

ARTICLE

Sexual Frustrations and Dream Vacations: Gay Tourism, Straight Tourism, and the Role of Racialized Desire after West Germany's Sexual Revolution¹

Christopher Ewing¹  and Ulrike Schaper² 

¹Purdue University, USA and ²Freie Universität Berlin, Germany

Corresponding author: Christopher Ewing; Email: cbewing@purdue.edu

Abstract

This article argues that sexualized travel was a crucial site in which the ambivalences of the so-called sexual revolution were negotiated. Focusing on the experiences of white, West German men between the late 1960s and early 1990s, this article draws on a wide range of travel literature—as well as criticism of sex and travel—to document the ways in which tourists made sense of sexual ambivalences at home through discussions about sex abroad. Regardless of sexual orientation, white, West German men drew on overlapping languages of racialized desire to describe perceived pleasures abroad, revealing that race and racism are inextricable from the history of the sexual revolution in the Federal Republic of Germany.

Keywords: post-1945 Germany; race; sexuality; tourism; LGBTQ+ History; history of heterosexuality

*A paradise is promised to men when they fly to these countries as gentlemen traveling alone [alleinreisende Herren] with the intention of buying sexual satisfaction, a paradise is promised to them by companies that make a lot of money from prostitution tourism.*²

Introduction

By the end of the 1980s, the idea that tourist destinations in the Global South offered veritable paradises of sexual freedom had gained salience in German political and popular culture. In the aftermath of commercial and technological developments that made international travel increasingly more accessible to West German consumers, travel promotion capitalized on the language of sex, while guides and publications offered practical advice on how their readership—often understood as white men—could access a variety of sexual services and spaces while abroad. Mainstream media outlets published lurid stories of transactional sex in the Global South. Films like *Emmanuelle* (France, 1974), *Hot Sex in*

¹ The authors would like to thank Benno Gammerl for his extensive feedback on multiple drafts, Lukas Herde, Adrian Lehne, Veronika Springmann, and Sébastien Tremblay for workshoping early drafts, and the participants of the Research Seminar on Sex and Transnational Mobility of the European University Institute for their thoughtful comments, the Dahlem Junior Host Program for their generous support, Monica Black for her editorial leadership, and the anonymous reviewers for their constructive input.

² Barbara Lempp, “Rede zur Eröffnung des FIZ, December 11, 1987,” Landeskirchliches Archiv Stuttgart, K17–125.

Bangkok (Switzerland, 1976), and *Three Bavarians in Bangkok* (West Germany, 1976) had ensconced Thailand as an exotic site of sexual adventure in an international media market.³ The highly commercialized promise of a sexual paradise abroad, also attracted growing political criticism through the 1980s. Feminist critics argued that sex tourism was inherently exploitative of women, and politicians across the political spectrum grappled with questions of sexual tourism, trafficking, and exploitation in the context of a global epidemic. As strident as the cultural debate on sex tourism had become, it hinged on an underlying consensus: not only did popular travel destinations function as idealized paradises, but they could, for better or worse, ameliorate the frustrations of sexual life in West Germany.

This consensus stretched also to include same-sex desiring men, who were simultaneously in the process of developing more visible scenes after the end of the 1960s, scenes which included expanding circuits of travel. Discussion about sexual liberation, possibilities for intimacy, and racialized desire crystalized around transactional sex in tourist contexts. Same-sex desiring men—like their heterosexual counterparts—often disavowed or recast the transactional nature of sexual encounters. However, they simultaneously developed extensive networks of travel and communication to facilitate encounters with men, particularly men of color, in increasingly accessible travel destinations. Feminist activists rarely subjected the ostensibly separate category of “gay tourism” to the same critique until the early 1990s.⁴ Across the board, however, tourist discourses evolved around ideas that travel destinations promised opportunities for sexual encounters and experiences of sexual lust that were different from sex at home, a notion that often condensed into the image of these destinations as sexual paradises.

By examining some of these projections, this article argues that sex tourism became an important site for white, West German men to navigate the felt ambivalences or even frustrations of sex in the Federal Republic. Although in part divided into “gay” and “straight” tourist spaces—a dichotomy that was never completely borne out—discourses about sex tourism, specifically as produced by West German, cisgender, white men, carried marked overlaps and parallels that did not easily cleave to assumed bounds of sexual identity. Certainly, important differences, such as legal persecution of homosexuality, structured how same-sex desiring men understood sexualized travel.⁵ However, categories of gay and straight were and are not so separate. Not only did some men, bisexual and not, move between these scenes, but gay discourses were simultaneously enmeshed in the same context as their heterosexual peers.⁶ In order to ameliorate dissatisfaction with sex in the Federal Republic during the 1970s and 1980s, many white, West German men regardless

³ Alexander J. Klemm offers a close reading of these films and contemporary European productions that followed in the tradition of *Emmanuelle*. Alexander J. Klemm, “Thailand in the European Cinematic Imagination: The Phenomenon and Legacy of *Emmanuelle* (Fr 1974),” *IAFOR Journal of Cultural Studies* 4, no. 2 (2019): 71–93.

⁴ Christopher Ewing details the process by which gay tourism came under the scrutiny of West German feminist advocates and lawmakers after unification. Christopher Ewing, “Defining Sex Tourism: International Advocacy, German Law, and Gay Activism at the End of the Twentieth Century,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 32, no. 1 (2023): 27–55. He places it in closer context with both the history of gay tourism through the twentieth century and 1990s political upheavals in his recent book. Christopher Ewing, *The Color of Desire: The Queer Politics of Race in the Federal Republic of Germany after 1970* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2023).

⁵ However, even those had only uneven effects on gay men’s fantasies of travel, and experiences often depended on local policing rather than national law. In places like Morocco, where an anti-sodomy statute was enacted shortly after decolonization, policing remained sporadic until the 1970s. Even then, same-sex desiring men continued to travel in search of better or freer sex.

⁶ In addition to bisexual men, straight-identified men who had sex with men muddled an easy division between gay and straight spaces. Kamala Kempadoo discusses this boundary crossing, particularly in regard to men who have sex with trans women. Although we avoid a biological-essentialist analysis that differentiates between cisgender and transgender women on the grounds of “authenticity,” tourist spaces did and do function as sites for white, straight men to engage in sex and intimacy that trouble historically contingent definitions of what “counts” as heterosexuality. Kamala Kempadoo, “Introduction: Globalizing Sex Workers’ Rights,” in *Global Sex Workers: Rights, Resistance, and Redefinition*, ed. Kamala Kempadoo and Jo Doezeema (New York: Routledge, 1998), 6. For more on race, heterosexuality,

of sexual identity looked abroad to what they imagined as sexual paradises. In so doing, they deployed the logics of race, which depended on long-standing albeit shifting colonial tropes of white, masculine access to sexual adventure with exoticized “others” in ways that were fully commensurate with left-wing political commitments.

Such commensurability requires us to think critically about the notion of “sexual revolution” in reference to a publicly visible proliferation and pluralization of sexual practices and norms that intensified from the late 1960s onwards.⁷ This development was intimately connected to social movements that gained traction in the late 1960s and early 1970s, including the student movement, the women’s movement, and the gay liberation movement. As an analytic term, however, the concept is dubious at best as it suggests a sudden and fundamental upheaval, aspects that have been questioned in their suitability to characterize complicated processes.⁸ Elizabeth Heineman in particular notes the entanglement of the West German sexual revolution with commercialization, allowing for the proliferation of erotic material and open discussions about sex while also providing a source of deep ambivalence for many on the left.⁹ While recent historiography has thoroughly complicated the analytic utility of the term, there has been little attention to the importance of sexual racism to the commercialization of sex.¹⁰ In this article, we show that not only does a focus on race and racism contribute to a critical reading of the “sexual revolution,” but situating the sexual revolution within the context of global power relations and transnational travel further reveals the ways in which West German discussions and even feelings about sex were enmeshed in dynamics of sexual racism that spilled over the borders of the Federal Republic.

We therefore use the term sexual revolution only as a pragmatic label to name a complex set of processes of liberalization, politicization, pluralization and proliferation of sexual practices, norms and discourses that at least gained momentum and visibility by the late 1960s, were often closely linked to commercialization, and do not adhere to easy dichotomies of liberation and repression.¹¹ Finally, in order to investigate the full imbrication of politics,

and straight men who have sex with men, see Jane Ward, *Not Gay: Sex between Straight, White Men* (New York: New York University Press, 2015).

⁷ See Peter-Paul Bänziger, Magdalena Beljan, Franz X. Eder, and Pascal Eitler (eds.), *Sexuelle Revolution? Zur Geschichte der Sexualität im deutschsprachigen Raum seit den 1960er Jahren* (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2015).

