

## **Social interactions among paedophiles \***

**by**

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\* This research was funded by the Canadian Ministry of Justice and sponsored by the International Bureau for Children's Rights. The fieldwork benefited from the support of Luc Granger, Eric Beauregard, Alexandrine Chevrel, Line Bernier, Christine Perreault (Solicitor General of Canada), Bernadette Lamoureux, France Paradis (Philippe Pinel Institute), Claire Deschambault, Oscar Blais (L'Amorce) and the help of my colleagues (Jean Proulx, Marc Ouimet, Richard Estes, Neil Weiner, Elena Azaola). Views expressed in this paper are those of the author. They do not engage in any way the views of the Ministry of Justice or other governmental agencies who facilitated the field work. A first draft of the paper was written in March 2001 and revised in September 2001 and May 2002. The September 2001 version was translated in Spanish by J.A.Lewis and E.Azaola and is included in E.Azaola and R.J.Estes (eds) *La Infancia como Mercancia Sexual en América del Norte* (forthcoming).

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this study is to explore the range and nature of social interactions among individuals who experience a sustained and compelling attraction towards young adolescents or prepubescent children of either sex. Such an attraction, of course, is prohibited and the target of extensive social controls, legal sanctions and therapeutic efforts. Given the widespread hostility they elicit, paedophiles are generally viewed not only as social outcasts but also as social isolates. This may explain the lack of research on the social networks of paedophiles. Nonetheless, a non-trivial proportion of criminal prosecutions involve multiple co-defendants; a number of advocacy groups publicly challenge age of consent laws exist and provide favourable definitions of paedophilia; finally social learning theory typically emphasizes the influence of peer groups in maintaining high recidivism rates and the development of deviant careers. My substantive goal, here, is to analyze the variety of conditions that allow paedophiles to overcome their social isolation, seek each other out and become, as a result, embedded in a deviant quasi-community or social movement.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Sexual behaviour is shaped by constitutive and regulative norms. Regulative norms define the appropriate patterns of erotic behaviour. They restrict the range of appropriate erotic stimuli (pornography laws) or target "courtship disorders" such as voyeurism, exhibitionism and "toucherism". Constitutive norms define the domain of erotic partners. Adultery and "sodomy" statutes restrict the range of appropriate range of adult sexual relationships. Age of consent prohibitions define what is believed to be the appropriate onset and age differentials of individuals engaged in sexual relationships. In this paper we concentrate on offenders violating age of consent prohibitions.

West has observed "that an extraordinary upsurge of awareness of sexual abuse of children has occurred in recent years, aided by media presentations of adult recollections of childhood experiences of molestation. Writings on the subject have proliferated enormously, alerting social workers and other professionals to any hint of improper sexual behaviour towards children" (West, 1987; p. 40). Lieb, Quinsey and Berliner (1998) have documented the "intense legislation and public attention on sex offenders" of the 1990s and the somewhat chilling diffusion in America as well as in Europe of both registration and community notification statutes and the increased severity of criminal sentences meted out. In Canada, a predominant proportion of offenders sentenced under the 1977 Dangerous Offender legislation have a history of sexual offending. Recommendations that priority attention be placed on identifying and prosecuting both "long-term" as well as violent sex offenders were adopted by the Canadian Parliament in 1997 (Lieb et al., p. 86). A 1995-1996 survey (Ouimet, 1997) of sex offenders convicted in Quebec to a prison (federal) sentence of two years or more indicates that a majority (66%) could be labelled as either paedophiles (38% of their victims were younger than 12) or "hebephiles" (28% of victims belonged to the 13 to 17 age group). Thus more than half of all federal sex offender inmates could be considered as age of consent offenders.

As could be expected, the younger the age of the victim, the more serious the perceived harm of the offence, and the higher the likelihood that the convicted offender will receive a federal prison term. Only 18% of suspects in police sexual assault cases were accused of sexual intimacy with children, yet they represent 38% of all federal inmate sex offender admissions (Ouimet, 1997). By contrast, individuals prosecuted for unlawful sexual behaviour with other adults represent 56% of all police sexual assault cases but only 35% of offender admissions. It is quite likely that the increasing stigmatisation of age of consent offenders has driven the overall increase in sexual offences reported to the police since the late 1970s in England (West, 1994); in the United States (Lieb et al., 1998); in Canada (Ouimet, 1998) as well as in other European countries. Much of this increase may be due to the increased reporting, prosecution and conviction of offenders engaged in inappropriate sexual behaviour with minors. A definite account of this increase in the rate of age of consent offences known to the police or the associated arrest rates has yet to be undertaken, partly because law enforcement statistics have not, until recently, routinely cross-tabulated complainant and suspect characteristics.

It is quite tempting to argue that this upward trend in age of consent offences is primarily triggered by improved social support for complaining victims and greater readiness on the part of the police to prosecute (West, 1994; p. xii). The feminist movement has given a powerful impetus to the current awareness of sexual abuse of children that has occurred in recent years, and to the morale crusades against juvenile prostitution, pornography and child abuse (Okami, 1992; p. 118). I develop, here, an alternative perspective and question whether this upsurge in public sensitivity would have been successful without an actual increase in the rate of age of consent offences. One possibility is that there has been, in Canada, as well as in other developed countries, an increase in the number of individuals motivated to act out their sexual preferences. Another possibility is that there has been a concurrent increase in the number of youngsters willing to share sexual intimacy with adults.

### **Pool of Motivated Adults**

Robert Merton's seminal paper ("Social Structure and Anomie", 1938) argued that societies or social groups in which individual success is perceived as the ultimate measure of self-worth are more likely to experience higher aggregate levels of property or market crimes (Rosenfeld and Messner, 1998; pp. 164-5). Merton's basic insight - the "motivational insight" - is that "structural and cultural conditions can set into motion causal processes that motivate members of particular groups or strata to disproportionately engage in criminal behaviour" (Chamlin and Cochran, 1997; p. 203).

Modern culture, however, does not simply emphasize monetary success but also "self-fulfilment". Charles Taylor (1991) suggests that terms like "narcissism", "hedonism", "moral laxism" do not adequately "recognise that there is a powerful moral ideal at work here, however debased and travestied its expression might be. The moral ideal behind self-fulfilment is that of being true to oneself" (Taylor, 1991; p. 16). Trying to explain this moral ideal as "simply" an expression of self-indulgence misses the point. "The point is that today many people feel called to be who they are, feel they ought to do this, and feel their lives would be somehow wasted or unfulfilled if they didn't do it" (*Ibid.*; p. 17). Such an ideal implies that knowing right and wrong does not simply involve a utilitarian calculus of expected costs and benefits but requires instead the recognition that "each of us has an original way of being human - an idea that has entered very deep in modern consciousness. It is also new. Before the late 18th century no one thought that the differences between human beings had this kind of moral significance" (*Ibid.*; p. 28).

A related theme is that we have come to think of ourselves as beings with "inner depths". "Being true to oneself" is thus not given but requires effort, time, aptitudes as well as a discovery process: "Being true to myself means being true to my own originality, and that is something only I can articulate and discover. In articulating it, I am also defining myself. I am realizing a potentiality that is properly my own. This is the background that gives moral force to the culture of authenticity, including its most degraded, absurd or trivialized forms" (*Ibid.*, 1991; p. 29). A third theme is the modern preoccupation that "equal chances allow everyone to develop their own identity, which includes the universal recognition of difference, in whatever

modes this is relevant to identity, be it gender, racial, cultural, or to do with sexual orientation" (*Ibid.*, 1991; p. 50). The ethics of authenticity has shaped the politics of equal recognition and its implicit assumption that "denied recognition of individual differences can be a form of oppression". It has also increased the perceived seriousness of those offences that could endanger the process by which individuals develop their identity. "Love relationships are not important just because of the general emphasis in modern culture on the fulfilment of ordinary life. They are also crucial because they are the crucibles of inwardly generated identity" (*Ibid.*, 1991; p. 49).

Charles Taylor's analyses are important in two ways. They account for the current moral and legal crusade against "sexual exploitation of children and adolescents". More interesting, they also predict that even though the rate or number of adults attracted to prepubescent or young adolescents may have remained constant over time, we should expect an increase in the proportion of those who will be willing or "morally compelled" to actualize their "originality" and express "who" and "what" they are. Of course this implies that, all else constant, the stronger the cultural emphasis on sincerity and authenticity, the higher the rates of age of consent offences. This basic pattern should account for variations in rates across societies (for example, a higher rate of age of consent offenders in the more affluent countries). It also implies that within a given society, social groups and occupations who are strongly exposed to this cultural emphasis will also experience higher rates of such offences (for example, higher rates of age of consent offenders among the more affluent social classes or the more creative professions).

### **Pool of Suitable Targets**

An increase in the prevalence of adults motivated to seek sexual relationships with juveniles may not trigger an upward trend in the incidence of age of consent offences if their opportunities to act on their inclination are simultaneously curtailed. "Opportunity" could be defined as the amount of time adults and juveniles are free to interact intimately in the absence of appropriate supervision. To the extent that juveniles assume work and reproductive roles at an early age (as in traditional societies), the prevalence of juveniles free to engage in sexual relationships with adults should also increase. This implies that rates in age of consent offences should be higher in economically disadvantaged societies. Since sexual attractiveness and freedom from parental supervision increases as a function of age, we should also expect the search for suitable interaction opportunities to be less constrained for adults seeking young adolescents than for those attracted to prepubescent children. Within a given age group, interaction opportunities may also vary over time. Research on the daily activities of adolescents across cohorts suggests that in affluent societies time spent under no parental supervision has increased dramatically over time for both male and female teenagers (Felson, 1998). What may be true for teenagers, however, may not be true for other age groups. One of the subjects interviewed mentioned having noticed a significant shift in guardianship during the mid 1980s in Montreal: fewer unsupervised children in the public parks and in the streets, more suspicious life guards monitoring the public swimming pools, more vigilant parents supervising their own (as well as others') children in parks and playgrounds, and a significant increase of surveillance of

school areas. If this observation has some merit, we should expect the proportion of age of consent offences involving unacquainted parties (“strangers”) to have increased for young adolescents but decreased for prepubescent children. Suitable interaction opportunities may also vary by gender. To the extent that that girls are more closely supervised than boys, we should expect that adults seeking sexual intimacy with boys and male adolescents will be provided with a wider range of interaction opportunities than adults attracted to girls and female adolescents. Testing this particular hypothesis requires, however, a prior assessment of the prevalence of individuals attracted to juveniles of either sex.

