

# Motivational and Behavioral Characteristics of Boy-attracted Pedosexual Males: Validation of a Typology Using an Internet Survey

David L Riegel

## ABSTRACT

Over the past quarter century or more, research on males who are sexually attracted to boys has focused largely on clinical patients and prisoners. In the present study, men outside these settings were recruited online to participate in a survey designed to examine a proposed typology of such males, which comprises seven classes across which the sexual dimensions of these males' relationships with boys range from purely platonic through sexually passive, active, and aggressive, while the nonsexual dimensions of nurturing and/or mentoring boys vary from substantial to absent. Of the 517 men who submitted valid questionnaires, relatively few gave responses that placed them in the more active or aggressive classes which typify the "child molester" or "predator" image. The vast majority fell into the platonic or passive classes, where their interactions with boys would be less likely to come to the attention of clinicians or legal authorities. Tests of various hypotheses intrinsic to the typology, using data from the survey, generally were supportive.

## INTRODUCTION

Relying primarily upon clinical and forensic samples (e.g., Groth, 1979; Seghorn et al., 1987; etc.), research over the last three decades concerning men erotically attracted to and/or sexually involved with boys has been based on the assumption that such interests represent *a priori* a mental disorder and that the sexual interactions themselves constitute "abuse," while nonsexual aspects of the relationships (e.g., friendship, bonding, mentoring) generally are accorded little or no weight. Thirty years ago, however, such relationships generally received little public attention; Tindall (1978) observed that such men and their activities usually went unnoticed. But since the late 1970s, public attention to these issues has increased substantially (Jenkins, 1998), with media playing an important role (West, 1998); one example being the American television network NBC series *To Catch a Predator*, in which adults posing as children lure men into meetings where their arrests are recorded for later broadcast (Salkin, 2006). The hyperbole and stereotyping in these and other media presentations can be understood as a product of the moral panic that has surrounded this issue over the last three decades (Jenkins, 1998; West, 1998, 2000). Rare dissenting or qualifying opinions are highly vulnerable to intense recriminations (Lilienfeld, 2002; Mirkin, 2000; Oellerich, 2000).

However, current cultural assumptions of aggression, manipulation, and pathology as typical of, or even intrinsic to, older males' sexual attractions to, or interactions with, boys are questionable. In a variety of historical and anthropological settings, older male sexual interest in boys or youths was normative rather than anomalous, and in many of these societies such interactions were often part of a broader and culturally sanctioned relationship which promoted social growth on the part of the younger male (Herdt, 1987; Murray, 2002; Percy, 1996, Williams, 2000). More recently, according to figures from Rind, Bauserman, & Tromovitch (1998) there are some fifteen million men in the US alone who had primarily nonnegative boyhood sexual contacts with older persons, and the clinical and forensic samples favored by

much of the research community would seem to be unrepresentative of these much larger numbers which have not come to the attention of clinicians or the authorities. There have been studies of such men who were neither in therapy nor prison (e.g., Bernard, 1985; Lautman, 1994; Wilson & Cox, 1981). The findings of these researchers present a much more complex picture, indicating that while some of these men do conform to popular and professional stereotypes, many others involve not just sex, but include nonsexual motivations that appear to be for "benevolent reasons." (Wilson, 1981, p.135). Therefore, the present study was designed to survey similar men in the general population rather than those in clinical or penal settings.

## **TERMINOLOGY**

In any discussion of these issues it is important to use a neutral yet practical descriptor for males who are sexually interested in, or involved with, underage younger males. Terms such as "child molester," "predator," "pedophile," and "boy-lover" are negatively value laden and tend to trigger prejudiced associations (Jenkins, 1998; Rind & Bauserman, 1993). Furthermore, most of these terms are not gender specific, and the reactions of girls to these situations tend to differ significantly from those of boys (Lautmann, 1994; Rind et al., 1998; Wilson & Cox, 1981). "Pederast" is also inappropriate because it has acquired the connotation of applying only to adolescent boys, while excluding the younger boys who also are of interest in the present study. Riegel (2004a, 2004b) employed the term "boy-attracted pedosexual male(s)" (BPM, singular or plural) in order to include both adolescent and younger boys as the objects of the attraction, to identify the gender and nature of attraction of the older party, and to attempt to be value-free. Although BPM is a relatively new term in the literature and likely unfamiliar to some readers, it was felt to be the most appropriate for use in the present study.

For respondents to be considered BPM in this investigation, they had to be at least three years older than the boys at or below mid-adolescence to whom they were typically sexually attracted. This definitional scheme allows even for males who are legal minors to be classified as BPM, given that respondents indicated their sexual attractions to boys frequently developed years before they reached the age of majority (cf. Table 1). In the present study, however, only men 18 years of age and older were accepted as participants.

## **TYPOLGY**

To move beyond the narrow stereotypes that form the foundation for much of the clinical and forensic research in this area, a multilevel typology was proposed to describe motivations and resultant behaviors of males sexually attracted to boys. The interrelated factors and classes of this typology are not based on any previous format; they were developed from several years of investigations of these phenomena using the Internet, which allows the relatively anonymous conversations required for free and open discussion of these motivations, behaviors, and the relationships between the two. In order to protect the researcher as well as correspondents, discussions of actual sexual contacts with boys in these preliminary one-on-one, potentially traceable, electronic conversations were avoided (although the even more anonymous questionnaire did inquire into these areas), only motivation and potential behaviors were explored. Over the years, patterns of motivation and behaviors began to emerge, and these, along with a review of various other sources, eventually coalesced into the typology.

The varieties of motivation that came to light through these preliminary contacts range from negative, as in popular stereotypes (manipulative exploitation and a focus only on one's own sexual desires), to positive (genuine concern for the boy, deference to the boy's sexual and nonsexual needs over one's own). The latter motivations appear in many of the descriptions in other nonclinical, nonlegal samples (e.g., Bernard, 1985; Lautman, 1994; Wilson & Cox, 1981; Wilson, 1981) and in the ethos of other societies that have integrated sexual relationships between boys and older males (e.g., Ford & Beach, 1951; Herdt, 1987; Murray, 2002; Percy, 1996; Williams, 2000; etc.). Drawing from this range of research and the author's prior investigations, the typology considers a number of "traits," the varying levels of which are incorporated into seven classes as described in the text below, in tables 3 through 9, and in the complete typology which is presented in Appendix A.