⁸ Franz X. Eder, “Die lange Geschichte der ‘Sexuellen Revolution’ in Westdeutschland (1950er bis 1980er), in *Sexuelle Revolution?*,” 25–59, particularly 25; Julia Paulus, Eva-Maria Silies, and Kerstin Wolff, “Die Bundesrepublik aus geschlechterhistorischer Perspektive,” in *Zeitgeschichte als Geschlechtergeschichte. Neue Perspektiven auf die Bundesrepublik*, ed. Julia Paulus, Eva-Maria Silies, and Kerstin Wolff (Frankfurt am Main, Campus Verlag, 2012), 11–27; Franz X. Eder, “Die Sexuelle Revolution—Befreiung und/oder Repression?” in *Liebe und Widerstand. Ambivalenzen historischer Geschlechterbeziehungen*, ed. Ingrid Bauer, Christa Hämmerle, and Gabriella Hauch (Vienna: Böhlau, 2005), 397–416.

⁹ Elizabeth Heineman, *Before Porn Was Legal: The Erotica Empire of Beate Uhse* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 4, 7, 11–18.

¹⁰ Certainly, there are exceptions. Franz Eder for instance points to the proliferation of exoticizing depictions of people of color in Austrian and German magazines. Eder, “National and Racial Images of the Sexual ‘Other’ in the German-Speaking Countries,” *Sexuality & Culture* 21 (2017): 362–81; Pascal Eitler has also shown how central oriental-ization became in the politicization and commercialization of sex after 1968, see e.g. Pascal Eitler, “Das ‘Reich der Sinne’? Pornographie, Philosophie und die Brutalisierung der Sexualität (Westdeutschland 1968–1988),” *Body Politics* 1, no. 2 (2013): 259–96; Eitler, “Der kurze Weg nach ‘Osten’. Orientalisierungsprozesse in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland um und nach 1968,” in *Von draußen. Ausländische intellektuelle Einflüsse in der Bundesrepublik bis 1990*, ed. Axel Schildt (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2016), 288–305; Moritz Ege has demonstrated the politicization of inter racial sex within this context, Moritz Ege, *Schwarz werden. “Afroamerikanophilie” in den 1960er und 1970er Jahren* (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2007). Todd Shepard and Kadji Amin in different ways also tease the political usages of references to race and sex in the writings of the French left after decolonization through figures like Jean Genet, who had an international reach. Todd Shepard, *Sex, France, and Arab Men, 1962–1979* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), 54–55, 65; Kadji Amin, *Disturbing Attachments: Genet, Modern Pederasty, and Queer History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017), 78.

¹¹ Eder, “Die lange Geschichte der ‘Sexuellen Revolution’ in Westdeutschland (1950er bis 1980er),” in *Sexuelle Revolution?*, 25–59, 25; Benno Gammerl, “Frau Muskeltyp, Herr Hexe und Fräulein Butch? Geschlechtlichkeiten und Homosexualitäten in der zweiten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts,” *Zeitgeschichte als Geschlechtergeschichte*, 225–45;

desire, and racialization, we deliberately eschew a framework of the sexual revolution that circumscribes straight and queer sexualities into separate studies, or positions gay liberation and lesbian feminism as subplots in a wider story. Instead, we center the specific interrelation of gay and straight discourses of the sexual revolution.

"Sex tourism" is a similarly muddy category of analysis. Scholars have, for example, demonstrated how sexualized and gendered power unfolds in tourist settings.¹² With regard to sex tourism in a narrower sense, scholars argue that it should not be restricted to formalized settings of transactional sex but seen as part of a broader continuum of sexual activity in tourist contexts.¹³ Forms of gay tourism, for instance, can intermingle cultural pursuits, identity formation, and sexual desire, and these seemingly disparate motivations often reinforce each other.¹⁴ The connection between sex and tourism furthermore unfolds in a wide range of media that sexualizes destinations and their inhabitants to promote travel to these regions, often catering to male heterosexual desires.¹⁵ While a vast body of literature has explored this phenomenon, gay tourist experiences, and how the various overlaps of sex, sex work, and tourism play out in sex worker practices and their expectations and aspirations, few offer an integrated approach of gay and straight men in context.¹⁶ In adopting a unified focus on racial discourses that could be categorized as gay and straight, our analysis draws on this literature to uncover the commonalities across sexual identity categories while setting aside the rigidity of assumed identity as a useful analytic tool. Overtly organized forms of sex tourism were and are incorporated into mass tourism and its promotion, sexual encounters were central to the tourist experience in particular destinations, and the boundaries between sex work, intimacy and romance proved to be fluid in tourist contexts. Our work lays bare the overflows of sex into tourism and vice versa, limiting such messiness to neither gay nor straight men alone.

We mainly work with material from the media—such as *Der Spiegel* and the gay magazine *du&ich*, as well as travel guides, promotional material, and activist publications. We are

243; Gammerl, "Ist frei sein normal? Männliche Homosexualitäten seit den 1960er Jahren zwischen Emanzipation und Normalisierung," in *Sexuelle Revolution*, 223–44; Imke Schmincke, "Sexualität als 'Angelpunkt der Frauenfrage'?", in *Sexuelle Revolution?*, 199–222; the literature on sexual ambivalence after the 1960s in Germany is vast. See, for instance: Craig Griffiths, *The Ambivalence of Gay Liberation: Male Homosexual Politics in 1970s West Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021); Gammerl, *Anders fühlen. Schwules und lesbisches Leben in der Bundesrepublik: Eine Emotionsgeschichte* (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 2021); Christina von Hodenberg, *Das andere Achtundsechzig: Gesellschaftsgeschichte einer Revolte* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2018); Eva-Maria Silies, *Liebe, Lust und Last: Die Pille als weibliche Generationserfahrung in der Bundesrepublik 1960–1980* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2010).

¹² Fiona Jordan and Cara Aitchison, "Tourism and the Sexualisation of the Gaze: Solo Female Tourists' Experiences of Gendered Power, Surveillance and Embodiment," *Leisure Studies* 27, no. 3 (2008): 329–49.

¹³ Martin Oppermann, "Sex Tourism," *Annals of Tourism Research* 26, no. 2 (1999): 251–66; Chris Ryan and Rachel Kinder, "Sex, Tourism and Sex Tourism: Fulfilling Similar Needs?" *Tourism Management* 17, no. 7 (1996): 507–18; Liza Berdychevsky and Neil Carr (eds.), *Sex in Tourism: Exploring the Light and the Dark* (Bristol: Channel View Publications, 2021).

¹⁴ Jared McCormick explains how gay tourists in Lebanon in the 2000s simultaneously pursued cultural tourism and sexual tourism in Lebanon. Gregory Mitchell further explains how Black gay men described the construction of a universal Black identity, and sought to reinforce that through sexual encounters with Black, Brazilian men. Jared McCormick, "Hairy Chest, Will Travel: Tourism, Identity, and Sexuality in the Levant," *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 7, no. 3 (2011): 71–97; Gregory Mitchell, *Tourist Attractions: Performing Race and Masculinity in Brazil's Sexual Economy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018). Gregory Mitchell has further shown the difficulty in defining transactional sex in opposition to sexual intimacy for gay travelers to Brazil.

¹⁵ Annette Pritchard and Nigel J. Morgan, "Privileging the Male Gaze: Gendered Tourism Landscapes," *Annals of Tourism Research* 27, no. 4 (2000): 884–905.

¹⁶ See, for example: Denise Brennan, *What's Love Got to Do with It? Transnational Desires and Sex Tourism in the Dominican Republic* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004); Kamala Kempadoo (ed.), *Sun, Sex, and Gold: Tourism and Sex Work in the Caribbean* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1999); Kamala Kempadoo, "Freelancers, Temporary Wives, and Beach-Boys: Researching Sex Work in the Caribbean," *Feminist Review* 67 (2001): 39–62; For an article that includes male and female heterosexual as well as gay tourism in his analysis of geographical imaginations, see Jean-François Staszak, "L'Imaginaire géographique du tourisme sexuel," *L'Information géographique* 76, no. 2 (2012): 16–39.

interested in how travel destinations were “sexoticized” as sex paradises and what kinds of promises and expectations regarding sex and lust travel agencies and media evoked.¹⁷ Importantly, these media forms hardly ever positioned women as consumers and almost never as politically scandalous “sex tourists.” Instead, women interested in sexualized forms of travel were viewed as a different reading public and a separate market. Women who sought men abroad were largely understood as “romance tourists,” an at best problematic category that has since seeped into academic analysis.¹⁸ Women searching for women, often excluded from gay tourist networks until the 1990s or issuing lesbian feminist critiques of gay sexual practices, relied on guidebooks, companies, and publications catering to same-sex desiring women.¹⁹ White, West German women could and did seek sex abroad, meriting further study and analysis integrated with men’s sexual practices. However, the ways in which they used their experiences to make political claims, how media outlets positioned them as mobile consumers, and what critics of “sex tourism” did with both avoid clear parallels with men, gay and straight alike, escaping the purview of this article.

