Italy, which since the photographs of Wilhelm von Gloeden and the publication of Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice* could be considered a

³² See Bruno Bendig to Brongersma, 13 August 1979, no. 107, AEB; Hensel, Neef, and Pausch, “Knabenliebhabern,” 147.

³³ See Edward Brongersma, “Pädophile und ‘Kinderschänder’: Unterschiedlichkeit der Begriffe,” *Sexualpädagogik*, no. 1 (1977): 17–25; Brongersma, “The Thera Inscriptions—Ritual or Slander?,” *Journal of Homosexuality* 20, no. 1/2 (1991): 31–40; on Bernard, see Friedrichs, “Delinquenz.”

³⁴ Hensel, Neef, and Pausch, “Knabenliebhabern,” 144.

³⁵ Hensel, Neef, and Pausch, 143.

³⁶ Hekma, “Bernard,” 127.

³⁷ Frits Bernard to Brongersma, 2 June 1963, no. 172, AEB.

³⁸ Bernard to Brongersma, 7 August 1963; Bernard to Brongersma, postcard, 27 September 1963; Bernard to Brongersma, 29 May 1964, all in no. 172, AEB.

³⁹ Joseph Geraci to Brongersma, 8 August 1984, no. 124, AEB.

place of longing for central European “boy lovers.”⁴⁰ In the 1960s the Maghreb, especially Morocco, had established itself as a destination for male pedophile and homosexual tourists interested in sexual contacts.

Brongersma traveled repeatedly to Morocco between 1960 and 1968 and in the 1970s and 1980s also regularly to Tunisia.⁴¹ Over time, the destinations shifted to Southeast Asia, with repeated trips to the Philippines (1978–93) and Thailand (1987–93). Brongersma was thus part of larger developments affecting tourism in general and sex tourism in particular.⁴²

In Brongersma’s correspondence, the fact that these journeys were about the possibility of initiating sexual contacts with children was repeatedly alluded to. For example, the owner of a relevant German book publisher and mail-order company, a Mr. Mierken, wrote to Brongersma in 1971: “I was spending New Year’s Day with Dr. O. in B. and he told me about your lion hunt in the Sahara. Hopefully there will be one ‘lion’ left! Two years ago I also made a Trans-Sahara-crossing through Tunisia-Algeria-Morocco and back via Gibraltar, but with a travel company and without a lion.”⁴³ Mierken established common ground with Brongersma and Dr. O. based on their shared travel destination, as well as on the insider knowledge that both would like to find “lions,” that is, boys for sexual acts, in the Maghreb. Beyond the actual journeys, these topics could be addressed—first between Dr. O. and Mierken, then between Mierken and Brongersma—and thus served as a means of community building.

However, networks were also established locally at the travel destinations themselves (and again reported on in letters). “Hotel is less charming. For a short time present were: Graham Gilbert (with 19 year-old friend), Gianni B., and Fabien. Ben Sherwood is in the city too,” Bernard reported to Brongersma from Sicily in 1974.⁴⁴ Such contacts had practical benefits. When Bernard was blackmailed by the mother of a boy on the same holiday, an acquaintance settled the matter: Bernard got away with only a little fright after paying 20,000 lire and asked Brongersma “not to talk to anyone about this.” Afterward, however, he recommended to his friend the “new boy in the hotel” and to pay a visit to a certain bar on his next visit.⁴⁵ Questions about and information on relevant hotels can be found

⁴⁰ Christopher Ewing, “‘Color Him Black’: Erotic Representations and the Politics of Race in West German Homosexual Magazines, 1949–1974,” *Sexuality & Culture* 21, no. 2 (2016): 394; Robert Beachy, *Gay Berlin: Birthplace of a Modern Identity* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014), 102.

⁴¹ See here and below Brongersma’s travelogues, nos. 289–325, AEB.

⁴² Christopher Ewing, “‘Toward a Better World for Gays’: Race, Tourism, and the Internationalization of the West German Gay Rights Movement, 1969–1983,” *Bulletin of the GHI*, no. 61 (2017): 119; Beljan, *Rosa Zeiten*, 162–71; Colin Michael Hall, “Sex Tourism in South-east Asia,” in *Tourism and the Less Developed Countries*, ed. David Harrison (London: Belhaven, 1992), 64–74.

⁴³ Mierken to Brongersma, 10 March 1971, no. 96, AEB, German original.

⁴⁴ Bernard to Brongersma, 28 July 1974, no. 172, AEB, Dutch original.

⁴⁵ Bernard to Brongersma, 28 July 1974.

throughout the correspondence.⁴⁶ Maja Nazaruk has pointed out that sex tourism “makes groups of men show solidarity with each other, be initiated and build camaraderie around female ‘objects.’”⁴⁷ This is apparently also true when the objects of sexual desire are children; due to the stronger criminalization and moral rejection, this was probably even more so than in the context of heterosexual sex tourism.