## METHOD

Researchers have noted the value of the Internet in enabling investigators to reach otherwise inaccessible persons and populations (e.g., Duffy, 2002; Rhodes et al., 2003), and have shown the value of Internet studies by comparing data collected over the web with "paper and pencil" data, finding no significant differences in their quality or validity (e.g., Cronk & West, 2002; Pettit, 2002). The anonymity available on the Internet is crucial to recruiting a wide and varied sample of BPM who are generally invisible with respect to other sampling approaches; furthermore, such respondents are more likely to be candid and less liable to give "socio-politically correct" answers. These factors, as well as previous experience by the author, made the Internet the venue of choice. But even with the Internet, in today's political climate this investigation might not have been possible if the author had been affiliated with an academic institution. But as an independent researcher, no institutional review was necessary, although every effort was made to conform to social science ethical principles.

### *Recruitment and procedure*

Potential BPM participants were recruited by requesting a link on the Internet site "Boylinks" (<http://www.boylinks.net>), a site visited by BPM and others interested in finding web sites that deal with "boy-love" issues. On the linked page, men who were 18 or older, and who self-identified as BPM, were invited to respond anonymously to a nonjudgmental, computerized questionnaire concerning various motivational and behavioral aspects of their actual or desired interactions with boys. It was emphasized that participation would be totally anonymous and that beyond date and time, no identifying information would be attached to the data or otherwise recorded. Respondents were informed that this study was being conducted by an independent researcher and was not connected with any professional organization or group, were presented a disclaimer in accordance with the American Psychological Association Ethical Principles and Code of Conduct, and were advised that by proceeding they were both identifying themselves as BPM and agreeing to the terms and conditions of the research project.

On the second page, they were reminded of the legal age requirement and the anonymity of the study. They were encouraged to answer truthfully and accurately, rather than giving socially correct or "safe" answers, and were asked not to participate if they felt they could not be truthful and accurate. They then were instructed how to respond to the survey questions, and advised that if they omitted any question, the processing software would reject their submission

until they answered it. The processing software also included a "lockout" that prevented multiple submissions in rapid succession. A "prefer not to answer" option was provided for some items, as well as default null responses for age related questions beyond the respondent's current age. Visitors who continued then were presented with the questions described below.

### *Measures*

The instrument designed for this study was an online questionnaire consisting of four sections: (a) demographics, (b) traits, (c) self-classification, and (d) experiences, perceptions, and feelings. Participants were asked to respond to (b) and (c) as of each of the six age groups that applied to them, thus providing life-course data which could be used to identify changes over time. "Traits," which, for convenience were labeled A through G, asked respondents to describe the characteristics of their actual or desired interactions with boys. In "self-classification," participants were presented with the complete typology (as shown in Appendix A) and asked to identify the class that best described them at their current age and at each earlier age grouping. "Experiences, perceptions, and feelings" contained items on participants' experiences with boys and perceptions of the law, their degree of comfort or anxiety about their attraction to boys, the nature of their sexual attractions, and the age at which they became aware of their attraction.

*Demographics.* Participants were asked their current age group; their race; where they lived; their religion; the influence of religion on their attitudes and decisions (using a 5-point scale, from "not at all" to "in everything"); their political orientation (using a 5-point scale, from "very conservative" to "very liberal"); economic levels; marital status; and number of biological children. Years of education and occupational levels were assessed with the Hollingshead Two-Factor Index of Social Position scales. Participants were asked to evaluate their present mental health on a 7-point scale from "excellent" to "extremely poor," as well as how well they coped with problems of everyday life on a 5-point scale from "extremely well" to "extremely poorly."

*Traits.* For each of 7 "traits," participants were asked to rate themselves at each of the age groups up through their current age. The questions asked and the responses offered are detailed in tables 3 through 9.

*Self-classification.* After first completing the traits section, respondents were presented with the complete typology (as shown in Appendix A), asked to read it carefully, and then to choose the class that best described them at each of the age groupings that applied to them.

*Experiences, perceptions, and feelings.* In this section, participants were asked, over their lifetime, the number of relationships (sexual or not) they had had with boys that could be described as Class 1; Class 2; and so on, up to Class 7. They were instructed that all contacts with an individual boy, regardless of how extensive, should be considered as a single relationship. Response options were: none, 1, 2-3, 4-6, 7-10, 11 or more, and "prefer not to answer." Next, they were asked how old they were when they became aware that they were sexually attracted to boys at least 3 years younger than themselves, and if their attraction to boys was: (1) exclusive, (2) primary, with some attraction to other persons, (3) equal to attraction to other persons, (4) secondary to attraction to other persons, or (5) very minor, mostly with attraction to other persons. Two more questions concerned their levels of internal comfort and externally influenced stress and anxiety about their attraction to boys.

Questions about the fairness of laws, enforcement, and punishments regarding sexually expressed interactions with boys were posed next. The three "fairness" questions concerned interactions that fit Classes 3 through 5, Class 6, and Class 7, respectively. For each of these questions, responses were assessed on 7-point scales ranging from "completely fair and appropriate" to "extremely unfair and inappropriate." The last question concerned their own involvement with the law, with 9 response options, reported in Table 1, which ranged from none to conviction with prison time.

#### *Participants:*

There were N=517 men who submitted valid responses; there were also 55 additional responses which were rejected because the respondent was under 18 (13) or the answers were obvious fakes or were so chaotic and inconsistent that they were useless (42). Tabulated responses are presented in Table 1.

The median and modal ages of participants were both in the 31-40 age range. Ninety percent of respondents were White, and a little more than half (52%) were from the U.S. A third claimed no formal religion, and over half indicated that they were rarely or never influenced by religion in their general attitudes and personal decisions. Nearly half the participants had an undergraduate or higher degree. The Hollingshead classifications of occupational and economic levels that were calculated indicated that the sample was more upscale than the population at large, with almost 40% in the upper or upper-middle class.