In examining travel literature and criticism, we can pull out three main interrelated themes that undergirded the sexotization of these destinations. First, claims of civilizational and even evolutionary difference were often articulated through discontent with Western, capitalist modernity, which further located travel destinations in a nebulous and nostalgic pre-modern past. Second, perceived racial difference proved an important contributor to exotic fantasies, as travel literature sexotized the bodies of people of color for primarily white, West German consumption. Third, imaginaries of exotic space, marked by palm trees, beaches, tropical vegetation, and wilderness intertwined with heightened expectations for sexual pleasure abroad in a way that stamped destinations as undeniably foreign. The sexotization of travel destinations and their inhabitants was sustained by a general criticism of Western culture as being anti-pleasure, suffering from restrictive sexual morals, and producing inhibited attitudes towards sex.²⁰ In many ways this framing echoed assertions that capitalist society or commercial transaction inhibited possibilities for emotional intimacy, although here articulated explicitly in terms of sexual desire and pleasure. The sexotization of spaces, people, and cultures in the Global South undergirded these claims, drawing on multiple and sometimes contradictory explanations. Together, and through the reformulation of this dichotomy, they constituted a broader nexus that was consequential for liberatory politics. Both pursuit of sexual opportunities through travel and its multifaceted condemnations were part of larger domestic and international negotiations about sex in the aftermath of the sexual revolution. Attention to these contradictory dynamics reveals how across the board, sexual racism was a crucial part of the history of the West German sexual revolution.

¹⁷ Ulrike Schaper, Magdalena Beljan, Pascal Eitler, Christopher Ewing, and Benno Gammerl, “Sexotic: The Interplay between Sexualization and Exoticization,” *Sexualities* 23, no. 1–2 (2020): 114–26.

¹⁸ Sheila Jeffreys for instance argues that women should not fall under the category of “sex tourism” because of the “profound” differences between male and female sexuality and women’s (in)ability to sexually exploit male partners. Sheila Jeffreys, “Sex Tourism: Do Women Do It Too?,” *Leisure Studies* 22, no. 3 (2003): 223–38.

¹⁹ Jasbir Puar’s generative critique of queer tourism stems from a discussion of lesbian tourism. Since then, there have been several works that examine lesbian circuits of mobility; however, the topic remains understudied in comparison to gay men’s and straight women’s tourist practices. Jasbir Puar, “A Transnational Feminist Critique of Queer Tourism,” *Antipode* 34, no. 5 (2002): 935–46; Veneita Kantsa further elaborates on lesbian tourism though, like Puar, does not identify it as sex tourism. Veneita Kantsa, “‘Certain Places Have Different Energy’: Spatial Transformations in Eresos, Lesbos” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 8, no. 1–2 (2002): 35–55; C. Miller, “Better Living through Circuitry: Lesbians and Circuit Parties,” in *Gay Tourism: Culture, Identity and Sex*, ed. Stephen Clift, Michael Luongo, and Carry Callister (London: Continuum, 2002), 214–25; Anette Therkelsen, Bodil Stilling Blichfeldt, Jane Chor, and Nina Ballegaard, “‘I Am Very Straight in My Gay Life’: Approaching an Understanding of Lesbian Tourists’ Identity Construction,” *Journal of Vacation Marketing* 19, no. 4 (2013): 317–27.

²⁰ Our use of “sexotization” draws on previous work in collaboration with Magdalena Beljan, Pascal Eitler, and Benno Gammerl that examines the interrelation of sexualization and exoticization in European history since the nineteenth century. Ulrike Schaper et al., “Sexotic,” 114–26, 116.

Civilizational Difference

Sexoticization of travel destinations in the Global South rested on older stereotypes that opposed Western civilization to non-civilization along the lines of sex. Whereas Western civilization was conceived as anti-pleasure and repressed, societies differently understood as non-western were constructed as uncivilized cultures in which people had a natural relation to their bodies and their sexuality and a greater ability to feel (and provide) pleasure. In the context of the sexual revolution, however, the perceived sexualization of West German society could also stand in the way of pleasure through new problems ranging from overstimulation to commercialization to unattainable expectations, even if commercialization was simultaneously instrumental to the so-called sexual revolution and increasingly disquieting, as Dagmar Herzog points out.²¹ Racial exoticization provided the fantasy of sexual pleasure contingent on assumed simplicity in contrast, offering outlets for frustrated West Germans.²² Many of these ambivalences were present in travel literature already at the start of the 1970s, however, revealing the durability of appeals to racial and civilizational difference, now used here to make sense of the specific historical context of post-1960s West Germany.

Guidebooks, quotes of tourists, and even assumptions about tourists' motivations in the press constructed travel destinations as sexual paradises that could overcome these contradictory sexual frustrations at home. As the author of the guide *Die Freuden von Bangkok und Singapore* (*The Pleasures of Bangkok and Singapore*) assures his readers: "Everything is totally uncomplicated. If in Central Europe 'sin' plops to the floor like a thick telephone book for all involved, in the Far East it has become a petal. Sex is the simplest thing in the world. No more difficult than going to the cinema or a football match."²³ Sin and pleasure were framed here as opposites, geographically located in Central Europe and the "Far East" respectively. Non-western cultures were depicted as open to sex and pleasure, offering an exotic and racialized counterpoint to domestic frustrations. Thus, potential sexual partners, including sex workers, were described as having a natural, uncomplicated, and relaxed attitude to sex.

Important to note is that media approaches to sex tourism happened in conversation with material changes in West German tourist markets from the mid-1960s. Technical innovations, such as the introduction of the jet engine for commercial flights, reduced the time and thus the cost of traveling.²⁴ Large tour operators that relied on small profit margins on package deals benefited from the absence of ticket regulation in charter flights and the 1980s deregulation in the air travel ticket market. Operators initially marketed tours to holiday resorts in

²¹ Dagmar Herzog, "Die 'Sexuelle Revolution' in Westeuropa," in *Sexuelle Revolution?*, 361–63.

²² Although many of the intended audiences of West German travel literature were white, we cannot rule out the possibility of people of color using these media or engaging in their fantasy, particularly as the Federal Republic was a racially diverse state, and increasingly so during this period. As scholars like Jennifer Nash and Kevin Mumford have pointed out, people of color also consumed racializing porn, so the participation in the erotics of racial difference cannot be relegated to white people alone. Jennifer Nash, *The Black Body in Ecstasy: Reading Race, Reading Pornography* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014); Kevin Mumford, *Not Straight, Not White: Black Gay Men from the March on Washington to the AIDS Crisis* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016), 77.

²³ Charles Floreal, *Die Freuden von Bangkok und Singapore* (Berlin: Dülk 1973), 64. See also Erich Schief, "Plädoyer für die Prostituierten (am Fall Thailand)" in *Prostitution für Touristen: Anmerkungen zu Thailand und den Philippinen*, ed. Gustav Strobultz (Munich: Herzberg-Verlag, 1983), 5–13, 9. All translations are our own. Guidebooks were mostly published by two publishing houses, Monika Dülk Verlag, which also offered city maps "for men" and Herzbergverlag. The authors' names often contained ambiguous sexual innuendos such as Florian Rosenstiehl (phonetically: rose stem) or Erich Schief (crooked) that they are most likely pseudonyms. Florian Rosenstiehl was allegedly the pseudonym of a self-proclaimed leftist, who also owned a marriage agency for Asian women.

²⁴ Peter Lyth, "Flying Visits. The Growth of British Air Package Tourism, 1945–75," in *Europe at the Seaside: The Economic History of Mass Tourism in the Mediterranean*, ed. Luciano Segreto, Carles Manera, and Manfred Pohl, (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009), 11–30; Peter Lyth, "'Gimme A Ticket on an Aeroplane ...' The Jet Engine and the Revolution in Leisure Air Travel, 1960–1975" In *Construction d'une industrie touristique aux 19e et 20e siècles. Perspectives internationales. Development of a Tourist Industry in the 19th and 20th Centuries. International Perspectives*, ed. Laurent Tissot (Neuchâtel: Éd. Aphil: 2003), 111–22.

the Mediterranean, but began to offer long-distance package deals to places like Kenya, Thailand, Sri Lanka, and India from the mid-1960s.²⁵ Package tours made international tourism affordable for larger sections of the population. Changes in the products travel agencies offered to tourists were tied into international developments, in which international organizations such as the United Nations, industrial countries' developmental policies, and national governments in the Global South promoted tourism as a strategy for development.²⁶ Mass sex tourism developed in line with the increase in international tourism. While many of the racialized tropes that tourists deployed bore continuities with the past, they were rearticulated for a rapidly changing context.

