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„ICH FÜHLE MICH NICHT DISKRIMINIERT, ICH WERDE DISKRIMINIERT“

Social Stigmatization of Paedophiles in Germany

MSC MEDICAL ANTHROPOLOGY AND SOCIOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

The focus in this thesis lies on the personal perception of self-identifying paedophiles concerning the stigmatization of their sexual preferences. In the literature there is a lack of emic perspectives regarding the stigma of paedophilia. Thus this study aims to contribute to the filling of this gap. The research is limited to a German context. Through data collected via a questionnaire and interviews, five key-themes informing stigma have been developed. These are self-assessment, paedophilia in everyday life, coming out, experiences with society's opinions regarding paedophilia and views on the legal framework in Germany. The vast majority of approximately seventy informants have been reached over internet forums administered by paedophiles and four more through the therapy network '*Kein Täter werden*'. The findings of the research suggest that paedophiles do perceive a stigmatizing environment in Germany. The best solution to fight the growing stigmatization appears to be educating the German society about paedophilia.

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1. Stigmatization of paedophiles

“No one should be judged or rejected just because of his sexual orientation, as long as no other person gets harmed” (Anonymous Informant - survey).

Stigma, as Erving Goffman describes it, is “the situation of the individual who is disqualified from full social acceptance” (1986: preface). Being a stigmatized individual “has the effect of cutting him off from society and from himself so that he stands a discredited person facing an unaccepting world” (ibid.: 19). Concerning paedophilia¹ the discourse in Germany could be labelled an ‘unaccepting world’ as paedophilia ranks among the most stigmatized attributes (Jahnke et al., 2014).

An issue in most discussions is the synonymous use of the terms child sex offender and paedophile (Seto, 2009). “[P]eople with pedophile or other paraphilic interests are often stereotypically portrayed as violent criminals” (Jahnke et al., 2013: 171). The common assumption is that all child molesters are paedophiles and all paedophiles are child molesters. As surveys have shown, neither assumption is always correct (Seto, 2009). “Agreement with the stereotype that pedophilia often or always coincides with child sex offenses is likely to prompt a high degree of discrimination against people with pedophilia, regardless of their actual behavior” (Jahnke et al., 2013: 171).

In an article written by staff of the forensic department of the University of Regensburg the authors state, that sexual preferences including paedophilia are the primary factor for the recidivism rate of sexual offences (Mokros et al., 2012). This means that paedophiles who have committed a sexual crime are more likely to reoffend than others who might have committed a similar offence but without having paedophilic preferences. However in general only 25 – 40% of sexual offenses against children are committed by paedophiles (ibid.). There is no certain number for the prevalence of paedophiles in German society. Researchers assume that about 0,5% - 4% of men have paedophilic preferences while the prevalence in women seems to be considerably less (ibid.). These numbers come from a German context. US-researcher Seto for example talks about a prevalence with an upper limit of 5% and furthermore writes that “approximately 40 – 50 % of sex offenders with child victims are not pedophiles based on their sexual arousal or behavior” (Seto, 2009: 392). Nonetheless numbers from both papers arise from small surveys. Large-scale surveys on the prevalence of paedophilia that could truly

¹ Sometimes paedophilia is just spelled with an ‘e’ instead of ‘ae’. The Oxford Dictionary spells it pAEdophilia, so I will, too.

be representative have not been conducted so far (Fromberger et al., 2013; Mokros et al., 2012).

Over the past years there have been several scandals that have brought the topic paedophilia to a public attention in Germany. In 1998 a number of former pupils of the Odenwald-School, located in Hesse near Frankfurt am Main, talked openly for the first time about being sexually abused by the headmaster of the school during their time there. In a final report published in 2010 the authors talk about 132 victims (Holl, 2010). An article about the case - titled '*Ein Nest von Pädophilen*' (≈ a nest of paedophiles) – did not problematize the motivations of the abusing teachers (Menke, 2010). Hence it is not mentioned whether they actually had paedophilic preferences or whether there were other reasons behind the sexual abuse. From 2003 on Michael Jackson was on trial for child abuse. He was cleared of all charges in 2005 but there was a huge media coverage during the trial (Goode, 2011). Before the elections of the German government in 2013 a huge debate arose around the party 'Bündnis 90/Die Grünen' and their connection to the 1980's 'age of consent reform' (in Germany known as '*Pädophiliebewegung*' ≈ paedophilia movement). Then, at the beginning of 2014, German media was full of the 'Edathy-affair'. This was caused by an investigation concerning politician Sebastian Edathy about nude images of children that had been found on his computer. Here as well it was not clarified whether he *is* a paedophile or not; possessing nude images of children was deemed sufficient to assume he was a paedophile. Consequently, Edathy lost his career and social standing even though in the end he got cleared of all charges. It is understandable that people are upset about scandals like these, especially in cases such as the Odenwald-School where children were actually harmed. In a large and heterogeneous German sample "[f]ourteen percent of the participants [...] agreed that PWP [people with paedophilia] should better be dead and 39% recommended imprisonment, even though the instruction emphasized that the individual in question had never committed a sexual (or other) crime" (Jahnke et al., 2015: 2).

Quite recently, in May 2015, an article was published about a male kindergarten teacher who had come out as being paedophilic to his employees after working in a daycare center for over ten years. Even though there had been no indication that a child was harmed the man was barred from the facility and parents got notified. Considering the increasingly hostile social environment for paedophiles in contemporary Germany and the fact that so far not a lot of

research has been done on this topic I want to answer the following research question in this thesis:

'How do self-identifying paedophiles in Germany perceive the stigmatization about their sexual preference?'

To answer this question, I conducted research among several German online forums administrated by paedophiles and with the prevention network 'Kein Täter werden' (≈ not becoming an offender) which runs eleven therapy groups for paedophiles in Germany.

At first I will review the current state of research regarding paedophilia and the factors that inspired my research question. This will be followed by an account on the theoretical framework I want to apply in this thesis, namely Goffman's stigma theory. After a description of the different methods I will briefly reflect on the experiences I made working in this field. Subsequently I will present the results of my empirical research. Here I have identified five key themes which will be approached in separate subchapters followed by a discussion on stigma and internalized stigma. To conclude I will describe the approach 'Kein Täter werden' takes and compare the data gained from their participants with the answers from the online survey.

2. State of research

“They are often surprised about what paedophilia actually is. That is has nothing to do with child molesting, as many think. That’s why it is so important to enlighten the public” (Chat with Finn).

2.1 Definition of Paedophilia

The Oxford dictionary defines paedophilia as ‘sexual feelings directed towards children’ (2015). A similar definition can be found in the German equivalent, Duden. Hebephilia describes sexual attraction towards pubescents, but the term is not used very often (Blanchard et al., 2009). I mention it here as I have included hebephilic preferences in my questionnaire (see chapter 4.1). Often this distinction is being ignored (ibid.) or does not matter that much as people deal with similar issues. Both on the forums as well as in the ‘*Kein Täter werden*’ groups paedophiles are represented as well as hebephiles. Without this clear distinction I did not want to exclude people who identify as hebephiles from my research. However as I am not aware of a term that includes both paedophilic as well as hebephilic preferences I will concentrate on paedophilia. From the way the informants answered in the survey (some of them mentioned having hebephilic preferences) there was no indication of a notable difference in the perception of stigma between the two preferences.

In the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders IV (DSM-IV) paedophilia is categorized under ‘Paraphilic Disorders’. Paedophilia, or Paedophilic Disorder as it is called in the DSM-V, is characterized by either A) “recurrent, intense sexually arousing fantasies, sexual urges, or behaviors involving sexual activity with a prepubescent child or children (generally age 13 years or younger)” over a period of at least 6 months. Or also if the individual has B) “acted on these sexual urges, or the sexual urges or fantasies cause marked distress or interpersonal difficulty.” In order to qualify for this diagnosis, the person must be C) “at least 16 years old and at least 5 years older than the child” (Blanchard, 2010: 315). Furthermore it should be specified whether the paedophilic attraction is exclusive (attracted only to children) or nonexclusive (attracted also to adults) (ibid.)².

This definition has generated a lot of criticism.³ However despite discussion prior to the publication of DSM-V, these criteria have not changed (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). The main problem clinicians and researchers have concerns the parts about sexual

² A similar definition can be found in the WHO’s International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD) (World Health Organization, 1993).

³ For a detailed summary of the criticism see Blanchard, 2010.

behaviors (Blanchard, 2010). According to the DSM definition everyone involved in a sexual act with a child is automatically a paedophile. This fits in with a general perception of paedophiles in German society (see chapter 6.3) but not with the diagnosis used in practice. “[T]he diagnostic utility of the DSM diagnostic criteria is so low that these criteria are virtually ignored by clinicians as well as researchers” (ibid.: 304f). For example, as I learned in my interview with Ms. Linder [a pseudonym, like all names in this thesis], who works as a therapist with one of the ‘*Kein Täter werden*’ groups, masturbation fantasies for instance are a more important criteria in diagnosing paedophilia than behavior. Mokros et al. state clearly that child molesters and paedophiles are not the same and that the two terms should therefore not be used interchangeably (2012).

Nevertheless, the DSM classifies paedophilia as a disorder. Seto questions this classification and suggests that it is a sexual orientation (2012); an opinion that most informants share⁴ (see chapter 7.1.1). In any case there are different methods offered by professionals to help paedophiles coping with their sexuality. The main goal here is to keep the risk of illegal actions taking place at a minimum. There are for example hormone treatments offered to paedophiles that are supposed to lower the sex drive or even surgical castration (Seto, 2009). Another measure is therapy as for instance offered by ‘*Kein Täter werden*’.

There are several presumptions concerning the etiology of paedophilia. Assumptions include conditioning processes during puberty, own experiences of abuse during childhood, genetic predispositions and neurobiological abnormalities. However, so far none of them could be verified empirically (Fromberger et al., 2013).

What in research is often overlooked or neglected is the fact that paedophilia is not a phenomenon that solely concerns men. It appears to be much more common with males but it stills occurs among women as well (Seto, 2009). It seems to be far more difficult in the cases of women to distinguish between child sex offending and actual paedophilic behavior. In spite of many similarities to male paedophiles women seldom offend outside of their families. In most cases this is seen as a “greater need for nurturance and intimacy, relationship constancy and control” (Nathan et al., 2001: 47). So far, not a lot of research has been conducted in this field. What has been done is mainly on the subject of female sex offenders but there is hardly anything on female paedophiles in particular (ibid.: 44). In my research there were no

⁴ Here we have to keep in mind that most of my informants have been acquired over the internet, not over a therapy group.

indications that any of the answers date back to a female participant. Everyone who contacted me used male or gender neutral names/pseudonyms. Nonetheless the majority of informants stayed anonymous hence I do not know their sex for sure.

2.2 Problem Statement

As mentioned above paedophilia is one of the most stigmatizing attributes. Stigmatization can cause serious harm in people. “It may result in both self- and other-labeling, and consequently, a development of a ‘spoiled’ public identity” (Buchmann et al., 2009: 18). A repeatedly occurring problem is that paedophiles are conflated with child sex offenders. As mentioned above, less than half of all sex crimes against children are committed by paedophiles. In addition researchers assume that only a minority of all paedophiles offend children. However so far there are no large-scale epidemiological studies to prove this (Fromberger et al., 2013). Nonetheless there are smaller studies based on voluntary self-disclosure of paedophiles. For example Seto (2009) where he states that the “majority (78.6%) [of 290 self-identified boy-preferring pedophiles]⁵ reported no history of legal involvement as a result of any allegation they had sexual contact with a boy” (ibid.: 392). The survey took place over the internet. Proceeding on the assumption that only a minority of paedophiles actually do abuse children, implies that the majority is being stigmatized based on an (most of the times) incorrect suspicion.