Opportunities for “breach of trust” may have also increased over time. As the proportion of single-parent household’s increases, friendly “neighbours” are more likely to be called upon for supervision. As the proportion of double-income households rises, the number of children spending time under the supervision of other adults in some official capacity (day care centres, summer camps and a range of other organised recreational and educational associations) will also increase. One subject, a high school teacher by profession, who was attracted by 9 to 12 year old girls, enjoyed giving private lessons of French at the children’s house. Another subject had two sons and encouraged them to invite the little girls they knew from school. The pattern is interesting because of its embeddedness in everyday routines of family life. As the number of children per household diminishes (in affluent societies) and as families become more concerned about the hazards of allowing their children “play in the streets” (fear of crime, fear of “strangers”), the size of children street-corner networks is likely to decrease. This in turn favours the emergence of geographically dispersed school-drawn friendship networks. These networks, however, are more difficult to control partly because parents have little opportunities to interact among themselves and partly because the turnover in children is high. We should therefore expect an upward trend in the proportion of age of consent offences involving breach of trust - a factor that, all else constant, may be perceived as an aggravating circumstance that increases the seriousness of the offence.

“Opportunity” can also be defined as the proportion of juveniles who find some emotional or monetary advantage in seeking intimate sexual relationships with adults. Biologists have observed that as result a protein-rich diet onset of puberty now occurs around 12 in the more developed countries (Montemayor et al., 1990; see also Felson, 1998). Since puberty stimulates interest in sex, it implies that a larger pool of youngsters motivated to seek out sexual experiences not only with other juveniles but also with adults. On the supply side, troubled juveniles may realise that sexual relationships can provide them with significant earnings. On the demand side, a side effect of recognising freedom of sexual orientation may have been to increase the scope of the male juvenile prostitution market. The ability of such a market to expand and organise itself is likely to vary across settings. Age of consent offences may occur under conditions of relatively high market visibility (this is the case, for example, in Acapulco or Cancun, Azaola, 2001) when: a) juveniles are expected to assume adult roles at an early age and the option of participating in sex related occupations is acknowledged as socially acceptable by their entourage; b) lack of other earning opportunities and the presence of a large pool of affluent patrons makes the option an economically attractive one not only for the juveniles themselves but

also for those who depend on them (families) and who profit from them (entrepreneurs); and c) the threat of arrest for all market participants (including patrons) is low. These conditions may not be present in more developed or affluent societies: to the extent that juveniles are not expected to assume adult roles before their majority, prohibitions of age of consent offences are more likely to be enforced, prostitution more secretive and individualistic, and the market itself more disorganised.

In short, all of the ingredients for a sustained "crime wave" may be present: a larger pool of potential offenders motivated to act on their attraction; an increase in interaction opportunities between adults and juveniles; a larger pool of suitable targets (unsupervised, attractive and attracted); and an increase in public concern. This explanatory framework is mainly designed to account for variations in non-violent age of consent offences. Testing it empirically is beyond the scope of this paper. It does provide, however, a convenient analytical background for this research.

### **Focus of the Current Research**

The purpose of this study is to explore the range and nature of social interactions among individuals who experience a sustained and compelling attraction towards young adolescents or prepubescent children of either sex. Such an attraction, of course, is prohibited and the target of extensive social controls, legal sanctions and therapeutic efforts. Given the widespread hostility they elicit, paedophiles are generally viewed not only as social outcasts but also as social isolates. This may explain the lack of research on the social networks of paedophiles. Hanson and Scott (1996) argued that it would be useful to analyze more closely the characteristics of paedophiles' social networks for a number of reasons. A non-trivial proportion of criminal prosecutions involve multiple co-defendants; a number of advocacy groups publicly challenge age of consent laws exist and provide favourable definitions of paedophilia; finally social learning theory typically emphasizes the influence of peer groups in maintaining high recidivism rates and the development of deviant careers.

My substantive goal, here, is to analyze the variety of conditions that would allow paedophiles to overcome their social isolation, seek each other out and become, as a result, embedded in a deviant quasi-community or social movement. The methodological challenge was to assess the feasibility of locating subjects willing to be interviewed about their motivation to initiate and maintain meaningful patterns of interactions with other paedophiles.

## 2. DATA AND METHOD

The main data set, in this study, relies on the taped conversations I obtained from 19 subjects. About half (N=11) were currently serving their sentence in a Canadian federal prison (the "prison sample"). Another group of subjects (N=4), interviewed in my university office or at their place, were currently participating in a community relapse-prevention self-help group - L'Amorce - ("the institutional community sample"). Access and referral were provided by the psychological staff managing this program (sponsored and funded by the provincial government). In both cases, I had asked staff to refer me to individuals known to have had some past interactions with other paedophiles, and willing to talk about it to a university professor conducting an independent investigation on the topic. The other participants interviewed were located by independent means (the "street sample"): two were located by way of an advertisement placed in an upbeat nightlife Montreal weekly ("Voir"); another was a personal acquaintance I had known as an undergraduate philosophy student; the last subject was a committed libertarian and writer that had publicly acknowledged his "right" to seek out sexual intimacy with young adolescents.

Interviews were conducted in French in 17 cases, and in English in two cases. Most lived or had lived in Montreal. Participants - all males - were between 30 and 50 years old. Most had paid the high price for their sexual orientation and had been subjected to multiple sex related convictions. Of the two exceptions one had been charged but acquitted, and the other had been repeatedly convicted for other offences (armed robberies). Except for this latter case, none had been seriously involved in other property or violent offences, although some were street-wise and knowledgeable about the "life". Thus participants in this study can be viewed as repeat offenders.

None of the subjects were known as having had to use force in seeking prohibited sexual intimacy, and none showed in our conversations the slightest indication of any sadistic or psychopathic predispositions. In short, they could not be meaningfully categorized as "sexual predators". This is not altogether surprising. West (1987; p. 58) documented that the "vast majority of men who are sexually attracted to children are non-violent in their approaches. Signs of fear or annoyance on the child's part would normally make them desist. After all, child lovers are seeking, however inappropriately, an affectionate response and a mutually pleasurable experience". As he observes elsewhere, the legal qualification of "sexual assault" should not be taken as a descriptive or factual attribution since any intimate touching is always categorized as assaults since in such matters persons under the permissible age cannot give consent to any sexual act (West, 1994; p. xi).

Most of the persons I interviewed (17 of the 19) were compellingly attracted to young boys or adolescents. This is somewhat surprising since age/sex specific incidence rates of sexual assaults reported to the police indicate that young females are more at risk than young males of becoming the target of inappropriate sexual solicitation (Ouimet, 1997). Montreal's 1998 law-enforcement victimization counts show that young girls (6 to 9 years old) are two times more



likely than boys to be sexually assaulted (2.7 v. 1.3 per 1000). As they grow up and become sexually attractive to a wider range of males, their relative odds of victimization also increases: relative odds are three times higher for the 10 to 14 age group (6.5 v. 1.7 per 1000). As young adolescents become older and are provided with the power of choice, rates of sexual assaults decrease for both males and females. Relative odds in victimization risks, however, continue to widen among the 15 to 19 age group (5 v. 0.5 per 1000). One reason why offenders attracted by young males are so severely over represented in our convenience sample may be that age of consent offences are perceived by parents, social workers, and other welfare professionals as more likely in such cases to confuse the future sexual orientation of the solicited youngsters. To the extent that such offences are perceived as more serious, we should expect those who commit them to be more likely to be sentenced to prison and thus more likely to be included in this study. For example, Ouimet (1997) found that inmates serving a federal (2 years or more) prison term for unlawful sexual intimacy with 13 to 17 year-old male adolescents represented 8% of all "sex offender" inmates in Quebec, but only 4.4% of all suspects in "sexual assault" cases investigated by the police. No such over representation was observed for prohibited sexual relationships with female adolescents (22% of all police sexual assault suspects and 20% of all sex offender federal inmates). Another possibility, however, is that adult males attracted to boys are more likely to interact between themselves and thus more likely to be selected for referral in this social network study.

Subjects interviewed were more attracted to young adolescents ("hebephiles") than to prepubescent children ("paedophiles"). West (1981; p. 41) suggests that the term paedophilia be restricted to designate a "significant erotic arousal on the part of physically mature adults to pre-pubertal children or to children in the early stages of pubertal development". The attraction to "physically developed adolescents ... is so widely experienced and acknowledged, through the pictures used in advertisements and soft porn publications and the popularity of teenage prostitutes, that it scarcely amounts to sexual deviance". One of the subject's mentioned that as paedophiles mutually invited each other to informal gatherings, cliques spontaneously emerged on the basis of language (French v. English) or sexual preferences or interests ("over the hill" v. "under the hill"). Although many subjects never heard of the "hebephile" label, they bitterly complained about the fact that although psychologists and related professionals customarily distinguished between paedophiles and hebephiles, law officials, criminal codes, public opinion, as well as other inmates, unfairly collapsed all age of consent offenders as "child molesters".

This over-representation of "hebephiles" among our subjects cannot be explained simply as an artefact of an institutional self-selection bias. Ouimet's (1997) analysis shows that although there is a higher prevalence of adolescents than children in police sexual cases (26% v. 18%), there is a higher prevalence of paedophiles than hebephiles sentenced to a federal prison (38% v. 28%). The higher prevalence of hebephiles arrested by police is not surprising since we should expect that the pool of adults potentially attracted by young adolescents to be much larger than those aroused by "under the hill" children. Templeman and Stinnett's (1991) study of arousal patterns in a convenience "normal sample" of undergraduate males - a typical "control group" for psychological or psychiatric investigations of sex offenders or deviants - shows that the base

rate for self-reported arousal is about four times higher for adolescent stimuli than child (6 to 12 years old) stimuli. The fact that paedophiles are over-represented - and hebephiles under-represented - in federal inmate sex offender samples, on the other hand, is not unfitting. Incarceration or incapacitation is basically designed to be selective and to target the more serious offenders. In sexual assault cases, the younger the age of the complainant the more potentially harmful the offence is perceived to be and the higher the conditional odds of being incarcerated if charged. It may well be that hebephiles also benefit from a wide range of interaction opportunities than paedophiles in the first place and more likely, if this line of argument is correct, to be assessed as a suitable referral for our study.

Only two subjects interviewed had been convicted for incestuous or quasi-incestuous relationships with their children. Both cases, however, qualify as accidental referrals. In the first case, I interviewed an inmate because of his involvement in the pornography trade. As it happened, his pornography charges had occurred a number of years ago (in 1985), his pornography business did not include in fact juvenile material, and his current conviction involved a quasi-incestuous relationship with his stepdaughter. In the second case, I had met the subject because he had been elected as vice-president of the administrative board of L'Amorce. Following this election, he had received his sentence and was sent to a medium-security federal prison that provided treatment opportunities for sex offenders (located in La Macaza). Learning of his whereabouts, and since I was planning to meet other inmates at this same institution, I took advantage of the opportunity to interview him without inquiring about the nature of this current conviction. Given the focus of the current research, it makes sense that we excluded from our investigation those offenders whose attraction towards pre-pubescent or young adolescents depended on the unique dynamics of tortuous intra-familial relationships.