A large majority of participants were single (73%), and had no biological children (85%). The median age at which respondents became aware of their sexual attractions to boys at least three years younger was 14; and 88% did so before they reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. As a precondition for participation in the survey, all were to some degree sexually attracted to boys, but in less than a quarter of the sample (24%) was this attraction exclusive, with another half being primarily attracted to boys (49%). Two-thirds reported that they had never had any problems with the law over their sexual interests or behaviors. Only 7% of the entire sample reported any criminal conviction, with an additional 3% accepting a plea bargain, and less than 5% had actually served time in prison.

## **RESULTS**

Even though they were reported after the trait responses in the questionnaire, the self-assigned classifications are presented first in the results in order to provide a basic overview.

In tables 2 through 9, the number of respondents in each age group from 22 up varies somewhat from table to table. This is due to failure of a few of the respondents to replace a default "null" response in the questionnaire up through their current age, or from mistakenly replacing a null response past their current age. This variance is statistically insignificant.

Frequencies of the levels of the seven traits, which were assessed prior to self-classifications, are presented by age groups in tables 3 through 9, along with the question and its

Table 1: Participant Characteristics (N=517)

Age group:	Cope with problems:	Biological children:
18-21 -----16.8%	Poorly----- 1.4%	None ----- 84.7%
22-25 -----13.9%	Not very well ----- 9.7%	One-----7.4%
26-30 -----15.3%	Fairly well-----40.8%	Two -----5.0%
31-40 -----23.4%	Very well-----37.5%	Three-----1.6%
41-50 -----16.1%	Extremely well ----- 10.6%	Four or more -----1.4%
51 and older-----14.5%		
Race:	Years of education or highest degree (Hollingshead):	Religion:
White-----90.5%	Less than 7 years----- 0.2%	Protestant ----- 21.9%
Black ----- 0.8%	7-9 years----- 0.8%	Catholic ----- 19.7%
Asian ----- 2.3%	10-11 ----- 5.2%	Jewish -----2.7%
Latino ----- 5.8%	HS diploma or equiv. --26.9%	Muslim -----0.4%
Other ----- 0.6%	13-16 -----17.2%	Other----- 22.1%
	Undergraduate degree--29.6%	None ----- 33.3%
Residence:	Graduate degree-----20.1%	Influenced by religion:
United States-----52.4%	Occupation level (Hollingshead):	In everything -----4.8%
Canada ----- 3.7%	Executive----- 5.0%	Frequently ----- 18.8%
United Kingdom ----- 8.7%	Manager -----18.0%	Occasionally-----20.9%
Continental Europe ----19.7%	Administrative-----24.8%	Rarely----- 14.9%
Australia/New Zealand-- 5.6%	Sales, technician -----36.0%	Not at all ----- 40.6%
Asia----- 1.9%	Skilled ----- 9.5%	
Other ----- 7.9%	Semiskilled ----- 2.1%	Age of awareness:
Political and social views:	Unskilled ----- 4.6%	Under 13 ----- 29.6%
Very conservative----- 6.0%	Hollingshead Index of Social Position:	13 - 15 ----- 43.5%
Mildly conservative----17.0%	Upper ----- 4.6%	16 - 17 ----- 14.9%
Moderate -----20.7%	Upper Middle-----33.7%	18 - 23 -----9.5%
Mildly liberal -----25.9%	Middle -----46.6%	> 23 -----2.5%
Very liberal -----30.4%	Lower Middle -----11.8%	
Economic status:	Lower ----- 3.3%	Sexual attraction:
Poverty----- 3.1%	Marital status:	Exclusively to boys --- 23.8%
Below average -----22.8%	Single -----72.7%	Primarily to boys ----- 48.6%
Average -----47.0%	Long term heterosexual 13.5%	Equ. to boys and others 19.5%
Comfortable-----24.6%	Long term homosexual - 6.4%	Primarily to others-----7.0%
Wealthy----- 2.5%	Separated----- 1.4%	Almost exclu. to others --1.2%
General mental health:	Divorced----- 5.4%	
Extremely poor ----- 0.2%	Widowed ----- 0.6%	Encounters with the law:
Very poor----- 3.1%		None ----- 65.8%
Less than average -----15.9%		Suspicion----- 12.8%
Average -----23.8%		Questioned-----8.9%
Above average-----17.0%		Arrested but released----1.9%
Very good -----23.4%		Tried but acquitted -----0.6%
Excellent-----16.6%		Plea bargain, no prison --2.5%
		Convicted, no prison ----3.1%
		Plea bargain, prison -----0.8%
		Convicted, prison-----3.7%

In this table, as well as in others, percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

optional responses. Given the intensity of sexual feelings, the high level of education and mental health reported by the respondents, and that the median age is the 31-40 group not all that far removed from their youth, recall bias for the self-classifications and the levels of traits at earlier ages should not be a significant problem.

### *Self-classification*

Table 2 presents the frequencies of self-classification at each age level. In the <18 questions, respondents were given the option of answering that they were not sufficiently aware of their BPM nature prior to age 18 to assign themselves to a class, resulting in N=419. All respondents, however, had been or were in the 18-21 group (N=517), but the number, of course, drops off in later age groups.

Table 2: Self-classification

Age groups:	<18	18-21	22-25	26-30	31-40	41-50	>50
N=	419	517	423	356	275	156	77
Class 1	12.9%	13.9%	10.4%	8.7%	8.7%	7.1%	3.9%
Class 2	12.2%	19.5%	23.6%	26.1%	24.0%	28.2%	29.9%
Class 3	26.5%	26.9%	29.3%	27.3%	29.8%	23.7%	28.6%
Class 4	22.9%	22.4%	23.6%	25.6%	26.6%	28.9%	22.1%
Class 5	16.2%	13.7%	10.6%	10.4%	9.5%	9.6%	11.7%
Class 6	7.4%	3.3%	2.4%	2.0%	1.5%	2.6%	3.9%
Class 7	1.9%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Percentages in Class 1 decreased with maturity, but those in Class 2 increased with age, possibly because of greater realization of potential consequences, while Classes 3 and 4 remained relatively stable. Percentages in Class 5 dropped steadily through the age progressions until the 41-50 and >50 groups, an anomaly that also shows up in Class 6 and is not readily explained. Relatively few classified themselves in Class 6, and none after age 21 in Class 7.