Furthermore when looking at the literature and research already conducted regarding paedophiles I observed a concentration on the opinion of ‘outsiders’. Quite some research on paedophilia has been conducted so far. Especially interesting for this thesis are for example recent articles by Jahnke et al. (2013, 2014, 2015) where they explore paedophilia in the context of stigmatization. Seto’s papers (2009, 2012) present a nice overview on the assessment of paedophilia and the question on disorder or sexual orientation. Blanchard (2009, 2010) takes a closer look on diagnostic criteria and proposes an alternative definition to the one from the DSM. Others approach the topic through a more medicalized lens and also talk about etiology, treatment options and prevalence as for instance Mokros et al. (2012) or Fromberger et al. (2013). Furthermore there are papers regarding research on convicted sex offenders, some of them paedophiles, for example Hartmann (1965). There is also literature on the connection between sexual assault and paedophilia. Kuhle et al. (2013) distinguish

⁵ The majority of the participants could be described as white, middle class males from western societies. None of them were in prison at the time they filled out the questionnaire (Riegel, 2004).

between people who assault as a 'surrogate action' (*Ersatzhandlung*) and actual paedophiles. Others are for instance Beier et al. (2010) or Fromberger et al. (2013). A rather new field of research is the use of the internet. Concerning this topic there is some literature about the online usage of child pornography and the negative consequences for the victims as for example Quayle et al. (2002). Another approach towards researching the medium internet is made by Holt et al. (2010). However in most of the papers and studies about paedophilia 'outsiders' were interviewed about their thoughts on paedophiles or medical trials were conducted but paedophiles themselves were not questioned. In contrast, personal experiences of and accounts by paedophiles themselves were rare in most studies. In a review by Jahnke et al. only three of the eleven regarded studies questioned self-identified people with paedophilia (2013).

Consequently I see a gap in research where the personal insight of paedophiles is concerned. Especially regarding stigma where Jahnke et al. observe a "blind spot on pedophilia" (ibid.: 178) as "despite productive research on stigma and its impact on people's lives in the past 20 years, stigmatization of people with pedophilia has received little attention" (Jahnke et al., 2015: 21). The authors mainly criticize that the research concerning stigma hardly ever concentrates on paedophilia but lays the main focus on other issues as for example homosexuality. Additionally the studies conducted are often not representative in regards of biased participants as well as mostly too small to give generalizable evidence (ibid.). This lack I perceive in the literature brings me to my research question, as mentioned already in the introduction:

'How do self-identifying paedophiles in Germany perceive the stigmatization about their sexual preference?'

Stigmatization of paedophilia in general would have been a topic too extensive so I limited it to one country. With this thesis I hope to contribute to the research on paedophilia by adding an emic perspective on stigmatization by a group of paedophiles obtained mainly over the internet.

3. Theoretical Framework

“We do not suffer under paedophilia but under the negative stigmatization” (Anonymous Informant - survey).

According to Feldmann et al. paedophilia is one of the most stigmatized mental disorders (2007). Characterizations such as Feldmann’s inform my research question. When writing about stigma Goffmans (1963⁶) work is of great relevance. Hence I want to base most of my theoretical framework on it. At first I will explain the concept of stigma. Following I want to take a closer look at internalized stigma. In many cases of paedophilia the surrounding people do not know about the preference of the individual. Thus the stigma may not be evident but it still exist within the person.

3.1 Stigma

Goffman identifies three different kinds of stigma: abominations of the body - various physical deformities (for example scars, cheiloschisis), deviations of individual character (for example mental illness, alcohol addiction, criminal history) and ‘tribal’ stigma that can not only affect the particular person, but can also be passed on to other family members (for example race, nationality) (1986). Stigmata are defined by Goffman as attributes “that makes him [the stranger present before us] different from others in the category of persons available for him to be, and of a less desirable kind – in the extreme, a person who is quite thoroughly bad, or dangerous, or weak” (ibid.: 3). In the Greek origin of the term, stigma was an actual sign on the body, for instance a burn mark, whereas now it is rather the “disgrace itself than [...] bodily evidence of it” (ibid.: 1f). According to Goffman’s understanding of stigma paedophilia could be categorized under ‘deviations of individual character’. However all three kinds of stigma have one common consequence: “an individual who might have been received easily in ordinary social intercourse possesses a trait that can obtrude itself upon attention and turn those of us whom he meets away from him, breaking the claim that his other attributes have on us [...] we and those who do not depart negatively from the particular expectations at issue I shall call the *normals*” (ibid.: 5).

What people view as deviant and what as normal is predetermined in specific settings. This can change when seen in a different context. However it is society who “establishes the means of categorizing persons and the complement of attributes felt to be ordinary and natural for members of each of these categories” (ibid.: 2). Members of the respective society “lean on

⁶ I used the First Touchstone edition from 1986.

these anticipations” and transform them “into normative expectations” (ibid.). In western society mental disorders (Feldmann, 2007) as well as being a member of a sexual minority (Herek et al., 2009) do usually not fall under the attributes that people feel to be ordinary and natural. So regardless of whether paedophilia is seen as one or the other it does not meet the normative expectations of society and is hence stigmatized.

As a result of this deviation “we exercise varieties of discrimination, through which we effectively, if often unthinkingly, reduce his [the stigmatized individuals] life chances” (Goffman, 1986: 5).

3.2 Internalized stigma

Logically one would assume that in order for an individual to be stigmatized their surroundings have to know about the deviating attributes that cause the stigmatization. However this is not necessarily the case. Unlike other stigmas that Goffman calls “visible” or “evident” (ibid.: 48), usually just looking at a person does not tell you much about their sexual preferences. In order to differ between people whose stigmas are clearly visible and whose are not, Goffman implements the terms “the discredited” and “the discreditable” to distinguish between these two kinds of individuals (ibid.: 41). Discreditable individuals, who show visible signs of deviance are the focus in Goffman’s book. With a discredited person on the other hand the “differentness is not immediately apparent” (ibid.: 42). One of the main problems arising from being a discredited individual is not “that he must face prejudice against himself, but rather that he must face unwitting acceptance of himself by individuals who are prejudiced against persons of the kind he can be revealed to be” (ibid.: 42f). When ‘normal’ people are present the person with the deviating attribute is “likely to reinforce this split between self-demands and self, but in fact self-hate and self-derogation can also occur when only he and a mirror are about” (ibid.: 7).

The person possessing the stigma has to decide which course to take when dealing with the stigma. Furthermore he has to stick to it in order to keep it hidden (Jahnke et al., 2013). This is what Goffman refers to as “passing” (Goffman, 1986: 42). So people can feel stigmatized even when society, hence the people around them, do not know about the stigma itself: “[...] not all potentially stigmatizing characteristics are obvious, and some are easier to conceal than others” (ibid.). However the stigmatization still affects this person.

In addition Stöwsandt (1994) makes a distinction within the concept of ‘secret deviance’. ‘Secret’ refers to the fact that only the persons themselves know about the deviation. This is

often the case with paedophilia. There can be two different reasons why the individuals keep their deviation a secret. Either because of preceding self-stigmatization they themselves think that their behavior / feelings are deviant, not 'normal', and thus decide to hide it. Or, they are fine with it but know that others might find it abnormal and hence stigmatizing so they keep the preference a secret to protect themselves.

This self-stigmatization can pose actual danger to an individual. It can for instance prevent paedophiles to seek help because they might be familiar with the attitude of for example professional health care personnel who are as influenced by social stigma as any other person: "[...] a large number of PWP [people with paedophilia] named the expectation to be treated in a stigmatizing way by the professional as one of the primary reasons for their previous reluctance to seek help" (Jahnke et al., 2014: 2).

4. Methods

*“For me the legal contact with children is enough, it gives me so much just to play with them, laugh, learn etc. I don’t need anything beyond that”
(Chat with Lars).*

As stated above I found there is a gap in research in regards to the personal views of paedophiles. The aim of this study is to learn whether paedophiles in Germany perceive societal stigmatization and also how they experience the (internalized) stigma. To pursue this goal, I applied qualitative research. Qualitative research offers the right tools to learn about these individual opinions and experiences as it helps to view the “social world through the eyes of the people that they [qualitative researchers] study” as one “must participate in the mind of another human being [...] to acquire social knowledge” (Bryman, 2008: 385).

For my fieldwork I returned to Germany for twelve weeks. As I wanted an emic perspective to be central in my thesis I naturally needed to get in contact with paedophilic people. I knew about '*Kein Täter werden*' from an article I had read years back so the prevention network was my first contact point. I wrote to all locations and told them about my research ideas. My first plan of participating in group sessions of the therapy and acquiring interview partners there, turned out to be unfeasible. My attendance would have disrupted the guaranteed anonymity and interfered with the work of the therapists. One group however made the suggestion that I could send them questions for the patients to fill out instead. I was thankful for the offer and in the end three groups agreed to hand out questionnaires.

4.1 Questionnaires

I designed a questionnaire with fifteen questions. All except one were open questions which gave informants the opportunity to elaborate. One of the therapists recommended to include hebephilic preferences to match all patients, which I did.

However I was still worried that through this channel I might not get enough data. So I sent the same questionnaire to the platform 'ITP' (*Informationen zum Thema Pädophilie*) where it got passed along to paedophilic users. After having contacted several forums for paedophiles in the internet I turned the questions into an online survey. The link to this survey was posted on one and taken on by three more forums. Looking for informants on the internet proved to be very helpful as “individuals with sexual interests that are considered outside of societal norms are often driven into the virtual world where they may operate in relative anonymity without fear of shame or stigma” (Holt et al., 2010: 4). In the end I received one questionnaire

from 'ITP', four from '*Kein Täter werden*' and seventy over the online survey. In my analysis I will separate between the seventy-one questionnaires gained through the internet and the ones I got back from '*Kein Täter werden*'. These four will be discussed in chapter 8.2 only. The fact that most of my data originates from one source, the forums, could produce partial results. As I will discuss in chapter 5.2 the opinions from users of the forums might contradict those represented by '*Kein Täter werden*'. This has to be kept in mind when regarding the empirical findings in chapter 7.

Attached to every questionnaire was a letter where I explained my project and asked people to contact me (via e-mail) if they were interested in an interview in person, via phone or chat. In regard to content of the questionnaire I tried to create a bigger picture around stigmatization. I started asking about people's own feelings towards their sexual preferences. This included their coming-in, the influence they have on their daily lives and the assessment of their preference in general. Furthermore I wanted to know about possible experiences with outing, and the opinions on paedophilia of people they know. Very important concerning stigma were the questions on whether they felt disadvantaged and discriminated against. Also of interest to me was their valuation of the development of the public opinion concerning paedophilia and their view on the legal situation in Germany.⁷

At first the questionnaire was supposed to be an access into the field, a method with the primary function of making first contact. However the answers proved to be of such rich quality, capable of answering my research question, that they became my main source of data. The questions were often answered very elaborately and offer a nice insight. However there are limitations to this kind of data collection. With the provider I used for the online survey it was not possible to display the questionnaires in the order they were answered but only question by question. Hence I do not know which answers belong together so I cannot reconstruct a complete questionnaire nor trace answers to informants. Linking quotes to persons is impossible thus it made no sense to use pseudonyms for the quotes from the survey. So please note that every quote (recognizable through diverging layout) is a citation from the answers I gained through the online survey. Furthermore all informant quotes are originally German. I translated them into English. This transition has both disadvantages and benefits. I try to translate them as directly as possible but naturally misinterpretation can

⁷ For the complete questionnaire, see annex.

occur when there is no equal term in English. On the other hand the translation helps with the anonymity as a style of phrasing is no longer discernible.

4.2 Direct Contact

In addition to the data from the questionnaire I also wanted to collect narratives through interviews as people tend to share in a more anecdotal style when talking. This way I hoped to deepen the observations on stigma I had made on the questionnaires since stories “offer some fundamental way to make sense of experience” (Mattingly et al., 2000: 10). As Ricoeur notes, human experience is more easily analyzable when interpreting them through the stories people tell (1991). Reflecting on stories of the past helps the narrator coping with current events (Ochs et al., 1996). A narrative with a personal point of view offers more than just a chronology. By adding “human conditions, conduct, beliefs, intentions, and emotions” (ibid.: 26) a sequence of actions turns into a real narrative. The reason for forming a narrative is to give meaning to life problems, explaining how they came to be and what impact they might have on future events. “While narrative does not yield absolute truth, it can transport narrators and audiences to more authentic feelings, beliefs, and actions and ultimately to a more authentic sense of life” (ibid.: 23). Most of my interview partners, especially those I talked to on the phone, used a lot of stories and anecdotes to answer my questions and explain their situation and illustrate their experiences.

In total, twenty-four people contacted me after having received my letter and questionnaire. Some offered to speak to me and answer further questions, others just had questions themselves about my project. In the end I met one informant in person, had three chat interviews and six over the phone. Additionally I corresponded with six persons via e-mail. The interviews took between forty-five minutes to two hours. My interview partners were between their early twenties to mid-seventies and all German-speaking.