Conversations with participants lasted two hours, and more often than not, longer. Two inmates were interviewed twice. Obtaining the required authorizations to conduct interviews imposed significant delays (about 4 months for the inmate referrals, about 8 months for the psychiatric referrals). The first batch of interviews was conducted in May and June 2000, and the second batch of conversations took place in January and early February 2001. As I presented myself to the subjects, I made it quite clear that I had no therapeutic or law-enforcement concerns and that my intent was of a more general nature and that my professional interest was to obtain a direct account of the circumstances of their arrest and prosecution and their own views on the current public and media portrayal of paedophiles. Second, I began to read what some of the most literate subjects suggested that I should read: the biography of Lewis Carroll (whose attraction to prepubescent girls is well documented); the novels and essays of Gabriel Matzneff; as well as the autobiography of Tom O'Carroll (who both disclosed, analyzed and came to terms with their own paedophilia dispositions). When offered the opportunity to do so I readily accepted to become an external member of the administrative board of a community relapse-prevention self-help group based in Montreal. Since even the more persistent offenders spend most of their daily lives without committing offences, I believed it useful to interact with the subjects on whom I was about to write about in a context where their past or current sexual attraction was not the main focus of the discussion. I thus attended the annual election meeting

of a self-help community sponsored relapse-prevention group and applied for the position of external member of its' administrative board. I engaged thereafter, once a month throughout the research, in various discussions on policy and administrative matters with other board members (three of whom had themselves engaged in age of consent violations).

Because of the initial focus of this research a thorough discussion of subjects' current or past ties with other paedophiles was a standard interview topic. In two cases, the subjects' current conviction involved co-defendants. Both co-defendants were located but only one of them was finally interviewed. A useful referral was obtained accidentally when a subject mentioned a fellow inmate whom he had met a couple of months before that would be of interest for my research. He accepted that I mention his name if I managed to interview him. This inmate in turn provided me with a set of relevant hot-mail addresses that I could contact if I wished to pursue my research. I did not make use of these contacts for this paper. Another inmate mentioned his past associations and friendship with one of a number of Montreal intellectuals who had publicly challenged existing legal age of consent restrictions in the late 1970s. I located their writings and was provided with four contacts, of which I interviewed one. The subject who responded to the newspaper advertisement came to the interview with his current companion whom I interviewed a week later. He mentioned among his personal ties a number of friends and acquaintances sharing his attraction for young adolescents. I asked him to talk to them about my current research interest and persuade them to call me at my office. They never called back either because the subject did not contact them or because they did not wish to do so. At the time, these were my very first field interviews. I believed - wrongly as it turned out - that a more thorough analysis could be obtained if I could overcome the expected heterogeneity of eligible subjects interviewed and attempt to restrict the investigation to adults attracted primarily to pre-pubescent youngsters. As the research progressed I changed my mind and found it analytically useful to show how interactions opportunities between age of consent offenders increased as a function of the relative freedom from supervision granted to juveniles (significant for young adolescents but much less before onset of puberty). As the initial set of institutional referrals began to expand, I nonetheless decided to bring the research to a halt. I did so for two reasons. First, the research project was initially designed as a tentative probe of modest means. Second, my initial gamble was simply to establish that sociological field work on paedophilia attraction was a feasible research strategy and that it could provide a more comprehensive analytical framework for understanding the social dynamics governing the incidence of prohibited sexual intimacy violations.

In short, most offenders interviewed can be qualified as a subset of committed paedophiles: a) who targeted youngsters that were not their own children; b) whose sexual orientation prevented them or deterred them from adopting parental obligation in the first place; c) who were attracted to boys rather than girls; and d) who could be qualified as seducers ("manipulators") rather than "predators".

### 3. MARKET-DRIVEN SUBCULTURE OF HEBEPHILES

We now turn to the main focus of the paper, namely forms of possible interactions among age of consent offenders. Individuals who share a prohibited sexual attraction may wish to interact among themselves. Such interactions may increase their chances that their search for companions will be more successful. This implies: 1) that opportunities for intimacy interactions are scarce; 2) that opportunities for interacting with other paedophiles exist; and 3) that their chances of meeting suitable companions will increase as a result of such interactions. Interactions of this sort may be qualified as instrumental in that their relationship with other paedophiles is valued only in the sense that such interactions will allow them to secure access. Networks of paedophiles may thus emerge for the purpose of obtaining access to difficult targets.

One subject (MC) recalled how in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the public display of juvenile prostitution was socially tolerated. "You only needed to go downtown to Dominion Square. There was a cop at each end of the square but they didn't enter. You came in a car and just patrolled. There was 15 or 20 adolescents at any given time. Kids from ten to sixteen came to the car. At the time, the Dubois Brothers controlled the downtown prostitution street market. It was not rare to see solid hoods and bikers with their lads. There was no violence, all went well". The downtown central station or some particular parks (like Lafontaine Park) were places where adolescents gathered for the purpose of prostitution.

"I even found, one time, a teenage couple asking me to watch them having sex and joining them. I doubt very much that many of the adults I know ever had the opportunity to reach the state of paroxysm I attained that particular night. It was like a window that brought you in another dimension." But then, he recalls, "in the mid 1970s the police created a special unit who made juvenile delinquency its' priority ("Police Jeunesse) and the cops were quite efficient in clearing the main public hunting grounds. The market displaced itself "indoors"".

Arcades, however, provided a protected commercial area that attracted a large pool of adolescents and youngsters, mainly boys, and an ideal setting for initiating contacts. "When the youth police squad made their crackdowns in public areas ... arcades provided new opportunities for adults to seek adolescents and it took quite a while before law enforcement agencies and city officials found a way to control what was going on in these places."

Even when public or semi-public hunting grounds were easily accessible, interactions among paedophiles were infrequent. "Of course you could recognize the adults who were looking for youngsters. I myself was not interested in talking to them. Sometimes a guy came to me saying "there aren't too many people here today" or "they're too young for my taste" and so on". There were a number of reasons why these interactions were restricted in scope: a) "I didn't like to share the youngsters... they were mine. Some like to have group sex but not me"; b) "I thought I was dangerous or that I would attract trouble if I interacted too much with the other

guys”; c) “It wasn't like I was advertising my sexual preferences. Nobody knew about it, except my wife”. Moreover, his state of mind was not conducive to such interactions: “When I was with a 13 year old boy, I myself talked like a 13 year old kid ...”. Interactions with other paedophiles occurred but remained restricted in scope. For instance, the subject did get to know one “but they didn't cruise together” partly for the above reasons and partly because this other fellow was attracted to younger age categories. Another acquaintance provided him with an apartment, a useful arrangement because it was less expensive than tourist rooms. The subject wasn't and didn't wish to be socially integrated to the “paedophile milieu”. He was not gay in the first place and nobody, except his wife, knew about his special sexual attraction.

Although MC was mainly attracted to 13 to 15 year old adolescents, he could also be induced to accept younger boys. “That particular time, I hadn't found anybody appropriate so when this 11 year old boy approached me, I said yes. He was very experienced. We went in a tourist room and the boy was constantly asking if I felt good... he was totally devoted to the task of satisfying me”. Another subject – Nicolas - provided a detailed account of the male juvenile prostitution market that emerged with the development of the gay village in Montreal. He was 41 at the time of the interview, so his prostitution years (from 12 to 18) covered mainly the 1972-1978 period. As he stopped working as a male prostitute, he shifted to the other side of the market and paid young adolescents. Indeed the reason why he went to prison - hold ups in “dépanneurs” - was that he used the money specifically to pay for adolescent prostitutes. A 16-year-old lad arranged the subject's entry into prostitution.

“At the time, I was about 12 years old, I was hanging around in Longueuil's metro station and I met an older guy - he was about 16 years old - who asked if I wanted to make some easy cash. I asked him if it was dirty money (“argent croche”) and he said no, that it was simply to go with men and to let them do what they wanted for a half-hour and that I could make \$30 or \$40. I accepted. He brought me to his man” (“bonhomme”) who lived in Montreal. We met two weekends in a row. He liked to see us together making it. My friend had a real kick on me, and he was cute and I liked it. I felt important and accepted. The old man, I didn't get to know him much. On the following weekend, we arrived and found him dead in the kitchen, his head fractured and a hammer a few inches away. I had never seen such a thing. I was scared straight. We left the apartment and I phoned the police without saying who was calling. My friend showed me the tearoom trade that was going on in a downtown shopping centre - the Complex Desjardins - and said he was working with an escort agency with deluxe clients. He referred me to the agency and I started working for them at 13. I worked there for 3 years and half. At the beginning I received \$50 for a half-an-hour and the agency kept \$100. When I was 15, I negotiated a better deal - \$70 to \$80 for me and the rest for the agency. I never met the agency owner, just the chauffeurs. They picked me up in a limousine and brought me to a fancy motel - the Canada Motel on Taschereau Boulevard. The client paid the agency \$150 as well as the motel bill. Sometimes they would bring 2 or 4 lads in the same limousine. The chauffeur would park alongside the motel and call the room to say to the client that the half-hour was over. I went with all kinds of clients. Some were physically

handicapped, others wanted me to be whipped or to whip me. I had said to the agency that I didn't want to be sodomized. Other lads agreed to do it, but I didn't. Clients who wanted to have anal sex said so and were provided only with those lads that agreed to that".

Asked about the current age of consent policy among escort agencies he mentioned that as in everything, there were good agencies (that respected the 18 year old limit) and bad agencies. He was working for a "bad agency". He also added, "Look I can give you the phone number of an agency that will offer you a 16 year old mate without any kind of problem".

When Nicolas - the subject's street name - reached 16, he quit the agency for a number of reasons: a) "If you worked with the agency you were not allowed to have other clients on the side (even if most of us in the agency occasionally violated the rules) and the chauffeurs would interrogate us about whether or not we respected the rules"; b) "If I refused to work one night, the sanction was that they didn't give me clients for two or three days"; c) "I wasn't making enough money and wasn't free enough".

So Nicholas started the street prostitution scene from 16 to 18 in the gay village in Montreal, on the corner of Champlain and Alexandre de Sève. "All the lads were homosexual, whereas many of those who were in the agency had girlfriends and were basically heterosexuals moonlighting for the money. Another difference is that we were all on drugs. I mainly sniffed cocaine but others were junkies - shooting themselves with heroine. I also started dancing in the gay clubs (3 months at 16, 3 months at 17)". He quit his extensive involvement in prostitution at 18, mainly because he was sent to prison for 2 years. When he got out of prison, he was 20 years old and quit the prostitution scene, even though "if you look good there is still a market for prostitutes up to 25 years old". He realized, however, that getting clients was becoming more difficult ("sometimes I had to wait an hour before getting a client").