Claims that used West German metrics of sexual liberation were entangled in the broader framework of Orientalism that shaped expectations of sex abroad, while also taking on local particularities. Thailand held a place of prominence, in large part due to the development of Thai tourist industries during and after the Vietnam war. In the West German pop cultural imaginary of the 1970s and early 1980s, Thailand was consistently promoted as a setting for Western sexual transgression. The style-defining 1974 French soft porn *Emmanuelle* formed an initial crystallization point for these imaginaries and, through its international popularity, triggered various follow-up film projects that took up the same motif of Thailand as a place of sexual experimentation.²⁷ Though the media and political landscape in which these fantasies were located was specific to the 1970s and 1980s, they built on a much longer tradition of projecting expectations of sexual liberalism onto Thailand.²⁸ Here, images of sexual permissiveness unhampered by bourgeois morality overlapped with images of a sensual East and Far Eastern art of love.²⁹

These images resonated with the assumption that sex abroad could be better, precisely because of exoticizing difference generally and local possibilities. Sexual experiences could be understood as both qualitatively better, based on the often-localized assumption that men and women alike in destination countries knew how to have more pleasurable sex, as well as quantitatively better, as many described how tourists would be inundated with offers upon arrival, often regardless of destination. Even as gay travel writers became increasingly concerned with the narrowing possibilities for sex with Arab men during the 1970s and 1980s due to accounts of legal repression, assumptions of sexual availability were markedly durable.³⁰ One report in *him* by Horst J. Andel on Yemen in 1980 asked readers, "Do Arabs love better?" While many were starting to worry that Arab men were in fact not inclined to gay sex, Andel nevertheless detailed sexual pleasure and emotional intimacy that the author had felt with a (married) Yemeni man.³¹ Similarly, in a 1978 report, *du&ich*

²⁵ Christopher Kopper, "The Breakthrough of the Package Tour in Germany after 1945," *Journal of Tourism History* 1, no. 1 (2009): 67–92.

²⁶ On the UN, see Patrick Vrancken, "The World Tourism Organisation," *South African Yearbook of International Law* 24 (1999): 231–45, 244.

²⁷ Klemm, "Thailand in the European Cinematic Imagination," 71–93.

²⁸ For an analysis of the French sex reformer René Guyon, who promoted sexual rights in reference to a utopian sexual freedom in the non-Western world: Tamara Loos, "Respectability's Edge: Transnational Sex Radical René Guyon," *Sexualities* 23, no. 1–2 (2020): 146–69.

²⁹ See, for example: Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books/Random House, 1978); Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality. Volume I: An Introduction* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978); Joseph Allen Boone, *The Homoerotics of Orientalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014).

³⁰ As Christopher Ewing has shown, North African tourism became an important site of making sense of Islam, particularly after the Iranian revolution. We have found little evidence of Islam—or, specifically, anxieties about Islam—playing a similar role for men traveling to Islamic countries in search of sexual encounters with women. However, the long-standing fantasy of the harem and ascendant anxieties about the Islamic control of women's bodies would suggest that some tourists did make sense of experiences abroad through reference to Islam. Ewing, *The Color of Desire*; Jessica Jacobs has written extensively on this intersection in the twenty-first century, particularly in thinking about white women's sexual practices. Jessica Jacobs, *Sex, Tourism, and the Postcolonial Encounter: Landscapes of Longing in Egypt* (New York: Routledge, 2010).

³¹ Horst J. Andel, "Lieben Araber besser?" *him* (November/December 1980): 22–23.

wrote that Cairo remained appealing because of “Oriental nights, luxury, cultural sights [*Sehenswürdigkeiten*], day trip possibilities, and the fulfillment of the most unusual sex wishes.”³² In so doing, *du&ich* positioned sex as an important tourist experience, on par with seeing cultural sights and taking day trips. Travel bureaus catering to gay men capitalized on this expectation by advertising fantastical trips to Sri Lanka, Thailand, and the Philippines, promising “Boys, boys, boys,” referencing the supposed abundance of sex.³³ Similarly, travel guides, which were primarily aimed at a heterosexual readership, promised that “pay-whores in division strength” waited for them, for example in Bangkok, and women in general were available for sexual activities there.³⁴

Sexual availability and the imbrication of sex, culture, and scenery also appeared in straight markets and even tourist markets not generally understood as exclusively sexual in nature. *Baedeker for Bangkok*, the Bangkok edition of one of the most popular guides for cultural tourism published in West Germany, positioned sexual opportunities as one of the many experiences that tourists could pursue in the city. Included among the architectural sites and cultural opportunities was also explicit information on how to access sex work. “Massages for tourists” indicated the possibility for sex, according to the guide, some clubs offered additional services after hours, and there were certain coffee shops where men could find a “regular cadre of beautiful and well-groomed young ‘ladies’” ready to be taken to potential clients’ hotel rooms.³⁵ The guide followed with tips on how to secure a room in a hotel amenable to guests’ local companions.³⁶

Racialized ideas that sex was better in tourist spaces seeped into other parts of West German society and could even be generative of new anxieties about pleasure. In 1971, a woman wrote to the resident psychologist of the men’s magazine *Praline*, worried that after her fiancé had spent a year in Asia, he had gotten used to “a different sexual taste” and she could no longer satisfy him.³⁷ The psychologist tried to assuage her fears, but still deployed the sexualized language of racialized difference to concede that, “nevertheless, the sexual activity of the Asian woman is infinitely strong. The main difference is that she does not know the usual back and forth movements during intercourse. Instead, she moves during intercourse by rotating her abdomen in a circle, which greatly multiplies the stimulus to the penis.” The woman’s concern and the psychologist’s advice evoked widespread notions of a special Asian sex technique as well as fantasies of a more pleasurable and satisfying Asian sexuality. Even as the vocabulary shifted in the wake of the sexual revolution—here towards pop psychology in men’s magazines—pre-existing interpretations of sexual possibility within the larger framework of tourist pleasures proved difficult to dislodge.

Similarly, ideas that capitalist modernity were antithetical to pleasure and intimacy had a history that well preceded the 1970s yet continued to inform discussions about travel to supposedly pre-modern spaces. As Hasso Spode argues, European tourists described perceived cultural differences as indicative of freer, healthier, more natural, and more authentic societies.³⁸ Sex guides to Southeast Asia opposed a natural attitude towards sex they argued to have found there with artificial morality, encrusted ideology, and patronizing, sexphobic, lust-killing prejudices that ostensibly dominated the attitude towards sex in Germany as part

³² “Wohin im nächsten Urlaub?,” *du&ich* (January 1978): 15.

³³ “Du&ich Freundschaften,” *du&ich* (March 1981): 38.

³⁴ Thailand. Exotisches Reich am Golf von Siam (Munich: Müller, 1974), 24; Floreal, *Die Freuden von Bangkok und Singapur*, 41, 95; Michael Terzieff, *Sex in Fernost* (Berlin: Monika Dülk, 1984), 21, 44, 48.

³⁵ *Bangkok: Baedekers Allianz Reiseführer Taschenbücher* (Stuttgart and Freiburg: Baedeker Verlag, 1981), 145–48.

³⁶ *Bangkok*, 148.

³⁷ “Mein Verlobter ist einer Asiatin verfallen,” readers’ questions and response by Ottomar Mann, *Praline*, no. 45 (1971): 39.

³⁸ Spode uses the concept of “Chronotopia” to explain how tourists made sense of spatial difference in terms of chronology. Hasso Spode, “Homogenisierung und Differenzierung. Zur Ambivalenz touristischer Chronotopie-Konstruktion,” in *Kultur all inclusive. Identität, Tradition und Kulturerbe im Zeitalter des Massentourismus*, ed. Burkhard Schnepel, Felix Girke, and Eva-Maria Knoll, (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2013), 93–115.

of the industrialized and Christian world.³⁹ Even though morals seemed to be loose in Southeast Asia, this easy and natural access to sexuality was in fact thought to enable a true morality that was not built on the unnatural restrictions Western sexual morality entailed. Erich Schief made this point explicit in his 1983 “Plädoyer für die Prostituierten (am Fall Thailand),” (Plea for the Prostitutes [the Case of Thailand]), a chapter in the collection *Prostitution für Touristen (Prostitution for Tourists)* making a plea to destigmatize sex work while justifying tourist practices. Schief wrote that “a superficial immorality [Sittenlosigkeit] such as prevails in Thailand brings about a much deeper morality—namely, the absence of the grand delusion of life [Lebenslüge] about partnership that is common in strictly moral countries without prostitution: the delusion that sexual desire [sexuelles Wollen] is oriented towards monogamy from the outset.”⁴⁰ Many guides often used the term “petty-bourgeois” (*spießbürgerlich*) to mark the attitude as narrow-minded, which they found typically German and in opposition to what they claimed to find in Southeast Asia.⁴¹

The racialization of gender, which cast white women as frigid in contrast to sexually available women of color, was replicated in specific discussions of sex work. This was clear as feminist criticisms of sexual exploitation were ramping up in the 1980s. Michael Terzieff, for example, tried to delegitimize feminist detractors in his 1984 *Sex in Fernost (Sex in the Far East)*, a book-length discussion that sat between the genres of anecdotal report on his sexual experiences, travel guide, popular ethnography and sexual-political pamphlet. Pushing back against growing feminist criticisms, Terzieff suggested that “so-called” women’s liberation groups were reducible to lesbian desires.⁴² By arguing that any domestic criticism of sex tourist projects was part of a radical project, made even more radical and desexualized by its association with lesbian activism, Terzieff could more easily dismiss such critiques to justify exploitative practices.