At the beginning of each interview I asked whether informants wanted to tell me a little bit about themselves. Some just told me their age, maybe where they worked and relationship status. The majority however dove right into stories about their lives in relation to their sexual preference. Several of my questions were answered before I even raised them. Basically I asked similar questions to the ones in the questionnaire but I went more into detail. Additionally I had some further questions. Sometimes I just got short direct answers. This was especially the case with the interviews conducted via chat, which I mainly affiliated to the medium used. Over the phone however the conversations were a mix between narrative

features and lay expertise. The interviews did not necessarily provide me with new information nonetheless they presented a more in-depth inside and anecdotes that made the matter for me way more imaginable.

4.3 Interviews with Professionals

As mentioned above, three of the '*Kein Täter werden*' groups offered to help me with my research. I was able to schedule interviews with therapists of two of them. With one, Ms. Schmitt, I conducted an interview over the phone, the other one, Ms. Green, I met in person. The meeting took place at the same house where the therapy group sessions happen. Also present were four other students interested in paedophilia. This was quite helpful as we were able to have a small discussion about the topic after Ms. Green had given us a presentation on her work.

Besides wanting to know about the work they do within the therapy groups, I also asked them to evaluate the stigmatizing environment. Not only concerning their patients, but also themselves in regards to the job they are carrying on.

Furthermore I met with the head of the sexual assault ward of the forensics department of a hospital in Munich, Ms. Munch. Again another student took part who is writing her Bachelor thesis on paedophilia. Even though the themes Ms. Munch and her colleagues are concerned about in the secure unit do not really match my topic, it was very interesting to get an inside look into the work of forensic psychologists.

5. Reflexivity

“Stupid question! Seriously, who comes up with such stupid questions?”

(Anonymous Informant - survey).

vs.

“I find that the questions are fair and unbiased”

(Comment in one of the internet forums).

In this chapter I want to discuss my experiences while working on this thesis. I got interested in the topic of paedophilia when I browsed an issue (06/2006) of the German ‘Neon’ magazine. I got stuck on an article about Marco, a man with paedophilic preferences. A reporter had accompanied him and covered how he went to therapy (at ‘Kein Täter werden’). For the first time the term paedophilia had a face, Marco’s face, which looked different than what I had associated with paedophilia so far. Thus I became interested in learning more about it. So when we had to come up with possible subjects for our thesis during the Master’s program of Medical Anthropology and Sociology at the University of Amsterdam I remembered this article and suggested to write about paedophilia. At first I was not sure whether it would fit the program as to me it was unclear whether paedophilia qualifies as a medical issue or a sexuality. Nevertheless the topic was accepted and I started to plan my fieldwork.

5.1 Emotional experience

When I decided to write about paedophilia I did not really expect it to affect me much. This was probably a bit naïve as I knew I would be dealing with a deeply stigmatized group of people; after all this was my research question. What hit me quite hard was especially the one interview I conducted in person. Karl, the young man I met, had contacted me after he had filled out my questionnaire and offered to answer further questions. At first we had planned to meet in the center of Munich where we could take a walk without anyone overhearing our conversation. However we had to change our plans as on that day hurricane Niklas hit the Greater Munich area. Public transport in Munich was almost entirely cancelled and there was no way for me to get into the city. In the end we decided to meet in a café in the small town outside of Munich where I stayed. Karl had a car so for him it was possible to get there. That meant a detour of almost 200 km but he was eager to talk to me. When we met he told me that he saw the thunderstorm as a sign for the things he was going to talk to me about. A café was of course not the ideal venue for a topic like that but luckily it was quite loud in there so we could not be overheard. Nevertheless we both automatically avoided the term paedophilia

during our conversation. What made this interview so hard for me was the fact that Karl was so obviously suffering from having paedophilic preferences. He is an intelligent man who reflects a lot about his life and his situation which, as he said, makes it even harder for him to deal with his paedophilia.

Karl reached the point where he decided to go to therapy when his friends started to have children. He said to himself, I now have a couple of years before I might be attracted to them, in these years I want to learn to handle my preferences and overcome them as far as possible. He told me about his plans to get a new computer in order to make a fresh start without consuming any kind of legal or illegal material relating to paedophilia. He had already gotten a new phone on which he showed me his screensaver that read 'Stop'. This was supposed to keep him from accessing any material over the phone. So far, it had worked. Of course he will not be able to get rid of his feelings entirely, but he had big plans for the future. Once he will have gotten rid of everything concerning paedophilia that might be traced back to him, he wants to migrate to the USA and make fresh start.

These plans for the future sounded good and Karl thinks that he will achieve them one day but right now his life sounded extremely tough. He told me about his everyday struggle, the insomnia, the fear of being discovered, the anxiety of maybe never being able to live a happy fulfilled life, the attempts to get it out of his system... When we reached the point where he tells me about his suicide attempts I just wished I was at home so I could finally cry. There was this guy sitting across the table from me who wanted to do everything right, with no bad intentions who was simply hating himself for who he was, or as he called it for *what* he was. This conversation burdened me quite a while and made me second-guess my choice of topic and whether I would be able to handle it. I knew I had chosen a sensitive topic but I did not expect that it would affect me so deeply. As a consequence of this interview I did not want to meet other interview partners in person. Not because I was scared of the people themselves, everyone I talked to was very pleasant, but because I was afraid that I could not cope with another encounter like that. Hence all further interviews were conducted over the phone or via chat. I suppose that most informants preferred it this way as well but I did not even offer a face to face conversation any more. This might have cost me deeper insight. Especially as my concerns turned out to be a bit unnecessary. The meeting with Karl was one of the first interviews I conducted and my following interlocutors had a far more positive attitude and

perspective on their situation. These far more positive conversations helped me a lot to carry on with my research.

5.2 Agendas

What also stressed me was the balance between the different stakeholders I was in contact with during my research. I did not expect to encounter such a variety of agendas in the field. Mainly two problems occurred.

The first one was in big parts my own mistake. The provider I used for my online survey offered the possibility to share a link which displays all answers given. The answers were sorted by questions, not by questionnaires, but later on I was informed that it was possible to retrace which answers belonged together if you knew your own. This means an entire questionnaire could be pieced together again. When the survey was terminated, the editor of one of the forums, where it had been shared, Mr. Berger, asked me to send him this link so he could post it on his site. At first I was in doubt whether this would violate the anonymity of the participants. Mr. Berger however assured me that this was not the case and when I had checked that no identifying information was in the answers I shared the link with him and also send it to the editor of another forum, Mr. Weiss, I had been in contact with. Mr. Weiss was outraged by the release of the link. He complained to me as well as to my supervisor. When I saw his e-mail I immediately disabled the link. This did not please Mr. Berger. After a few days of discussion I turned to the university for guidance. The ethical board advised me against sharing the data in its raw form. I welcomed this decision because it guaranteed the complete anonymity of all participants.

The second problem occurred a week later when one of the *'Kein Täter werden'* groups I was in contact with learned that I had acquired participants for my survey over Mr. Berger's forum. I had not shared this fact because I was unaware that this might be a problem. Nevertheless when they found out Ms. Brandt and Ms. Schmitt, who I had already conducted an interview with, wrote me an e-mail saying they were not willing to work with me anymore. It had nothing to do with the issue on sharing the link to the data. They based their decision on wanting to distance themselves from this forum in general as they represent different points of view. Furthermore they stated that the "claim of scientific research cannot be accomplished when data is being recruited from a non-independent / non -neutral pool of persons". In turn some of the participants from the forums had something to say about *'Kein Täter werden'*, for

example “[...] that all paedophiles are potential child molesters like the idiotic project ‘Kein Täter werden’ suggests”.

As far as I can assess the situation one of the main differences seem to be the opinions regarding the potential threat of a paedophile and whether or not consensual acts between children and adults should be legal. Also within the forums, there seems to be different views on this issue.

5.3 Ethical considerations

The most important ethical issue is protecting the informants in this study. During my entire research and thesis I abided by the ethical principles outlined by the American Anthropological Association (AAA). In keeping with these principles, all names used in this thesis are pseudonyms. Furthermore I informed everyone who talked to me or filled out my questionnaire beforehand about who I was and for what purpose I wanted the information (informed consent). Prior to answering my questions some informants asked me further questions about the project and my motivation. The informants were also aware that everything they shared with me could get cited in my thesis, but without the mentioning of names or background information (age, profession etc.), so completely anonymously. Those who were willing to be interviewed could decide between an anonymous chat or a conversation over the phone.⁸

Besides attempting to provide an optimal ethical frame for the informants I also reflected on my position in this field of research. According to Hardon et al. there are three different modes of engagement an anthropologist can choose from when deciding how to approach a certain topic and how to study it (Hardon et al., 2014). Probably used most often is ‘subaltern alignment’, where anthropologists study a group, frequently a minority, that has little power and try to give them a voice (ibid.). This describes quite well what I wanted to do. I am aware that I will most likely not be able to make a significant difference in the lives of the people who struggle with stigma regarding their sexual preferences. But even achieving a little difference is already a reason to try.

⁸ Informants could call me and thus block their own number. Furthermore I deleted all numbers I received for those I called after the interviews, in order to guarantee their anonymity.

6. Situation in Germany

“There was hardly a time when this preference was more stigmatized than today” (Anonymous Informant - survey).

6.1 History and legal circumstances of paedophilia

To start this chapter on the history and legal changes in Germany concerning paedophilia, I want to talk about the concept of the child. If there were no children then there would be no paedophilia. According to Ariès et al. in a European setting the concept of child did not yet exist in the Middle Ages. Back in that time, as soon as a child was not dependent on its mother or wet nurse anymore, it was considered part of the community or so to say an adult. A child younger than that did not really count, a notion upheld well into the 17th century (Ariès et al. 1976). Thus “there were no ‘children’ [...] as there are today” (Killias, 1990: 43). In the 18th century a transformation can be observed. Children start to get more and more attention and an interest in their psychological behavior arises as well as a striving to discipline them (Bühler, 2012). This fits better with the image of children we have today. They are human beings who have to be educated and mature before they can enter the world of the adults. In the German law for protection of children and youth⁹ (*Jugendschutzgesetz*) children are defined as “persons who are not yet fourteen years old” (JuSchG §1, translated by author)¹⁰. The UN makes no distinction between childhood and adolescence when defining children. Here, a human is a child as long as he or she is under eighteen years old (UN-Kinderrechtskonvention, 1992). As a result of diverging definitions in various (legal) contexts the boundaries between child, adolescent and adult are inconsistent. As I am concentrating this thesis on Germany however, I will use the definition stated by German law.

But even if the concept of the child did not exist, paedophilic preferences can be dated back a long time. Percy (1998) describes the forms of paedophilia, or more precisely pederasty, which refers exclusively to a sexual relation between a man and a *male* child or adolescent, in different Indo-European tribes (e.g. Teutonic, Celtic, Germanic). In most tribes there seem to have been occurrences of pederastic actions but there is few written evidence. An exception are the Celts: “Greek and Latin sources proffer more evidence about Celtic pederasty than about that of any other early Indo-Europeans [...] the Celts also, though they have very

⁹ All German laws are accessible online: <http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/> [accessed on 06.06.2015].

¹⁰ The predecessor of the *Jugendschutzgesetz* (JuSchG), the *Gesetz zum Schutze der Jugend in der Öffentlichkeit* (JÖSchG), was issued in 1951. In 2003 it was modified to what is now the JuSchG. The definition of the child did not change over the years.

beautiful women, enjoy boys more” (ibid.: 18). By examining art, literature and archeological sources the existence of pederasty in Greece is quite easily traceable. Scanlon argues that pederasty started openly in Sparta around the seventh century BC and spread rapidly to the other Greek states (2005). According to Percy the boys with whom grownup men had sexual relations were usually not younger than ten, rather twelve and older (1998). But even though these connections were always between two males, I want to argue with Lear et al. (2009) that these forms of sexual relations cannot be just categorized under the label of homosexuality as they consisted of a couple where “only one person (the adult) experienced desire and sexual pleasure and the other (the boy) was merely the object of it” (ibid.,: 2). Besides sexual pleasure for the adult, this kind of relationship also served as an educational system. “[...] Plato portrays Socrates as the ultimate pederast who uses his erotic feelings for his followers to add energy to the educational process” (Ungaretti, 1978: 292). The adult was responsible to make a valuable citizen out of his lover so “the love of boys was not persecuted but fostered” (ibid.).

Despite the fact that some forms of paedophilia have definitely existed early on, it is quite hard to trace them throughout the entire history as for example in medieval Europe. In this era, as described above, there was no actual distinction between child and adult. Girls often got married at the age of twelve and boys at fourteen, in aristocratic circles even earlier. Legally there was no minimum age for getting married (Killias, 1990). Usually the man was significantly older than his wife-to-be (Goetz, 1994). Viewed by modern standards this could already be described as paedophilia.