### *Traits*

*Recognition of sexual attraction to boys.* (Trait A) The degree of recognition and acceptance of the respondents' sexual attraction to boys was expected to increase with age,

Table 3: Trait "A," Recognition of sexual attraction  
Response scales, frequencies, means, and standard deviations

Question: <b>To what degree do/did you recognize and acknowledge your sexual attraction to prepubescent and/or early to mid-adolescent boys?</b>							
Age groups:	<18	18-21	22-25	26-30	31-40	41-50	>50
Responses (see note):	N = 517	N = 517	N = 425	N = 356	N = 278	N = 159	N = 79
1 Not at all/repressed	13.5%	6.2%	6.4%	5.1%	4.3%	4.4%	5.1%
2 Possibly recognized	19.0%	8.9%	5.7%	3.9%	1.4%	0.6%	0%
3 Probably recognized	27.5%	20.9%	10.3%	9.0%	7.6%	6.3%	2.5%
4 Fully recognized	40.0%	64.0%	77.7%	82.0%	86.7%	88.7%	92.4%

### Notes:

The response options in the instrument for Trait A were:

- (1) I either did not recognize my attraction, or I consciously or subconsciously repressed it,
- (2) I possibly recognized it, (3) I probably recognized it, (4) I fully recognized it.

and to vary between classes. As proposed in the typology, Class 1 men should most tend to deny, or fail to recognize or acknowledge, the sexual component of their interest in boys, with an increasing linear trend through men in Classes 6 and 7. Table 3 presents the frequencies by age groups and the mean scores by class. The increased recognition and acceptance over age in Response 4 is substantial, more than doubling from the first age group to the last, and increasing by nearly half from the second age group to the last.

*Respect for boy as a person* (Trait B) Participants indicated their level of respect for the boy as a person on a scale from extremely high to nonexistent. The typology suggests, but does not specify, that such respect should be highest (lesser M) in the middle classes and lower at the extremes. Table 4 presents the frequencies by age groups and the mean scores by class.

Table 4: Trait "B," Respect for boy as a person  
Response scales, frequencies, means, standard deviations, and significant differences

Question: <b>How would you describe your level of respect for a boy as a person, apart from his right to sexual self-determination?</b>							
Age groups:	<18	18-21	22-25	26-30	31-40	41-50	>50
Responses (complete):	N = 517	N = 517	N = 426	N = 356	N = 275	N = 157	N = 77
1 Extremely high	37.1%	43.9%	53.3%	55.9%	62.9%	56.7%	62.3%
2 Very high	21.3%	24.6%	24.2%	26.4%	23.6%	29.9%	27.3%
3 Somewhat high	15.3%	15.1%	10.3%	7.9%	6.6%	5.1%	1.3%
4 Moderate	14.9%	8.5%	6.3%	5.6%	4.0%	4.5%	3.9%
5 Somewhat low	5.0%	4.3%	3.1%	2.0%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%
6 Very low	3.4%	1.4%	1.6%	1.1%	0.7%	1.9%	1.3%
7 Nonexistent	3.3%	2.3%	1.2%	1.1%	1.5%	1.9%	3.9%

Percentages for Responses 1 (Extremely high) and 2 (Very high) tend to increase with age, while the other 5 responses tend to decrease.

*Respect for boys' sexual self-determination.* (Trait C) Respondents were asked to rate their level of respect for a boy's right to make his own decisions about sex. The typology descriptions suggest that men in Classes 1 and 2 would give most weight to moral and legal prohibitions, regardless of the boy's wishes. Classes 3 and 4 are more oriented toward the boy's needs and wants, and therefore would have a higher "respect" for a boy's sexual decisions, even when they ran counter to social taboos. Class 5 men, taking advantage of "passive consent" on the part of the boy, would have less respect, and Class 6 men would show even lower respect. Table 5 presents the frequencies by age groups and the mean scores by class.

As in Table 4, the percentages selecting Responses 1 and 2 tend to increase with age while they tend to decrease in the other 5 responses. The mean scores are largely consistent with expectations from the typology, and the overall ANOVA was significant,  $F(5, 511) = 3.67, p = .003$ . The post hoc comparisons showed that men in Classes 2, 3, and 4 reported significantly greater respect (lesser M) for a boy's sexual self-determination than men in Class 6; men in the other two classes were intermediate and did not significantly differ from either extreme.



Table 5: Trait "C," respect for a boy's right of sexual self-determination  
Response scales, frequencies, means, standard deviations, and significant differences

<b>Question: How would you describe your level of respect for a boy's right of self-determination regarding his own sexuality, and his right to make his own decisions in this area, regardless of whether you would or would not engage in sexual activity with a boy?</b>							
Age groups:	<18	18-21	22-25	26-30	31-40	41-50	>50
Responses (complete):	N = 517	N = 517	N = 427	N = 358	N = 277	N = 158	N = 78
1 Extremely high	43.3%	48.7%	55.0%	61.5%	63.5%	60.7%	64.1%
2 Very high	18.0%	23.8%	21.1%	19.8%	20.2%	26.6%	28.2%
3 Somewhat high	14.5%	9.7%	11.9%	7.8%	8.3%	5.1%	3.9%
4 Moderate	11.0%	9.5%	5.2%	5.9%	4.7%	3.2%	2.6%
5 Somewhat low	5.2%	3.3%	3.3%	2.5%	1.4%	1.3%	0%
6 Very low	3.5%	1.9%	1.4%	0.8%	0.4%	0.6%	0%
7 Nonexistent	4.5%	3.1%	2.1%	1.7%	1.4%	2.5%	1.3%

*Desire to nurture, support, and mentor.* (Trait D) The typology hypothesized that the desire to nurture and mentor a boy with whom the respondents were involved in a relationship, regardless of whether the relationship involved sex, would be greatest for Class 3 men (a "significant" degree of bonding or mentoring), and would progressively diminish in lower classes, and even more so in higher classes. Table 6 shows the frequencies by age groups and mean scores by class.