As he stopped earning his life as a street prostitute or a dancer, he "shifted around" and started living the life. His idea of the high life was to start the evening by making a hold-up (in "dépanneurs"), come back to his place, take a shower, put on his jewels, go to the gay village, pick-up a lad, bring him to a gay restaurant and pay him a nice dinner and a bottle of wine, and then start making his rounds.

"I liked to flash. Without cash I was nothing. With the cash I was "Nicholas", the guy everyone loved and greeted. All the lads were crazy about me because I paid so well and treated them like the old friends they were in fact. I started by going to a club - the *Track* - from 10 till midnight. Then we would go to *Adonis* from midnight to one clock and then close the night at *Le Taboo*, up to 3. I did this over and over again and liked to hang out in the same clubs where people came to know me. A night would cost me \$500, and on the weekends around \$1,000 paying the lads, the dancers and the coke. I must have committed over 200 hold-ups over the years to finance this life style. For a while I also

started selling coke for the bikers. The village was a good place to sell because coke has such a powerful sexual effect".

Finding boys wasn't difficult: "To find the new lads, I went strolling into the St- Laurent and Ste Catherine Amusement Arcades. That's where lads start their prostitution career. It's the best place to find the new ones. Owners were not interested in controlling the traffic because these youngsters were good clients and brought new clients. One owner tried to control the prostitution market but the lads - blacks, Chinese, whites - were working for an agency. So two Chinese strong arm men went to see the owner and simply said that his property would burn if he didn't mind his own business".

He never got arrested either as a prostitute or as a client mainly because he limited the search within the geographical and social boundaries of the gay community and village, although he sometimes recruited youngsters elsewhere. Public swimming pools provided a useful hunting ground.

"It was quite easy and natural. For example, I liked to go out in the summer at l'Ile Ste Hélène. After the swim you took a shower and some of the adolescents would look at me and I would look at them and that was enough. We talked and I brought them over a nearby wood or to my place, I would give them \$20 and that was that. Once the lads discover how easy it is, then they are ready to go downtown and find their clients in the Arcades and eventually get recruited in the agencies".

Although currently treated as a "sex offender" at Pinel Institute, Nicolas comments that "I never realized until recently that I had a problem with adolescents. Indeed when they told me I was a "sex deviant"... they said I have a sickness ... yes...let me see, the term they used I think was hebephile. I didn't know what they were talking about because in the gay community it is so natural to seek sexual relationships with lads under 18".

### **Off-the-market Cliques**

The market allows participants to develop more than furtive sexual relationships. Cliques emerge. But they are mainly adolescent-driven networks. YM opened a tattoo shop in eastern downtown Montreal. At the time he had been convicted twice but only for selling hashish and pot. His two children had turned 18 and were independent. He had divorced his wife a long time ago (she had left with a friend of his). He had another stable relationship for 10 years with another woman, but that was finished. He had always worked: as a bouncer in the clubs and he ran a pool place for a number of years.

"Of course with this kind of business (the tattoo shop), a lot of the customers were boys coming from Mont St-Antoine and Cartier (juvenile correctional institutions). They made their own tattoos and they do it all wrong. So they came to see me so that I could

arrange. They look at me with this look in their eyes and ask if I can fix it with my dick, so what is a fellow to do? The police say it's prostitution, but it isn't. I'll be frank. I love pot, I love hash. I've been stoned since the mid-1970s. The police say I provide the lads with hash in exchange of sex. But I offer a smoke to all of my friends, whether or not I have sex with them. This ain't prostitution. And anyways I am not a paedophile, I just like young lads, you know 14, 15, 16 years. A friend of mine, he liked them younger and would go to the Arcades. Christ! I don't need to go on Champlain Street, there was always a crowd at my place. Two lads in the living room, another in the bedroom. They wanted to be there, I wasn't forcing anybody, they liked hanging around. We simply had fun. So I like young lads, so what? Age of consent? That's crap. These lads know more about life than most adults. They're just 12 years old, and wiser by far than we were, you and me, at 12. I see these inmates, they just killed their wife and after a year and half they're out on parole because the system doesn't think they are a "danger to society". And I get a 5-year bit for loving a lad, and I'll do my whole time because I think aversive conditioning is perverse, absurd and wrong. You know how I got this conviction? A lad comes to my shop with his 13 year-old brother. They just want to crash and find a place to sleep. So we go to my place. The younger boy likes me and needs affection, he needs a sugar daddy. This boy was doing prostitution for the past 3 years. He says to me, "If I could have a father, I would like him to be like you", and so on. So the relationship developed for a year or so, he was always around my place. I love the boy. But I have a record, all these juvenile delinquents hang around my shop so they're after my number. The boy comes from a rotten family so the social workers are on his back. And so the police finally pinch him with a stolen motorcycle and put pressure on him, "you file a complaint against him, or else it's the ticket for Cartier detention center". Finally, there was this educator that the boy liked, and he tries to tell her about our relationship, hoping that she'll be able to stop the pressure. But she uses that to lay a formal complaint against me. Basically they cracked him. What can you expect? He's a young boy. Look, at the courthouse, it was written in the papers, the lad cried and shouted to the court not to send me to prison. It's not like I assaulted the boy or hurt him. He loved me. And it was mutual. But of course with the judge I had, and the paedophile bogeyman hysteria, I didn't stand a chance."

YM did not share his clique with other hebephiles. JC, another subject, did however. DG met JC through BC.

"BC was a long time friend. He had presented me to JC a while back and I knew who he was. But I had not established any particular tie with him. One night, BC comes over to my place and starts rambling about the incredible night he had spent with EU and the marvel of the lad. I had seen EU around and the next day I met him at the downtown shopping centre - Complex Desjardins - a favourite meeting ground. So I talk to him and we chat in a café. As we were talking, JC comes over. The boy presents me to him, "This is JC. This is my man!" So I say, "Congratulations!" JC invites us to his place, so I got to know his whole crew of lads. I got to know JC more intimately. He knew a lot of boy



lovers, but mainly through his lads. He mentioned that a friend of his talked to him about NAMBLA (North American Man-Boy Love Association) and that he had spent a weekend in the United States at one of their meetings. I went a couple of times with him at the Fullum Street public swimming pool. There he presented me to AB, who also knew many of the boys. The lads all knew each other. One of the lads EF was very interesting for me. We started a relationship. It turned out that EF was also a very disorganized lad, constantly running away from his home or from elsewhere. He also was constantly hustling. So I told him that I didn't want to be simply one of his customers. In fact, I didn't want to be his favourite customer. I was looking for a one-on-one relationship, and I wanted him to love me for my blue eyes only. A guy has a right to have some standards, some kind of ideal. So we broke off and I started dating another of JC's lads. But again, the relationship proved unsuccessful. JC was a special guy. He didn't mind me dating his lads. In fact he sort of enjoyed it. "Come and meet them," he would say, "It's fine with me". All the boys knew each other and most of them were into hustling. Basically, they recruited themselves you know. And JC was the provider. He was the provider for the whole crew. His place was like a hotel with the lads coming and going. He provided them with hash, with food, with money. His place was their place. He was their provider, their "man". But they were all hustling on their own and JC did not receive any tangible benefits from it. So I went from one lad to another. I dated 5 lads of JC's crew before I started getting fed up with this hustling scene. But it was too late. What was bound to happen, did in fact happen. One of the boys got into trouble, and talked about his sexual relationship with JC, me and the others. The police got to know of the lad's friends and we all got arrested and convicted. The media had their day "An organized paedophile ring dismantled". And I was supposed to be its main architect ! The basic facts were correct but wild allegations were thrown in. One of the lads mentioned having had 50 sexual contacts with me. I never touched him! Anyway JC and I received 43 months. BG got 3 months. Maybe it was because he didn't have a prior record. Both JC and myself had a prior record for similar offences. I suspect, however, that despite his rambling about the paedophile fraternity, he co-operated with the police and got himself some kind of deal. He eventually became a junkie and committed suicide. AB had vanished. When I got out of prison, I met AB. He had learned about our arrests and got out of the city. He went to Quebec and lived underground for 2 years: no cars, no license, no phone numbers, and no reported earnings. He dived underground and stayed still. It worked. As for BC, I just heard he got convicted again." What is striking is the extent to which interactions among hebephiles were largely mediated by juveniles themselves. They recruited one another more than they were recruited by the provider. Indeed they selected the provider more than the provider selected them. CG didn't mention what had happened to the boys. He probably didn't know.

JC operated as the clique's "sugar daddy". CK, currently a member of L'Amorce, whom I interviewed at his apartment, and who had been engaged in prostitution over a long period (between 12 and 28) mentioned how he met his first "sugar" ("sugar daddy"):

"I was 12 years old at the time. His name was Michel. I had got a customer at a shopping centre - Galeries d'Anjou. This customer presented me to a taxi driver (also a customer). This taxi driver presented me to another guy, Jacques was his name, and he was in the construction industry and worked up north in James Bay. This Jacques finally presented me to Michel. It lasted a few months. Michel didn't present me to any other client. But I went to live with him.

Q. Live with him?

A. Yes, I know it sounds a bit incredible, I went to sleep at his house.

Q. And your parents?

A. Well he knew them. I think my mother was glad someone was taking care of me. I think she didn't know how to deal with me. Michel took care of me and bought me things, pot and hash, things like that. Even though he was very attracted by me, he must have been somewhat disappointed. I was sexually very passive. Anyway I was placed in a juvenile institution after a few months, and this relationship ended. My second sugar, it was a bit later on. I was 13, I had him as a customer at the Galeries d'Anjou. He showed me Lafontaine Park. GT was affectionate, although in retrospect he was the kind of person who likes himself best. But he did take care of me. He gave me money and he was nice. He also paid me for doing some maintenance of his office (he was an accountant). The relationship with this sugar lasted about a year. The relationship with a sugar was something special: I had the right to hustle as I wished (have as many customers as I wanted), but not him. He was supposed to be mine. I guess I loved him. I was looking for a nice father you know. But I also remember that he could humiliate me at times. We were in his car and he was slowly driving around Lafontaine Park. Then he said, see, this lad, and this lad, and this lad, they are doing it here but he added that if I wanted to make more money I would have to learn how to suck. I felt debased in a way. Eventually I stopped hustling at Galeries d'Anjou and came to Lafontaine Park instead. I had other sugars, but when I was older, in my twenties".