But even though sexual desires towards prepubescent children have existed for a long time, the way paedophilia is seen today is a “Western invention of the late nineteenth century” (Angelides, 2005: 272). When paedophilia is seen as a form of sexuality, Foucault’s concept about the invention of sexual tendencies fits well. Foucault claims that actual conceptions of these tendencies have not existed outside of society before and hence are always a result of social construction. It wasn’t until the nineteenth century that the concepts of homosexuality and heterosexuality were created by social scientists, biologists and psychologists. A sexual identity, at least in Western society, is a construct reflected by sexual behavior. This transformation in thinking went along with the rise of psychology in the early twentieth century (Hippe, 2011, Katz, 1995). For quite a while paedophilia was acknowledged as existing but sexologists were concentrated more on what gender an individual found sexually

attractive, than what age group (Angelides, 2005). However this has changed over the past decades: “The discourses of paedophilia and sexuality have undergone profound transformations, and it is the axis of age, and the distinction between child and adult sexuality, that is of utmost social, community and parental interest and concern” (ibid.,: 273).

From a legal perspective there was no prohibition of paedophilic sexual acts in Germany before 1800 (Killias, 1990). When in the nineteenth century, as described above, the concept of child emerged, the legal framework also started to change. The age of sexual consent and for marriage were legislated. As sexuality was officially seen for the purpose of reproduction, children were seen as too immature to have sexual relations. The assumption that they were too immature made it “easier [...] for society in cases of illegal sexual activities to shift the blame onto the adult or older partner exclusive[ly]” (ibid.: 44).

The right to sexuality is not specifically mentioned in the German constitution, declared in 1949. However in article 2 it is stated that “everyone has the right to free development of his personality” as long as “he does not violate the rights of others” (Deutscher Bundestag, 2014, translated by author). This can be applied to sexuality as well. The rights children have in order to protect them from sexual assault are written down more clearly in the §§ 174, 176, 176a, 176b, 184b StGB (*‘Strafgesetzbuch’* ≈ German penal code). The age of sexual consent in Germany is fourteen¹¹. Children are not allowed to have sex at all, or better said the sexual partner over fourteen is liable to prosecution according to §176 StGB¹². Furthermore it is prohibited to “spread, [...] produce, obtain [...]” child pornography (§184b StGB, translated by author). Furthermore on November 14th 2014 the German government passed a new law concerning sexual offences (Bundestag, 2014) that became effective in January 2015. This improved *‘Sexualstrafrecht’* extends, besides others, the already existing article §201a *‘Verletzung des höchstpersönlichen Lebensbereichs durch Bildaufnahmen’* (≈Violation of the personal life sphere by image capture) of the *Strafgesetzbuch*. It is now illegal to take naked pictures of children and adolescents with the aim of selling or trading them. Preceding this new law there had been quite a debate in parliament about the restrictions of it. The version now passed is a mitigated form of what was originally planned. The new law is supposed to provide more safety for children and adolescents to protect them and their privacy. It is supposed to close a loophole in German legislation that former politician Edathy used to

¹¹ There are exceptions where the age of consent is 16 or even 18 but these concern only situations where plight and/or compensation for sexual acts play a role (§182 StGB).

¹² The law has existed in this form since 1973.

defend himself. The pictures he owned had not been defined as child pornography before. To sum up, according to the German law, *being* a paedophile per se is not forbidden. But, in order to protect children, *practicing* most paedophilic activities is forbidden.

In the 1980's a German political party tried to change the general interdiction of paedophilic activities. The first party program of the 'Grünen' in 1980 contained a sub item called '*Gegen die Diskriminierung von sexuellen Außenseitern*' (≈ against the discrimination against sexual outsiders). Amongst other things the 'Grünen' demanded that the §§ 174 and 176 StGB are to be changed so that "in cases of sexual acts only application or threat of violence or abuse in a relationship of dependence are to be punishable" (Die Grünen, 1980: 39, translated by author). If this demand had come through, consensual sexual acts between children and adults would have been legal. In some interpretations even non-consensual acts if they were not performed under violence or the threat of violence (Müller et al., 2013). This amendment however never happened. When a debate about this issue arose in 2013 politicians of the 'Grünen' party called their statements back then "totally unacceptable" (Zeit Online, 2013, translated by author) and were distancing themselves from the idea (ibid.).

6.2 Public opinion

Today probably no politician in Germany would mention the idea of legalizing paedophilic actions. On the contrary, some of the above mentioned paragraphs in the StGB have instead been tightened over the last years (e.g. §201a StGB). A lot of people in Germany have a very negative opinion of paedophiles. "[P]edophilia [...] is among the disorders that provoke the greatest discrimination in the form of increased social distance, that is, the desire to reject stigmatized people at different levels of personal contact" (Jahnke et al., 2014: 1). This assumption is also embedded in my research question where I start from the premise that paedophiles are being stigmatized. I myself have experienced it as well when I told others about my field of research. In order to support this claim, I want to present a few examples to illustrate this negative view. These are only samples and not an all-encompassing analysis of the entire social discourse in Germany; over the internet only some of the views people have can be observed.

I have chosen to present four brief examples from different sources of media where negative public views concerning paedophilia is visible: comments made on an online newspaper article, a post on the social network Facebook, blog entries discussing paedophilic internet forums and a small poll conducted by a tv magazine. The comment section on an article about

the kindergarten teacher who outed himself to his employers contained remarks such as “Impossible! Sterilize!”, “A paedo-pig in the epicenter of his lust and desire...”, “The thought, that my little granddaughter, who only speaks a few words, is being exposed to such a man, who changes her diapers, terrifies me. Apparently it wasn’t a good idea after all to educate male kindergarten teachers!” (Süddeutsche Zeitung, 2015, translated by author). When the scandal about Politician Edathy was in the news, it caused quite some traffic on Facebook. For example a part of one post reads: “The entire day I thought about what to write about the sentence in the case Edathy.....!?!?! Now I know: I hope that this perverted bastard gets spat at everywhere on this planet and that stones are thrown at him.....!!! Instead of having balls and admit to himself [...] that he is a mentally sick man [...] he makes excuses like a cowardly, disgusting filthy paedophile and he will do it again and again!! [...] In what kind of a sick, disgusting world are we living in??? [...]” (Leyk, 2015, translated by author). On a blog there was a thread about two forums for paedophiles, the girllover and the boylover forum. The opinion was unambiguous: why is this allowed in Germany? “Did you guys knew about this? I am totally shocked! This site is completely legal. Look at it, everyone should know that something like this exists in Germany. What do you think about it? Every horror movie is being censored – why is such a forum allowed?” (Hexxenzauber, 2011, translated by author). Even though, as the blogger says so himself, the forum is legal, he and the other commenters are indignant about its existence. Furthermore in a short video of the tv show ‘Mittagsmagazin’ a couple of people in the street were asked about their opinion on paedophiles. One man says that they should “all be shot. Let me be honest with you: that is the biggest disgrace” (Mittagsmagazin, 2014, 00:34 min., translated by author). These examples have given a brief overview on the presumed negative opinion Germans seem to have of paedophiles¹³.

As mentioned previously, the main reason why many Germans have such a bad opinion of paedophiles might be because they conflate them with sex offenders. An article on DasErste.de reaches the same conclusion: “The perception in society is: Someone, who is paedophilic, inevitably abuses children” (Das Erste, 2014). The abuse of children does not only include personal contact but also consumption of child pornography etc. As seen in the case of Edathy the possession of nude pictures is enough for societal stigmatization.

¹³ In order to ultimately proof this assumption, a profound analysis of the public opinion on paedophilia would be necessary.

However, more and more online newspaper/magazine articles are trying to paint a more nuanced picture of paedophilia. Especially the project *'Kein Täter werden'* seems to have provided more factual information as it is mentioned in many articles (e.g. Fries et al., 2014; Pfister et al., 2014; Perkuhn, 2011). And not only the journalists but also the readers commenting on articles such as these seem to approach a level of understanding. This can be seen for example by a comment made on an article again on the Edathy scandal with quotes from *'Kein Täter werden'* co-founder Dr. Beier. Among very critical remarks there are also more objective ones: "Paedophilia is like sinistrality (supposedly) inherent. It is unfortunate when one can't live out his sexuality, but it's possible!!! Of course children must never be harmed!" (Spiegel Online, 2014, translated by author).

Nevertheless, one opinion appears to dominate: that paedophiles should keep away from children. This can be illustrated by a small conversation again in the comments made on the newspaper article about the paedophile who used to work at a kindergarten. "He can't help that he has these preferences and I respect him for outing him despite of the imminent exclusion from society. But I also think that a paedophile has no business working with children. That's like employing a dry alcoholic in a schnaps distillery." Another commenter answered: "The way I understood it, he lost his job!" And then a third replied: "He did and that's good! But he shouldn't be excluded and persecuted! I hope that the man will find a job that has nothing to do with children and from which he can make a good living :)" (Süddeutsche Zeitung, 2015, translated by author).

Later on in chapter 7.4 I will analyze the experiences paedophiles themselves have made with the public discourse in Germany.

7. Empirical Results and Discussion

“I have made the experience that it makes more sense not to utter the term paedophilic when coming out to someone. To fall in love with children or feeling attracted to them are nice paraphrases which describe the essence of paedophilia much better than the term paedophilia“ (Chat with Sven).

In this following chapter I will present the results from my empirical research. The data and quotes used in this chapter are solely from the ca. seventy informants who replied to the online survey. Originally the quotes were all in German, I translated these. For more comprehensibility they are in a different layout than the rest of the text. The answers from the four questionnaires I got back from “*Kein Täter werden*” will be addressed in chapter 8.2. From the collected data I have identified five different key themes which are all relatable to stigma. These are:

- self-assessment (how do they themselves define their preferences, what language do they use regarding paedophilia, what was their course of action after their coming-in, how do they adhere to their paedophilia),
- paedophilia in everyday life (how big is the role that the sexual preferences play in their daily lives, in what way do they feel discriminated against and disadvantaged compared to others, what role do actual children play in their lives),
- coming out (what expectations do they have of coming out to others, what experiences have they made already),
- experiences with society’s opinions regarding paedophilia (how do acquaintances view the topic, what does the public think about paedophilia, how do they learn this information) and finally
- views on the legal framework in Germany (changes in Germany in the past decades, reactions to the new law passed in November 2014).

In the following I will elaborate on these key themes. Afterwards I will conclusively analyze in chapter 7.6 how the key themes indicate a stigmatization towards paedophiles.

7.1 Self-assessment

To answer my research question it was necessary to learn about the personal view of paedophiles themselves regarding their sexual preferences. This included how they define their paedophilia, what terms they use to paraphrase it and how they have experienced discovering their sexual preference.

7.1.1 Defining paedophilia

For a closer definition of paedophilia ‘How do you define your sexual preference?’ was the third question I posed in the survey. The participants could choose between three default answers: disorder/sexual orientation/other. When clicking on ‘other’ they had the option to elaborate on that. Two people checked the box on ‘mental disorder’, fifty-two choose ‘sexual orientation’ and twenty-one clicked on ‘other’ and wrote a further explanation. In these explanations the informants showed very diverse opinions. Dominating with over fifteen voices is the notion that having paedophilic preferences is a positive thing. A *“gift to feel a love for little humans that non-paedophiles don’t have”*. It is regarded by six more as a sexual orientation as *“normal as hetero- or homosexuality between adults”*. And mentioned five times is the fact that paedophilia is inherent, not a disease and therefore cannot be changed or healed. Others relativize this a bit. They say, yes it is inherent, but it should not be acted upon. *“Inherent, not chosen and hence not damnable, as long as it is not practiced.”* Another informant makes a distinction referring to the DSM-V: *“The preference is only a disorder when acted on or when there is suffering or inter-personal problems appear. This is not the case for me”*.

Next to the two people who answered ‘mental disorder’ there are a few comments that suggests similar views. For example *“childhood trauma”* or *“development disorder”*, but these are an exception of two from twenty-one. So the majority of informants view their preferences positively, as God-given and normal.

