

Pedophile Relationships in the Netherlands: Alternative Lifestyle for Children?

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ABSTRACT: The experiences and perceptions of 25 boys in on-going relationships with pedophiles in the Netherlands were studied using a semi-structured interview technique. Areas of personal significance or value to the boys, including the pedophile relationship, the pedophile himself, and the sexual contact, were investigated for their emotional meaning and salience. The older partner and pedophile relationship were found to be significant but not overly important aspects of the boys' experiences. The partner and relationship, including sexual aspects, were experienced in predominately positive terms; evidence of exploitation or misuse was absent. Implications of findings from this convenience sample are discussed in terms of research and social policy.

Pedophilia is often regarded as a compulsive sexual perversion, although professionals also sometimes classify it in a less loaded way as one of the paraphilia (Money, 1977). Pedophilia is seldom considered as a preference in its own right. As such, the concept of pedophilia is used to denote feelings of attraction toward children in general. These feelings include interest in how children feel and think, as well as having a sexual component. People may experience such feelings to a greater or lesser degree whether or not these have been labeled as pedophilia. When a person experiences those feelings in a strong or exclusive way, as a cornerstone of identity, such a person can be considered a pedophile. Out of pedophile desires a person may make contacts or maintain relationships with children. Sex may be part of those contacts or relationships, but does not necessarily have to be; sex may remain at the level of desire without being actualized.

To denote actual sexual contacts between children and adults, the term "pedosexual contact" is to be preferred. In most discussions, pedosexual contacts are associated with the concept of sexual abuse or misuse without differentiation of the relationships or experiences, thus ignoring several important dimensions upon which pedosexual contacts can be differentiated. One such dimension concerns the motives of the older person. The pedosexual contact may arise from

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adult pedophile desires, or the child may be a substitute for an adult partner not available at the time. Pedosexual contacts may sometimes be part of a "liberated sexual education" by parents who do not skip certain places when they fondle their children (Summit & Kryso, 1978). A pedosexual contact may also be initiated by a child and directed at an adult who does not necessarily have to be a pedophile. A particularly important dimension is the degree to which both partners participate freely (Constantine, 1981). Where there is coercion, it will most likely be the child who is coerced, although coercion can occur in very subtle ways. On the other hand, it should not be excluded that children are able to consent, that is, to indicate that they like the sexual contact and want to participate in it. Other dimensions are the relational context of the pedosexual contacts and the times of occurrence between the same partners.

A biased view of pedophilia has played a part in most scientific investigations of pedosexual contacts. Even to many researchers, the norm has been that sex between children and adults is categorically unacceptable. With some exceptions (e.g., Bernard, 1975) research on pedophiles has been restricted to how pedophile desires can be unlearned or cured. Terminology is often stereotyped and exaggerates differences in power between children and adults: the adult is the offender, the child is the victim, although sometimes a "participating victim" (Ingram, 1979; Virkuunen, 1975). Each pedosexual contact is then, by such definitions, child molestation or another form of abuse.

Most research into pedophilia has been limited to small samples within clinical or legal settings, as was formerly the case with research on homosexuality. As only selective cases thus come to the attention of the researcher, the results are predictably biased (Constantine, 1981) and have only low generalizability. This approach may be compared to researching heterosexuality by studying only females who have been raped. These biases make it difficult to understand what is really going on in pedophile relationships, especially how children themselves experience pedophile relationships and pedosexual contacts.

By contrast, this research study is an investigation of the experiences of children in pedophile relationships outside clinical and legal settings. Use was made of a special technique which made it possible to study the pedosexual contacts as one aspect of the "experience world" of the young participants. The meaning of the older partner and the pedophile relationship itself for the younger partner was also extensively investigated and will be the main focus of this paper; the experience of the sexual contacts by the children is reported elsewhere (Sandfort, 1982).

Two limitations of the investigation must be kept in mind from the beginning. The aim of this article is primarily descriptive, whereby the young partners speak for themselves as much as possible. Little can be said at this point about the significance of the sexual contacts or the relationship for the later development of the younger persons. Another limitation is the lack of representativeness of the sample, which will be discussed later.

The most important part of the research data were collected with the "Self-Confrontation Method" (SCM) (Hermans, 1976; 1978). This method makes it possible to obtain an overview of the aspects that are important for a person at a certain moment in his life. It also gives insight into the affective and behavioral meaning these aspects have within this person's experience world.