Restrictive Western morality apparently even affected West German prostitutes in contrast to their Thai colleagues, who were supposedly more in sync with nature. As Michael Terzieff continued, “while Western prostitutes are anxious to suppress sexual excitement in their work and therefore constantly urge their clients to hurry up and call such excitement, if it should occur, a “technical mishap” [Betriebsunfall], which understandably must sooner or later lead to a schizophrenic attitude towards sexuality in general and thus to the petty-bourgeois [*spießbürgerlich*] clichés often observed among prostitutes ... Thai prostitutes remain at one with themselves in what they do, for they do not repress their own sexuality, but behave in accordance with nature [*naturgemäß*].”⁴³ Transnational networks of sex worker activism were simultaneously beginning to develop new articulations of sex work, and only five years after Terzieff’s writing Than-Dam Truong elaborated one of the first theoretical conceptions of the relationship between work, sexual subjectivity, and bodily pleasure in the specific context of Southeast Asia.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, Terzieff was able to position sex workers in Thailand as at once sexually liberated and racially other. By glossing over new forms of feminist debate and shoring up constructions of racialized femininity, these guides justified German men’s demand for sex work abroad as being in line with liberalizing trends in the Federal Republic and even morally superior to restrictive Western attitudes toward sex.

In the connected contexts of the sexual revolution and women’s liberation, guidebooks became a platform through which some men could advance dissatisfaction at both. In arguments for the normalization and destigmatization of prostitution, sex tourism guides sometimes evoked explicit reference to the self-named “Whores’ Movement” in Germany.⁴⁵

³⁹ See for example: *Sexparadies für Männer: Manila* (Berlin: Dülk, n.d.), 17–21.

⁴⁰ Schief, “Plädoyer für die Prostituierten,” 5–13, 11.

⁴¹ Terzieff, *Sex in Fernost*, 20–21.

⁴² Terzieff, *Sex in Fernost*, 6, 7, 15, 97.

⁴³ Terzieff, *Sex in Fernost*, 93–94.

⁴⁴ Kempadoo, “Introduction: Globalizing Sex Workers’ Rights,” 4; Thanh-Dam Truong, *Sex, Money and Morality. Prostitution and Tourism in Southeast Asia* (London: Zed Books, 1990).

⁴⁵ Strobulutz, *Prostitution für Touristen*, 12, 45. See also Terzieff, *Sex in Fernost*, 12.

Developed in West Germany during the 1980s in concordance with international sex worker activism, which often ran counter to strands of feminist activism that explicitly criticized sex tourism as linked to exploitation allegedly inherent to prostitution, the movement sought to decriminalize and destigmatize sex work while improving working conditions for sex workers.⁴⁶ The 1983 collection, *Prostitution for Tourists*, quoted Pieke Biermann—a leading activist within the movement—in conjunction with a number of theoretical texts to use sex workers' calls for the destigmatization of prostitution as a simultaneous call to destigmatize sex tourists and undermine feminist critiques of sexual exploitation. Since the movement also fought for fair working conditions, this convergence of sex tourist and sex worker rights activists looks more like discursive instrumentalization than solidarity. However, regarding its historical context, it is significant that some sex tourists were able to and did articulate new justifications for their sexual activity abroad using decontextualized reference to progressive sexual politics.

At the same time, the opposition between “schizophrenic” German prostitutes and Thai prostitutes operated in tandem with a wider recasting of the supposedly pre-modern as a sexualized draw to certain travel destinations. Sexual possibility and exotic setting could themselves become markers of a pre-modern, erotic past located in destinations on the fringes of Europe.⁴⁷ In reporting on Gran Canaria, a popular gay tourist destination, in 1971 *du&ich* projected the past onto the island's landscape, writing, “little villages, whose houses one could only describe as huts and whose African/Arabic character cannot be denied.”⁴⁸ However, the magazine advised readers that “you will quickly forget this first almost romantic impression, because you have now arrived in Las Palmas and that means that you are in the middle of modernity.”⁴⁹ Located at the crossroads of both time and space, the African/Arabic huts of the countryside were rendered romantic by the modernity of the big city, which offered possibilities to relax with access to both modern comforts and pre-modern landscapes.⁵⁰ In Gran Canaria, West German, white gay tourists imagined a combination of European modernity and African primitivity as creating an enticing tourist space, which was only constrained by Franco-era laws.⁵¹

The discontent with the constraints of modern society also cropped up in more concrete terms in gay discussions of sex tourism. According to Georg U., a 43-year-old decorator from Munich, vacation gave him the opportunity “to gather strength for work and job-related stress.” Georg U. explained that “I only get this through sex. On vacation I can be intimate with a partner ten times a day.” Concluding his report in no uncertain terms, Georg U. argued that “Sex is just part of vacation. Whoever says the opposite is either uptight [*verklemmt*] or a hypocrite.”⁵² In coupling the need for release from “job-related stress” with the claim that those who criticized his sexual behavior were “uptight,” Georg U. positioned capitalist modernity and bourgeois moralism as interrelated limitations to sexual pleasure at home, which could be remedied through liberation of sexuality abroad. When read even more capaciously, sex on vacation was necessary for the maintenance of modernity.

⁴⁶ Mareen Heying, *Huren in Bewegung: Kämpfe von Sexarbeiterinnen in Deutschland und Italien, 1980 bis 2001* (Essen: Klartext Verlag, 2019).

⁴⁷ For a discussion on sex tourism as time travel framed as reactions to West German feminism, see: Ulrike Schaper, “Reisen in eine vorfeministische Vergangenheit: Bundesdeutscher Sextourismus und das Verhältnis zur ‘Dritten Welt,’” *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 69, no. 3–4 (2018): 170–84.

⁴⁸ “Gran Canaria,” *du&ich* (July 1971) 47.

⁴⁹ “Gran Canaria,” 47.

⁵⁰ “Gran Canaria,” 47.

⁵¹ Gran Canaria was not the only international travel destination in Franco's Spain. As Javier Fernández Galeano shows, Málaga also drew gay travelers from elsewhere in Europe, even as the province became a site for intermittent anti-gay repression. Javier Fernández Galeano, “Is He a ‘Social Danger’? The Franco Regime's Judicial Prosecution of Homosexuality in Málaga under the Ley de Vagos Maleantes,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 25, no. 1 (2016): 1–31.

⁵² “Zu zweit oder allein in Urlaub?,” *du&ich* (December 1978): 3.

Some guides also marketed authentic and natural pre-modern societies as creating freedom and eroticism for tourists through abjection. Florian Rosenstiehl's 1983 guide, *Herzbergführer Philippinen* (*Herzberg Guide to the Philippines*), related the sexual titillation of this place to the lack of regulation, the "uncivilized" chaos and the "dirt" there, which enabled endless opportunities and a wide spectrum of sexual experiences, forbidden by the standards of Western morality. Opposing the "countries in the Third World" to Switzerland, understood as the epitome of cleanliness and thus boringness, the guide stated, "we are drawn there [to the Third World] because where there is dirt, there are possibilities, there is eroticism to the point of perversion, there are opportunities to the point of criminality. Where there is filth, there is power outside legality, there is life outside morality."⁵³ The reference to sexual experiences that broke the boundaries of Western sexual morality in the inclusion of the perverse was here directly related to the social context, which was characterized with stereotypes of a backward vivaciousness. At the same time, the location of perversion, dirt, and erotic *outside* the confines of morality and legality clarified the boundary between backward yet exciting uncivilization and modern yet inhibited Western civilization. Florian Rosenstiehl, the author of the guide, characterized West German society as obsessed with order [*Ordnungs-Gesellschaft*] and therefore boring and neglecting the desire for adventure [*Abenteuerlust*].⁵⁴ References to the excitement that tourist spaces cast as primitive offered in contrast to the "civilization" of Europe permeated publications, from *Praline* to literature to individual guides.⁵⁵ The exciting life outside of morality was made possible by the—here also symbolically charged—dirt and the freedom from the constraints of modern society.⁵⁶

Capitalist modernity, job stress, alienated prostitutes, bourgeois sexual morality, and lesbian feminists all functioned as points of criticism and discontent for this spectrum of guides, ads, and tourists. Similarly, there was a very wide range of ways in which these same actors identified the possibilities abroad to remedy these frustrations. Across the board however, we see a maintenance of a racialized hierarchy through the construction of separate temporalities. By casting destinations as unchanging, primordial paradises, and locating exoticized racial difference within the context of pre-modernity, white, West German tourists, commentators, and guides, gay and straight, issued criticism at modernity, while simultaneously locating that modernity in Western Europe. The proliferation of sexual discourses in the aftermath of the 1960s did little to challenge this much longer-term construction. On the contrary, it was precisely through the varied forms of media and discontent with new social and political formulations that many men could reclaim the temporal logics of racialized desire.

Sexoticization of Bodies

The sexotic was not just located in tourist spaces, but also on racialized bodies. Editors and travel writers alike used publications through the 1970s and 1980s to make sense of perceived sexual freedom through the language of race. Their assumptions resonated with long-standing cultural images that linked sexual attraction to racialized bodies by which ethno-sexual encounters enhanced erotic desire and pleasure.⁵⁷ What was particular here, however,

⁵³ Florian Rosenstiehl, *Herzbergführer Philippinen* (Munich: Herzbergverlag, 1983), 17.

⁵⁴ Rosenstiehl, 17.