Whereas customers act as referral for other customers of the same market, "sugars" are elected into that role by the young lads to be their privileged in-group tie. Although most of CK's customers didn't know each other, it is nonetheless noteworthy how chain referrals linked CK to his first sugar daddy, indicating that customers established acquaintance ties with other customers, talked about the lads and brought them new "clients". It may be assumed that such chain referrals are in effect exchange or trading linkages: if I refer you to a lad, then I probably expect that on some future occasion, you will reciprocate. It is also interesting to point out that CK presented both of his "sugars" to his mother as if all his "significant others" should know each other. Indeed both "sugars" developed friendly relationships with the mother. At the time, his mother as well as others, only knew about his delinquent activities (constant throughout his teen and young adult years), but not about his much more "secretive" prostitution life or his homosexuality. CK remembered coming back home with a book on "pederasts" that one of his customers had given him. The parents were outraged, called the police, and tried to locate him, unsuccessfully. I asked CK if at the time he would have provided the customer's address had he had known it. His reply was yes.

What emerges, then, is a social organization of male adolescent prostitution that included both an urban neighbourhood (the gay village), and a set of businesses that specifically attracted youngsters (arcades, piercing, tattoo) and provided congenial meeting grounds for both adults and young adolescents (shopping centres). The supply of prostitution was partly, but only partly, controlled by illegal firms (escort agencies) and required the back up of a variety of ostensibly legitimate businesses (for example, motels or "tourist rooms"). The data also suggests that enforcement of age of consent prohibitions is less strict when the juvenile prostitution market involves male rather than female adolescents. Much of this social organization is mainly designed for instrumental purposes, yet other off-the-market cliques clearly emerged. Moreover the market provided participants (both juveniles as well as adults) favourable definitions of themselves.

#### **4. WEB-DRIVEN EXCHANGE FORUMS FOR PAEDOPHILES**

Individuals violating age of consent offences may wish to interact among themselves for another reason as well: confronted with a large consensus that their sexual inclination is harmful and undignified; and despised by a very large majority of other persons, they face a serious problem in self-respect and self-worth. To the extent that they realize their inclination to be compelling and enduring, they are confronted with a set of options: a) repress their inclination, avoid thinking about it; b) acknowledge their attraction but engage in systematic abstinence and avoid opportunities of relapse; or c) turn to others who share a similar inclination and learn from them the appropriate way to socially handle their unwanted "deviance", learn from them the extent to which their inclination is in fact harmful and despicable and if not why and under what circumstances. In this latter case, paedophiles will search for other co-paedophiles as an end itself and not as means to extend their access to youngsters. We qualify such interactions as symbolic because their purpose is to offer both parties with a meaningful solution or accommodation to their current predicament. Networks of paedophiles may thus emerge as support groups designed to overcome their social isolation.

We choose to distinguish both types of networks because the goals pursued and the means for achieving such goals are also quite different. Our working hypothesis is that instrumental interaction opportunities may vary independently of symbolic interaction opportunities. An analytical framework construed to account for the first type of social organization may well be insufficient to account for the second type.

JM, a subject interviewed in prison, mentioned that "he realized that he belonged to a very small minority, but that only in the last couple of years before this arrest and conviction did he realize that it was a "reachable minority". "I was getting to the point where I was feeling so much like an island that I needed, above anything else, to touch base". Locating this reachable minority happened by chance and not by searching for pornography sites on the web:

“You hear stories about porno out on the Net so I went searching, very unsuccessfully at it turned out. About a year later , however, I stumbled on what I was looking for completely by accident. I was searching, for purely professional reasons, for children’s clothing sites. But one link lead to another and I was going through the links, one of them brought me to *Free Spirits*”.

The discovery was eventful: "When I found that link... it was like... bang! I recall the day, it was a Saturday". At first he stayed away from the chat rooms and was more attracted by the discussion forums. He was particularly attracted to one of *Free Spirits*' sites, CBLF - the *Christian Boy Lover Forum*, partly because of his strong religious beliefs (although raised as a catholic in New Brunswick, he now patronizes Anglican churches). “CBLF was a general discussion support group with a religious flavour whereas boy chat forums are more of the "hey guys, turn to Fox channel for quite a show” variety”.

After a year or so, and as he got more and more involved in the chat rooms he asked to become a member of Montreal’s Ganymède collective: "I believed I would get arrested but I did it anyway. I was willing to take the risk if I could meet other people whom I could talk with". As it turned out the meeting took place “in a coffee shop by the Basilica in the Old Montreal area, a Friday afternoon in late August”. The Ganymède representative was mainly interested in assessing "if my paedophilia attraction was for real".

“Their other concern was to avoid recruiting "radicals". The Montreal group does not advocate physical contact ... they encourage you to adopt instead a mentoring position. They do not officially encourage you to cross the line. If one is considered to be a militant, he will not be allowed in the group. The group is low profile. It has very strict rules, does not allow trading of pornography, it is only a group of like-minded people that provide mutual support. Within the group, on the other hand you are allowed to be completely yourself. It was a major discovery. The founders of the Ganymède group are three people who met on line. They realized that they were in the same city, founded the group and now it has 50 or 60 members. On average, group members get together once a week for the supper. About 10 to 20 persons attend any given get-together, once a week in the home of one or the other of the founders. At the first meeting, group members presented themselves by their Internet nicknames. I then realized I was meeting the people I had been exchanging with for so long."

As he became part of the group, he chose another web name and this time kept it. Members attending the weekly get-together were both English and French. Most (about 60%) of the members had a prior record of some sort. "I even met a fellow that had the same case manager in an Ontario prison as I had".

"Within the group the age range of attraction is wide and we joked about the fact that sometimes at the get-togethers the "over-the-hillers" will regroup in one corner of the room, and the "baby rapists" congregate in another corner". But on other occasions

members will divide themselves into French and English-speaking cliques. Whatever the internal in-fighting and individual differences, there is a very strong camaraderie among all members. One particular fellow, a former high school teacher who now works as a free-lance technical writer, got in trouble. He was under police surveillance and had his computer confiscated. Without his computer he couldn't work. So the members arranged that a new computer was brought at his place so that he could continue to work. That sort of thing".

As he got involved in the group, he realized that there were actually two distinct paedophile support groups localized in Montreal: those that belonged to the Ganymède group, and those that belonged to the *Free Spirits* group.

“One of the founders of *Free Spirits*, the network that loans sites to all major paedophile support groups (Danish, German, Netherlands), came to Montreal a year and a half ago, after he had been exposed as a paedophile by a reporter who successfully managed a kind of "journalistic sting operation". He used to live in New York, but now lives in Montreal, and moved part of his business activities as well. He is extremely knowledgeable with computers and a certified Microsoft engineer. His computer business is perfectly legal and quite successful. The only thing, is that there was the unwritten rule that to work for this company you had to be a member of a paedophile support group.”

The *Free Spirits* Internet network that organizes paedophile support groups is itself a non-profit organization. It is self-supporting through the voluntary contributions of its members. This is therefore not a commercial or profit oriented enterprise. But such a network could not survive long if those who operated and maintained it in existence did not possess the required computer and management expertise and could not rely on the dedication of a large number of individuals.

"One employee of the founder's company, a computer programmer by profession, does the technical stuff and he is in charge of the maintenance of the whole *Free Spirits* network. One member of the Ganymède group is a college (CEGEP) teacher and is the group's security expert. When you join the group, one member will come to your place and make the computer safe, especially if you had been trading before. If you have a collection, another member will come over and encrypt the data".

At the time of this arrest, the subject had a 60-megabit collection of pictures. “The detective sat down at my computer. He asked my permission to go into it. I gave him the permission. I never found it. I doubt that most law-enforcement agencies are updated on current encryption programs.”

Much of the work involved in managing the *Free Spirits* network is to ensure that what occurs within the confines of the network remains perfectly legal. This requires extensive self-

policing: "The way *Free Spirits* is built allows those who manage it to know exactly who comes into the site, who gets out, where you go and what you post. They have absolutely no qualms to report you to the Internet provider if you engage in illegal trading within the network and ask the provider to have your connection cut off". In any case, illegal operations occur outside the *Free Spirits* site per se, for example, in the newsgroups such as "alt.pretty boy " or "alt.john". These sites are not in any way under the jurisdiction of *Free Spirits*. Similarly, when two individuals meet in a *Free Spirit* discussion or chat forum, what they do after they have left the site is not a matter of concern for the FS webmaster. This overall *Free Spirits* policy is also the policy of the local Montreal Ganymède group. Neither *Free Spirits* nor the Montreal Ganymède group advocate "any physical contact". They welcome those who are attracted to boys and young adolescents, but not those who act out their attractions.

"When the particular relationship - the one that got me arrested and convicted - began, I did not advertise to the other group members, although I had mentioned it privately to two other members. But I wasn't allowed to talk about it officially or at the weekly meetings. It's a "you don't tell, and we won't ask" kind of policy. Similarly members can privately show each other collections but not to the whole group. Moreover they are not allowed to trade. In one case we all knew that one of the members had an affair with a 13-14 year old boy but it was all right because it was presented as purely platonic. Very unwisely, this particular gentleman whose relationship with the boy had become in fact quite "physical" took a picture of the boy completely undressed in a very seductive pose and used the picture to make a Christmas card. Unfortunately he not only sent the card to a few of his personal friends among the group members but also, inadvertently to all members of the group. As much as the people enjoyed the picture privately, officially they were outraged and indignant - you know what I mean."

Beyond the weekly get-together, special events brought about international reunions.

"For the Millennium New Year's party, sixty people came to Montreal from around the world. Asia and Africa were the only continents not represented. One fellow, originally from South America but who now lives in the United States, came up to Montreal with other fellows from Texas and New York. One came from France as he was visiting a friend who lived in Quebec City. Another person was from Australia. The *Christian Boy Lover Forum* (CBLF) also meets once a year, alternatively in Montreal and Washington, because one of the founders of CBLF lives in Washington and the other in Montreal. The Montreal group contributed financially to help out Sharp's costly challenge of the current Canadian child pornography laws and invited him over to give a talk. "The talk was quite informative, although he would not be the kind of fellow I would like to include in my personal circle of friends. We also had people from the radical *North American Man-Boy Love Association* (NAMBLA) come over. *Free Spirits* and NAMBLA are two completely different organizations. *Free Spirits* has a low-key outlook and has more affinity with the Danish paedophile support group than with NAMBLA. In fact one of the members of the Danish paedophile support group now lives in Montreal and is also

part of the Ganymède collective. NAMBLA representatives were interested in merging the two organizations because of *Free Spirits'* computer expertise and skill in managing web sites. The offer was turned down. NAMBLA's inefficiency in updating on a regular basis their own site is quite obvious you know."

Paedophiles' interest in pornography takes many forms. "I, for example, wasn't interested in commercial pornography sites. As I began surfing on the net, at the very beginning, way before learning about *Free Spirits*, I had found lots of pornography sites, but they were always asking me for my credit card, and there was no way I was going to give that and not because I could be traced, but because I am a miser...".