COMING TO TERMS WITH THE PEDOPHILE SELF
VIS-À-VIS THE ORIENTAL OTHER

The pedophile men who were in contact with Brongersma often made a strict distinction between their everyday life and the exceptional situation of being abroad. A trip to Italy against the backdrop of a joyless everyday life could thus be idealized as “life-sustaining” and as a “rejuvenating cure.”⁴⁸ The way in which academic discourse and travel practices intertwined can be seen in Brongersma’s correspondence with a Mr. Künzeli from Biel, Switzerland. The latter asked Brongersma to meet him personally, as the reading of *Das verfemte Geschlecht* had brought him “a great relief.” Since then he had been searching for “a lifestyle of my own [*eine(n) eigenen Lebensstil*].”⁴⁹ Shortly afterward, the two met in Montegrino, Italy, an apparently popular destination for pedophile men in the 1970s.⁵⁰ Künzeli then went back to Brongersma’s work and confirmed to him that it was “the best thing I have read so far on the subject of ‘boy love.’ What is particularly impressive is the objectivity and the comprehensive documentation which support your argument.”⁵¹ The academic semblance of *Das verfemte Geschlecht* allowed Künzeli to acknowledge his sexual orientation—but this was to be only a first step: “More and more I am becoming convinced that a meaningful life is also possible for me—when I finally succeed in *fully* accepting my disposition [*meine Neigung voll anzunehmen*].”⁵² For this purpose he asked to be put in contact with other pedophiles, which Brongersma had offered in a previous letter.

Alas, Künzeli concluded half a year later, he could only truly become himself outside his usual environment: “After having intensively dealt with my situation for over two years, I came to the conclusion that a longer stay in a pedophile-friendly environment would probably be the best solution for

⁴⁶ See, for example, K.E. to Brongersma, 6 July 1974, no. 99, AEB, German original: “Is it possible to find boys in smaller towns in Sicily without attracting attention—or only in the cities? Where were you able to make such observations or which places are particularly favorable?”

⁴⁷ Maja Nazaruk, *Le tourisme sexuel en Asie du Sud-Est: Les marchés du désir* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2010), 118.

⁴⁸ K.E. to Brongersma, 6 July 1974.

⁴⁹ R. Künzeli to Brongersma, 25 August 1977, no. 103, AEB, German original.

⁵⁰ Probably Montegrino Valtravaglia, close to the Swiss border.

⁵¹ R. Künzeli to Brongersma, 27 December 1977, no. 103, AEB, German original.

⁵² Künzeli to Brongersma, 27 December 1977, original emphasis.

me. As my inner inhibitions are constantly being reinforced by the environment—although I am always trying to become freer—a ‘change of climate’ is indicated. . . . I would then have the opportunity to spend several months in the Philippines or in another country. This would give me the opportunity to really come to terms with my own opinion.”⁵³ Such deliberations also mirrored the notion that sexuality in general was suppressed in Western societies and therefore inevitably deficient, an idea that was widespread far beyond the pedophile scene.⁵⁴ In this respect, Mr. Künzeli was no different from other westerners who sought their (sexual) selves in an exoticized foreign place.

But what exactly was it that distinguished a “pedophile-friendly environment”? Why were Italy, Spain, Morocco, or the Philippines the preferred destinations? If one believes the pedophile tourists, then in Sicily, for example, one encountered “fiery and approachable youth,” ascriptions that were similar to those found in magazines such as *du&ich*.⁵⁵ “With regard to the Arab and African regions,” according to Magdalena Beljan, “the description of youthfulness, which appeared as an ideal throughout, was linked with the attribution of strength, potency, and masculinity, while for the Asian region the soft and feminine ‘characteristics’ of the ‘natives’ were usually emphasized.”⁵⁶ The advice given to a pedophile man in 1972 by the “agony aunt” of *du&ich* is also significant: sexual relationships with boys were initially categorically rejected, since, “for example, an eleven-year-old boy . . . is unlikely to be psychologically capable of coping with a sexual experience with an adult; an eleven-year-old, I maintain, will never take the initiative in such deeds.” Only a few lines later, though, the author advised regular trips to the Maghreb because “in Tunisia, as well as in Morocco, eleven- to fourteen-year-old boys offer themselves to you on the streets, early-developed boys for whom sexual intercourse with tourists is a matter of course.”⁵⁷ There would therefore be no reason for despair.⁵⁸

These were, of course, Orientalist and racist fantasies, which were also common in hetero- and homosexual contexts.⁵⁹ Historian Christopher

⁵³ R. Künzeli to Brongersma, 19 April 1978, no. 103, AEB, German original.

⁵⁴ Beljan, *Rosa Zeiten*, 167.

⁵⁵ K.E. to Brongersma, 6 July 1974; see also Johannes Werres, “Pädophilie: Nicht fördern, doch dulden,” *Sexualmedizin*, no. 10 (1986): 490.

⁵⁶ Beljan, *Rosa Zeiten*, 163. On Southeast Asia see Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity: The “Manly Englishman” and the “Effeminate Bengali” in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995).

⁵⁷ “Damoklesschwert,” *du&ich*, no. 3 (1972): 45–46.

⁵⁸ On the aforementioned international meeting in Breda, Bernard conducted a survey among fifty men about their preferred travel destinations in regard to pedophile contacts with locals. The ranking order saw the European Mediterranean on top (40 percent), followed by North Africa (36 percent), western Europe (18 percent), and the Far East (6 percent); Frederic [Frits] Bernard, “An Enquiry among a Group of Pedophiles,” *Journal of Sex Research* 11, no. 3 (1975): 251.