The SCM is readily associated with Kelly's "Role Construct Repertory Test" (Kelly, 1955) or Osgood's "Semantic Differential" (Osgood, 1952), because these also explore personal meaning in relation to content. There are, however, some basic distinctions. The aim of Kelly's test is to collect the basic constructs with which a person intellectually interprets his world. The Semantic Differential looks for the affective meaning certain predetermined concepts have for a person. Using the SCM, a person tries to find, with the assistance of the interviewer, the basic aspects within his experience world around which he organizes his experiences (cf., Hermans, 1976). The subject has a substantial share in determining the course of the "self-investigation" using the SCM. A person's experience world is not considered to be static. The basic aspects, the so-called "value areas," as well as their affective and behavioral meanings, change over time in what is termed the "experience process." Usually, therefore, the method is employed more than once. By using the SCM, investigator and subject gain a deeper understanding of the subject's experience process, enlarging comprehension of his entire life process. This makes the SCM useful in therapeutic as well as research settings. To the researcher, the SCM offers a richness of qualitative as well as quantitative data. The SCM has proven to be a workable instrument in a variety of research and treatment applications (Hermans & Verstraeten, 1980).

Design

Subjects

Participants in the investigation were 25 boys between the ages of 10 to 16 who, at the time of the research, had an ongoing pedophile relationship with an adult male. The boys were approached by way of

their older friends, who were participants in several of the local working groups of the Dutch League for Sexual Reform. This was probably the only practical way to obtain confidential and uncensored information from these children. Although it was originally intended to interview girls as well as boys who had affairs with both men and women, this did not prove to be possible.

The lower age limit was set at 10 years because of abilities necessary for the SCM; the upper limit of 16 years was chosen because Dutch law penalizes sex with minors under that age. Within these limits younger children were especially sought because sex with them is seen as more problematic. No other sampling criteria were applied. Nevertheless, the sample is probably very unrepresentative. It is likely that more of the "better" pedophile relationships were found; access to more troubled affairs would have been more difficult. It is unclear, therefore, to what extent the results can be generalized to other pedophile relationships. This does not alter the experiences of the boys studied. Their information can counterbalance likewise ungeneralizable findings from clinical and legal settings.

The mean age of subjects was 13 years and 4 months. Some were fully sexually mature, while others were prepubertal or pubescent. Their affairs had lasted, at the time of the study, between 2 months and 6 years. They saw their older partners from once a month to nearly every day.

Most of the boys (16) lived at home with their parents, 5 lived with their divorced mothers who, in 3 cases, were remarried. One boy's parents were getting a divorce, another lived with his widowed mother, one was in a children's home, and one lived with his sexual partner. According to the pedophiles, 15 boys were from the lower socioeconomic class, 8 were middle class, and 2 from the upper middle. The parents of only one boy practiced their religion.

The pedophiles ranged from 26 to 66 years, with a mean age of 39. Two of them were married, 2 divorced, and the rest were never married. They were fairly well educated. Some had affairs with more than one boy at once. Most of them were quite experienced in the field of pedophilia and seemed to have a relatively high degree of self-acceptance. They had "monogamous" and "polygamous" relationships with boys as well as isolated sexual contacts with children. A majority had been in conflict with the law on one or more occasions.

Data Collection and Processing

The initial interview used a version of the SCM adapted for young people and for this research. After the collected data were processed for each child separately, the results were discussed with him in a

second session which included an additional interview. The older partners were interviewed separately to get specific information about the sexual contacts and the backgrounds of the young people, the pedophile, and the relationships.

To explore as completely as possible the value areas experienced as important by the subject in his experience world at the time, a number of general fixed questions were asked within each use of the SCM. Examples are: What do you do a lot? What do you enjoy very much? Whom do you get along with well? Each question led to a discussion between the subject and interviewer, the purpose of which was to arrive at a succinctly formulated answer to incorporate as a value area. Not every question led to a value area, but some generated more than one.

Most of the boys spontaneously formulated value areas relevant to the research. If necessary, however, they were invited by the interviewer to include the older partner and the sexual contact as value areas in the self-investigation (Sandfort, 1982).

To determine the affective meaning of the value areas, they were subsequently scored on a fixed list of positive and negative feelings (see Table 1). The subject rated on a 6-point scale—never (0) to very often (5)—how strongly they experienced each feeling with respect to each of their own value areas. They also responded in terms of how often they experienced each feeling (Generalized Experience) and would like to experience each (Idealized Experience). An analogous procedure is applied with verbs referring to positive and negative behaviors.