7.1.2 Use of language

Interesting to look at are choices of language paedophiles as a group make. When looking at the definition Anspach (1979) established one could argue that paedophiles as a group participate in identity policy. She describes identity policies as social movements that “may have strong instrumental components, insofar as they seek to effect changes in public policy, they consciously endeavor to alter both the self-concepts and societal conceptions of their participants” (1979: 766). In the case of paedophilia the identity politics can be combined with symbolic politics. These are “not concerned with actual changing of behavior, but rather seek institutional affirmation for their values, life styles, and normative standards of conduct” (ibid.). One of the problems in identity policy regarding paedophilia is being addressed in a review on identity politics by Bernstein (2005). Paedophiles are not a homogenous group where everyone has the same opinion, let alone the same agenda as I have illustrated in chapter 5. Bernstein states that “because identity groups tend to splinter into ever more

narrow categories, they cannot agree on or sustain anything but opposition to a common enemy" (2005: 51).

However it is observable that the informants use certain types of language. Language is "of paramount importance" (Anspach, 1979: 773). In regards to sex and gender, Butler states that "[l]anguage ranks among the concrete and contingent practices and institutions maintained by the choices of individuals" (1999: 35). During my research it was interesting to witness how informants communicated about important issues. Especially considering the labels they use for themselves. Some researchers have reported that particularly in internet forums terms such as MAA (minor-attracted adult) or boy lover and girl lover (Holt et al., 2010; Durkin et al., 1999) are more common than the term paedophile. After my own research I can attest that the informants also use boy- and girllover, which are also the names of internet forums. I have not encountered the expression MAA but that is probably owed to the fact that my entire research was conducted in German. The term paedophile is often seen as carrying a negative connotation (Holt et al., 2010: 8). One informant wrote: *"There [on the forum] I was offered the self-imposed term Boylover. At that time it would have been impossible for me to call myself a paedophile"*. Another term I also came across many times during my research was 'Pädo(s)', an abbreviation for paedophile(s). In the survey the term was used over twenty times. Supposedly it has a nicer and less medicalized ring to it. Another term used several times was paedosexual. Some informants used it interchangeably with paedophile, but others made a clear distinction between the two expressions: *"[...] someone who is paedophilic is gratuitous regarded as a paedosexual. However not every paedophile is a sexual assaulter."* According to the definition of the 'Kein Täter werden' homepage paedophile is just the sexual orientation while paedosexual describes actual sexual acts on children (Kein Täter werden, 2010). But from the way most informants employ the term paedosexual I got the impression that it is mostly used synonymously to paedophilic. The DSM definition, too makes no distinction.

Some did not like the expression 'sexual preferences' I used in the questions: *"I oppose against the term 'sexual preferences' because it implies certain sexual practices [...] it implies that I find it hot to fuck children [...] a degradation of a child to an object. But this is nonsense!"* However in spite of other terms such as boy-/girllover being used, none informants of either questionnaire or interviews seemed to be offended by being addressed as paedophiles.

7.1.3 Coming in

The first question in the questionnaire was on the experiences of discovering the preference: ‘How did you react when you realized you had paedophilic/hebephilic preferences?’ Fourteen informants corrected the question, writing that a coming in is not a situation or event but a process that can stretch over time. From those who state an age it ranged between five to twenty-six years, but on average the process happened during the teen years/puberty.

Most informants reported mixed feelings. At first shock seems to be a common reaction together with disbelief. *“I paced back and forth in my room at my parents’ house and couldn’t believe that I am one of ‘those’ people.”* A lot of times the shock was followed by acceptance. However it took some participants years to reach a place of acceptance: *“At first I completely suppressed my preferences. I was aware that children were featured in my masturbation fantasy but I didn’t reflect on that for years. Later on I dealt with it at length, accepted the preference as part of my personality.”*

For some the negative feelings did not stop at shock or disbelief. *“Shame”, “self-loathing”, “self-disgust”* or *“suicidal thoughts”* were also mentioned. A big factor that played a part with these feelings was the fear of being discovered. It seemed inevitable that those feelings had to be *“kept a secret”*. The reasons for keeping one’s paedophilic preferences secret were fear of the society and being viewed as a member of an outlawed group. *“Coming along with this state of shock was the anxiety of an unwanted outing. This would be equivalent to a social death sentence.”* Going along with the awareness is also the discovery that this will probably have consequences on the entire life. *“Since then I know that I have a hard life ahead of me with lots of responsibilities [...] I will never be a part of the society but always a misfit.”*

Some rather welcomed the realization as it explained things about themselves they had not understood before: *“My coming-in contributed to answering many questions I couldn’t answer myself for a long time.”*

What was astonishing is the fact that for many informants the main problem was their own ideas about paedophiles. Before linking the term to their own feelings they had associated it with what they had learned from the media over time. *“I was supposed to be a paedophile?! At that time to me that term was synonymous to child rapist or potential child rapist.”* Thus it were often not the feelings themselves that troubled the informants but the societal ideas they perceived on these feelings.

7.1.4 Handling paedophilia

The focus in this following segment lies on informants' dealing with the paedophilic preferences. To find out about this I asked in the survey: 'How do you adhere to your sexual preference?' There were participants who have their difficulties with it. Four out of seventy respondents prefer to not be paedophilic: *"Basically I regret my preference and search the reason why nature made me the way I am." "I find it burdening and would like to be rid of it."* In contrast, the overwhelming majority expressed positive feelings towards paedophilia. Some people are *"proud"* of the way they feel, are *"at peace"* with it or have at least *"accepted"* paedophilia. Fourteen informants state that they would not want to miss it: *"I am very happy about it [...] I could not imagine having another sexual preference than paedophilia." "I wouldn't want to miss it."*

But again the majority of the negative sides mentioned came back to the position of society. *"I just suffer because society condemns persons with paedophilic preferences so much."* The explanation informants have for this condemnation is the conflation of paedophiles with people who sexually abuse children. *"It burdens me enormously that the public considers paedophiles like myself as a permanent threat."* In their answers informants affirm again and again that this is not the case. *"I have never and will never cause harm to a child in any way."* Another issue that makes it quite hard to deal with paedophilia is the (legal) impossibility to act on it. The majority reports that they have accepted the fact that they cannot live out their phantasies. In some cases this requires a certain degree of self-control and responsibility. *"I live out my sexual phantasies in my imagination only. I do not watch child pornography and I do not have sexual contact with children."* Partially this decision has juridical reasons, *"[...] unfortunately it is lawfully forbidden"*, partially it is viewed harmful for children *"I have no sexual contact with children and respect their boundaries [...] I feel that the risk of a secondary damage for the child is too high."*

Overall most informants adhere positively to their paedophilia but perceive many limits and restrictions that go along with it.

7.2 Paedophilia in everyday life

Next I explore how the sexual preferences affect the daily routine of the informants. This also includes whether or not they feel discriminated against in everyday life and what role children play in it.

7.2.1 Influence on the daily routine

Answering the question ‘How much do the sexual preferences influence your daily life?’ thirty-three informants stated that paedophilia does not affect their everyday life very much or at least not anymore. One wrote it *“hardly influences my everyday life. I pursue my job, I pursue my hobbies without having yearnings or anything like that. Basically, I have a good grip on life”*. A lot of the answers compared paedophilic preferences to other sexualities. They saw no *“noteworthy difference for this issue to hetero- or homosexual people”* and *“sleep, eat and work like everyone else”*.

Several reported that the preference mainly occurs in (masturbation-) phantasies. *“I like looking at pictures of attractive boys. They don’t have to be naked. A handsome face is enough.”* Pictures or phantasies are being used for *“daily masturbation”*. The phantasies also include impressions received throughout the day.

About twenty-seven informants claimed that paedophilia influences their daily routine quite a lot. This included for instance the choice of profession which can develop in different directions. For example by *“orientating my education towards working with children”* or else *“adjusting my private and my work life on distancing myself [from children]”*. And not only the job but also other events get arranged in order to comply with the preference. *“When my timetable allows it, I choose the same train that the children take to school [...] I hope to meet the girls that I am in contact with occasionally”*. Sometimes paedophilia can have a huge impact on the profession. Over twenty years ago one informant, a teacher, had gotten two years on probation. In succession he was not allowed to work in his job anymore even though he *“never did anything wrong at [his] place of work”*. Some occupy themselves with a more ‘theoretical’ side of paedophilia by helping out others as consultants or reading up on the topic: *“Given the fact that I engage in self-help for paedophiles [...] the preference affects my everyday life substantially. I am in daily contact with other paedophiles and help them or inform myself on the issue.”*

Many informants are very much affected by their preference. This ranges from *“every day, in every situation”* over *“more than I would wish for”* to *“massively! My whole life doesn’t work out because of this”*. The negative consequences are manifold. It starts with social isolation, a *“role as an outsider”*, continues with the often unrealizable *“wish to be a parent”* and every so often with a constant *“fear. Everyday. Without doing something illegal. Just because of my innate preference”*.

Those participants who are influenced by paedophilia in everyday life and those who are not so much, almost balance each other. For almost half of them not only thoughts but also living conditions are being adjusted to it.

7.2.2 Discrimination

What in most cases certainly does affect the everyday life is whether or not one feels disadvantaged or discriminated against because of paedophilic preferences. On my questions about these issues – ‘Do you feel disadvantaged towards others because of your sexual preference?’ and ‘Do you feel discriminated against because of your sexual preference?’ - there was broad consensus. When asked about disadvantages more than half informants stated that the disadvantages do not lie in the *“paedophilia itself but in the stigmatization and demonization of our [...] society”*. The disadvantages consist of *“not being able to take in part in typical ‘men’ conversations”, “not being able to build a normal family life”, “the sheer impossibility of living in a satisfying sexual relationship”...*

Some informants wrote that they feel only discriminated against when others know about their paedophilia. Many differentiated between active and passive discrimination: *“I have never experienced active discrimination against me personally. But as part of the whole Pädö group I already feel discriminated against by the term child abuser.”* This issue is mentioned again and again. The core of most discrimination consists of the assumption paedophile equals child molester:

“Especially the coverage of the media which almost always correlates paedophilia with abuse. When I read phrases like e.g. ‘got convicted because of paedophilia’ I get sick. Such phrases imply that individuals are criminals just because they have a certain preference they cannot help. I ask myself, how a society can be so nasty and mean [...] we don’t suffer from being paedophilic, we suffer from negative stigmatization.”

Some answers conveyed deep resentment and hatred towards society for the way they treat paedophiles: *“I deeply despise [...] this society [...] you can’t even look at a child without being decried as a child fucker.”* But not only do some hate the society, they also claim that society hates them: *„This isn’t discrimination anymore but hate and fascism.”* A further informant stated: *“I don’t feel discriminated against, I am being discriminated against!”* What this may lead to is reported by another: *“The suicide rate amongst paedophiles is massive. The physical problems caused by this prosecution are massive.”*

Almost all informants stated that they feel disadvantaged or discriminated against in one way or the other by society, the public opinion and sometimes the laws.

7.2.3 Role of children

When talking about how paedophilia influences the everyday life it seems interesting to take a look at what role actual children play. As mentioned above several informants reported that they have chosen a profession or hobbies that allows them contact with children on a daily basis: *“Right now I am being educated to become a kindergarten teacher (very successful and totally professional by the way)”*. And this contact is very important to many: *“If the law would prohibit me from having contact with children I would seriously think about ending my life.”* Regular contact helps some to cope with the preference. *“I always try to be in contact with children. But this has NOT the purpose of sexual satisfaction. It is rather that on those days where I encounter girls I feel a lesser urge to masturbate.”*

Moreover in many answers informants gave account on their good connection to children. They are *“extremely good with children”* and children are *“happy in their presence”*. Some even took this to give reason to the fact that paedophilia exists. *“It serves a purpose. It’s the paedophiles who affectionately take care of children if they have problems. In the past this was certainly a natural task to protect the next generation.”*

Apparently informants are most of the time appreciated by the children: *“Children like me. The attention I give them, sincere unfeigned interest and simply the way I am. This liking and being liked makes me very happy. In order to keep this alive I try not to do anything that could be seen as wrong by society or let alone anything that could raise suspicion.”*

In the daily life of most informants children play an important role, for many this contact is vital for their happiness.

7.3 Coming out

In chapter 7.1.3 I have discussed the coming in process where individuals firstly acknowledge their feelings and deal with them. The coming in is often (not always) followed by a coming out where the individuals open up to others about their feelings. This does not mean telling everyone, the public, but is rather an act of self-recognition. The coming out can have very different effects. When the experiences are negative they *“can confirm all the old negative impressions and can put a seal on a previous low self-concept”*. When they are positive however *“the reaction can start to counteract some of the old perceived negative feelings, permitting individuals to begin to accept their sexual feelings and increase their self-esteem”* (Coleman, 2010: 34). During my research it became clear that the expectations participants

had of or before coming out to friends and family often differ from the experiences they actually made with sharing.