⁵⁹ Note also that according to Edward Said Orientalism has pictured “the Oriental” as childlike, contrasting it with the supposed maturity of Europeans; Edward Said, *Orientalism*

Ewing writes that many gay men in the 1970s “maintained a set of assumptions about racial difference that exoticized and essentialized men of color, assumptions that are particularly apparent in the erotic representations (both visual and literary) of men of color.”⁶⁰ Brongersma tried to support these assumptions with references to sexual initiation rites in various cultures.⁶¹

“BOY LOVER” OR “BOY HUNTER”? SELF-IMAGES AND PRACTICES OF POSTCOLONIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

The fragility of these (self-)images was exposed when the economic gap between these men and their objects of desire became apparent. In May 1964 Bernard reported to Brongersma, who was staying in Tangier, on a trip to Portugal that had just ended.⁶² On thin Air Iberia airmail paper, Bernard first described the itinerary in a “Super-Jet” from Seville to Lisbon (“less than 45 minutes!”)—still an extraordinary experience and testament to extraordinary economic privileges. In a Portuguese holiday resort, he sought the proximity of two boys with whom he must have had contact on previous occasions and whose families praised him as a benefactor probably because of material allowances. But the idyll was clouded when one of the boys asked for gifts “sooner than he used to.” The second boy was also “not very grateful” and “immediately asked for money.” However, Bernard did not like to acknowledge the transactional nature of their relationship: services, especially photographs (more on this later), in exchange for “gifts.” Instead, he blamed the increasing tourism in the region for changing everything for the worse. Other, less empathetic tourists, so the implicit logic went, with their imported materialism, spoiled the original “purity” and “innocence” of the “natives” in general and of the, by definition, pure and innocent children in particular.⁶³

Other letter writers also tried to draw a line between materialistic exploitation, which was to be rejected, and legitimate affection. The Austrian K.E., for example, was furious that a young person he often photographed—“my

(New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 40. See also Joseph Allen Boone, *The Homoerotics of Orientalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014).

⁶⁰ Ewing, “Color Him Black,” 382.

⁶¹ See Edward Brongersma, *Loving Boys: A Multidisciplinary Study of Sexual Relations between Adult and Minor Males* (Elmhurst, NY: Global Academic Publishers, 1986), 1: 85–90, 158–66.

⁶² Bernard to Brongersma, 29 May 1964, Dutch original.

⁶³ While traditionally children’s alleged innocence was strongly linked to a supposed absence of sexuality, in the context of “sexual liberation” since the late 1960s children could appear as innocent and pure precisely because they were ascribed a sexuality—a sexuality that was conceived as pure because it was not deformed by societal norms under capitalism. See Häberlen, “Feeling Like a Child,” 223; Dagmar Herzog, *Sex after Fascism: Memory and Morality in Twentieth-Century Germany* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), 207; Meike Sophia Baader, *Die romantische Idee des Kindes und der Kindheit: Auf der Suche nach der verlorenen Unschuld* (Neuwied: Luchterhand, 1996), 8.

beloved Mario, the nicest of all”—had received only 100 lire from a Frenchman for posing for similar nude photos: “No, it doesn’t work like that! These are egoists without heart. After all, we’re always dealing with underprivileged youth, you can’t get close to the well-off.”⁶⁴ Here it is very clear that the contacts to the “beloved” boys were only possible because of an economic imbalance, but K.E. still tried to maintain the image of himself as a “boy lover” (and not as a “boy exploiter”) and of an actual friendship between him and the boy. For “one can only express one’s gratitude through money and gifts. And what is more, they are *decent boys*, not prostitutes. A real boy lover is always an emphatic *sentimentalist* [*betonter Gefühlsmensch*].”⁶⁵ Such attempts at demarcation were necessary if one wanted to maintain the self-image of a “boy lover.” The search for friendship in a foreign country—a motif that also ran through the travelogues in *du&rich*—should therefore also be seen in connection with academic debates taking place at the same time that tried to distinguish “genuine,” “consensual” pedophilia from child sexual abuse.⁶⁶

However, this should not hide the fact that for other men the sexual exploitation of children was not a problem at all. In January 1978 a certain C.E. reported on a trip to Ceylon.⁶⁷ An acquaintance had rented a beach house there, including some “very efficient houseboys” for kitchen work. “However, my friend there then proceeded to hunt down and bring us samples of the most delicious ‘dishes’ we might [want] to sample—and eventually three of these became permanent all-day or all-night additions to the household.” It was quite clear to C.E. that these boys, whom he degraded to objects in writing (sample dishes, household items), were only prepared to make such an arrangement because of their poverty: “The boys know that if they can find a ‘special uncle’ they can earn some money, maybe, and get some American chewing-gum.” C.E. was not bothered by the lack of illusion of mutual love; instead, he considered his approach in metaphors of hunting or strategy.⁶⁸ Whereas the Austrian K.E. viewed a mutual friendship with “genuine love in return” as ideal, C.E. adored a German teacher who had had sex with 118 boys during the thirty days of his stay in Ceylon: “That just about sums up Ceylon (but maybe he would have had 218 in Manilla!).”⁶⁹

⁶⁴ K.E. to Brongersma, 18 February 1974, no. 99, AEB, German original.

⁶⁵ K.E. to Brongersma, 18 February 1974, original emphasis.