Table 6, Trait "D," Desire to nurture, support, and mentor a boy in a relationship:  
Response scales, frequencies, means, standard deviations, and significant differences

<b>Question: How would you describe your level of desire to provide nurturing, support, and mentoring in a mutually positive environment for a boy with whom you have an established relationship which may or may not include a sexual component?</b>							
Age groups:	<18	18-21	22-25	26-30	31-40	41-50	>50
Responses (complete):	N = 517	N = 517	N = 426	N = 357	N = 275	N = 158	N = 76
1 Extremely significant	30.2%	38.3%	46.0%	50.4%	54.9%	55.1%	50.5%
2 Very significant	15.3%	20.5%	22.1%	19.9%	21.5%	20.3%	23.7%
3 Significant	18.4%	13.9%	10.8%	14.9%	11.3%	15.2%	9.2%
4 Moderate	13.5%	10.4%	8.9%	7.6%	8.0%	5.1%	4.0%
5 Less than moderate	5.4%	6.0%	5.9%	2.5%	1.1%	0.6%	0.0%
6 Minimal	6.4%	4.1%	2.8%	2.0%	0.4%	0.6%	0.0%
7 Absent	10.8%	6.8%	3.5%	2.8%	2.9%	3.2%	2.6%

Once again, the percentages for Responses 1 and 2 tend to increase with age, 3 is essentially flat, and 4 through 7 tend to decrease, although once again there are a few inexplicable minor anomalies.

*Circumstances for engaging in sex with a boy.* (Trait E) The circumstances under which participants would engage in sex with a boy were expected to be least for Class 1 men, whose "moral" based rejection of sex is absolute, and would increase linearly through Class 7. Class 2 was considered to have a higher value than Class 1 because it allowed for sex if legal

circumstances were to change. Table 7 presents the frequencies by age groups and mean scores by class.

Table 7, Trait "E," Circumstances for engaging in sex with a boy  
Response scales, frequencies, means, standard deviations, and significant differences

<b>Question: Disregarding potential legal consequences for (3) through (7), under what circumstances would you consider engaging in sexual activity with a boy?</b>							
Age groups:	<18	18-21	22-25	26-30	31-40	41-50	>50
Responses (see note):	N = 517	N = 517	N = 425	N = 355	N = 277	N = 157	N = 75
1 Never, principles	14.1%	12.0%	13.2%	11.8%	12.6%	12.7%	10.7%
2 Never, out of fear	7.7%	13.7%	18.1%	19.2%	18.8%	17.2%	20.0%
3 Enticed by boy	23.4%	27.5%	29.4%	28.7%	25.6%	26.8%	30.7%
4 Interest by boy	26.1%	28.4%	26.6%	26.5%	27.1%	24.8%	21.3%
5 Boy not opposed	17.0%	13.0%	8.2%	10.1%	10.8%	10.2%	9.3%
6 I would seduce, etc.	6.4%	4.1%	3.3%	2.5%	4.3%	5.7%	5.3%
7 Any means necessary	5.2%	1.4%	1.2%	1.1%	0.7%	2.6%	2.7%

Note: The response options in the instrument for Trait E were:

- (1) I would not engage in sexual activity with a boy under any circumstances,
- (2) I would not engage in sexual activity with a boy because of fear of legal consequences,
- (3) Only if the boy openly and obviously enticed or solicited the activity without any prompting on my part would I be receptive,
- (4) Only if the boy showed some degree of interest would I suggest or promote such activities,
- (5) Only if the boy appeared not to be actively opposed to the idea would I suggest or promote such activities,
- (6) I would attempt to seduce, entice, cajole, bribe, and or pressure any available boy into sexual activities or would hire a boy prostitute
- (7) I would obtain sexual gratification from any boy using whatever means I felt necessary.

No significant changes in frequencies over age were apparent beyond the <18 group.

*Relative degree of pleasure and gratification in sex with a boy.* (Trait F) As men in Classes 1 and 2 by definition do not engage in sex with boys, their responses indicate abstinence rather than any degree of gratification. Class 3 men should be mostly oriented toward the boy's wants and pleasures, but the reverse should be true for Class 6 and 7 men, with men in Classes 4

Table 8, Trait "F," Relative degree of pleasure and gratification  
Response scales, frequencies, means, standard deviations, and significant differences

<b>Question: What relative degree of pleasure and gratification would you want and expect in sexual activities with a boy?</b>							
Age groups:	<18	18-21	22-25	26-30	31-40	41-50	>50
Responses (see note):	N = 517	N = 517	N = 426	N = 357	N = 275	N = 156	N = 77
1 No sex, principles	13.2%	11.4%	11.7%	10.9%	12.0%	10.9%	7.8%
2 No sex, fear	5.6%	10.8%	13.6%	13.7%	12.4%	14.1%	11.7%
3 All for the boy	12.0%	14.7%	19.0%	20.5%	20.7%	18.6%	28.6%
4 Mostly for the boy	17.4%	23.8%	24.2%	25.2%	25.1%	24.4%	20.8%
5 Equal	34.4%	31.7%	26.1%	25.8%	27.3%	28.2%	27.3%
6 Mostly for me	13.5%	6.4%	4.7%	3.6%	1.8%	2.6%	1.3%
7 All for me	3.9%	1.2%	0.7%	0.3%	0.7%	1.3%	2.6%

Note: The response options in the instrument for Trait F were:

- (1) I would not engage in sexual activity with a boy under any circumstances,
- (2) I would not engage in sexual activity with a boy because of fear of legal consequences,
- (3) The boy's pleasure and gratification would be my overriding concern,
- (4) The boy's pleasure and gratification would be much more important to me than my own,
- (5) The boy's pleasure and gratification and my own would be of equal importance to me,
- (6) My pleasure and gratification would be more important to me than the boy's,
- (7) My own pleasure and gratification would be of overriding concern, and I don't care how the boy might be affected.

and 5 falling increasingly in between. Table 8 presents the frequencies by age groups and mean scores by class. As noted above, response options 1 and 2 reflect abstinence rather than a degree of gratification. Percentages for Response 3 (All for the boy) generally increased with age; for Response 6 (Mostly for me) they decreased with age, while other responses were essentially flat.

*Persuasion, pressure, or coercion to induce the boy to participate in sex.* (Trait G)  
Responses 1 and 2 indicated no influence because there could be no sex, while Response 3 indicated a conscious intent not to use any influence. Responses 4 through 7 describe increasing levels of influence, persuasion, pressure, and, in 7, blatant coercion, thus providing a linear progression. Table 9 presents the frequencies by age groups and mean scores by class, which closely conform to expectations.