Several different indices are computed from the feeling and behavior scores in each value area (Table 2). These provide information concerning the affective and behavioral meanings the value areas have within the experience world of the subjects. By establishing hierarchies for each index, the value areas are put in relation to each other. In the second interview, the data and insights derived from the processing were discussed. Additional qualitative information was collected; for example, relationships between certain feeling scores and value areas were made explicit.

Results

The Older Partner

The general questions used in the SCM led to formulation of rather diverse value areas. Some refer to activities the boys like (“petting with my girlfriend,” “watching movies,” “playing football,” “doing

Table 1
Boys' Affective Experiences and Behavioral Reports of Older Partners
Feelings About Older Partner *Reported Behaviors of Older Partner (Means)*

<i>Feelings^a</i>	<i>Mean^b</i>	<i>Behaviors</i>	<i>In General</i>	<i>In Sexual Contact</i>
happy (+)	4.70	to pay attention to (+)	4.72	4.64
nice (+)	4.45	to make allowance for (+)	4.70	4.44
safe (+)	4.16	to cooperate (+)	4.08	4.28
free (+)	4.00	to give chances (+)	4.00	3.84
contented (+)	4.00	to help (+)	3.68	3.52
proud (+)	2.80	to consult (+)	3.52	2.84
strong (+)	1.40	to encourage (+)	3.36	2.24
sad (-)	0.84	to domineer (-)	0.36	0.08
shy (-)	0.72	to make fun of (-)	0.24	0.08
angry (-)	0.56	to coerce (-)	0.24	0.12
naughty (-)	0.56	to scare (-)	0.04	0.00
lonely (-)	0.48	to mislead (-)	0.04	0.00
afraid (-)	0.44	to leave in the lurch (-)	0.00	0.16
dislike (-)	0.40	to deceive (-)	0.00	0.00

^aPositive and negative feelings and behaviors are indicated by (+) and (-), respectively.

^bScale width: 0 (never) to 5 (very often).

Table 2
SCM Indices Computed on Feeling Scores^a

P	the degree to which a person has positive feelings with regard to a value area [sum of positive feeling scores; $0 \leq P \leq 35$]
N	the degree to which a person has negative feelings with regard to a value area [sum of negative feeling scores; $0 \leq P \leq 35$]
C	the degree to which a person is emotionally concerned with a value area ($P+N$; $0 \leq C \leq 70$)
Q	proportion of positive feelings in all feelings about a value area ($100 \times P/(P+N)$; $0 \leq Q \leq 100$)
G	the extent to which a value area is related to general experience, the generalization tendency [product-moment correlation; $-1 \leq G \leq 1$]
I	the extent to which a value area is related to ideal experience, the idealization tendency [product-moment correlation; $-1 \leq I \leq 1$]

^aThe indices P, N, C, and Q are also computed on behavior scores with analogous interpretations. For each value area there will be behavioral indices for the behavior of the young person toward the older partner and vice versa.

things with my hands”) or which they don’t like (“homework,” “helping my mother in the household,” “fighting”). Others refer to the boys’ home situations (“my family, when everyone is in a good mood,” “my father, because he has never taken care of us,” “I want to leave home”), to things they think or worry about a lot (“children not being allowed to give their own opinion,” “the consequences of nuclear war,” “my engagement,” “if I’m in trouble,” “that I have to go to boarding school”), while others refer to different people they like or dislike (“people who are unreasonable,” “dolloed up girls who show off,” “certain teachers who are unkind,” “the school mistress who pays a lot of attention to us”), or to other aspects of the experience world. Some values are concrete and specific, while others are more general or abstract (“the future”).

The older partners usually appear in value areas formulated on the basis of several general questions. In some, the older partner is central (as in “Ruud, with whom I can talk easily” or just “Nico”), while in others they may be more peripheral (“being with Chris” or “going out with Herman”). The relationship is admitted as one value area (“my relationship with Joop”) or as part of one (“the law, which prohibits the relationship between Albert and me”). Only three boys did not spontaneously formulate a value area in which the older partner was central; to facilitate our study of the affective meaning of the older partner, they were invited to formulate one.

One might have the impression that the older partner and the pedophile relationship form a dominant part of the boys’ experience worlds; this is the case for some boys. However, as the interviews were usually held at the older partners’ places and the boys knew the interviewer was primarily interested in them because of their pedophile relationship, the context might have led to an over emphasis of the partners’ importance.