⁶⁶ On these travelogues, see Beljan, *Rosa Zeiten*, 125. On academic debates, see Meike Sophia Baader, “Pädosexualität: Kindheit und Geschlecht im wissenschaftlichen Diskurs der 1970er Jahre,” *WestEnd*, no. 1 (2017): 7; Friedrichs, “Delinquenz”; Jan-Henrik Friedrichs, “‘Freie Zärtlichkeit für Kinder’: Gewalt, Fürsorgeerziehung und Pädophiliendebatte in der Bundesrepublik der 1970er Jahre,” *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, no. 44 (2018): 554–85.

⁶⁷ C.E. to Brongersma, 1 January 1978, no. 106, AEB, English original.

⁶⁸ “I was also in Delhi, in India. . . . There were some devastatingly beautiful *creatures* there and I am going to try and find out where one can stay and how one *operates* there” (C.E. to Brongersma, 1 January 1978, my emphasis). See the aforementioned metaphor of the lion hunt.

⁶⁹ K.E. to Brongersma, 18 February 1974; C.E. to Brongersma, 1 January 1978, original emphasis.

This concept of the hunter and trophy collector existed in parallel with the debate on pedophile practices that were said to be oriented toward equal rights and child emancipation. Since most of Brongersma's own letters have not been preserved, it is generally impossible to understand how he viewed such descriptions. However, one letter has been filed in which he objects to such obvious exploitation practices. In 1979 a Mr. H.L. from Cochem on the Moselle told Brongersma about an acquaintance who had pro forma married a "poor Brazilian woman." She in turn claimed three boys and a girl as her own, all of whom were previously chosen by the acquaintance "from the millions of orphaned and homeless children." With this family, H.L.'s acquaintance was now living very happily in Germany: "He now has his 'children,' just as he always wanted, all to himself . . . with no one to stop him. The former little girl is pregnant by him and will thus ensure that he always has enough offspring. All well planned."⁷⁰ In a second letter, H.L. reported on his plan to enter into a similar arrangement with two friends. Together they would pay for the upkeep of the woman and her children, "while the three of us in return would be allowed to keep ourselves busy with the children without restriction."⁷¹ Brongersma vehemently rejected this, as "there was not a bit of respect for the child": "Against 'pedophilia' of this kind I would certainly fight with all means. For us, the fight for pedophilia is inseparably linked to the fight for youth emancipation. . . . This is really exactly what the antipedophile public opinion imagines as a specter: children are sacrificed to the lusts of these men."⁷²

Thus, at the end of the 1970s and beyond the realm of political groups and academic forums, different concepts of pedophilia and pedophiles coexisted. Although not surprising, it is relevant because apologists of pedophilia in their publications have always tried to distinguish "genuine pedophiles" with an interest in equal relationships from sexual abusers.⁷³ They were aware, as Brongersma's correspondence shows, that pedophilia and sexual exploitation were by no means mutually exclusive. All in all, it becomes clear that although the two concepts—hunter and "child lover"—were apparently irreconcilable, the practices associated with them were for the most part hardly distinguishable, and each functioned against the background of global economic inequality and postcolonial regimes.⁷⁴ While pedophiles and their advocates drew an image of a suppressed minority, their story, as Meike Baader has put it in a different context, "is also a history of an

⁷⁰ H.L. to Brongersma, 23 November 1979, no. 108, AEB, German original.

⁷¹ H.L. to Brongersma, 22 April 1980, no. 112, AEB, German original.

⁷² Brongersma to H.L., 24 May 1980, no. 112, AEB, German original.

⁷³ See Edward Brongersma, *Over pedofielen en "kinderlokkers"* (Amsterdam: intermediaire, 1975), 8; Rüdiger Lautmann, *Die Lust am Kind: Porträt des Pädophilen* (Hamburg: Klein, 1994).

⁷⁴ See also Edward Brongersma, "Geschenk, nicht Bezahlung: Zum Problem sexueller Ausbeutung Jugendlicher," in Hohmann, *Der pädosexuelle Komplex*, 43–50.

elite, one with very specific social and gender dimensions.”⁷⁵ The privileges of white European men over their underage “partners” from the global South was one of the central structural elements in the constitution of the “pedophile” in the 1970s.

PRIVATE AND PUBLIC USES OF PHOTOGRAPHS

Pedophile men from Western industrialized countries may have found fulfillment in countries such as Morocco and Thailand, but for those who did not immigrate, such experiences were short-lived and, depending on their financial situation, relatively rare. Sharing stories about such journeys—from sexual adventures to tips on localities and warnings of increased persecution—partially lifted these temporal and spatial restrictions and helped to establish a pedophile network. Photographs and films fulfilled a similar function.