Table 9, Trait "G," Persuasion, pressure, or coercion to induce a boy to have sex:  
Response scales, frequencies, means, standard deviations, and significant differences

Question: <b>To what degree of persuasion, pressure, or coercion would you subject a boy in order to induce him to participate in sexual activities?</b>							
Age groups:	<18	18-21	22-25	26-30	31-40	41-50	>50
Responses (see note):	N = 517	N = 517	N = 427	N = 358	N = 275	N = 158	N = 77
1 No sex, principles	14.3%	13.2%	14.1%	11.7%	12.4%	11.4%	7.8%
2 No sex, fear	6.4%	11.2%	15.0%	15.9%	16.7%	17.1%	19.5%
3 None	24.6%	29.6%	31.2%	31.3%	28.7%	30.4%	36.4%
4 Persuasion if interested	28.1%	27.1%	26.2%	27.1%	26.9%	24.7%	20.8%
5 Pressure if not opposed	12.6%	10.6%	8.0%	10.3%	9.5%	11.4%	11.7%
6 Everything but force	10.4%	6.6%	4.9%	3.1%	4.4%	4.4%	3.9%
7 Everything plus force	3.5%	1.7%	0.7%	0.6%	1.5%	0.6%	0.0%

Note: The response options in the instrument for Trait G were:

- (1) I would not engage in sexual activity with a boy under any circumstances,
- (2) I would not engage in sexual activity with a boy because of fear of legal consequences,
- (3) I would not employ any degree of persuasion, pressure, or coercion,
- (4) Only if the boy showed some degree of interest would I try to persuade him,
- (5) Only if the boy appeared to not be actively opposed to the idea would I employ persuasion, and some small degree of pressure and/or bribery,
- (6) I would employ any degree of persuasion, pressure, or bribery I felt was needed to obtain the boy's cooperation, but other than playful touching I would not use physical force,
- (7) I would use whatever degree of persuasion, pressure, or physical force required to compel the boy to submit to me.

Variations in frequencies through the age groups for each of the response options was minimal, with only a minor decrease in Response 1 and a similarly minor increase in Responses 2 and 3.

### *Contacts with Boys*

Respondents were asked to report the number of "contacts" of various classes they had with boys who were 3 or more years younger than themselves over their lifetime. No matter how long the relationship, each boy constituted only one contact, which could have been sexual or not. It should be noted that a contact within a class that allows for sexual contact (3-7) does not necessarily mean that sexual contact actually took place, only that the situation and conditions were such that sexual contact could occur. This precludes even an estimate of the number of contacts that took place which were actually sexual.

Table 10 summarizes the responses.

Table 10. Number of contacts (Sexual or not) of each class respondents had with boys

No. of Contacts	Multiplier	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4	Class 5	Class 6	Class 7
None	0	294	266	255	302	370	434	475
1	1	30	38	59	45	31	15	7
2 or 3	3	58	70	90	62	37	15	4
4 to 6	5	35	39	41	33	17	7	1
7 to 10	9	8	17	19	21	13	7	1
>10	15	61	57	23	25	21	12	2
Preferred not to answer		31	30	30	29	28	27	27
Totals (as noted below)		1366	1166	1155	960	659	338	63
Percentages (all, N=5707)		23.9	20.4	20.2	16.8	11.6	5.9	1.1
Percentages (3-7, N=3175)		-	-	36.4	30.2	20.8	10.7	2.0

About 94% of the participants answered these questions. Totals, shown near the bottom of the table, were calculated using multipliers of 1, 3, 5, 9, and 15 for the various contact ranges; the grand total was 5,707; the total for classes 3-7 was 3,175. Approximately 44% of the contacts were of the Class 1 or 2 types (i.e., nonsexual). Another 37% were Class 3 or 4, perhaps involving sexual contact, but "non-predatory". Eighteen percent were Class 5 or higher, but of these only 6% were of the blatantly seductive type, with 1% being the physically coercive type consistent with the "child molester" or "predator" stereotype. Given that contacts which had the potential to become sexual are not separated from those which actually were sexual, any ratio of how many boys had sexual contact with an average respondent would be pure speculation.

### *Fairness of Laws Against Sexual Contacts*

Men, or even male minors, who have sex with younger boys are currently subject to severe legal penalties, which, in the U.S., frequently entail prison sentences for decades or even life, and pursuit and prosecution, as well of levels of punishment, are higher than at any previous time in history (Jenkins, 1998). Respondents were asked to express their evaluations of current punishments for three levels of encounters. Table 11 presents the results.

Table 11. Mean ratings and Percents for Perceived Fairness of the Laws Regarding Sexual Relationships with Boys as a Function of Degree of Consent versus Force

Fairness of the laws for:	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Fair	Mixed feelings	Unfair
Classes 3-5 (consensual)	4.80	1.75	20%	27%	53%
Class 6 (pressured)	2.93	1.81	62%	20%	18%
Class 7 (forced)	1.80	1.48	85%	8%	7%

On a 7-point scale from 1 (completely fair) through 4 (mixed feelings) to 7 (completely unfair), respondents rated laws on willing encounters or passive consent (Classes 3-5) as unfair ( $M = 4.80$ ), but laws on pressured sex as somewhat fair ( $M = 2.93$ ) and on forced sex as fair ( $M = 1.80$ ). Thus, respondents were generally against the existing laws regarding willing or passive sexual contacts but in favor of those regarding pressured or forced contacts.

Two measures of current adjustment to BPM awareness also were conducted and are presented in Table 12. The first had to do with internal feelings of comfort and peace, and on a 7-point scale from "completely comfortable and at peace" (ego-syntonic) to "extremely uncomfortable and disturbed" (ego-dystonic); the mean was 2.98, with 83% falling in the first four levels. The second measured societal and media influenced anxiety and stress on a 7-point scale from "not noticeably affected (ego-syntonic) to "severely affected" (ego-dystonic), with a mean of 3.40, and 72% in the first four levels.