Boys’ Motives for Maintaining the Pedophile Relationships

The value areas in which older partners figured and the discussions leading to their formulation contain much information about what the boys value in the older partner and the relationship, as well as their motives for visiting the older partner and maintaining the affair. If, for instance, a boy introduced the older partner in response to the question, “Who do you get along with well?” he was always asked to state why he got along well with the pedophile and to include this reason in the formulation of the value area.

Many boys formulated the value area “being with the older partner” or something similar in response to, “What do you enjoy very much?” This throws light on their motives. To many, being with the older

partner made them feel nice, happy, free, safe, and contented, although more divergent reasons were also mentioned.

To illustrate the range of motives for maintaining the relationships, the boys will "speak for themselves." Because this aspect is not dealt with systematically within the interviews, it will be treated here illustratively. A motive mentioned by one boy may play a part for another who did not mention it, and several motives of differing importance may play a part at one time. The order of presentation here does not represent the relative importance of the motives to the boys.

One reason the boys maintain the affair with an adult is that they do a lot together. Some share the same hobbies, others enjoy sports like swimming and football; they do a lot of games, go to movies, or go on holidays together.

Peter (14 years, 6 months): Yes, I often play games, especially in the evening and in the morning. Monopoly and gambling and checkers are what we do very often. Otherwise we have to go to bed so early, and we really don't feel like that. I'm now at Technical College, so I have a lot of free time and then I go directly to him and stay with him mostly until the end of the evening.

Simon (12 years, 1 month): We do all sorts of nice things together, we sometimes play cards, all kinds of things. I like it very much to meet Ed (32 years, 5 months). We also have a friendly fight, especially if we are in bed together. And we go to the woods; that is also what Ed likes.

Maurits (10 years, 10 months): Well, Maarten (32 years, 3 months) is a good friend of mine. I often go to the movies with him, in any case we do pleasant things. Sometimes when I'm alone at home I think, let's call Maarten, maybe he is at home, and maybe he can drop in for awhile. It has also happened once that someone else just came by after I had phoned him, so it was not necessary any longer, but he still came.

Thijs (10 years, 11 months): I mostly go to Joop (26 years, 4 months) and then I stay playing there with him. Sometimes a lot of boys and girls go to Joop's every Saturday with chips and hamburgers and then I always go as well. But I still go if no one else is there.

Jan (11 years, 10 months): If I feel bored, then I often go to Sander's (41 years, 2 months), playing pinball, looking at the video, playing football. I also do a lot of skating with him, so I have a lot of hobbies in common with Sander.

The things they do with their older partners are perhaps easier for the boys to distinguish and express as a motive for maintaining the affair. For a few boys, these are a means to resolve boredom. For most, the activities are a form of play or relaxation, but also a means to receive attention from their adult friends.

Lex (13 years, 1 month), probably with a rather exclusive relationship, distinguishes the advantages of the pedophile relationship over his home situation, where he has to share his attention with brothers and sisters. He answers why he gets along so well with Richard (31 years, 9 months):

Just because I go out with him very often and because I experience a lot of things with him. We go out very often, we also go swimming very often. We just do everything together. I also prepare food here often, macaroni or something with the fryer. Sometimes we go to the movies or to a country park. If Richard says, 'Tomorrow we will go to the movies,' well, I look forward to it. Then I think about it almost all day. Or if we go to the amusement park or to a pony park . . . You have mostly only got that if you keep company with a pedophile, or you have to be an only child.

The things which the boy and his adult friend do together are predominantly positively experienced aspects within the boys' experience worlds. It is not surprising, then, that things like attachment, loyalty, and friendship develop. The atmosphere at the older partner's place also attracts the boys. Some describe it as cozy or relaxed, "different" or "nice," and mention it as a reason they like to be with the older partner.

Besides feeling comfortable at the older partner's place, boys are attracted by greater freedom to make decisions for themselves and to be more responsible for their own actions.

Willem (13 years, 5 months): At home you cannot do as much as here with Roel (29 years, 10 months). Smoking, for instance, I'm not allowed to do that at home. Here I'm allowed to do everything.

Rene (12 years, 7 months): Robert (42 years, 6 months) approves of a lot more things, I'm much freer than I am at home.

Harrie (16 years): With Pieter (32 years, 3 months) it is nice and relaxed, a very different atmosphere than at home. At Pieter's you can do at least whatever you want. If you do that at home, your mother immediately gives you a wallop. For instance, tuning up your motor bike; Pieter doesn't even know what tuning up is. And I sometimes go somewhere with Pieter and afterwards we get some chips. At home that is never possible, there are seven of us.