Again and again the letters mention photographs enclosed (but not handed down), which were apparently exchanged, lent, and copied.⁷⁶ One man from the United States regretted the loss of the “many BW prints which your friend copied from your negatives for me,” a hint that in addition to direct exchanges, more complex arrangements with middlemen were organized.⁷⁷ These, too, likely had a community-building effect. Films were used in a similar way, although they were more difficult to copy. In some cases, joint screenings of these films appear to have been organized.⁷⁸

The mentality of hunting or collecting shone through here as well, as the same writer boasted that his collection contained over three thousand color slides and about thirty thousand black-and-white photographs. Yet this was comparatively small: “I would imagine that your own collection has grown considerably over these past 8 years, so that you probably have certainly much more than I.”⁷⁹ Brongersma’s status as an icon of the pedophile movement was thus based not only on his academic publications but also on the presumed enormous size of his child pornography collection.⁸⁰

Pornographic images and erotic literature could also serve as a link between otherwise irreconcilably opposing political views and their representatives. Research so far assumes that a leftist discourse on pedophilia, operating with concepts of emancipation and liberation, established itself in the 1970s and subsequently replaced older justifications that had presented

⁷⁵ Meike Sophia Baader, “Pedo-sexuality: An Especially German History,” *Women’s Studies Quarterly* 43, no. 1/2 (2015): 317.

⁷⁶ K.E. to Brongersma, 18 February 1974.

⁷⁷ C.B. to Brongersma, 1 June 1975, no. 100, AEB, English original.

⁷⁸ Joseph Geraci to Brongersma, 27 April 1989, no. 139, AEB.

⁷⁹ Geraci to Brongersma, 27 April 1989.

⁸⁰ In at least one case Brongersma helped a German find Dutch mail-order companies for child pornography material. See H.R. to Brongersma, 4 July 1981, no. 116, AEB.

pedophile contacts in terms of an authoritarian relationship (pedagogical Eros) between “teachers” and “pupils” to be initiated.⁸¹ In the West German context, the journalist Johannes Werres (born 1923) is considered a prominent representative of this rather conservative pedophile concept. Representatives of the DSAP described him in 1980 as a “brazen homophile from the right-wing corner” whose “reactionary basic conviction” they vehemently opposed.⁸²

However, the latter had translated Brongersma’s book *Pedofilie* into German in 1970 and later also made every effort to make Brongersma’s work—which clearly rejected authoritarian concepts—accessible to a broad German audience.⁸³ Thus Werres made several suggestions to Brongersma for potential publication sites for his text “Over pedofielen en ‘kinderlokkers’” (On pedophiles and “child molesters”), which had appeared in the Dutch student magazine *intermediaire* in 1975. Werres sent the manuscript to the pedagogical journals *betrifft: erziehung* and *Eltern*, until he was finally successful with the journal *Sexualpädagogik*.⁸⁴ Brongersma, born in 1911, whom Werres flattered as a “key figure of pedophilia not only in Holland but internationally,” appears here as a possible mediator between different political camps and generations.⁸⁵

That this was the case can, in my opinion, only be understood by the fact that the boundaries between academia and consumption were extremely permeable; different concepts of pedophilia or political positions derived from them thus faded into the background. Nowhere is this clearer than in the published material itself. Werres, for example, enthusiastically informed Brongersma that his book *Das verfemte Geschlecht* was cited in great detail in the best-selling sex education book *Zeig mal!* (Let’s see it!): “The book . . . contains almost exclusively photos of naked children and adults. It’s a breakthrough for pedophilia in Germany.”⁸⁶ Indeed, in *Zeig mal!* the boundaries between child and adult sexuality blurred, as Christin Sager has pointed out.⁸⁷ Subsequently, these photographs were also used in

⁸¹ Hensel, Neef, and Pausch, “‘Knabenliebhabern,’” 141f.

⁸² “Wie steht’s?,” *die zeitung (Rundbrief extra)*, no. 1 (1980): 4.

⁸³ See note 27.

⁸⁴ Johannes Werres to Brongersma, 6 December 1975, no. 100, AEB; Johannes Werres to Brongersma, 7 July 1976, no. 102, AEB; Brongersma, “Pädophile und ‘Kinderschänder.’”

⁸⁵ Quote from Johannes Werres to Brongersma, 7 February 1975, no. 102, AEB, German original. In this regard Brongersma mirrors the role of Jean Genet in France; see Amin, *Disturbing Attachments*.

⁸⁶ Letter from Johannes Werres, Kronberg, 15 March 1974, no. 99, AEB, German original.

⁸⁷ Christin Sager, “‘Zeig mal!’—aber wie viel?! Sexualaufklärungsbücher und ihre Fotografien um 1968,” in *Sexuelle Revolution? Zur Geschichte der Sexualität im deutschsprachigen Raum seit den 1960er Jahren*, ed. Magdalena Beljan et al. (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2015), 63–85; Christin Sager, “‘ENTSETZLICH, was die Kinder heute schon alles wissen dürfen’: Kindliche Sexualität, Sexualerziehung und sexualisierte Gewalt um 1968,” in Baader et al., *Tabubruch*, 227.

publications of the pedophile movement for illustration purposes.⁸⁸ Arguments and images circulated between academic, pedagogical, political, and consumer spheres.