The really interesting pictures were not found in the commercial sites but in the newsgroups: "If you are a collector of pornography it is in the newsgroups where you have the better chances ... and it's free". Moreover much of the pornographic material was not viewed as desirable. "For a long time the pictures were: a) either low quality, very old black and white pictures - much of it was Russian stuff; and b) more important, if it doesn't look convincing enough that everyone is really enjoying what they are doing, then it didn't interest me and is not worth collecting". However,

"About 3 or 4 years ago there emerged this fellow who put out multiple series of pictures of the same boy. They were called the *Nathans* or the Nathan collection. This is a collection of 300 pictures of a boy named Nathan. The pictures are spread over a 3 or 4 year period (it begins when Nathan was around 9 and ends when he was 13). The first 60 or 70 pictures start with Nathan fully clothed. In fact only a very small subset of 20 to 25 pictures that are "actual sexual contact pictures. These pictures are extremely rare, hard to find and well guarded".

The features of the Nathan collection was that: a) It was a collection - much like a stamp collection; b) It involved a personal on-going relationship between the photographer and the subject; c) The relationship appeared convincingly to be consensual (no violence and no commercial undertone); and d) Collectors had to sort out the pictures in their chronological order. "A big part of the attraction for a paedophile is the ability to establish an enduring one-to-one relationship with a boy. This is maybe the reason for the success of the Nathan collection." At the same time, the search for these collections was made more complicated. "Before you could find 150 pictures each day from a newsgroup site. Now out of 300 persons posting, 250 of them are hackers, vigilantes or spammers. So now, if you want to download the pictures you first need to scan the file with a viewer program, and delete the hidden program before downloading."

What is perceived by paedophiles as "attractive" is not necessarily "hard core pornography":

"There is a TV show on Fox, a sitcom called "*Malcolm in the Middle*". It's about a family that has 4 sons. What is peculiar of this particular sitcom is that in almost every episode

it shows at least one of the boys in underwears. In the opening episode, two of the boys wrestled on the floor in underwears for about five minutes! When it made its' debut, on Sunday night, all the lines on the Free Spirit network went red hot. "Turn on this! Turn on this!". It got so wild too that even in the Montreal group there was a small clique of people who got together each Sunday night to watch this half-hour TV show. We were wondering which of the 3 boys would be in his underwear this time. People could talk about the show endlessly throughout the evening."

Whereas hebephiles or pederasts can blend more easily in the gay community, paedophiles stricto sensu cannot. Moreover a number of such paedophiles are not "homosexuals" in the usual sense of the term (and may entertain heterosexual relationships as adults), and would not be willing to be considered as "gays". For these paedophiles the juvenile prostitution market offers no solution. Moreover the casual, impersonal and commercial nature of sexual relationships may offend their desire to maintain unique, personal, intimate and lasting relationships. This pushes such paedophiles away from the market and into the families. Thus paedophiles attracted to prepubescent or early teen adolescents were confronted, until the advent of the Internet, with a very solitary life. This solitude is a built-in feature of the basic script of the relationships they attempt to actualize.

JM's conviction files represent a unique mix of property and sexual offences. In 1987, he was working in a hunting resort. The place shut down temporarily because he had a heart attack. The resort's pilot asked him to become the family cook until the resort opened up again. He agreed, not knowing they had children. But they had and he was asked to do a bit of administrative work and babysit. They had 3 children, a daughter and two sons, a 12 year old and a 7 year old. The older son was often away and he took care mostly of the younger boy.

"He was not of an age I was predominately attracted to... again it was somebody under my normal age - namely 9 to 11; I ended up fondling the young boy. When I realized what I was doing, I knew if I stayed it would continue. So I ran with the family's car. I was arrested the same day. The police pulled my file, got suspicious and was prosecuted for 3 charges of sexual contacts. I was sentenced to 7 months in prison".

A number of years later, he ended up working in a Montreal hospital. Because of his skills in teaching sign language, and his religious beliefs, he met the secretary of the church he belonged to. The secretary developed a fondness for him. She called him one day and said that a friend of hers needed to go Christmas shopping and asked if he could go to the movie with her son. He did. Progressively the relationship between the mother of the boy and himself developed.

"The mother developed a crush on me. She was looking for an instant-daddy. Because his apartment had been damaged, she offered him to stay at her place for a couple of days and then asked me to stay longer. So I agreed. A couple of weeks later the boy and I had gotten filthy dirty playing football. I was in the bath tub. The mother knocked on the



door, asked me to draw the curtain and put her boy in the bathtub. That did it. The boy, again, was 7 and under my normal age. Sexual contacts and oral sex occurred 5 or 6 times. The child was not knowledgeable but aggressive: after the first time, while his mother was working over time, the little guy grabbed me. I am not justifying myself, just describing the events; anything I did to him, he wanted to do the same to me. Two weeks later I had to leave. Two days before I left, his mother had left the house early. I waited for the boy to get dressed. It was the kind of boy who hates getting dressed. Instead he was jumping on the bed saying "Come lick on this. Come on." That's when I decided to leave. Two days later I took the mother to work and the kid to school. Just before driving him to school, I took pictures of him undressed. I left with the family car and kept it. I got arrested two months later in another province. The car had been reported stolen".

All property offences in JM's record sheet are indicative of different actualizations of his attraction to young boys. Despite what these dry accounts of his offences convey, JM is intelligent, charming, profound, very patient and very smart. Both children and women find him "likeable". In fact, most of the time, he persistently organizes his life as to avoid "relapse". Precisely because he is a man of principles when "relapse" occurs, his reaction is to behave in such a way as to make certain that he will be punished. "I am not proud of what I am but I have come to accept it. If I could be born again, I would probably not choose this special attraction. I have not come to the conclusion that I am okay and that the rest of society is screwed up but rather that I was not born at the proper time and place". For such a man, mentorship and a social support network that accepts his sexual preference was, and presumably will still be, the best social adaptation he can expect under such circumstances. Another option perhaps, given his compulsion to ensure rapid punishment after relapse, would be getting involved in a long psychoanalytical journey. Meanwhile, he is doing time in prison and has accepted to participate in cognitive-behavioural treatment. A key feature of the treatment is that subjects submit themselves to aversive (ammoniac) conditioning.

The more serious the offence, the lower the prevalence of individuals willing to commit it. Similarly, the more deviant the sexual attraction, the more unlikely the possibility for them to participate in a subculture. Individual paedophiles are thus likely to live a solitary life for a number of reasons. They are unwilling to disclose their deviance, they cannot identify who is or is not part of the in-group. Since in any given population very few adults have this attraction, the likelihood for them to meet or interact is very low. Even if they can identify them, they do so under unfavourable conditions (they can meet each other in prison, in a therapeutic setting, or in Arcades). The Web is thus of particular significance for paedophiles: (1) It provides individuals with a forum that allows intimate interpersonal exchanges; (2) These exchanges may be conducted under secure conditions (anonymity); (3) Such exchanges are not, furthermore, constrained by geographical barriers or costs. This latter characteristic is important: the smaller the actual size of a minority in a given environment (city or nation), the more isolated it is. To the extent that the Web neutralizes the distance barrier, it also increases the likelihood of providing the critical mass required for the development of a sizeable minority.

The second characteristic is also noteworthy. The more deviant the sexual attraction, the more secretive individuals are likely to be - and the more costly exposure to the out-group. The Web provides a medium that provides relatively strict guarantees of anonymity. Even more important, it allows individuals, despite anonymity, to interact extensively and thus provide both partners for extended opportunities to test the reliability of their partners. Although sting operations can be initiated by law enforcement agencies, such tactics are mainly designed to trap interactions between youths and adults or instrumental networks of paedophiles (trading networks). When interactions are designed for the purpose of mutual support rather than for the purpose of facilitating the actualization of any particular illegal behaviour, law enforcement agencies have no reasonable grounds to target such exchanges (except for intelligence purposes) and no opportunity to prosecute participants. Such exchange forums, on the other hand, provide paedophiles (and hebephiles) with a unique opportunity to overcome their isolation. As they become part of a community, albeit a clandestine one, they can define collective norms of behaviour (the Nathan collection as the idealized paedophile relationship) and shape a culture of their own (the "*Malcolm in the Middle*" TV program). This is an important development for all age of consent offenders but especially for paedophiles attracted to prepubescent children.

## **5. INDIVIDUAL COMMITMENT AND SOCIAL DISCLOSURE: EVOLVING PATTERNS**

The extent to which individual paedophiles may acquire the commitment to act out depends in part on their exposure to favourable definitions of paedophilia - advocacy. Balland (1987; see also Plummer, 1980; 1981a; 1981b) has made a useful survey of various groups publicly advocating "inter-generational" sexual relationships. The *Paedophile Information Exchange group* (PIE) created by Michael Hanson and directed subsequently by Tom O'Carroll, who published in 1979 "Paedophilia - The Radical Case", is now available free of charge on the Web. The CRIES group (*Centre de recherche et d'information sur l'enfance et la sexualité*) in Belgium, was created by Philippe Cartier in 1982, and the *North American Man-Boy-Love Association* (NAMBLA) was created in 1978 as a spin-off of a collective protest (the Boston-Boise Committee) against a crackdown on the gay prostitution market.

Balland's findings are interesting. First, these groups emerged mainly in the margins of homosexual organizations but were subsequently officially ostracised. Second, no such groups emerged in Southern European and underdeveloped countries. Third, existing groups qualified as weak and ephemeral organizations that managed to recruit only a limited number of adherents partly because of strong out-group hostility, partly because of inherent self-selection biases in the recruitment process.

Entrepreneurs involved in the creation on the Web of *Free Spirits*, on the other hand, have provided a more stable and integrated means of diffusing favourable definitions of paedophilia. In this last section of the paper, I start by describing a given instance of paedophilia

advocacy in Montreal. Then I underline a number of factors that severely limited the impact of past advocacy ventures and show how current Internet technology overcomes these restrictions.

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In the late 1970s the American Psychiatric Association finally removed homosexuality from the list of psychological disorders in the DSM-III. A prevalent view is that

"The mental health institution as a whole owes many apologies to the gay community. Generations of misunderstanding and misdiagnosis have resulted in generations of mistreatment, emotional abuse, and psychological torture of gays and lesbians. The field of psychology convinced gay people and their loved ones that homosexuality was a disease. ... Once originated, the disease concept of homosexuality opened the door to..., a myriad of cures, consisting of everything from years of psychoanalysis, to sedation, castration, hysterectomies, lobotomies, electroconvulsive therapy, and numerous degrading behaviour modification programs, including aversive conditioning with electrical shocks. Of the studies conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of any therapy where conversion to heterosexuality was the treatment goal, none has ever been reported to be effective even 3 years following the end of the treatment" (Arey, 1995; p. 205).