Harrie then formulated a predominantly positively experienced value area: "being with Pieter and relaxing and deciding for myself everything I do." For some other boys, the pedophile relationship can be a means to leave a limited family context (cf., Plummer, 1981).

Of course, the boys' motives also have to do with the older partner himself. They are found to value the older partner in diverse ways. For many boys, the older partner is someone with whom they can talk easily. Paul (14 years, 6 months) expresses this in a predominantly positive value area: "Ruud (27 years, 5 months), with whom I can talk easily." Rene formulates a similar value area which is similarly experienced. Asked why they got along well with the older partner, some answered as follows:

Theo (13 years, 9 months): Well, Bert (35 years, 9 months) understands children, boys better. Well, my mother also, and my father. But he (Bert) knows more about it, I think.

John (13 years, 6 months): Well, we have complete confidence in each other, we tell everything to each other. If we are at a loss at what to do about something, then he says it, and we talk it over. He says, 'I'm not the type of person to keep thinking it over, I just have to say what I think about it.' Well, and I also tell him everything that's troubling me. Rob (12 years, 5 months) also says he can talk over all his problems with Chris (38 years, 1 month). He says:

I like very much to be able to go back to Chris. If necessary, I can kick in the door, but I can come back after 5 minutes. Chris forgets unpleasant things faster than my mother does.

Kees (15 years, 8 months) says of Max (57 years, 11 months):

Well, I have known him quite some time. I have been with him very often. I can talk pleasantly with him. Some time ago something happened in the group at boarding school. I was quite upset then. I ran away and went to Max's at eleven o'clock. I talked with Max and then I phoned the group leaders so that they would know I wasn't hanging around somewhere that night. But Max was able to persuade me to go back the next day.

Here are some other answers to why the boys got along well with their older partners:

Ben (10 years, 9 months): I like to sleep together, then I'm not alone in bed. Sometimes I'm a little afraid to go to sleep, if I have seen a movie.

Wouter (12 years, 7 months): I feel at home with Gerard (42 years, 6 months), I really can take shelter there from my father. It is of great help to me. And if I'm upset, then he also understands fully why I'm upset. He is a nice fellow and you can do what you want with him, ha ha, if you just don't go too far. He makes allowances for you and then you also have to make allowances for him.

In these replies, representative of others, the older partner emerges as someone the boys can talk to easily and with whom they can discuss their problems. He is someone by whom they feel understood, in whom they have confidence, and in whom they recognize themselves. Some boys also find support from the older partner in solving problems at home or elsewhere.

As the following replies show, for some boys the older partner is also someone they learn from:

Rob: Chris has taught me things, which my mother will never be able to teach me, even if I were twenty . . . Especially sexual things, I think. And about the way my parents treat each other.

Walter (15 years, 7 months): Steven (35 years, 11 months) talks about things which are important, something we mostly don't do at home. Gaining some experience and learning to accept each other, that is what I find important. You just like each other and the sex can be a lot of fun then.

Gerit (16 years, 1 month): With Berend (39 years, 3 months) I get much opportunity to develop myself. Also with drawing, I enjoy that very much. Berend often helps me if I have made a sketch . . . I learned a lot from him, but it was never like, 'You have to accept this!' He has never done that. What he did tell me was how society is formed and when I didn't agree with that, then I could say so. So he never influenced me, but he just helped me to think in that direction . . . If I had not had this affair, then I probably would have that of my parents, . . . because when you're a child, you're not able to develop your own thoughts. If your parents tell you this and this is right, you just accept it. If you hear both sides, then you start thinking. In the end you discover what is right and what is wrong.

The various things cited so far have something in common: they are ways to receive attention. Although not every boy is able to distinguish it and put it into words spontaneously, receiving attention from the older partner is one of the major motives for maintaining the relationship. When value areas were scored in behavioral terms, the boys indicated "to pay attention to" as one of the most suitable verbs for qualifying the behavior experienced from the older partner.

Considering the pedophile orientation of the men, attention is often expressed physically. Peter (14 years, 6 months), for example, mentions that he appreciates that Karel (30 years) hugs him a lot. This is especially significant because, in our culture, boys in the age group studied would not generally be expected to be hugged by their parents. It is not surprising that the boys go elsewhere for security and affection (Rossman, 1976).