⁵⁵ References to naturalness upheld this dichotomy of primitiveness. "Die andere Haut lockt," *Praline*, no. 13 (1973): 8–9, 9; Bodo Kirchoff, "Im Reich der Ungeliebten. Deutsche Szenen aus Bangkok," *TransAtlantik*, no. 5 (1982): 47; The connection between primitivity, dirt, and excitement was not limited to discussions of Asian destinations, but places like Kenya as well. *Kenia* (Munich: Nelles, 1985), 295. It also was not necessarily just a sexual phenomenon, but could engender other forms of excitement as well. Robert Treichler, *Südostasien selbst entdecken: Von Robert Treichler, der dreieinhalb Jahre in Asien verbrachte und 278000 Kilometer machte* (Zurich: Regenbogen-Verlag, 1979).

⁵⁶ For social constructions of "dirt," see Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger. An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 2002).

⁵⁷ Joane Nagel, *Race, Ethnicity, and Sexuality. Intimate Intersections, Forbidden Frontiers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

were the ways in which this process also became a means through which white, West German men articulated discontent with post-1960s German society. The sexual repression of the metropole here was filtered through the language of *European* sexual liberation. In short: the construction of racialized bodies was now also about the failures of West Germany's sexual revolution.

In many instances, white writers and travelers linked sexual freedom to Blackness, as several successive *du&ich* articles in the late 1970s show. Advertising Haiti as a "vacation paradise for homosexuals," *du&ich* explained in June 1977 that in addition to no age of consent laws and year-round summer weather, what made Haiti particularly appealing was that "the natives know no sexual taboos," which probably alluded to an allegedly general openness concerning sex.⁵⁸ Columnist Valentino Rhonheimer confirmed this assessment in the next issue, writing that "there are absolutely no sexual taboos there."⁵⁹ In its spread on Haiti in March of the following year, *du&ich* linked sexual possibility even more explicitly to racial otherness, reporting that "the Black erotic is understood as something natural."⁶⁰ The association between abundant, uncomplicated sex and Blackness was further clarified in *du&ich*'s discussion of possible vacation spots in January 1978, which described Senegal as "a paradise for lovers of young little N* [*N*lein*], who are scarcely to be surpassed in their sexual experience and attachment."⁶¹ Sexualization here was inextricably connected to deeply racist categories.

Evading sexual taboos for white, West German men involved the simultaneous transgression of racial hierarchies and their re-enactment. These descriptions reveal that not only did tourists imagine that Haitians knew no taboos and that taboos still existed in the minds of white tourists and the society from which they came, but also that there was a connected racial taboo transgressed in these encounters. The taboos that still structured sex between men (and with boys across the age of consent) at home could therefore be evaded through the disruption of the related but separate taboo of interracial sex. That this racial taboo was deeply charged with sexual meaning can be read in tabloid papers and men's magazines during the 1970s, which explicitly addressed the sexual quality and sexual attractiveness of "dark skin."⁶² As Linda Williams argues in her study of US-American pornography, the transgression of the separate taboo of crossing racial boundaries in sex—mainly by acts between white women and Black men—used to invoke fear or images of power-ridden sexual abuse in the context of the racial slavery of the US South.⁶³ Although German sex tourists did not act in the same historical context, their sexotization of the encounters similarly also built on a transgressive moment, which in its latent breaking of the taboo of interracial sex potentially increased the excitement of the sexual experience, while at the same time potentially also eroticizing racialized hierarchies for white, West German men. "Many tourists do not seek white sand, but black sex at the beach of the Indian Ocean, above all the Germans," claimed the news magazine *Der Spiegel* in an article about the Kenyan government's attempts to fight sex tourism.⁶⁴ Access to the "Black erotic" that was associated with increased pleasure of sex abroad was at the core of tourist motivations to seek sexual encounters on vacation.⁶⁵

⁵⁸ "Urlaubsrenner '77," *du&ich* (June 1977): 61.

⁵⁹ "Blick hinter die Kulissen der Redaktion," *du&ich* (July 1977): 11.

⁶⁰ "Haiti Intim," *du&ich* (March 1978): 3.

⁶¹ Edited from the original. "Wohin im nächsten Urlaub?," *du&ich* (January 1978): 16.

⁶² See for example the article series "Dunkle Haut bei uns" (Dark skin here with us) that ran in the *Praline* in 1972 and 1973, featuring women of color living in Germany, their sexual experiences, and images of their naked bodies.

⁶³ Linda Williams, "Skin Flicks on the Racial Border: Pornography, Exploitation, and Interracial Lust," in *Porn Studies*, ed. Linda Williams, Heather Butler, and Richard Cante (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 271–308.

⁶⁴ Alles verpufft. Mit einer Moralkampagne will die Regierung in Nairobi den weißen Sex-Tourismus eindämmen, *Der Spiegel*, no. 46 (1982): 191.

⁶⁵ Williams, "Skin Flicks," 275. See also Julia Meszaros and Christina Bazzaroni, "From Taboo to Tourist Industry: The Construction of Interracial Intimacies between Black Men and White Women in Colonial and Contemporary

Further troubling the sexotization of Blackness was the reference to the eroticization of youth, here distinctly racialized. In their discussion of Senegal, the editors of *du&ich* placed young boys (whose ages are not disclosed) as overly experienced. As Estelle Freedman describes in her careful study of the conceptual construction of rape in the United States, oversexualization of young, Black girls helped to exclude them from the legal and social category of who could be raped.⁶⁶ Here, a similar dynamic is at play. The eroticization of youthfulness, as described in the Senegalese context and visually depicted through photography in the Haitian context, is implicitly justified by the framing of young, Black boys as both naively enthusiastic and experienced beyond their years. The alleged taboolessness of Haitian or Senegalese society hinged on reducing young boys to racialized tropes of hypersexual partners, erasing for white, West German men the possibility of overlapping forms of exploitation. Finally, the appeal of no age of consent laws became important to men who, after the decriminalization of sex between men in West German in 1969, desired boys under the new legal age of consent, set at 21 in 1969 for same-sex desiring men and lowered to 18 in 1973. Travel to Haiti or Senegal could both offer racialized pleasures and provide a means for some men to skirt new, domestic laws.⁶⁷

Across the board, age and, specifically, references to sex with underage boys and girls, remained an important part of sexotization, even if sexotization and “sex tourism” also exceeded questions of child sexual abuse. During the 1970s and 1980s, child sexuality became a central object of leftist and alternative attempts to transform and liberate society.⁶⁸ In this context, it was possible to include references to sex with children as part of wider conversations about liberating sexuality, beyond the narrow networks of pedophile organizing.⁶⁹ In referring to the exoticism of Thai and Filipina women, media coverage and guides aimed at heterosexual men described physical features such as almond eyes, brown velvet skin, petite, slender bodies with slender legs and black hair to prove (exotic) attractiveness as a bodily feature.⁷⁰ In some ways, sexotization actually made the boundaries of age less clear. Age was a crucial component of sexotization. At a 1974 conference on the economic impacts of tourism, one of the presenters, a travel journalist, claimed that “certainly, sex with dark-skinned girls plays a considerable role in the decision for an exotic destination.”⁷¹ The use of the term “girls” [*Mädchen*] was widely used in reference to Southeast Asian women, regardless of age. While the infantilization of women is

Times,” *Sociology Compass* 8, no. 11 (2014): 1256–68, 1258, who argue, that “Colonial economies of forbidden desires laid the groundwork for contemporary neoliberal economies of desire.”

⁶⁶ Estelle B. Freedman, *Redefining Rape: Sexual Violence in the Era of Suffrage and Segregation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013).

⁶⁷ Jan-Henrik Friedrichs astutely argues that the development of European pedophile networks heavily depended on travel literature and the proliferation of racialized imagery during the 1970s and 1980s. Jan-Henrik Friedrichs, “Transnational Networks of Child Sexual Abuse and Consumerism: Edward Brongersma and the Pedophilia Debate of the 1970s and 1980s,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 31, no. 2 (2022): 169–91, 171.

⁶⁸ Sven Reichardt, *Authentizität und Gemeinschaft* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2014), 263–67, on the Kinderladenbewegung as a way to initiate social change through promoting and supporting childhood sexuality, see Anthony D. Kauders, “Drives in Dispute: The West German Student Movement, Psychoanalysis, and the Search for a New Emotional Order, 1967–1971,” *Central European History* 44, no. 4 (2011): 711–31, 722–23.

⁶⁹ Tobias Neef, for instance, examines how the “taboo” of pedophilia during the 1970s and 1980s partially, if briefly, eroded. Tobias Neef, “Das ‘stärkste Tabu’: Zum Tabu der Pädosexualität und seiner Infragestellung,” *Indes* 3, no. 2 (2014): 81–90.