At about the same time, in Montreal, a crackdown on gay bars had attracted strong public criticisms and a collective reader was published in 1978. Its' title "*Sortir*" can be understood and translated as "Coming out" and refers to the process by which public self-disclosure of one's own sexual orientation frees the individual and allows him to fulfill himself. I had never come across this particular book until the current investigation was under way. In fact, none of my colleagues working on recidivism and treatment patterns of sex offenders knew about it and it is certainly not the kind of book that parole or probation officers and most criminology or psychology students would find in their listings of "required readings". The book however was mentioned in two separate occasions by those I interviewed. DG talked about the book while I was interviewing him in La Macaza federal prison. He mentioned that at the time, his circle of friends and associations included a number of intellectuals who in Montreal hold the view that free sexual orientation had become a central political, cultural and personal issue. One of his good friends, who contributed a chapter of the book, had urged him to join the "movement". He declined the invitation arguing that he was currently "active" and that it would be against his best interest to participate actively. The second mention of the book occurred later one when I interviewed a subject deeply involved in a community relapse prevention support group.

"I remembered that while I was in Montreal's provincial prison, I became quite friendly with a solid con, a professional property offender. Although married, and father of 3 children, he had no qualms about talking about his "mistress" - a 14 to 15 year old adolescent who was also his partner in burglary. He had this nice book, written by a Quebecker who was advocating "boy-man" sexual relationships and was reading out loud

passages of his sexual experiences while he was travelling from Montreal to Sept-Iles" (MC).

As I realized afterwards, the writer that was mentioned in the interview was one of the contributors to the book - Jean Simoneau, and the chapter was entitled "*Loving the boys, the adult's wonderland*" ("Aimer les petits gars, féerie du monde adulte"). This is not to say that most paedophiles are "intellectuals" - in fact the large majority of those whom I interviewed were not. However, a surprising number of subjects were involved in various writings schemes. DW, whom I met at the federal regional reception federal prison, was a teacher and school administrator by profession and combined a distorted courtship disorder ("spanking") with a side attraction to prepubescent youths. He talked about the "erotic story" that had been accepted for publication in a specialized magazine called "*Stand Correct*". The magazine attracts individuals, of both sexes engaged in consensual role-playing sado-masochistic sex (on the subculture of this "paraphelia", see Weinberg et al., 1984). As he was arrested and as the media expressed their outrage, this public indignation also drew the attention of his acquaintances and friends. This particular acquaintance chose to support him throughout his judicial proceedings and as he did so he also wrote a story under the pseudonym of Gordon Hunt. DW allowed me to photocopy it since his new friend was now looking for a publishing outlet. Another subject interviewed (YM) had written two lengthy manuscripts. The first one was called "*En leurs noms, je porte plainte*" ("In their names, I have filed a complaint") was written while doing time in 1991-1992. And at the time of the interview he was feverishly writing another manuscript "*La société trompée*" ("The abused society"). After the interview I also received a long letter about his somewhat grandiose interpretation of the implications of my research project and his "radical" interpretation of my own interest and motivation in pursuing this particular research. He also mentioned that the staff had the manuscript of his first "book" but as I asked clinicians about it, they didn't have it in fact and weren't particularly interested in reading it anyway. They assumed that such writings were simply self-justificatory rambling - a "negative attitude" that simply needed to be neutralized and crushed before any therapeutic progress could be entertained.

I asked all subjects about the time and circumstances when they did not even realize their attraction to youths and the moment when they realized that they were not the "only ones", that others shared a similar inclination. DG for instance realized that he was not the "only one" when he found in a psychiatric manual a section on perversions (the "pederast" label). The fact that the label was a negative one, classifying him as suffering from a mental disease, was of a lesser concern than the fact of discovering that there were "others out there like him". The discovery "relieved him" and in fact boosted his spirits. Only one of the subjects I interviewed discovered that he "was a paedophile" through literary means. LB, whom I had become acquainted with as an undergraduate student in the philosophy department, recalled the precise moment when he discovered that "he was not alone". His brother knew a college professor who was rather frank about his being gay. "I got to know him and although I hadn't disclosed myself ... he sort of guessed about me because he offered me two books. As he drove me to the place where I was starting my career as a high school teacher, he also told me to be prudent because news and rumours travelled extremely fast in small towns". The first book was written by Gabriel Matzneff

and it was called "*Les moins de 16 ans*" ("Less than 16 years old") - a title that explicitly referred to the legal age of consent for sexual relationships. The author describes in an obviously autobiographical fashion his love life with adolescent girls. His other books describe his sexual relationships in Manila with young 8 to 13 year old boys (e.g., Matzneff, 1981). Matzneff has also been accused of being a "sex fiend" in 1982 and a key member of a "paedophile ring". It turned out in 1984 that the allegations were false. In 1990, his "black diaries" were published and created an uproar and an influential Canadian journalist - Denise Bombardier - branded him publicly as a paedophile on Bernard Pivot's widely diffused television cultural program ("Bouillon the culture") and argued that he should in fact be thrown in prison (Delannoy, 1992). The second book was written by Michel Tournier. It was entitled "*Le roi des Aulnes*" and was published in 1970. Whereas Matzneff is mainly an autobiographical writer, Tournier is an important novelist (see for example, Cloonan, 1985). In this particular book the narrator Abel Thiffauges "is tempted by little boys. Yet what he wants is not sexual gratification in the normal sense of the term. He seeks instead the erotic and emotional satisfaction that comes from his carrying a child on his shoulders. Nowhere in the novel does Abel molest a child, but he does seek and obtain a type of fulfilment that falls outside the established categories of homosexual and heterosexual love. The novel describes a pseudo-mythical universe replete with signs, visions, and symbols whose function is to justify an instinct, which is of itself neither good or bad" (Clooman, 1984; p. 442). Clooman also mentions that "on the flyleaf of the Gallimard edition of the novel, the writer, most probably Tournier, describes his book as an essay to describe a new model of non-genital sexuality" (*Ibid.*, p. 52). These two books were crucial markers in LB's commitment to his paedophilic attraction to young girls partly not only because they revealed to him that "he was not the only one" but also because what appeared to be an "unshareable and demeaning deviance" could in fact be construed as a meaningful personal challenge.

A variety of intellectuals (artists, poets, novelists, gay militants, journalists, editors and social scientists) were involved in the 1978 publication in Montreal of "*Sortir*". Three of the contributors tackled the issue of appropriate sexual intimacy between young adolescents and adults. These contributions were original in their own ways. George Khal's paper, who at the time was co-editing an influential "avant-garde" periodical (*Mainmise* - a Rolling Stone kind of magazine, a fine sample of the libertarian exuberance of the 1970s and now a prized collection item for bibliophiles), was analytical in tone. The paper (entitled "*The pure and the impure - the labyrinth of pederasty*"), analyzes the social and personal options offered to adult males attracted to 11 to 16 year old males and offers a brilliant contribution to the sociology of pederasty. In his concluding paragraphs Khal writes, "I have the impression that by signing this article, I am writing my death warrant and make it certain that I will become a choice target for the morality police squad. At the same time, strangely enough, I have this exhilarating feeling that some Mozart-bird-song is playing just over my head, humming "Don't worry, man, it's all right, it's all right."" (1978; p. 220). As it happens, Khal is now currently residing in Singapore.

Another chapter of the book also deals with age of consent prohibitions and is written in a lyrical/prophetic style, by a poet, Paul Chamberland. Chamberland has written a number of

books and is currently a professor at the University of Quebec's, Department of Literature in Montreal. He is a prolific writer and an established "poet" among literary circles. The sentimental relationships that can develop between adults and 11 to 15 year old adolescents is the topic of a number of his writings, for example, "*Strolling in Outremont or elsewhere*", published in 1987 and "*Émergence de l'adultenfant*" - ("The emergence the childman") published in 1981. Chamberland's writings certainly qualify as radical. His main argument is that the true "moral innovator" (1981; p. 28) recognizes that existing age of sexual consent prohibitions are "only a means to achieve another goal, much more fundamental, namely that of censoring and suppressing the various generic forms of expression of child sexuality" (*Ibid.*; p. 46). A second argument is that "child-man sexual relationships, when expressed in unconstrained forms, is naturally reciprocal" whereas paedophile or pederast "labels" locate by definitional fit "the adult in the role of instigator and the child in the position of a passive target or sexual object" (*Ibid.*; p. 47). The implication is that, "I cannot condone anymore by my silence the current state of sexual censure" even though "the social order would certainly prefer that in exchange of my silence that I would be allowed clandestine compensations (...) But I must bear the social hazard of being isolated and assaulted. This is a necessary working requirement" (1987; 43,33). In his 1978 essay, Chamberland seems to anticipate the current state of internet exchange forums and chats,

"Just thinking about the idea of creating a new movement, something like the Liberation Movement of Childadults... depresses me: invitations, meetings, telephones, group gossip...ok nothing like that. The thing is, the movement exists already; it is already emerging as a side effect of unplanned private encounters. But how could we define or recognize precisely the actual conditions that could qualify as an authentic actualization of such a network of encounters? In fact, what I am looking for, in all circumstances, is how to accelerate the actualization of a large scale communication network of individuals freely exchanging their most intimate fantasies" (1978; pp. 73-74).

Jean Simoneau wrote another of "*Sortir*" relevant contribution. This was the piece that the Montreal jail's reader enjoyed so much. Simoneau wrote an autobiographical account - and disclosure - of a young man who discovers his attraction to adolescents at a time (the 1960s and early 1970s) when homosexuality was viewed as a mental illness and pederasty as a cardinal deviance. "I recalled having gone to the psychiatrists because I feared my attraction could evolve into some kind of degenerative disease and that I would become a monster". The book was published in 1981 under the title "*Let the boys come to me*".

"I had submitted three manuscripts to Jean Basile, the editor of *Parti Pris*. At the time I had joined a group of young writers in Sherbrooke that thought that literature was a religion. One of them knew Basile and the circle of progressive intellectuals of *Parti Pris*. Basile selected the *Boys* manuscript because he felt that I wrote best when I wrote about my own life. The manuscript had been written a number of years before but got published only in 1981. The story published in "*Sortir*" is of the same vein as "*Let the boys come to me*". Simoneau's first book was a collection of poems published in 1968, "*Hymn to love, vice and revolt*". I had met an adolescent in a metro. He was hustling,

and went to my place. I fell in love with him but never managed to retrace him. So he inspired the book and I hoped that by publishing it he would hear about it and that I could meet him again. I never did in fact."