But the use of photographs and films remained ambivalent. In 1977, for example, a certain Peter Schluter told a member of the British Paedophile Information Exchange about a planned nonfiction book entitled *Boys' Sexual Practices*: "BSP will be a textbook of academic appearance, like a junior edition of the Kinsey work *Sexual Behavior In The Human Male*. The text would carry the same authoritative tone as Kinsey, matter-of-factly giving totally explicit descriptions, illustrated with line drawings, of the wide variety of male-oriented practices of having sexual pleasure that boys form and engage in, by themselves, with one another and with men, from childhood to young manhood."⁸⁹ Brongersma was supporting the project and served the project as a consultant, according to Schluter. In the end it probably did not come to publication. John D. Stamford, head of the Spartacus publishing house in Amsterdam, who had also been approached by Schluter, had rejected publication because *Boys' Sexual Practices* could not decide whether it should be aimed at boys or be a serious publication for adults. As "sexual stimulant for adult masturbatory fantasies," however, it could still serve a purpose, according to Stamford.⁹⁰ Besides the complicated role of images, the case shows above all the significance of empirical studies, or at least the appearance of them, to normalizing pedophilia—a fact that Brongersma and Bernard had clearly recognized.

Both had therefore adopted a markedly serious habitus in order to move closer to their goal of decriminalizing pedophile acts. This was also done in order to prevent their work from being discredited as being biased and fraudulent—an accusation that was thoroughly justified.⁹¹ So when his book *Loving Boys* was finally published in German, Brongersma was so upset about what he believed to be the pornographic character of the cover and illustrations that his publisher, Joachim Hohmann, subsequently terminated the collaboration.⁹² On the other hand, a magazine such as *du&ich* served Brongersma as a place both to present his theses—framed by photographs of naked young men—and to establish contact with boys via personal ads.⁹³ And in his comment on *Zeig mal!*, Werres implied that the images

⁸⁸ See *Betrifft: Beziehung*, no. 7 (1980): 12, 23; Bereich Schwule der Alternativen Liste, ed., *Ein Herz für Sittenstrolche* (Berlin, 1980).

⁸⁹ Peter Schluter to D.G., PIE, 6 February 1977, no. 104, AEB, English original.

⁹⁰ John D. Stamford to Brongersma, 24 January 1978, no. 106, AEB, English original.

⁹¹ See Friedrichs, "Delinquenz," 168 ff.; Schuijjer, "Brongersma," xxii; Günther Kaiser, "Ungenau, fragwürdig, zweifelhaft . . . Bernards Methodengenauigkeit," *betrifft: erziehung* 6, no. 4 (1973): 29–30.

⁹² Joachim S. Hohmann to Brongersma, 22 January 1992, no. 148, AEB.

⁹³ "Man wird nur dazu verführt, wozu man verführt werden will": du + ich—Gespräch mit Dr. Brongersma," *du&ich*, no. 5 (1970): 10–11; *du&ich*, Leine-Verlags GmbH, Rechnung für Chiffre-Anzeige, Hanover, 18 June 1981, no. 114, AEB.

themselves would testify to the “truth” of child sexuality, providing yet another argument for their political cause.⁹⁴

In any case, academic actors and discourses were much more closely linked to practices and media consumption than has been acknowledged so far. David Johnson has shown how physique magazines helped establish gay communities before the formation of a decidedly political emancipation movement.⁹⁵ The entanglement of both areas—erotic consumerism and academic arguments—proved to be extremely productive not only in the establishment of networks but also in the development of specific conceptions of pedophilia and pedophiles. Looking at the use of images, demarcations between political camps within the pedophile movement turn out to be much more permeable than previously assumed.

A “PAEDOPHILE SEX MAGAZINE”?

PAIDIKA AND THE END OF THE PEDOPHILIA DEBATE

Many of the aspects discussed here can be exemplified by the journal *Paidika: The Journal of Paedophilia*. *Paidika* appeared in twelve issues between 1987 and 1995 and was intended as a cultural studies flagship project to academically establish the research conducted by Brongersma, Bernard, and others. Since the mid-1980s the tide had been turning against the advocates of pedophilia in favor of the concept of child sexual abuse. Propedophile articles now received fierce criticism by readers and were subsequently no longer published in academic and pedagogical journals.⁹⁶ Queer youth and lesbian groups also started challenging pedophile activists’ claim to represent children and to advocate their sexual desires.⁹⁷ *Paidika* was thus a last attempt to solidify propedophile positions in an academic environment while simultaneously addressing questions of political organization and pedophile consumer demands.

Already in the first issue, the publishers made it clear that “the starting point for *Paidika* is necessarily our consciousness of ourselves as paedophiles.”⁹⁸ In addition to Brongersma, Bernard, and the French philosopher René Schérer, the publishers named the chairman of PIE, Tom O’Carroll, as an academic mentor. The magazine’s founders and coeditors, Joseph Geraci and Donald Mader, had connections to the consumer sphere

⁹⁴ Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 77.

⁹⁵ David K. Johnson, “Physique Pioneers: The Politics of 1960s Gay Consumer Culture,” *Journal of Social History* 43, no. 4 (2010): 867–92. Important homophile magazines such as the Swiss *Der Kreis* had also featured underage boys as objects of desire until specialized pedophile magazines such as *Coq* (Denmark), *Pikbube* (Germany), and *Boys* (the Netherlands) were founded in the late 1960s and early 1970s. See Craig Griffiths, “Sex, Shame and West German Gay Liberation,” *German History* 34, no. 3 (2016): 450.

⁹⁶ Crane, *Child Protection*, 79; Friedrichs, “Delinquenz,” 176.

⁹⁷ Paternotte, “Pedophilia,” 272.