⁷⁰ *Sexparadies für Männer*, 12, 35; Floreal, *Die Freuden von Bangkok und Singapur*, 16, 50, 56, 58, 62; Peter Abel: *Was, Wie Wo. Ein Handbuch das Beste aus einem Thailand-Aufenthalt zu machen*, 4th ed. (Bangkok: Far East Publication, 1977), 217; Robert Treichler and Michael Möbius, *Südostasien selbst entdecken. Mit 70 Karten und Stadtplänen* (Zurich, Cochabamba: Regenbogen-Verlag, 1984), 111. “Tor im Fels,” *Der Spiegel*, no. 22 (1978): 236; Stefan Loose, *Südost-Asien Handbuch*, 1st ed. (Berlin: Verlag Stefan Lose, 1978/79), 417. For a contemporary analysis of the image of the Asian women in the press, see Susanne Lipka, *Das käufliche Glück in Südostasien. Heiratshandel und Sextourismus*, 3rd rev. ed. (Münster: Verlag Westfälisches Dampfboot 1989), 17–24.

⁷¹ Wolfgang Boller, “Erleben und Verhalten Deutscher Ferntouristen: Sie wissen nicht, wo sie waren,” in *Ferntourismus. Ein Mittel der Entwicklungshilfe und Völkerverständigung? Bericht über eine Tagung des Studienkreises für*

observable in other geographic contexts, including in the Global North, the use of the term “girls” paralleled the infantilization of Asian men using the term “boys” [*Knaben, Jungen*, or even *Boys*] and here also fed into other rhetorical strategies that dehumanized Asian women as flowers, orchids, monkeys, cats, or dolls or diminished Asian women as females [*Weiberchen*].⁷² These ambiguities around age were not limited to descriptions of travel to East Asia. As continuous references to “girls,” “boys,” and “youths,” together with warnings about age of consent laws made clear, West German eroticization of youth could intersect with and enhance racialized fantasies.

Although often riddled with ambiguity and innuendo, the eroticization of underage boys and girls was also made explicit. Gay guides and publications, like in decades prior, walked a line between the eroticization of youth and legal standards, yet took advantage of the openings of 1970s debates about child sexuality to reference explicitly sex with boys under the age of eighteen or offer information on local school vacations.⁷³ However, the eroticization of youth was never the sole purview of same-sex desiring men. On the contrary, guides for heterosexual men also made explicit references to sex with underage girls. The author of *Sex in Fernost*, who claimed to have had sex with 500 Asian sex workers, for example, clearly stated that he had had sex with girls as young as eleven years old.⁷⁴ In a pseudoscientific reflection about Asian women’s capability to orgasm (*Orgasmusfähigkeit*), he stated that young girls around the age of eleven or twelve were particularly capable of orgasm, even more so than older girls around the age of fourteen to fifteen. Resonating notions about civilizational difference and repressive Western sexual morality, he even claimed that this difference was the result of Western influence that had brought a sexual oppression of children that the younger girls had not yet experienced.⁷⁵ This argument did not only inject age into the sexotization of Thai women. It also linked pedosexual desire and civilizational critique and fed them into a rhetoric of sexual liberation.

Some white, West German tourists also connected the erotic appeal of pre-modernity more specifically to biological essentialism. In addition to appeals to the “natural” Black erotic that could be found from West Africa to Haiti, which implicitly located the eroticism of Black men as separate from Western civilization, a 1978 *du&ich* report made a similar claim about Sri Lankan men placed more explicitly in evolutionary terms. The report explained that “the Sinhalese make up the majority of the inhabitants of Sri Lanka and have unending charm. They are Indo-Germans and emigrated from Pakistan in the pre-Christian period.” While, according to this report, they may share common linguistic origins to German readers, *du&ich* emphasized their apparent biological-racial difference that made them particularly appealing sexual partners. *du&ich* clarified that “the blood of the original inhabitants [*Ureinwohner*], called Weddas, flows through their veins. The skin color varies from light brown to black. The body shape is thin and even small.” This link to a pre-Christian past, and paradoxically also to Germans, nevertheless biologically rooted them in this temporality, marking them as pre-modern and racially exotic.⁷⁶

This sexotization did not just exist in the imaginations of tourists and authors but took on a concrete, visual element. The sexotization and objectification of Asian women’s bodies was replicated in the photos, included in guidebooks, press articles, and travel brochures that

Tourismus vom 7.–8. Mai 1973 in Bensheim in Verbindung mit dem Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit, ed. Studienkreis für Tourismus e.V. (Starnberg, 1974), 27–32, 31.

⁷² *Sexparadies für Männer*, 12, 35, 40; Floreal, *Die Freuden von Bangkok und Singapore*, 16, 46, 60, 62, 72, 109. Günter Dahl, “Es muß ja nicht gleich Liebe sein,” *Stern*, no. 26 (1971): 62–67.

⁷³ See, for example, C. J. Bradbury-Robinson, “Ein Zug von Chorknaben,” trans. Alexander Ziegler, *du&ich* (May 1977): 10–16; “Wenn es Nacht wird in Marokko,” *du&ich* (March 1970): 20. On Weimar-era tensions about the eroticization of youth in gay publishing, see Javier Samper Vendrell, *The Seduction of Youth: Print Culture and Homosexual Rights in the Weimar Republic* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020).

⁷⁴ Terzieff, *Sex in Fernost*, 5, 16.

⁷⁵ Terzieff, *Sex in Fernost*, 100.

⁷⁶ “Ceylon,” *du&ich* (November 1978): 4.

viewed (half-)naked women or sexualized images of Asian women with flowers in their hair, lascivious and sexualized gestures such as sucking on a straw, and a promising smile.⁷⁷ Images of half-naked women in sexually charged poses or clear reference to the sex industry often accompanied press articles on sex tourism to Thailand and the Philippines or guidebook sections on nightlife facilities. However, even imagery which was not directly linked to the sex industry, visually communicated a notion of sexual availability and servitude of Asian women to Western tourists. The cover of the guidebook *Was, Wie, Wo. Ein Handbuch, das Beste aus einem Thailand-Aufenthalt zu machen* (What, How, Where: A Guide to Making the Most of a Stay in Thailand), that appeared in several editions during the 1970s, assembled a square collage of three-by-three photos.⁷⁸ The images seemingly formed a fragmented triptych of Thai “essence” and tourist “musts” through the visual representation of men and women who, for a white, German audience, were supposed to be perceived as Thai. The nine images were arranged around a heavily made-up, smiling woman in the center, whose unclothed body was hinted at in the cut, implicitly lying outside of the frame. Of the remaining eight images, four showed no people, but typical souvenirs for sale, such as jewelry set with precious stones and a piece of silk, or means of transport, such as a sailing ship (also alluding to the natural, tourist amenities of beach and sea) and a tuk-tuk. The remaining motifs showed a man in a market scene, a scantily-clad woman with diving equipment, presumably a diving instructor, a woman smiling while holding a basket of buns and bread for the camera, and a woman presumably in a bar scene, who stood on a dance floor in a fringed bikini while the surrounding mirrors reflected her from different perspectives. The selection of images thus not only gathered a disproportionate number of motifs of women, but also depicted them exclusively in sexualized poses and service work.

The photographic depiction of young, Southeast Asian men and boys in tourist literature marketed to gay men adopted markedly similar visual motifs. *du&ich* during the 1970s and 1980s was equally replete with images of men and boys that deployed similar visual aesthetics to emphasize supposed subservience. In 1982, travel guide Peter Voigt placed an ad in *du&ich*, offering readers private tours and “Asian dreams in the paradise of the Philippines and Thailand.”⁷⁹ The ad featured a young model, slightly bent over with his back turned, but looking over his shoulder and smiling at the camera. In 1987, the agency Thailand-Travel, an affiliate of the Berlin-based Horizont-Reisen, advertised “tropical experiences in winter” in Thailand, where “dreams come true” using the exact same photo that appeared in Peter Voigt’s ad five years earlier. Thailand-Travel paired this image with a collection of photos of Thai youths in varying states of undress, backed by palm trees and the beach.⁸⁰ The language of paradise and dreams helped to underscore the exoticism present in the imagery, which hinged on racialized notions of Asian sexual receptiveness through the positioning of the models. The models were depicted either bent over or looking over their shoulder at the viewer, referencing their imagined roles as the receptive sexual partners for implicitly white men. As Nguyen Tan Hoang reminds us, representations of Asian men as receptive partners in sex with other men—or “bottomhood”—cannot be simply conflated with Oriental passivity or effeminization.⁸¹ Certainly, the reference to Asian bottoms alone is not evidence enough of this sort of conflation, nor can the implied availability of the models be confused with passivity. In many ways, the opposite is the case when paired

⁷⁷ See e.g. Abel, *Was, Wie, Wo* (1977): 216, 223; Historisches Archiv zum Tourismus (HAT), D06 NUR 1974–1990 Katalog Neckermann-Fernreisen 74/75 “Die Welt in guten Händen”, 11, 13; HAT, D06-Scharnow 5 1970–80, Katalog Scharnow Flugreisen Winter 74/75, 108; Dahl, “Es muss ja nicht gleich Liebe sein”, 62–64.

⁷⁸ The cover of the guidebook, *Was, Wie, Wo*, which appeared in several editions during the 1970s, promised to make “the most of a stay in Thailand” and assembled a square collage of three-by-three photos which appeared in several editions during the 1970s, promised to make “the most of a stay in Thailand.”