Simoneau did not publish again after 1981 and remains somewhat of an outsider among literary circles: "I am not considered to be a real poet even though I write poems. They think I don't read enough, that I am lazy, that I am a child and overall they are pretty much condescending". Publicly disclosing his attraction to adolescents, had the paradoxical impact of limiting his interactions with other paedophiles or pederasts. He met one but only some years later. ( A young man, having read "*Let the boys come to me*" went to see him and they became friends. He eventually left the country and committed suicide abroad). Simoneau has recently written a preface for an anthology of poems on pederasty written by one of his former high-school colleagues. But it is fair to say that his interaction with other paedophiles remained quite limited. Simoneau pursued a somewhat chaotic life during which he developed strained mentoring relationships with a variety of troubled youngsters and as a special fatherly or avuncular responsibility for the two boys of a Bangladesh family. The youngest committed suicide and the oldest now lives in Toronto. He also got involved in the tortuous dynamics of a divorced family and took care, at the instigation of the divorced father, of his young boy who eventually laid charges of sexual molestation against him. He was convicted in 1996 to a six-month jail sentence for allegedly having fondled the young boy (he angrily denies having done so). His past writings were brought in court as circumstantial evidence of his culpability. He lost his job as a teacher : "Everyone could see that I was a flamboyant libertarian in sexual matters, but I defy anyone to prove that I violated the ethics of teaching. It's not to say that I did not occasionally fantasize on one or other of these lads".

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Those who are attracted to juveniles perceive this attraction as a given ("I didn't choose my attraction"). As one subject stated, "Heterosexuals don't ask themselves: Why, or what is it that I am fatally attracted to women?". But social norms governing age of consent erotic interactions are powerful. So powerful, in fact, that overcoming moral barriers is required before even contemplating the prospective actualization of this attraction. Self-perceived isolation should thus limit the motivation to overcome such barriers. Most subjects could in fact recall the moment they "discovered" that "they were not alone". The discovery itself was described as "exhilarating". One of the reasons it was so "exhilarating" was that it removed not so much the outside social pressure but the associated ("internalized") self-pressure and "shameful inner moral failing". No property offender would describe his discovery that "other property offenders" existed as especially "noteworthy" or "exhilarating". The reason, of course, is that although stealing may be wrong or illegal the choice of doing so or not is quite common and "normal". Being sexually attracted to young adolescents or prepubescent children, on the other hand, is neither common nor a matter of choice. Paedophilia thus becomes an "unshareable secret". Inner commitment or endorsement of favourable definitions of paedophilia does not flow automatically from the discovery that there is in fact a "reachable minority" of individuals

having similar dispositions. But it offers individual paedophiles the choice of trying (or not trying) to reach this in-group. It also offers them the choice of engaging (or not engaging) in a reflective assessment of both favourable and unfavourable definitions of paedophilia. Favourable definitions become consequential when definition-makers discover themselves as sharing a common prohibited disposition. They become influential when these definition-makers are perceived as persons of personal or social merit.

The diffusion of consequential and influential favourable definitions of paedophilia is severely constrained - an obvious consequence of its illegality. The diffusion or impact of the views of Khal, Simoneau or Chamberland advocating age of consent offences in Montreal in 1978 is illustrated as follows:

1. Such views were not the focal concern of an out-group of intellectuals whose main goal was to affirm free choice in sexual orientation and publicize undue law enforcement harassment of homosexuals. By contrast, *Free Spirits* and related sites provide an advocacy forum that is sponsored by the in-group itself.
2. These advocacy views were written for an intellectual audience. They could not reach those who had not the requisite literacy. The only exception was Jean Simoneau's contribution and this is precisely why Simoneau's story could be read in prison and not those of Khal or Chamberland. In contrast, the *Free Spirits* banner provides favourable definitions of paedophilia to a much wider audience, although it restricts the audience to those who are most intimately concerned by such issues.
3. All three advocates had little in common. They were pursuing their own careers and life goals independently of each other and shared no ties. Simoneau didn't know of Khal and had no special tie with Chamberland neither before nor after the publication of "*Sortir*". It was the book's editor (Jean Basile) who brought together their writings. In comparison, *Free Spirits* provides wider opportunities of interaction for writers and "posters".
4. Publishers and editors select what they publish partly for business concerns, partly for moral concerns. These transaction costs not only restricts the communication process but imposes delays. Simoneau's book describes events that had occurred ten to twenty years before his autobiographical account was published. In contrast, *Free Spirits* and related sites impose little or no censure and allow writers to communicate about their present here-and-now views on any given subject matter.
5. Public disclosure itself restricts what can be said. The three authors who advocated "moral innovation" in sexual relationships between adults and juveniles were obviously concerned about the social consequences of their disclosure and defiance. *Free Spirits* and similar forums guarantees that participants' identities will remain unknown to hostile third parties. This in turn increases both the number of people willing to communicate to others and the number of those willing to listen to what they say. Only very few individuals will in any given setting and period



(for example, Montreal, 1978) accept to express favourable views on sexual relationships between youths and adults, accept that these views be made public and agree to endorse them. *Free Spirits* and related advocacy internet sites allow a much wider opportunity of "advocates" to communicate between themselves.

6. The social distance is great between those whose writings are published and those who eventually will read them. Readers may want to "talk" to the writers, but will generally refrain from doing so unless some favourable particular circumstance allows it. Even if they do, the chance that this conversation will trigger a significant exchange is unlikely because the interaction will be constrained by the situation (the "writer" role and the "reader" role). Interpersonal exchanges on advocacy Internet sites, on the other hand, are not overly constrained by their public roles or social status.

7. Most publications are highly individualized and each publication is viewed as a distinct transaction. You may read a given author's novel or essay, but reading his other writings is a separate process. Khal's essay in "*Sortir*" referred you to a number of other writings advocating emancipation from age of consent legal and social prohibitions (the "bibliography" section) but the search for these other writings is a distinct endeavour and the reader bears the costs of that search. *Free Spirits* sites are integrated and impose little or no search costs to the user. It provides a menu that allows users to link themselves not only to chat groups, discussion groups and related forums, but also provides access to on-line libraries (updated sites on novels, essays, news reports, films and so forth).

8. The impact of the advocacy views of Chamberland, Khal or Simoneau was undoubtedly very limited. Few people had the opportunity, the ability or the motivation to read their writings. Moreover individuals typically shape their behaviour mainly through interpersonal means of exchange with individuals belonging to some common reference group. This becomes of paramount importance when the choices to be made are consequential. A basic proposition of Sutherland's "differential association theory" is that individuals acquire the motivation to "offend" or to violate legal prohibitions only through personal contacts. Internet exchange forums on paedophilia allow participants to engage in personal conversations and discussions. These exchanges may be "virtual" in the sense that participants are not physically present but qualify nonetheless as personal and intimate.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

Variations in the known incidence and characteristics of age of consent offences are not appropriately measured unless one analyzes separately the incidence of paedophile and hebephile offences and seeks to understand the differential dynamics of juvenile male and female involvement in both types of offences. This exploratory research suggests, for example, that the degree of organization or density of interactions among offenders engaged in similar violation

increase as a function of the age of the juveniles and their sex - hebephiles seeking male adolescents being the most socially organized domain of age of consent offences.

Documenting the significance of age of consent offences by scanning world-wide media reports on law-enforcement investigation agencies (a customary research procedure, e.g., Huges, 1999) does not necessarily provide useful insights for understanding variations in rates of age of consent offences because of the media's emphasis on "worst cases". Although a number of burglars rape their victims, it is doubtful that documenting patterns in burglary-rape cases would provide insights in accounting for variations in burglary rates. None of the subjects interviewed in this research (drawn mostly from a population of already serious repeat offenders) would qualify as violent offenders or as "worst cases". Yet they are probably quite representative of most individuals currently arrested and convicted by law enforcement for age of consent violations.

A distinctive argument in this paper is that non-instrumental or symbolic interactions among offenders are more important for certain kinds of offences (age of consent violations in particular) than for other offences (e.g., property crimes). This is so because commitment to violate basic social norms requires that potential offenders acquire through personal contacts "favourable definitions" of their own behaviour. Internet technology currently provides the organized means for social isolates to overcome natural, legal and social barriers. Because law enforcement agencies pursue practical goals (arresting individuals) web sites have mainly been understood as providing new instrumental opportunities for paedophiles or hebephiles to reach juveniles and commit (or attempt to commit) offences. However, the most significant and long-term implication of this new mass medium of communication is that it allows individual paedophiles to participate in the development of an authentic subculture and "community" and to perceive themselves belonging to "a social movement". The obvious implication is that a stable forum for in-group intimate, albeit virtual, contacts between individuals normally trapped by an unshareable secret will have lasting effects on their commitment and ultimately on the incidence of age of consent offences.

Research on age of consent offences is mainly undertaken by psychologists and criminologists pursuing the practical concern of treating individuals, assessing their personal characteristics ("personality traits") and evaluating the impact of various options of "treatments". Sociological research on aggregate patterns of age of consent violations over time and across countries and cities has not been viewed as policy-relevant. The perceived social encapsulation of many "sex offenders" has also discouraged research on paedophile and hebephile social networks (for exceptions, see Hanson and Scott, 1986). Current opportunities for both instrumental and symbolic interactions among age of consent offenders may change this current focus. One implication of this investigation is that perhaps more resources should be channelled to community relapse prevention programs. Another implication is that relapse prevention support groups should consider the possibility of taking advantage of existing Internet opportunities to expand their influence.

In this paper, I have avoided discussing the empirical or intellectual merits of “favourable” or “unfavourable” definitions (arguments) of sexual interactions between juveniles and adults and concentrated instead on analyzing behavioural interactions. Moreover, I have refrained from participating in Web discussions and chat forums and did not undertake an analysis of relevant paedophilia sites. Nonetheless a sociological investigation of the current web-driven paedophilia subculture should increase our understanding of paedophiles and could provide a useful strategy for overcoming the inherent self-selection sampling biases shaping conventional clinical and correctional research. It could assess the extent to which this socialization process (individual deviants becoming embedded in a collective set of exchanges) affects not only their motivation to act out but also their ways of acting out and even their motivation to cease or reduce the frequency and the seriousness of their violations. To the extent that age of consent offenders interact among themselves, they may learn from each other new “tricks” or discover new “opportunities” (an “enhancing effect”). But, at the same time, they may also define for themselves a new set of norms about the “appropriate” rules of courtship and about the appropriate settings for engaging in erotic interaction with juveniles (“a structuring effect”). Moreover, individuals engaging in age of consent offences may also realise that they are pursuing an altogether “impossible dream”. As they persevere, they are likely to be disappointed by the juveniles that they have interacted with (the theme of “betrayal” and the associated theme of the “unreliability” of juveniles were recurrent topics in our interviews). They may also be disappointed by the callousness or insensitivity of other paedophiles they happen to exchange with (another recurrent theme). As they attempt to actualize their attraction, the personal costs they impose on themselves and on their personal entourage (including the juveniles themselves), may trigger a self-reflection process that will commit them into abstinence. I have learned that much through my conversations with one of the subjects of this study (MC) who channelled his entrepreneurial and charismatic qualities in the creation of a relapse-prevention support group for individuals attracted to juveniles. Although co-ordinated by two devoted psychologists (who believed that “therapy” is basically a process of uncensored self-reflection), the impact of gifted individuals such as MC should also be analyzed more closely.

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