⁹⁸ “Statement of Purpose,” *Paidika* 1, no. 1 (1987): 2–3.

rather than to academia: Mader ran a photo studio and was arrested and charged several times for producing child pornography.⁹⁹ Geraci, like Mader, had emigrated from the United States to the Netherlands and ran an antiquarian bookshop. He managed the *Paidika* archive and was concerned about its security from raids and confiscation—an indication that it also included child pornographic material.¹⁰⁰ He had on at least one occasion suggested to Brongersma that they jointly view child pornographic films.¹⁰¹

Unsurprisingly and despite *Paidika's* academic appearance, the supposedly positive impact of pedophile contacts on children was never to be doubted. Only those studies that seemingly supported this claim were cited.¹⁰² A great deal of space was devoted to historiographical and ethnological contributions.¹⁰³ Reports on legal developments, reviews, and current research projects were published as well. Also prominently represented were political statements, pieces on identity politics, historical poems, diaries, prose, and erotic pictures on the subject.

Among the advertisers were galleries and publishers of erotic depictions of boys, as well as gay bookstores in the Netherlands, West Germany, and France. For example, in 1994 the Paris Éditions de la Moulette advertised “photo albums, portfolios, videos, calendars, magazines. Boys, girls,” while a group of German bookstores promised “a wide range of books on paedophilia,” including photo books.¹⁰⁴ In the same year that the International Lesbian and Gay Association expelled propedophile groups from its ranks, bonds between gay and pedophile consumer culture were still strong.¹⁰⁵

The editors were successful in that the number of contributors and academics working on the editorial board steadily increased. Among the latter—besides Brongersma, who was a member of the board from the beginning—were mainly researchers linked to the *Journal of Homosexuality* and to various chairs related to sexuality or LGBT studies, including, for example, John DeCecco (San Francisco State University), Gert Hekma (Universiteit Amsterdam), and Theo Sandfort (Rijksuniversiteit te

⁹⁹ Don Mader to Brongersma, 31 March 1991, no. 146, AEB; Joseph Geraci, editor, Stichting Paidika Foundation, newsletter, Amsterdam, [January] 1996, no. 157, AEB.

¹⁰⁰ Joseph Geraci to Brongersma, 1 August 1990, no. 143; Joseph Geraci to Brongersma, 27 August 1991, no. 138, both in AEB.

¹⁰¹ Geraci to Brongersma, 27 April 1989.

¹⁰² See, for example, Frits Bernard, “On Paedophilia,” *Paidika* 1, no. 2 (1987): 46–48; Theodorus G. M. Sandfort, “The Sexual Experiences of Children (Part 2),” *Paidika* 3, no. 2 (1994): 69.

¹⁰³ Erick Pontalley, “Celtic Pederasty in Pre-Roman Gaul,” *Paidika* 2, no. 2 (1990): 32–39; Maarten Schild, “The Irresistible Beauty of Boys: Middle Eastern Attitudes about Boy-Love,” *Paidika* 1, no. 3 (1988): 37–48; Norman Roth, “Boy-Love in Medieval Arabic Verses,” *Paidika* 3, no. 3 (1994): 12–16.

¹⁰⁴ Éditions de la Moulette, advertisement, in *Paidika* 3, no. 3 (1994): 76; Die schwulen Buchläden, advertisement, in *Paidika* 3, no. 2 (1994): 87.

¹⁰⁵ Paternotte, “International,” 131.

Utrecht).¹⁰⁶ It is noteworthy that Marjan Sax, a prominent feminist researcher, also took part in the debate; in 1992 she coedited an issue entitled “Erotic and Sexual Relationships between Women and Minors.”¹⁰⁷ However, the editors ultimately failed to establish pedophilia as a renowned field of academic research and *Paidika* as its organ.¹⁰⁸

In 1993, after the two psychologists Hollida Wakefield and Ralph Underwager had called on pedophiles in *Paidika* to have more self-confidence, American feminists protested and tried to stop them from working as experts in sex offense trials.¹⁰⁹ Some coeditors from the United States also came under criticism. In this context, the magazine was called “a magazine ‘advocating’ paedophilia” and a “paedophile sex magazine.”¹¹⁰

When in 1996 the case of Belgian child rapist and murderer Marc Dutroux shook the international public, media attention to child abuse increased, and propedophile positions became more or less unspeakable. Due to criminal prosecution of persons involved in the publication of *Paidika* and due to financial bottlenecks, the journal officially ceased publication in 1997; an intended special issue on a controversial study by the German sociologist Rüdiger Lautmann never came to pass.¹¹¹ With *Paidika*, all attempts to merge academic, political, and consumer practices to establish pedophilia as a field of study and its protagonists as legitimate experts on the subjects of pedophilia and child sexuality had eventually come to an end.

Brongersma himself, one of the most distinguished advocates of pedophilia, was now exposed to fierce criticism. Largely isolated and suffering from depression, he ended his life by suicide in August 1998. Only two years later, a public prosecutor investigating the Brongersma Foundation found that his archive held not only nude pictures but also those “of another character [*van een ander kaliber*]”; of the 350 videos seized, 183 films were “genuinely child pornographic material.” That these could serve research purposes and had been collected according to scientific criteria was denied

¹⁰⁶ Thus Brongersma was involved in the PhD dissertation of psychologist Thijs Maasen on Gustav Wyneken; he later reviewed the result in *Paidika*. Thijs Maasen to Brongersma, 26 September 1984, no. 124, AEB; Edward Brongersma, “De pedagogische Eros in het geding: Gustav Wyneken en de pedagogische vriendschap in de Freie Schulgemeinde Wickersdorf tussen 1906–1931,” book review, *Paidika* 2, no. 1 (1989): 58–61.