This need for affection has been recognized by many authors as a motive for children to have pedosexual contacts (Bender & Blau, 1937; Brant & Tisza, 1977; Ingram, 1979; Weeks, 1976). These authors put this in a less favorable light by linking it to an emotionally deprived background. Landis (1956), however, did not find this supported in his study of a group of unselected students. In the present study, some boys did have rather unfavorable home environments, but they were in the minority. Most boys spontaneously mentioned a good relationship with their parents. Parents also appear in rather positively experienced value areas in some boys' self-investigations. There appears to be insufficient grounds for generalizing to all pedosexual contacts the deprivation found in unrepresentative clinical samples (O'Carroll, 1980).

Attraction, friendship, and love constitute another group of motives. In almost every interview there were indications that the boys felt attracted to their old partners. Friendship was also frequently mentioned and was formulated into value areas in some cases ("my friendship with Fred" or "Frank, with whom I have a special bond"). Only a few boys, however, used the word "love" to describe their feelings for the older partner. Bart (14 years, 3 months) says:

My association with Albert (46 years, 5 months), thus my relationship, is what I find extremely important. . . . It is my opinion that if you go to bed with someone, if you love someone, then you just do things together. I cannot imagine there are boys who visit someone, just pop into bed with them, and then leave again directly. I also come for the company. If I were castrated in an accident, just to give an extreme example, then I can always come here, just because it is comfortable here. . . . He cares a lot for me, he knows me, I know him, we don't have any secrets from each other. I really would not want to miss it.

Feelings of attraction and intimacy are also mentioned when the boys are asked about positive aspects of the sexual contact. They formulate such areas as: "with sex you show love for each other," "physically and spiritually indulging in one's love," "sex with the right person gives you a great feeling," "because I like it showing emotions with Marcel," and "it happens when the relationship is good." For one boy, attraction did not play a part; he says he has sex because it is nice, not because he loves the older partner. Although most of the boys feel emotionally attracted toward the adults and all have sex with them, they are, generally speaking, not *physically* attracted to them. In the interviews most of the boys show a rather basic heterosexual interest, which they do not yet practice.

The interviews show that a pedophile relationship consists of more than just sex. The boys receive attention, affection, and support. Some boys say they learn from the older partner and appreciate the companionship and freedom they experience with him. Material motives such as money and gifts, so heavily stressed by some authors (e.g., Weeks, 1976) were not mentioned by any of the boys, although these could have played some part. Overall, the motives given by the boys for their relationship with a pedophile are easily recognized as those which are generally said to play a part in relationships between adults (Hinde, 1979).

Affective Meaning of the Older Partner

The boys were asked how often they experienced positive and negative feelings for the value area in which the older partner was central. The mean frequencies are listed in Table 1. The table shows that the boys feel glad and safe with the older partner “often” to “very often”. They like being with him; he makes them feel free and contented. The feelings of “proud” and “strong” are experienced less often, though still more often than negative feelings. It appears that some boys interpret “proud” as a negative feeling, while to a few, “strong” is interpreted strictly physically.

On the average, negative feelings are experienced “never” to “almost never” with respect to the older partner. In some individual cases some negative feelings occurred more often. These were not always caused by the older partner directly, but by outside factors. Bart (14 years, 3 months) reported sometimes or more often having feelings like “naughty,” “dislike,” “sad,” and “afraid” when he thinks of Albert (46 years, 5 months). He explains:

I dislike the law and I dislike the fact that it is not possible for me to be here more often. And I’m afraid that our relationship will be broken by the law or something else, that something happens, that it just goes wrong. I would not like that. And I am a bit afraid that we just cannot be free together. That if we are sitting on a moped, I will really have to look in the other direction, to show people, ‘Yes, that Albert does not actually interest me that much, I would much prefer to look around me,’ while I would like to touch him then. Yes, I assume that there are people who do not approve of it, but I’m still going to do it. For example, if my mother knew it, she probably would not approve of it, as well as my father. But I feel naughty and I just do what I want.

Walter also explains he sometimes feels naughty and angry when thinking about Steven (35 years, 11 months) because of the reaction of his family and acquaintances if it became known that he has a sexual relationship with Steven. And Willem (13 years, 7 months) says:

Sometimes I am afraid my parents will catch us when we are having sex. And naughtly because it is not something every child does. . . having sex.