7.3.1 Expectations

Question number ten in the online questionnaire asked the participants ‘Which reactions did/do you expect in the case of coming out?’. About 75% of the informants had anticipated negative reactions. They quite often voiced concerns regarding working and living situation. Many informants were afraid that they might lose their jobs and their homes and maybe even have to move to another city. Sometimes their answers were just keywords: *“hate, abandonment, threats, rejection”, “mistrust, abandonment, condemnation, disappointment”, “deprivation of employment, being homeless, entering a life of crime”*. These and similar terms give a sense of what paedophiles fear in case of coming out. Other big concerns are being *“isolated”, being “discriminated against”, being “excluded from society”* and being the *“victim of a witch-hunt”*. Experiencing physical harm was another worry: *“Societal ostracism right up to total social destruction and possibly bodily destruction, if ‘they’ could get what they want.”* A further fear was that already existing contact to children would change. This ranged from prohibition of any contact: *“I am quite sure that they would never let me come close again to my two nieces (to whom I never felt attracted to by the way)”* to being afraid of being monitored all the time. Informants also feared that all their further actions concerning children would be viewed in a totally different light than before the outing: *“My interest in spending time with children is being explained exclusively with sexual motives (social, emotional and amicable needs are not even taken into consideration).”*

Additionally, some informants expected that their sexual preference would become pathologized. They were afraid that people they confided in would urge them to go to therapy: *“...out of fear that I would sexually assault children they would want me to undergo therapy.”* One of the problems arising from pathologization is that people are only perceived in relation to their preference. *“I am being reduced to my sexuality and I am being pathologized.”*

Even though negative expectations like the ones described above prevail, informants also mentioned positive aspects. One wrote that he expected the same understanding that is granted to alcoholics: *“The positive and naïve expectation had been understanding and help and positive support.”* The words *“understanding”, “pity”* and *“support”* came up several times. However the most used term in regards to positive expectations was *“acceptance”*. The hope of positive reactions was most of the time limited to people who knew them better,

friends and family. Still, most informants mentioned the term “*shocked*”. However the shock was usually followed by the friends and family accepting them. Requirements for an outing with a positive outcome are “*good preparation*”, “*enough time and space*” and for some also a certain educational level. “*I think that people with a higher level of education are more open to the issue.*” In general it is important to know the people you are about to come out to in order to receive the reaction you anticipated: “*I was always very cautious about what I informed someone about. I got to know the people for a long time before I opened up to them.*” Among the informants persists a fear of confiding in others despite positive experiences with coming out to people close to them. For many the risk of negative reactions is simply too high.

7.3.2 Experiences

After knowing about the expectations informants had, it is interesting to learn about their actual experiences with coming out so I asked: ‘Did you ever come out to friends or acquaintances? If yes, what experiences did you make?’ From the seventy-one persons who answered the online survey, twenty-five people (so a little over one third) have not come out yet to others, or at least not to other non-paedophilic persons.

For some people negative reactions seemed to be inevitable. In the questionnaires one person simply wrote “*Are you crazy????*” for asking that question. Others stated they did not even try to out themselves because they are so sure of a negative reaction: “*With others, there is no way, as they make disparaging remarks already before they even know...*” Those informants who did out themselves reported reactions such as “*severe rejection*”, “*abandonment*”, “*slander*” etc. Some of the informants even mentioned death threats and the like. “*That would be like the burning of witches in the Middle Ages.*”

Even when friends and family did not drop the outed person, they often showed a lack of understanding and sometimes little interest. “*That’s what it’s like with most acquaintances, only a few really want to know about it.*” The topic is frequently being avoided and remains silent in order to block it out.

Another reaction mentioned several times is that even if people tolerate what they learned about the sexual preferences of the informant they do not accept it. The distinction between ‘tolerating’ and ‘accepting’ is of high importance for at least one of the informants, who states that “*tolerance is not enough*”. Furthermore the informants are advised by people they confided in to seek help, to “*go to a psychologist*” or similar tips.

Furthermore informants are being warned. Those to whom they came out fear that children could be in danger: *“At the beginning my mother was obviously afraid. This got clear in a situation with my cousin (preschool age).”* Or wives are scared that they will always play a second role (sexually) compared to children in the age their husbands find attractive. One informant quoted his wife: *“You don’t need those girls, you’ve got me!!!”* In general, some viewed it as a bad experience when their kin worried too much about them. *“It was a big mistake...because you involve them in your problems. They think about it. They can’t understand it...worry too much.”*

The knowledge about paedophilia has been used against some of the informants. For example one informant’s ex-wife uses paedophilia against him *“regarding the visitation rights of [their] children”*. Additionally it has caused prohibition of contact to children or at least close monitoring and supervision. One informant summarized the arguments against outing very nicely:

“I do not want any person to have such power over me. In case of a fall out with this person, they could use their knowledge against me. From that moment on I would always feel watched when I have contact with a child in front of that person. This would ruin many nice moments for me. Even though I can handle my paedophilia pretty well, the person I would tell might have bigger problems with it. I don’t want to do that to anyone.”

In spite of all the described experiences, outings do not always have drastic consequences. Some informants reported very positive experiences after coming out. These are not as lengthy described as the negative ones but they are the majority in the survey: from forty-six informants that have come out, thirty-one report positive experiences. *“Within family and friends I am completely out in the open. This increases my quality of life considerably compared to others with the same preferences that don’t have this environment.”*

Several participants have experienced that others do not find paedophilia so scary anymore when it concerns someone they actually know. Then it is no longer an abstract term. Especially when people had been wondering about peculiar behavior, which now they have an explanation for, they tend to be very understanding. Some offered to help or just listen when wished for. *“Even though I never felt I needed it, I accepted the offer once in a while just because it feels good to talk about it without the fear of being judged.”*

A very positive effect of coming out is the way it makes one feel when receiving good feedback. *“I outed myself and it felt damn good. Within my family the reactions were positive and a huge weight was lifted off my shoulders. [...] Exactly these conversations made my life worth living.”*

Whether someone comes out or not is their own personal decision. From what I have read and also heard in the interviews positive reactions from close friends and relatives seem to be more frequent than negative ones. Six informants stated that the key is a good preparation. One described it in more detail: *“Most of my experiences were positive especially because I plan every outing in advance. Also, I only come out to people whom I believe to know very well or who should react positively because of their professionalism. The reactions were mostly positive.”*

Forty-six of seventy-one informants have come out to others. The rest did not come out because they fear the aftermath. This might keep them from making positive experiences with coming out as others have reported.

7.4 Perceived societal discourse of survey participants

After having described something about expectations and actual experiences with coming out, I now continue with analyzing how the participants of the survey assess society's opinion on them. This also includes where they learn this information. In the questionnaire I asked separate questions on the views of friends/acquaintances and on the perspective of the public. However as large portions of the answers overlap I will discuss these in one subchapter.

7.4.1 Outsider's opinion of paedophilia

When talking about the opinion of others informants often differentiate between people who know about their preferences and people who do not. Friends to whom they have come out show a *“competent positive stance, due to knowledge and personal experience”* or at least *“careful tolerance with some reservations”*. But there are also some outsiders who are unaware of the preference but are still critical about the *“paedophilia-hysteria”*. In general *“people almost always tend to get more open-minded when an open conversation takes place, because they gradually become aware of their prejudices”*. Nevertheless paedophilia is surrounded by an *“atmosphere of taboo and fear”* that gets *“hardly talked about”*. The fear consists of the *“danger to come under suspicion”* when talking positively about paedophilia. However paedophilia also frequently arouses pity when one *“empathizes with the situation and realizes that it can't be easy”*.

Despite all that, the way the informants perceive it, there are by far more negative opinions on paedophiles and paedophilia. For one thing it is often seen as a *“morbid disorder. It is obligatory that paedophiles should get treatment und they mustn't be in contact with children”*. In addition a lot informants stated that people *“react disgusted”* when a conversation is directed towards paedophilia. Furthermore a widespread believe seems to be

that paedophiles are *“ticking time bombs”* who *“endanger the children”* because they *“without exception abuse helpless children”*. These opinions seem often be grounded in the fact that *“most of them don’t even know what paedophilia is exactly”*. One informant wrote that *“when such harsh words are spoken, I often ask the people who uttered them, what they understand by the term paedophilia. Most of the times this isn’t followed by something smart [...] after thorough explaining the tone mostly turns nicer”*.

Real harsh and often distasteful statements formed the majority of the perceived societal opinions. Again and again informants reported that the public at large would like to see all paedophiles *“locked away”, “castrated”, “put against the wall”* etc. According to the participants the discourse is *“nonreflecting”, “one-dimensional”, “extremely negative”, “discriminating”, “hostile”, “led by prejudices and hatred”* and much more. Repeatedly (ten times) a comparison is drawn to the persecution of the Jews: *“I have already received death threats after an outing [...] the stigmatization of the media takes on characteristics lastly seen with the persecution of Jews.”*

Many more examples could be mentioned here, but as said above, on no other question did the informants agree as much as on the one about the public’s view on paedophilia. No one wrote that the public has a positive view on it. Instead an informant commented: *“I find this question borderline as the answers are so obvious.”*

7.4.2 Gaining knowledge of public’s opinion

Question twelve in the survey asked ‘How do you learn this public opinion?’ This as well can be summarized quite quickly. One of the main sources is the media. This includes *“press, radio, television”* but also fictional *“movies, tv series, talk shows”*. *“Not a tv-series goes by without at least one sexual abuser per season.”* Informants report that it is hard to escape the topic in media: *“Sooner or later there is contribution to this topic on every channel that connects me to the outside world.”* Not only the reports itself but also the *“comments on Facebook, YouTube, online-newspapers”* serve as a mine of information on the public opinion. Especially on social media a lot of comments are being made, very honest one as one informants suspected because they *“feel anonymous”*.

Along with the contributions of different forms of media come statements made by public figures, *“for example the commentary by Til Schweiger¹⁴ concerning the dismissal of the lawsuit in the case Edathy”* or *“reactions of politicians”*. Three informants who have been in

¹⁴ A German actor.

contact with representatives of the authorities also mention *“police, child protective services, courts, doctors”* as sources of public opinion.

In addition there are also the comments made by *“colleagues at work”, “overheard reactions of individuals”, “conversations I listen in on”* or *“picked up in a pub”*. Furthermore some participants mentioned statements by professionals described by one as *“alarming comments by so called ‘experts’”*.

In general positive depictions of paedophilia in the public seem rare: *“For every enlightening contribution there are fifty negative ones. So how should it be possible for the public to get a normal and fair picture? For every case of abuse there should be an enlightening contribution to fight against this problem. You have to tackle the problem at the roots!”*

Paedophilia may not be a daily topic but it is present on all channels one can receive information over. Most of the channels seem to present similar views on paedophilia. In consequence it is hardly possible to escape the public opinion on paedophilia.

7.5 Changes in perception and law

In the previous chapter I have described what participants of the survey reported about the public’s opinion on them. In this section, I discuss whether they perceive that these views have changed over the past decades and how. Furthermore I inquired whether they thought there had been a time in Germany when it was easier to have paedophilic preferences. The last question of the survey referred to the new tightened law on the ‘violation of the personal life sphere by image capture’ that was passed in November 2014 and became effective in January 2015.

7.5.1 Changes of perception

All but four informants agreed that the public opinion on paedophilia deteriorated answering the question ‘To what extent do you think the public opinion has changed over the past decades?’ The starting point of this degradation of paedophiles seems to lie in the *“seizing of the topic by feminism in the 80’s”* when the attention of the public has shifted during the *“Mißbrauchsdebatte”* (≈ debate about child abuse) from the *“discourse of ‘father as offender’ to paedophiles as child abuser”*. Informants report that before being picked up by feminists the issue was *“not a public topic”*; the discussion about it was led only *“among experts”*. However a *“certain openness for discussion”* about paedophilia existed but this has *“consequently worsened since the 90’s”*. Participants also observed this on the basis of changes in law: *“Magazines that could be bought at every kiosk are now punishable with*

imprisonment. “The laws get tightened every few years” which has gone so far that “by now Germany is one of the countries with the strictest laws concerning this matter”.

Nowadays there is no “dialogue any more, no freedom of expression anymore concerning this topic [...] Self-help groups, political demands or let alone reification outside of scientific publications seem hardly possible anymore.” The negative opinion seems to sit so deep that “no one dares to utter even gentle critic” out of fear to be “pulled in”.