Table 12: Adjustment

Comfortable/at peace	%	Anxiety/stress	%
Completely comfortable and at peace.....	25	Not noticeably affected.....	10
Moderately comfortable and at peace.....	24	Minimally affected .....	22
Somewhat comfortable and at peace .....	13	Somewhat affected and increased.....	22
Mixed feelings .....	21	Moderately affected and increased .....	18
Somewhat uncomfortable and disturbed.....	7	Considerably affected and increased .....	19
Moderately uncomfortable and disturbed.....	6	Greatly affected and increased to the extent that my	
Extremely uncomfortable and disturbed.....	5	functionality is impaired.....	5
		Severely affected to the extent that I find it nearly	
		impossible to function normally .....	3

## DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to advance scientific understanding of the nature of older male sexual attraction to boys. Factors concerning the etiology of this sexual attraction were not addressed, but the study did inquire into the ages at which participants first recognized their attractions. By age 12, over a quarter of the sample reported this awareness; by age 15, nearly three-quarters; and 88% before age 18, i.e., while the respondents were minors themselves.

While this attraction has become more and more visible over the last several decades, objective understanding has not risen similarly, but instead has been compromised through increasingly extreme stereotyping and hyperbole which have been fueled by questionable research approaches and ignited by moral panic and media sensationalism (Jenkins, 1998; West, 1998, 2000). The rhetoric used to describe the sexual involvement of boy-attracted pedosexual

males (BPM) with underage males frequently equates all such contacts with abuse, which reinforces the idea that such relations are in essence acts of violence.

A few men do aggressively force themselves sexually on boys, and some coax boys who show no resistance into sex, but whose passive consent may not be so much a willingness to be sexual as an unwillingness or inability to put up resistance. But other men encounter boys who are willing and interested in sexual involvement, even to the extent of being encouraging and initiating. Gebhard, Gagnon, Pomeroy, & Christenson (1965), in their classic study on sex offenders done for the Kinsey Institute four decades ago, documented three levels of willingness among boys sexually involved with men, finding that in the majority of cases the boys encouraged the sex, especially early adolescent boys. For boys aged 12 to 15, according to the boys' accounts in official court records, 70% of them were encouraging, 11% of them passively consented, and 17% were coerced or forced (Another 2% were classified as mixed cases). For boys aged 11 and younger, these values were 52%, 7%, and 41%, respectively. The distinctions Gebhard et al. documented, as well as other similar research, faded into obscurity during the ideologically based child sexual abuse revolution of the later 1970s and beyond, and consequently more recent research has leaned toward the presumption that all sexual relations between men and boys are aggressive, exploitive, and invariably initiated by the man.

The present study sought to regain some degree of balance by giving voice to BPM who were not in forensic or forced clinical settings and therefore not under pressure to give the responses implicitly or explicitly demanded of "sex offenders" in the present era. The anonymity of the Internet minimized the tendency to give socially desirable answers and encouraged factual and truthful responses. Recall bias was not a factor in the "current age" responses, but could have had some indeterminable effect in answers to questions concerning past motivations and behaviors. However, the general consistency of responses over time would seem to indicate that this was not a major factor. These men, solicited from the population at large, as were the respondents in other studies in this area (e.g., Bernard, 1985; Lautman, 1994; Wilson & Cox, 1981), are likely to better represent the population of such men compared to clinical and prison samples. But as the authors in these older studies cautioned, it is also stressed here that the sample thus obtained cannot be claimed to accurately represent the entire population of such men. What is suggested, though, is that this sample, even if still far from representative, moves us closer to what would be representative than do clinical and prison samples.

This sample was obtained through a solicitation listed on an Internet site frequented by persons attracted to mid-adolescent or younger boys at least three years younger than themselves. The men who participated were indeed not representative of the general population, differing in various important ways. Unfortunately, very few minorities chose to participate; 90% were White. The sample was international, but skewed towards men from countries where English is the primary language (over 70%), but it still was more diverse than all other known studies of BPM in terms of nationalities involved. Educational level was high on average, with nearly half the sample having bachelor degrees or better from colleges or universities, and 20% having masters degrees or higher. Socioeconomic status was also above average; nearly three times as many men were in the upper socioeconomic classes as in the lower ones. Less than 5% of the men had been imprisoned for sex with boys. Finally, as a group, the men self-reported mostly good mental health and coping skills. All these characteristics show that the present sample was

quite different from the clinical and forensic samples which have been so popular among researchers, but which also differ from the general population. However, the findings need to be viewed with caution in terms of their generality, and would seem to be most relevant to populations of BPM consisting of generally English-speaking Whites who are more educated, higher in socioeconomic status, and free of criminal convictions involving sex with boys.

The typology formulated for this study was designed to identify different classes of BPM as suggested from various sources, including prior research by the author, historical and anthropological reports, as well as nonclinical studies. Seven classes emerged, ranging from the purely platonic (no sex with boys at all) through the sexually passive (sex only if the boy initiates it) and the sexually active (may coax the boy into it) to the sexually aggressive (will pressure or even force the boy). Roughly correlated with this sexual aspect, either positively or negatively, were the extent of self-recognition of sexual attractions to boys, degree of respect for the boy as a person and for the boy's sexual decision-making, as well as orientation towards nurturing and mentoring boys. However, as noted in the preamble to the typology, the classes were not intended to be absolute or exclusive; relationships other than in a subject's primary class are not unexpected.

The typology was examined by having respondents first rate seven traits at age levels up through their current age, and then afterward having them classify themselves by selecting the class in the typology which best described them at the same age levels. The life-course aspect of the questions was designed to show changes over time. Classes 1 through 6 were chosen by respondents of all ages, but only a few below age 22 chose Class 7. Three of every eight participants viewed boys as sexually off-limits, and another 53% viewed themselves as sexually reserved, willing to engage in sex with a boy only if the boy initiated the contact or otherwise showed genuine interest in it. Thus, about 90% of this sample consisted of men who were not likely to trespass on boys' sexual comfort zones and who would be much less likely to become subjects in clinical and forensic research. Some 10% were more in line with the "child molester" stereotype, being more likely to attempt to impose their own sexual desires on less willing or unwilling boys, and there was a "hard core" of less than 5% of those over age 21 whose "7" responses in tables 4-8 revealed a lack of respect for, or empathy with, the boys to whom they are sexually attracted.