More can be seen of the older partners' affective meaning within the boys' experience worlds by looking at the indices which are computed on the feelings scores for each boy separately, and by comparing these indices of the other value areas. In comparison to other value areas, the boys experience much positive feeling for the older partner (a relatively high *P*-index). If only value areas in which persons occur are considered, omitting areas referring to hobbies, school, etc., we see that for 13 boys the older partner is the person for whom the most positive feelings are experienced. For five boys, the older partner occupies the same place in the *P*-hierarchy as another person; for seven, other persons take a higher place in the hierarchy of the *P*-index. In most cases these persons are the boys' parents. For one boy the family and the older partner occupy the same place in the *P*-hierarchy. Persons who are clearly lower in the *P*-hierarchy are mostly people who the boy said he disliked or with whom he did not get along well, like a brother or sister, a child from the same class, or one of the parents. In comparison to other value areas, the boys experience some negative feelings with respect to the older partner (a relatively low *N*-index). However, for some boys there are people within their experience world, for whom they experience the same or even less negative feelings. The boys clearly experience more negative feelings towards the people they dislike or with whom they cannot get along well. All the boys experience more positive than negative feelings for the older partners. This proportion is expressed in the *Q*-index, the quality of value area. The *Q*-index of the value areas concerning the older partner ranges from 71 to 100 (mean = 87.5). Seven boys experienced only positive feelings and no negative feelings for the older partner (a *Q*-index of 100).

In comparison to other value areas, the older partner forms a value area with a relatively high *Q*-index. In most cases this value area stands at the highest part of the *Q*-hierarchies. This does not exclude that within the experience world of the boys there are persons for whom more positive and less negative feelings are experienced. This is, for instance, the case with the value areas "My family, when everyone is in good humor", "My father and mother," "Friends from the clubhouse", or "Grandmother and Grandfather." For some boys there are also persons from whom clearly more negative than positive feelings are experienced (a *Q*-index below 50). This can be one of the parents, a brother or sister, a teacher from school, or a friend.

The extent to which the boys experience positive as well as negative feelings for the older partner indicates how much they are affectively involved with him (the *C*-index). For ten boys the older partner is the person within their value system with whom they are most affectively involved. For the other 15 boys there are other persons. In some cases these persons are friends, more often these are the boys' parents. That the parents are affectively of more importance to the boys may be caused by the fact that they do not meet the older partner very often, while they see their parents daily. It should also be kept in mind that the extent to which the boys are involved with a value area does not say anything about the quality of the involvement. For almost all the boys, the older partner belongs to the persons within their experience world with whom they are highly involved; for none of the boys does the older partner stand at the bottom of the *C*-hierarchy.

Another look at the affective meaning of the older partner is obtained by comparing to what extent the feelings the boys experience for the older partner are also the feelings they would like to have in general (the *I*-index). This correlation ranges from .65 to .99, with a mean of .86. Compared with other value areas these indices are high: for all the boys the older partner stands high in the *I*-hierarchies.

A last index, the *G*-index, indicates to what extent a value area "colors" a person's general experience (cf., Hermans, 1976). The *G*-indices belonging to the value areas in which the older partners take a central place vary greatly. For five boys the *G*-index as well as the *B*-index of the older partner and the pedophile relationship form a rather important structural element within their experience world (cf. Sandfort, 1980). For other boys, hobbies, the association with peers, and other activities without the older partner play an equally big or even bigger part in their lives. It does appear, however, from the overview of indices, that the older partner belongs to those persons who are experienced as important and predominantly positive aspects within the boys' experience world.

Discussion

Instead of speaking in terms of "victims," "offenders," and "sexual assaults," which is still the usual way in scientific writing to refer to pedophilia (e.g., Brant & Tisza, 1977; Peters, 1976), this research approaches pedophile relationships as simply another form of relationship children can have, or people in general can have with each other. In putting aside our own value judgements and letting the children describe their experiences, we saw that both partners in

pedophile relationships can, probably in a different manner, feel attracted towards each other. Many activities of different kinds are undertaken together. The child often feels safe and happy, and receives attention and affection. He sometimes experiences more freedom than in a restricted home environment. The relationships emerge as positively valued aspects within the boys' worlds.

However, the restricted sample is a significant limitation of this investigation. It consisted only of boys in a limited age range, who had relationships only with men; within these relationships sexual contacts also occurred. Although no specific selection process was used in composing our sample, what we came across were probably the more accessible or "better" relationships. The sample was also limited in number. Altogether, there are insufficient grounds to generalize our results to all children in pedophile relationships. In our opinion however, it is quite likely that there are other young people for whom these findings apply. Furthermore, although this sample was selective, it counterbalances the kind of selectivity which is usual on studies of pedophilia, mainly executed in clinical and juridical settings (e.g., Brant & Tisza, 1977; Peters, 1976).