¹⁰⁷ Marjan Sax and Sjuul Duckwitz, eds., “Erotic and Sexual Relationships between Women and Minors,” *Paidika* 2, no. 4 (1992).

¹⁰⁸ As indicated by research on Google Scholar for central articles and on WorldCat for library holdings of the journal.

¹⁰⁹ “Interview: Hollida Wakefield and Ralph Underwager,” *Paidika* 3, no. 1 (1993): 2–12.

¹¹⁰ Joseph Geraci, editor, Stichting Paidika Foundation, newsletter, Amsterdam, [December] 1993, no. 151, AEB.

¹¹¹ Joseph Geraci, editor, Stichting Paidika Foundation, newsletter, Amsterdam, [January] 1996, no. 157, AEB; Lautmann, *Lust am Kind*; Ursula Enders, “Sexueller Mißbrauch in Institutionen: Wie Pädophile ihre Opfer suchen,” in *Skandal und Alltag: Sexueller Mißbrauch und Gegenstrategien*, ed. Gitti Hentschel (Berlin: Orlanda Frauenverlag, 1996), 236–37.

by the public prosecutor's office after consultations with experts.¹¹² While in the 1970s they might have been interpreted merely as images of "deviant" sexual behavior or even proof of children's boundless sexuality, they were now viewed as testimonies of sexual exploitation and rape. All pictures and films were confiscated, used to identify perpetrators of child sexual abuse, and eventually destroyed.

CONCLUSION

The question whether sexual acts between adults and children should be decriminalized under certain circumstances has been disputed in many western European countries since the early 1970s. So far, however, the close entanglement of political and academic discourses with practices of consumption has been largely overlooked. Child pornographic material—from poems and posing pictures to pornographic films—has been reproduced, exchanged, recommended, lent, collected, and archived. Consumers were often also the producers of the circulating material. "To photograph is to appropriate the thing photographed"—this applies in particular to the material discussed here: every photograph, every film came about through a situation of sexual exploitation.¹¹³ While contemporary discourse has sought to distinguish "genuine" pedophilia from violent abuse, taking into account the use of these images shifts hierarchical power relations into focus, relations that were otherwise covered with silence. These power relations existed not only between generations but also due to global economic inequality. An economically privileged European man such as Brongersma was thus able to maintain sexual contacts primarily in the Mediterranean and Southeast Asia. As parts of his correspondence show, these contacts came about through the exchange of money or gifts. However, it was precisely this transactional character that endangered the image of egalitarian love relationships, on which the entire debate on the decriminalization of pedophile contacts and the self-images of some pedophiles were based.

Without a doubt, people such as Brongersma and Bernard not only were activists and academics, according to their own pretense, but also gained prominence as consumers, producers, and collectors. Scholars have explored the links between consumption and movement politics during the "sex wave" and the "sexual revolution" of the 1960s, as well as during the gay liberation movement.¹¹⁴ And it was precisely this amalgamation that provided the basis for a "pedophile movement" and continued to provide

¹¹² Bartelsman, "Kinderporno," 6'15", 30'05"; "OM: Hoeveelheid kinderporno Brongersma is zeer groot," *De Volkskrant*, 29 May 2000, <https://www.volkskrant.nl/men-sen/om-hoeveelheid-kinderporno-brongersma-is-zeer-groot~b225b02b/>, accessed 28 September 2021.

¹¹³ The quotation is from Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (London: Penguin, 2008), 4.

¹¹⁴ Franz X. Eder, *Kultur der Begierde: Eine Geschichte der Sexualität* (Munich: Beck, 2009); Herzog, *Sex after Fascism*, 141–48; Johnson, "Physique Pioneers."

it with a structure and identity points of reference even after its renewed disappearance into marginality in the 1990s.

Edward Brongersma was arguably the most important link in a transnational network of activists, scholars, and “ordinary” pedophile men. Hundreds turned to him for advice, to seek support for political or publication projects, to exchange photographs or information, and to be brought into contact with like-minded men. His vast correspondence testifies to the extent and inner workings of this network, as well as to the enormous effort that was necessary to maintain the claim of consensual sexual relations despite innumerable indications to the contrary. In contrast to the projected self-image of an oppressed minority, through their correspondence, Brongersma, Bernard, and other pedophile men become recognizable as part of a white, male, Western elite, their struggle not one against an anachronistic, prudish morale but an expression of their sense of entitlement.

About a year before Brongersma’s suicide, a Canadian informed him that he was “just starting to explore the *net*.” Although one had to be careful of police, who were already charging people for downloading images of boys, the amount of information was “incredible”: “There is a lot of exciting material out there on the *internet*. In subsequent letters I will let you know of some of the more interesting things I find. Do you have any particular things you would like me to try to find?”¹¹⁵ While the political pedophile movement remained a mere anecdote in the history of the 1970s, the underlying consumer structures have been transformed in the digital age and are still very much alive today.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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¹¹⁵ S. to Brongersma, 5 May 1997, no. 148, AEB, English original, original emphasis.