The pattern that emerged in the traits across the typology is that men in the sexually reserved groups (classes 3 and 4) seem to be especially dedicated to boys, and most strongly interested in bonding with, nurturing, and mentoring them. In their desire to serve the boys' interests, they appear to be willing to forego direct erotic contact if the boy is not interested, or to engage in it if the boy prefers, even at the risk of legal consequences. Men in the platonic classes 1 and 2, being much more disturbed by social taboos along with legal sanctions, approach relationships more cautiously and are less likely to be of service to boys. For the sexually more active men in Class 5, and especially those in the sexually aggressive Classes 6 and 7, erotic fulfillment appears to be more of a progressively compelling force for them; they are increasingly inclined to serve their own interests rather than the boys', and more likely to overstep in their sexual interactions. Society hears much about men in the sexually active and aggressive classes who run afoul of the law, but is essentially unaware of the generally invisible men in the platonic and reserved classes who comprise the vast majority of this sample. An

important contribution of this study is to broaden awareness of these latter classes in order to counter academic, media, and public preoccupation with the sexually active and aggressive classes.

Despite the degree to which these present data and findings concur with older research (e.g., Bernard, 1985; Gebhart et al., 1965; Lautman, 1994; Tindall, 1978; Wilson, 1981; Wilson & Cox, 1981; etc.) and the Rind et al. (1998) findings, there is no way of ascertaining the extent to which the data in this sample are – or are not – representative of the overall population of BPM. Nevertheless, these findings can contribute to a more balanced professional and public understanding of men who are sexually attracted to boys, and who interact with boys within that context. "Predatory" contacts with boys in this sample were relatively uncommon; most contacts were either platonic (45%) or sexually reserved and deferential to the boy (36%). Further, a sizable minority of these men (44%) never had any contact of a sexual nature with a boy. The findings in this study speak strongly against the current indiscriminate use of inappropriate stereotypes, of the need for more rational and realistic descriptions, dialogue, and research concerning these issues, of the obligation of social scientists to look very critically at forensic and clinical samples in both past and future research, and of the need to reexamine questionable paradigms that perhaps have been embraced too readily.



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## APPENDIX A

It is a given in all of the proposed classes that the subjects are Boy-attracted Pedosexual Males (BPM), i.e., males who are, in fact, sexually attracted to prepubescent and/or early to mid adolescent boys who are a minimum of about 3 years younger than the subject. Attractions to older adolescents with whom sexually expressed relationships would be better described as homosexuality are excluded. The classes are not meant to be absolute or exclusive, but to constitute a continuum where one class grades into the next. Behaviors may be either isolated or recurring, and not all characteristics are required for inclusion in a given class. Any given individual may have concurrent or consecutive relationships in different classes.

- Class 1: Sexual attraction may be self-recognized, or it may be repressed or otherwise rejected. Either way, typically there is an absolute belief that any degree of sexual contact with a boy is "wrong," often on the basis of cultural attitudes of morality, religion or other values. While there may be realization that a boy may have a desire for sexual experimentation, it is assumed that such activity is inherently harmful under any circumstances, and such overtures are summarily rejected. However, a form of respect may be present, and a degree of bonding and/or a mentoring relationship may develop.
- Class 2: Sexual attraction is probably self-recognized, and there is a desire to respect a boy's wishes. But out of fear of the consequences, engagement in any level of sexual experimentation, exploration, and/or play with a boy is rejected. However, regardless of the absence of sexual expression, respect for the boy is high, and a degree of bonding and/or mentoring may develop. If the fear of consequences somehow were to be mitigated, this individual might find himself in one of the classes from 3 through 6.
- Class 3: Sexual attraction is most probably self-recognized, and, if there is enticement or solicitation by a boy, sexual experimentation, exploration, and/or play may take place, depending on all pertinent circumstances. Typically, a significant degree of bonding and/or mentoring develops, the boy's sensual pleasure and well-being are of overriding concern, and the desire for physical gratification by the BPM, while variable, tends to be minimal. The boy's decisions are respected, and occurrences are limited to those times and activities which are initiated or approved by the boy. There is an awareness of potential consequences, but either a spontaneous or calculated decision is made to proceed.
- Class 4: Sexual attraction is self-recognized, and, if a boy is perceived to be showing any degree of interest in consensual sexual experimentation, exploration, and/or play, such activities may be suggested or promoted by the BPM, depending on all pertinent circumstances. Typically, a moderate degree of bonding and/or mentoring may develop, the boy's sensual pleasure and well-being are of major concern, and the desire for orgasmic gratification of the BPM, while variable, tends to be secondary. The boy's decisions are respected, and occurrences are limited to those times and activities which are acceptable to the boy and within his level of comfort. There is an awareness of potential consequences, but a calculated decision is made to proceed.

Class 5: Sexual attraction is self-recognized, and, given any reasonable opportunity with a boy who is perceived not to be actively opposed to the idea, sexual experimentation, exploration, and/or play of a consensual nature may be promoted or initiated, depending on all pertinent circumstances. Typically, some degree of bonding and/or mentoring may develop, the boy's sensual pleasure and well-being are of concern, but orgasmic gratification of the BPM may be a significant factor as well. To a large degree the boy's wishes are taken into consideration, and occurrences are limited to those times and activities to which the boy does not object. Emotional pressure and verbal cajoling are at most minimal, but monetary or other inducements may be offered. There is an awareness of potential consequences, but a calculated decision is made to proceed.

Class 6: Sexual attraction is self-recognized, there are blatant attempts to seduce or entice any available boy into sexual activities, or a boy prostitute may be sought. Typically, any degree of bonding and/or mentoring is minimal, the emotional and/or orgasmic gratification of the BPM is primary, and the boy's willingness, sensual pleasure, and well-being are of lesser concern. Emotional pressure, verbal cajoling, and monetary or other inducements may be employed to achieve the desired ends, and to assure that the boy will not report the incident(s) to others. Playful touching intended to stimulate arousal may occur, but the use of any significant degree of physical force to obtain acquiescence is absent. There is an awareness of potential consequences, but a calculated decision is made to proceed.

Class 7: This class encompasses those who use gross physical force to obtain gratification that to some degree may be sexual, but which also may be just as much, or more, based on a need to exercise malevolent power over another person, and to derive pleasure from their suffering. Kidnappers, rapists, torturers, and murderers would be classified here.