The method of composing the sample lowered the possibility that we came across exploitative relationships in which sexual misuse occurs; in those affairs the older partner would probably not allow us access. We do not want to deny the existence of those kind of relationships and of sexual misuse. The stories which victims give are convincing proof (c.f., Armstrong, 1975).

Exploitation and misuse can occur in situations where differences in power between people exist. These differences exist in practically all situations where children and adults interact. It is significant that these differences are singled out and used as a major ground by investigators (Brant & Tisza, 1977) as well as radical feminists (Schwarzer, 1980) to reject pedophile relationships. It may be easier to project misuse of power onto pedophiles than to reflect on one's own power position in relationships with children.

Power was not the major focus of this investigation. However, more can be said because the behavioral side of some value areas was also investigated. As far as the sexual contact itself is concerned, although a few isolated instances of pressure were reported, evidence of exploitation or substantial uses of power were notably lacking in the relationships researched. The boys experienced almost no negative behavior which could point to misuse of them by the older partner. Instead, the boys experienced that, in the sexual contact, the adult paid attention to them, considered their feelings, and cooperated with them (Sandfort, 1982). Those behaviors also qualify the way both partners

interact in general within these relationships (see Table 2). Negative behavior is said to occur little, while some boys recognize that behavior such as forcing and domineering occurs in relationships with one of the parents, teachers and, in one case, with peers.

Power is always a matter of relative power *differences*. Power is a property of a situation and not of a person (Hinde, 1979). These differences become larger in situations where the less powerful are more dependent on the other because of nourishment, material provision, affection, and attention. This is especially the case in families. Children with pedophile relationships are relatively less dependent. They can stay away if they no longer want to continue the affair. This also implies that parent-child incest may be very different from other pedosexual relationships.

In pedophile relationships both partners have some power; it is still a matter of relative power differences (c.f., O'Carroll, 1980). The power a child has within a pedophile relationship can probably best be described as "reward power" according to the classification of French and Raven (1959). The child plays a major part, not only in the pedophile's sexual gratification, but also in his life's fulfillment. One can compare this with the significance married people can have for one another. By just staying away, the child can deprive the pedophile of a relationship, which because of social restraints, is not likely to be easy to replace. The fact that these relationships are illegal to a certain extent may also contribute to the dependency of the adult. Children should not be thought of as unable to size this up. Because of this there are pedophile relationships where the power balance changes to the child's advantage. In some such situations one can observe excessive indulgence by the adult. However, this should not be confused with the ideology of child liberation which is sometimes adhered to by pedophiles and is reflected in relatively more permissiveness.

Difference in power will still occur in pedophile relationships. This does not in itself justify condemnation of this form of relationship in general. Motherhood is also a relationship including power differences. Mothers are expected to use this power difference to the advantage of their children (c.f., O'Carroll, 1980). In a pedophile relationship the yardstick should be what the adult does with his/her relatively greater power. Does he or she use it to create a dependent relationship, solely in favor of himself/herself?

Another consideration is the social environment in which the pedophile relationship functions. Though the parents were well informed in a third of the cases, sometimes the whole relationship or certain aspects of it will be kept from them. The wider environment will generally not approve of it. Condemnation from society is

strengthened by laws which prohibit some things the boys do with their friends. Some boys said they were glad to be able to discuss everything with their parents, because they would not like to keep it hidden. Other boys realize that they are not able to talk about everything, otherwise they risk being prohibited from visiting the older partner. The lack of openness within their environment is regretted by most of the boys. Although this does not isolate the boys from their environment—most of the boys and other friends with whom they played regularly—it can be a burden on them.

It could be to the advantage of the participating child, the pedophile, and probably society at large, if pedophile relationships could be experienced by both participants in an open atmosphere, without guilt, shame, or fear. Hereby the relationships become more accessible for social control, which is an effective means for reducing the likelihood of exploitation and misuse.

Pedophile relationships have more aspects than we have discussed here. More questions can be raised and will probably have to be answered before the viability of the pedophile relationship as an alternative lifestyle for children can be decided. The present research suggests that such relationships can be viable for some children. This does not mean that they are equivalent to marriage or other durable relationships, because these pedophile relationships are of a transitory nature. Nor does this say that to grow up healthy minded, one should have such an affair. These relationships simply do occur, and our data show that they can be experienced by children as meaningful and positive although not every child will experience such a relationship this way.

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