Informants see media as the main perpetrator for this persisting negativity: “Thanks to the steadily growing range of media the climate for paedophiles has worsened dramatically. As a result of the exploitation of cases of abuse by tv and newspapers fear is spread even though the numbers of child abuse haven’t changed for decades.” Paired with the fact that “media doesn’t differentiate between paedophiles and violent child abusers” this led to “paedophiles being the most hated social group”.

In general the public opinion has changed “from bad to worse”, “absolutely catastrophic”, “way more negative”, “drastically to the unbearable” and so on. Alone in the answers to this one question sixteen informants described the discourse as a “hysteria” or a “witch hunt”. “By now a paedophile is the central bogeyman next to a terrorist.” Some had hoped that paedophiles could follow in the steps of homosexuals and be accepted someday but “today I see no hope for years to come”. Several explain this with the need of a society to have “a marginalized group they can despise”.

Those few who regarded the public’s opinion more favorably mostly relativize it at the same time. They described the “increasing view that paedophilia is a disease that people haven’t chosen and suffer under”. However this is not necessarily positive as paedophilia thus is “always seen as a disease that needs to be treated”. So paedophiles still are “a ticking time bomb that could lose control at any moment, should be kept away from children and must be in therapy”. Nevertheless “progress has been made to differentiate between the preference and acting on it”.

The four who differed perceive a “certain beginning ability to think”. “Slowly it is being recognized that paedophiles who do not act on their preference can be perceived as equal humans. However it is only a minority of the population that sees it this way.”

The majority of informants is in agreement that in 1960’s, 70’s and 80’s, the time of “sexual revolution”, it was “way easier to live as a paedophile” in Germany before the “outburst of hysteria”.

7.5.2 Views on the §201 a

As described in chapter 5 a tightening of §201a of the StGB took place. The final question I had in the survey was ‘What do you think about the tightened law governing sexual offenses that was passed in November 2014 and became effective in January 2015?’ The majority, fifty of the seventy-one participants, disapproved of it and called it names in the likes of *“total nonsense”* and *“silly”*. Besides some stated that it was *“unconstitutional”* and a *“violation of human rights”* as it does not respect the *“life sphere of citizens”*. In addition many criticized that the *“vague definition”* causes *“legal uncertainty”*. It were not a law but an *“extreme big and vast package”* because of its *“unclear and blurry interpretation”*. As a result several informants do not know anymore *“what is legal and what is prohibited. [...] Could it be that I have already done something illegal without even knowing?”* Furthermore it gets more and more problematic to gain access to legal material as there is hardly any left. The tightening of the law *“takes away the only legal path to damage-free act on the preferences”* for people who *“haven’t got their sexuality under control (paedophiles as well as surrogate actors)”* because now they have *“even less possibilities to release sexual pressure”*.

Other than that many informants thought that the law is nugatory and *“doing more harm than good”*. It will not be *“feasible in practice”*. Many stated that the tightening emerged through *“actionism”* as an aftermath to the *“hysterical overreaction to the case Edathy”*. Instead it will lead to placing *“marginalized groups even more in an offside position”*.

The way the informants interpreted the law, now *“all naked children and adolescents are porn”*. It affects primarily *“people who practice FKK¹⁵ and are not allowed anymore to take pictures of naked children”*. The reform also *“criminalizes innocent acts e.g. postcards with naked babies or the album cover of ‘Nevermind’ by Nirvana”*. In addition three informants wrote that it makes no sense that *“fictional pornographic writing”* or *“comics with pornographic content with children”* are forbidden even though *“no one gets abused”* in them. Of the few who have a positive reaction to the tightening of §201a, most have a quite cynical reason. The more legislation gets *“popularized mercilessly so it hits as many as possible [...] the more it will be made clear that it is absurd”*. *“Maybe I should hope that more absurd laws will follow until everything breaks down?”* Nevertheless there are a small number, eleven, of positive comments of people who can *“comprehend the resolution”* and think it is *“reasonable*

¹⁵ FKK = *Freikörperkultur* ≈ naturism, nudism.

in regards to the privacy that need to be protected". These eleven voices from seventy-one are however the exception.

7.6 Perception of stigmatization

7.6.1 Stigma

The aim of this thesis was to find out whether paedophiles in Germany perceive stigmatization. Even though in none of the survey questions the terms stigma or stigmatization were mentioned, they came up in the answers over a dozen times. Also beyond the use of the actual term, the stigmatization of paedophiles is quite easily observable.

For the majority of informants their sexual preference is normal. Hence they did not consider it as a deviations of their individual character as Goffman would call it. However for their surroundings, paedophiles possess an attribute that makes them "of a less desirable kind" (Goffman, 1986: 3) and often they are seen as bad or dangerous.

So even though most informants personally have no problem with their sexual preferences, it is sometimes hard for them to call themselves paedophiles. For that reason terms such as boy lover / girl lover or 'Pädo(s)' are used. Survey participants stated that the term paedophile has a negative connotation, some of them have internalized themselves. As Goffman writes: "the standards he has incorporated from the wider society equip him to be intimately alive to what others see as his failing, inevitably causing him, if only for moments, to agree that he does indeed fall short of what he really ought to be" (ibid.: 7). Thus what causes the described fear and sometimes even self-loathing while coming-in are not the feelings within but the stigmatizing attitude from without.

Most of the negative issues that are mentioned by survey participants are in regards to the view of the society and the fact that paedophiles more often than not are put on the same level as child sex offenders. For some informants the sexual preferences play a bigger role in their daily life than for others. Some have adjusted their living situation (e.g. job, hobbies etc.) by either keeping away from children to escape a possible stigmatization or by trying to have as much legal contact with children as possible. Paedophilia does not necessarily have a bigger influence on life than any other sexual orientation. Many fight against the prejudice that all a paedophile does all day is thinking about sex.

The finding that most informants perceived social stigmatization is clear when asked about disadvantages and discrimination. The attribute they possess "turn[s] those of us whom he meets away from him" (ibid.: 5). This gets also clear when looking at the expected reactions to coming out. Even though friends and family often react positively, especially when the

informants explain the issue more closely, a lot of them hesitate to come out because they are too afraid of the reactions. Following Goffman, they are afraid of having a “spoiled identity” (ibid.:19).

Not only do informants describe in which way they get discriminated against but some also report the drastic consequences of stigmatization such as a high suicide-rate or frequent psychological problems. Hence the stigmatization “reduces his life chances” (ibid.: 5).

Receiving a positive reaction can be very helpful and a relief, but those who are too afraid of stigmatization to come out cannot experience that. So stigmatization can have a real impact on life, as for instance this quote shows: *“I was horrified – I only knew the negative ‘model’ of a child abuser/rapist or murder. I didn’t trust that I don’t correspond to this cliché and kept away from children. This compromised my life very much.”* A German survey showed another problematic issue: “[M]ore than 95% of the responding psychotherapists were unwilling to work with patients diagnosed with pedophilia” (Jahnke et al., 2014: 2). The therapists have indicated different reasons for their decision. About a third were unrelated to stigma (e.g. lack of experience) while other reasons included negative feelings toward paedophiles or negative experiences in the past (Jahnke et al., 2013). In this case the stigma prevents or at least makes it harder for paedophiles getting the help they might seek.

The informants agree that German public opinion on paedophiles is almost consistently negative and there is hardly a way to escape this knowledge as it is imparted over every channel. It might have been better thirty or forty years ago, in times of sexual liberation, but the way the participants perceive it, the social stigmatization is getting consistently worse. According to them this is also traceable when looking at the legal framework that concerns paedophilia, which is getting tighter every couple years.

In the interviews I conducted with Ms. Schmitt and Ms. Linder, the therapists working for *‘Kein Täter werden’*, I also asked them about their personal experiences with stigma regarding their field of work. Ms. Schmitt told me that in her first years working in the field of paedophilia she told a lot of people what she does for a living. Back then she talked very openly about what she does and with whom she works. Gradually she stopped doing so because of the responses she received. People did not understand why she wanted to help paedophiles and made negative remarks about them. This however concerns distant acquaintances. With close friends and family she still talks about her work and gets positive feedback.

Ms. Linder reported mainly positive experiences when she talked to others about her work. Her parents were always interested but never wanted to know too much about the specifics. From friends and acquaintances she received feedback in the likes of “how can you handle this? I know I couldn’t” or “good, that they have you to help them”.

Ms. Schmitt said that the main reason for stigmatization is fear - fear of the unknown. What helps against this fear is enlightenment. Both women agree; they emphasize that a transformation to a more positive image of paedophiles, or at least an objective one, can only be achieved by educating people and straightening the facts. If people knew that a paedophile is not automatically someone who abuses children they might reconsider their prejudices.

This opinion is shared by most informants. They stated many times that the main problem is the lack of information. *“For most of them [people of the public] a minimum of enlightenment is enough to take a firm stand”; “The public simply isn’t informed enough, there should be more enlightenment and more studies about this topic”; “If there were more enlightenment and prevention then this law [§201a] didn’t have to exist!”; “Media reports unobjectively and that is why people are trapped with misinformation”.*

However both of them observed a growing interest in the topic of paedophilia. When for instance in the beginnings of the network it was quite hard to get a radio station to broadcast a report on paedophilia at all, now there are many enquiries from the press and from students. Also in media a better distinction between paedophiles and sex offenders is noticeable. So maybe this is headed in the right direction.

7.6.1 Internalized Stigma

As mentioned in chapter 3.1 individuals can experience a hidden stigmatization even if the deviating attributes are not visible or evident. This is clearly the case with paedophilia, as it is not “immediately apparent” (Goffman, 1986: 42). Not everyone has to experience internalized stigma. In order to find out I asked in the questionnaire ‘Do you also feel discriminated against in situation where no one knows about your because of your sexual preference?’

Approximately 43% answered with no, they do not feel stigmatized when unrecognized. Over half of them just answered with “No”, while others elaborated a bit. The few reasons that were mentioned included paedophilia being *“hardly a topic of discussion”*. One informant answered, that he does not feel discriminated because it is *“completely appropriate to despise paedophilic preferences”* for the *“protection of children”*. This however appears to be an isolated opinion among this group of informants. A more frequent reason for not experiencing internalized stigma was being at *“peace with one’s own identity”*.

The small majority of 56% reported experiencing hidden stigmatization. Among other things, this discrimination arises from being unable to open oneself up completely: *“I strongly desire to talk to a friend about my preferences. Since mentioning the topic already leads to repulsive acts, it is depressing that I cannot really talk about it to anyone.”* This can lead to isolation. *“That’s why I quite thoroughly avoid such situations. I live on a lonely estate and don’t take part in any social events.”* Let alone the thought of being discovered ensures that some people shut themselves away. *“I rather fall silent, reveal nothing of myself and exclude myself deliberately.”*

When not isolated from society, people are sometimes forced to live a lie, or make use of ‘passing’ (ibid.): *“Censorship makes me a liar.”* This conveys for example in situations where paedophiles have to exculpate themselves as to why they are not in a relationship or when their friends talk about their sex lives: *“With advancing age without a partner and without having started a family it is unpleasant to be called upon this topic.”*

These negative impressions mostly originate in conversations with unsuspecting acquaintances. *“When someone in my social environment expresses their view that paedophiles are evil, dangerous or disgusting, I feel hurt.”* The main cause for internalized stigmatization appears to be unmindful defamatory thoughts that are not directed at a concrete person. Nonetheless informants feel addressed *“when friends talk about paedophilia and suggest the most gruesome tortures for them.”*

The answers also verify Stöwsandts (1994) assumptions about the two kinds of secret deviances. Some people keep their preferences in the hidden because they regard them as deviations. Others accept their preferences as normal but are aware that society would not, so they do not reveal themselves: *“When I, as a person concerned, witness this, it shows me how perverted I must be. But I myself am not aware of any perversion, on the contrary. I do so much to bring joy to others, and yes, particularly to children. So I ask myself constantly what it is that makes me such a monster. The discrimination is enormous.”*

8. 'Kein Täter werden'

"In contrast to others this survey is about us – namely our problems, our fears etc. and not like usually about our potential risk" (Comment in one of the internet forums).

So far I have mentioned the network of therapy groups called 'Kein Täter werden' several times. At this point I want to say a bit more about how the groups works and what goals the therapists want to achieve. The information I have about the network is mostly from the interviews I conducted with two of the therapist working for 'Kein Täter werden' (Ms. Green and Ms. Schmitt, working at different locations) and from their website.¹⁶ Furthermore in the second part of this chapter I will talk about the questionnaires that four patients of Ms. Implen, therapist of the third group with whom I only had contact via e-mail, filled out. These were the only ones that were sent back to me.

8.1 The network

When I began my research there were ten locations of 'Kein Täter werden' in Germany. On May 21st 2015 an eleventh group started¹⁷. The first goal is to have groups in each of the sixteen federal states in Germany. The first group, in Berlin, was founded in 2005 at the Charité (one of the biggest university hospitals of Europe). Since 2014 there is also a therapy group for adolescents between twelve and eighteen.

The therapy is free of charge, anonymous and under complete doctor-patient confidentiality. Ms. Linder told me that this is unique worldwide as not even criminal offences are being passed on. Therapists in prison for example have to tell if a patient confides in them about something illegal they have done. But without complete confidentiality it would be impossible to build a true foundation of trust. The groups can be contacted via phone or e-mail. Whether someone is taken on in therapy is decided through a diagnostic conversation that can take up to three hours. Only individuals who diagnose as paedophiles (or hebephiles) and who have not been previously convicted after §§ 174 – 184c StGB are accepted. Usually the therapy is held in group session of about five to ten participants. In some cases single or couple sessions are possible as well. Group sessions are viewed as very productive as the patients can share their experiences. It helps to see that others have similar problems as oneself does. The group sessions take place once a week, in total the therapy takes about one year. In addition to the

¹⁶ <https://www.kein-taeter-werden.de/>, accessed on 07.06.2015.

¹⁷ There are now groups in Berlin, Düsseldorf, Gießen, Hamburg, Hannover, Kiel, Leipzig, Mainz, Regensburg, Stralsund and Ulm.

'conversation' therapy receiving medication is possible. The first step are anti-depressant with the side effect of lowering the libido. If that is not strong enough the next step are actual anaphrodisiacs.

The problems people who contact '*Kein Täter werden*' deal with have been summarized by Ms. Linder: "Taboo, shame, fear of social condemnation, having to overcome opening up to others, often a long time of suffering." The main goal of the therapy is for patients to learn self-evaluation; to know which situations they have to avoid. To illustrate this, Ms. Schmitt uses the metaphor of someone who is on a diet and therefore should not go to a chocolate factory. This includes dealing with problems oneself has with the sexual preference but also preventing sexual abuse of children. The therapy groups describe themselves as a 'prevention network', which exists so that paedophiles do not become offenders (as mentioned above the group name can be translated to \approx *not becoming an offender*). The therapy manual consists of thirteen steps. These are psychoeducation, acceptance, motivation, perception, emotions, sexual phantasies and behavior, empathy and perspective, learning and self-perception, coping mechanisms and strategies for problem solving, social relationships, intimacy and trust, planning the future and finally protective measures.

8.2 The questionnaires

As I learned during my fieldwork the internet forum I gained most of my data from and '*Kein Täter werden*' reject each other and represent different approaches concerning paedophilia (see chapter 5). For this reason I decided to look separately at the four questionnaires I got back from Franz, Peter, Rupert and Thomas, patients from one of the '*Kein Täter werden*' therapy groups. The content does not differ as much from the results from the online survey as I would have expected. With the exception of Franz, who did not discover his paedophilic preferences until he was retired, the group participants made similar experiences with their coming in as described above. None of them described paedophilia as a mental disorder but as (part of) their sexuality. However Franz, Thomas and Peter agree that they would rather live without it. Rupert does not go that far but writes that it is a "responsibility I have to bear and that I face today".

Again all apart from Rupert have outed themselves to their wives and other members of their family. It had burdened Peter's marriage quite a while but today his wife accepts his preference and supports him being in therapy. Even though Thomas' wife does not understand him, it helps him that he does not have to hide who he is anymore. In Franz's case

his family has rejected him. Rupert just mentioned that he has made positive experiences with his outing.

All four of them perceive the public's opinion very negatively. To quote Franz: "I perceive the public opinion as following: The majority thinks that paedophiles are monsters that should be locked away in order to protect our children [...] those people should be castrated so they cannot do anymore harm."

They agree that this opinion has not developed much over the years but rather gotten worse. Thomas especially has no positive prognosis for the future. He rather states that "a whore will be pope" before circumstances will improve for paedophiles.

Franz has no opinion regarding the tightening of the law concerning the trade of images of children. Peter, Rupert and Thomas all state that the new law will not achieve anything. Thomas compares it with the law on narcotics despite of which many people die of drugs in Germany. Peter writes that it is "comprehensible concerning the protection of children but on a juristic basis hardly applicable".

Their opinions converge regarding the protection of children. Even though Thomas is annoyed that paedophilic mangas (Japanese comics) and written fiction with paedophilic content are illegal as these do not harm any children he also stated that actual child pornography should be forbidden. Furthermore Rupert wrote that his sexual preferences have to "end where other human's boundaries start". Also Franz stated that he will never act out on his preferences. For Thomas the reason for no further action is clear. He wrote that it would "harm children's psyches". This point of view coincides with the one represented by '*Kein Täter werden*' but as showed in chapter 7.5.3 it is not exclusive to employees and patients of the therapy group.

9. Call for enlightenment

“Such a prevalent ignorance, paired with the tenacity in which it persists, would not be accepted in any other context” (Answer survey).

As my research has shown, paedophiles do perceive stigmatization in Germany in regards to their sexual preference. Stigma is, as Jahnke et al. wrote, “a widespread problem with serious adverse consequences for the stigmatized individuals, including, most notably, reducing quality of life and self-esteem” (2015: 2). This is confirmed by my findings obtained mainly through the survey.

The kind of research I conducted certainly has its limits. With the exception of the four questionnaires I received from patients of *‘Kein Täter werden’* all informants learned about my survey through an internet forum administered by paedophiles themselves. The internet as a source is always tricky. In my case the possibilities it offered in regards to anonymity were very important if not even absolutely essential. Supposedly without anonymity only a minority of informants would have been willing to share their answers. However I do not know whether everyone who answered does in fact have paedophilic preferences and whether they answered truthfully (but this could have been the case as well if I had met them in person, paedophilia is after all not something visible). Furthermore the anonymity made it impossible for me to connect different answers. Thus I could not assign pseudonyms to the quotes which would have contributed to a better understanding. Also, as I assume that only a fraction of all people with paedophilic preferences in Germany visit forums like those regularly, my data cannot be seen as representative for all German paedophiles.

That paedophiles are not a homogenous group can be seen for example when it comes to the issue of consensual acts. As mentioned before, in chapter 5, *‘Kein Täter werden’* is distancing themselves from at least one of the internet forums because of their stance on sexual acts between children and adults. However in the answers from the survey it was clear that not all paedophiles visiting the forums agree on this issue. Some do write that it were *“scientifically proven that consensual and child-oriented sexual acts harm nobody. And I don’t see intercourse as a child-oriented sexual act!”* Others make this more explicit: *“Friendships where there’s a place for playful, non-penetrative, non-orgasmic and, the way I see it, non-pathological dealing with sexuality”* or *“I have sympathy for sexual playing around but I have no understanding for intercourse/oral sex with a prepubescent child”*.

In the answers about public discourse on paedophilia crude words such as *'Kinderficker'* (≈child fucker) were mentioned several times: *"I have the feeling that the average citizen thinks only in categories of 'fucking' and sexual domination because that is all he knows."* According to Ms. Munch (the psychologist I talked to who works with convicted sex offenders) sexual acts that included penetration had been rarely committed by her patients. Other sexual acts that are not physically harmful are illegal as well and according to Ms. Munch psychologically damaging to children. However the public might have a worse imagination about what even convicted paedophiles have done. Amongst the informants there are also voices who state that they are against any kind of intergenerational sexual relations but these are rather rare: *"Only in my fantasy do I experience my sexual preferences. I don't watch child pornography and I don't engage in sexual acts with children."* *"I am aware that children have no interest in sexual activities or a relationship with an adult like myself."*

In any case informants stated that other factors in a relationship between child and adult are more important: *"A hebephile relationship isn't defined by shared sex but by the whole feel-good package of mutual interests."* Harming a child would be the last thing they want: *"A paedophile who really loves children and who, like myself, appreciates especially the natural joyful lightheartedness of the children, would never do anything that could destroy exactly this natural joyful lightheartedness – and abuse would most certainly do so."* *"I have never and will never harm a child in any way."*

As said before the group of paedophiles are diverse individuals with different backgrounds and opinions, or as Bernstein put it "identity groups [that] tend to splinter into ever more narrow categories" (2005: 51). In spite of that they are viewed as one category from the outside based on one single attribute. This category very often includes that *"all paedophiles are child molesters or potential child molesters"*. In no way do I want to belittle actual abuse that has happened and has seriously harmed children. However these cases should not provide the basis for a general stigmatization of all paedophiles. Thus it is necessary to provide more information in order to enlighten the public. In an interview a representative of a foundation for child protection requests an open debate: *"If we want to make progress in the contact with paedophilic persons, we have to address the topic in the public...and we have to do it loudly, so everyone can hear it. In order to win, and especially to win for our children"* (Das Erste, 2014).

My research has only opened a small window on the huge field of stigmatization of paedophiles in Germany. Further research should include more informants from different interest groups and possibly a wider spectrum of questions. Ideally in an interview setting instead of questionnaires where more depth is possible. The media coverage in Germany has shown that paedophilia is an issue that needs further discussion in a public context. To close with a final quote of an informant: *“The public simply isn’t informed enough, there should be more enlightenment and more studies on this topic.”*

10. Literature

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11. Annex

11.1 Questionnaire (German)

1. Wie haben Sie reagiert, als Ihnen klar wurde, dass Sie pädophile/hebephile Neigungen haben?
2. Wie sehr beeinflussen Ihre sexuellen Vorlieben Ihren Alltag?
3. Als was betrachten Sie Ihre sexuelle Präferenz (Störung/sexuelle Orientierung/sonstiges)?
4. Wie stehen Sie selbst zu Ihren sexuellen Vorlieben?
5. Fühlen Sie sich durch Ihre sexuelle Präferenz anderen gegenüber benachteiligt? Falls ja, auf welche Weise?
6. Fühlen Sie sich auf Grund Ihrer sexuellen Vorlieben von anderen diskriminiert? Falls ja, wie äußert sich dies?
7. Fühlen Sie sich auch in Situationen diskriminiert, in denen niemand um Sie herum von ihren sexuellen Vorlieben weiß?
8. Welche Meinungen zu Pädophilie sind Ihnen aus Ihrem Bekanntenkreis bekannt?
9. Haben Sie sich vor Angehörigen oder Freunden ‚geoutet‘? Falls ja, welche Erfahrung haben Sie mit damit gemacht?
10. Welche Reaktionen erwartete(n) Sie im Falle eines Outings?
11. Wie steht Ihrer Ansicht nach die Öffentlichkeit zu Pädophilie/Hebephilie?
12. Auf welchem Wege erfahren Sie diese öffentliche Meinung? (Presse, Aussagen öffentlicher Personen, Medien etc.)
13. Inwiefern glauben Sie hat sich die öffentliche Meinung zu Pädophilie/Hebephilie innerhalb der letzten Jahrzehnte geändert?
14. Glauben Sie, dass es eine Zeit in Deutschland gegeben hat, in der es einfacher war, pädophile/hebephile Vorlieben zu haben? Wenn ja, wann/warum?
15. von dem, im November 2014 beschlossenen und im Januar 2015 in Kraft getretenen, verschärften Gesetz zum Sexualstrafrecht? (§ 201a ‘Verletzung des höchstpersönlichen Lebensbereichs durch Bildaufnahmen’)

11.2 Questionnaire (English translation)

1. How did you react when you realized you had paedophilic/hebephilic preferences?
2. How much do the sexual preferences influence your daily life?
3. How do you define your sexual preference (disorder/sexual orientation/other)?
4. How do you adhere to your sexual preference?
5. Do you feel disadvantaged towards others because of your sexual preference? If yes, how?
6. Do you feel discriminated against because of your sexual preference? If yes, how?
7. Do you also feel discriminated against in situation where no one knows about your preference because of your sexual preference?
8. What opinions about paedophilia are known to you from your circle of friends and acquaintances?
9. Did you ever come out to friends or acquaintances? If yes, what experiences did you make?
10. Which reactions did / do you expect in the case of coming out?
11. What do you think is the public opinion on paedophilia/hebephilia?
12. How do you learn this public opinion? (press, statements of public figures, media etc.)
13. To what extent do you think the public opinion has changed over the past decades?
14. Do you think there had been a time when it was easier to live in Germany with paedophilic/hebephilic preferences? If yes, when/why?
15. What do you think about the tightened law governing sexual offenses that was passed in November 2014 and became effective in January 2015? (§201a 'violation of the personal life sphere by image capture')