⁷⁹ “Anzeigen,” *du&ich* (November 1982): 48.

⁸⁰ “DU&ICH Kontakte,” *du&ich* (January 1987): 21.

⁸¹ Nguyen Tan Hoang, *A View from the Bottom: Asian American Masculinity and Sexual Representation* (Durham, NC: New York University Press, 2014), 2.

with references to Asian men and boys as the active initiators of sexual contact. However, just as the guidebook *What, Where, How*, drew on a visual repertoire of Asian sexual availability and subservience to entice readers to Bangkok, so too did Horizont-Reisen use visual references to bottomhood and exotic settings to advertise its services to an implicitly white audience. Long-standing tropes of youthful, Asian subservience, here located on the body, operated as useful tools to market Thailand and the Philippines as eroticized spaces to West German travelers.

Oscillation between ambiguity and explicit reference to age both intersected with and mirrored the murkiness of sexotization. Visual and literary depictions of people of color were presented in a wide range of travel literature for white, West Germans to consume. These depictions often drew on civilizational discourses to enhance the racial alterity of possible sexual partners for white tourists, and the sexotization of bodies cannot be fully extracted from other modes of sexotization. Instead, it provided an additional means for white, West German men to negotiate the ambivalences of the sexual revolution. Societies without taboos and sexually experienced youth, who simultaneously were made to represent exotic, sometimes-illicit fantasies of racial crossing, offered an alternative to the constraints of everyday life. However, construction of space was crucial to this process, providing a fantastical location to live out sexual desires in ways that reinforced exoticization.

Sexotization of Space

The sexotization of bodies was intertwined with and even dependent on the sexotization of space, which drew on long-standing associations between hot climates, increased lust, and racialized sexuality.⁸² “Sun, sex, and sand” continued to appeal to white, West Germans after the 1960s, even as they made new sense out of this trifecta. Tropical vegetation, sandy beaches, and sunsets often served as the backdrop to images of happy couples or (hopeful) singles, with half-naked women or men smiling auspiciously, emphasizing their exotic difference while also creating an imagined space into which the tourist could enter in order to experience heightened pleasure.⁸³ German travel agencies in their promotional material and catalogs enticed potential customers with images of women at the beach or outdoor pools or created collages in which beach scenes and bar scenes were arranged next to each other, conveying the implicit promise that women’s bodies were present and sexually available as part of the holiday experience.⁸⁴ In the 1970s, the catalogs also included explicit images of services in the context of tourism sex work.⁸⁵ Captions alluded to sexual opportunities for (implicitly-)white men to be found in these spaces, promising that nobody had to stay alone: “If you want a charming companion, you never search in vain,” assured the

⁸² Littlewood, *Sultry Climates*, 194–97. Referring to the history of beach vacations, sunbathing, and tanning, Ian Littlewood argued that they have strong sensual and sexual connotations. Their fascination and sexual implications were based on the belief that hot climates led to relaxed morals and increased lust, as well as the association of dark skin with “primitive” sexuality.

⁸³ This tendency was rooted in a broader trend of projecting sexual pleasure on a foreign destination separated from the bounds of time and space. Jessica Jacobs, for instance, shows how tourist imaginings of destination spaces erase local geographies through constructing the so-called Third World as timeless. For the case of Egypt’s Sinai peninsula, she shows how tourists understand the wilderness of the desert as a marginal space allowing them to get “closer to nature” through sex. Jacobs, *Sex, Tourism and the Postcolonial Encounter*, xiv, 1–2.

⁸⁴ HAT, D06_5_Scharnow_1970–1980, Scharnow macht Ferien von Mensch zu Mensch, Flugreisen, Winter 74/75, 108; HAT, D06_5_Scharnow_1970–1980, Inseln und Küsten Sonne und Süden, Scharnow Winter 76/77, 85; a German leaflet about Pattaya, authored by the Tourist Organization of Thailand, for example, centered its imagery around the motif of women in bikinis, demonstrating how the imbrication of space and racialized desire permeated materials not explicitly oriented to the pursuit of sexual possibilities, HAT, T06_XX_81_Thailand, Tourist Organization of Thailand.

⁸⁵ HAT, D06_5_Scharnow_1970–1980, Die TS-Traumwelt mit dem Schutzengel Service, Touropa-Scharnow, Sommer ’73, 71; HAT, D06_NUR_1974–1990, Die Welt in guten Händen. Neckermann-Fernreisen 74/75, 11.

Neckermann long-distance travel catalog from 1974/75.⁸⁶ The proximity and sometimes interwovenness of gay and straight tourist spaces reflected not only discursive but also spatial entanglement. Civilizational othering and the sexotization of bodies were closely connected to tourism's spatial dimensions as well.

Beyond just evoking abstract images of romance and sex, travel guides offered a remarkably unified way for German travelers, gay and straight, to navigate and consume spaces in unfamiliar locations.⁸⁷ Guided by maps, recommendations, and long-form descriptions from *Spartacus*, *Sexparadies für Männer* (*Sex Paradise for Men*), *Südostasien selbst entdecken* (*Discover Southeast Asia for Yourself*) and other serial guides, men explored predominantly urban areas.⁸⁸ Bangkok and Manila were important to straight and gay men alike for overlapping reasons. *Stadtplan für Männer* (*City Map for Men*), a guide that mapped out these spaces in Bangkok, combined businesses that catered to gay and straight men alike in one singular guide. This overlap was not an exception, but reflected a wider range of guidebooks during this period that were targeted primarily at heterosexual men yet also provided information for male tourists seeking other men.⁸⁹ The expansion of tourist infrastructures in Bangkok and Manila during the 1970s converged with their framings as exoticized spaces. Editors of guidebooks marketed to both gay and straight audiences chose the same spaces to promise their readers sexual freedom and racialized pleasure.

Guides for Southeast Asia conflated sexualized bodies and geographies and played on sexualized cultural stereotypes to promote sex as a tourist attraction. The cover of the travel guide *Sexparadies für Männer—Manila*, is emblematic of the equation of the geographical space with its sexualized women and the prospect of sexual encounters with them. The name of the capital of the Philippines and one center of the Philippine sex industry Manila is placed just below the words “sex paradise for men.” The title ends in a colon, followed by images, indicating that the images are representative of Manila. However, these images did not depict geographic space but rather bikini-clad women in presumably bar contexts. The guide elaborated, “Manila is not a city, for which you have to travel around half the world, because you need to see it. What you need to see are the ‘dolls’ of Ermita, the ‘sinful quarter’ of Manila.”⁹⁰ Hence, Manila is here visually and verbally reduced to the bodies of Filipina women and the sex industry established as, in the similar words of Rudy Koshar, “what ought to be seen.”⁹¹

Although urban spaces were popular, many men also wanted to experience the spatial possibilities of the tropics, which could contribute to the pleasures of sexualized travel. Images in particular worked to catalyze pleasure by locating sexual opportunities in settings like the beach or among tropical vegetation. In March 1978, *du&ich* advertised its “Grand Travel Report: Haiti Intimate” with a photo of two naked, young men reclining on the beach with only a soccer ball pointedly covering and emphasizing their genitalia.⁹² In the report itself, *du&ich* paired an image of one of the young men featured on the cover, here similarly reclining on the beach but now wearing shorts, with the tip that “young people possess plenty of time but little money.”⁹³ The next page contained two images of the other young man from the cover, again relaxing on the beach and wearing shorts in one image and no clothes in the other, with the caption “students gladly earn pocket money.”⁹⁴ The Haitian beach became a contradictory site for relaxation and sexual labor, with the implication that German men could easily access both.

⁸⁶ See e.g. HAT, D06 NUR_1974–1990, Die Welt in guten Händen. Neckermann-Fernreisen 74/75, 13.

⁸⁷ See John Urry, *Consuming Places* (London: Routledge, 2002), 25.

⁸⁸ Treichler and Möbius, *Südostasien selbst entdecken*; *Sexparadies für Männer*.

⁸⁹ Terzieff, *Sex in Fernost*, 59–63; Abel, Was, Wie, Wo, 231.

⁹⁰ *Sexparadies für Männer*, 7.

⁹¹ See for guidebooks' role in the construction of tourist sights, Koshar, “What Ought To Be Seen,” 323–40.

⁹² “Cover,” *du&ich* (March 1978): 1.

⁹³ “Haiti Intim,” 3.

⁹⁴ “Haiti Intim,” 4.

At once exotic and phallic, the palm tree was a particularly prevalent trope around which fantasies crystalized. It was a common attribute adorning hotel complexes and beaches in travel catalogs. In the promotional material, palm leaves often formed the picture's foreground, through which one could peer at the beach action and the half-naked bodies in the middle ground against the background of sand or sea. The travel catalog of the Touropa Scharnow company from summer 1973, for example, used such a photo motif for its travel offers to Togo.⁹⁵ The image formed the background of a two-page spread that listed travel offers to Togo as well as informative texts on this newly-added destination. A palm leaf in the foreground showed the reader a view of a white and a Black woman lying on the beach in bikinis. The color value of the latter's skin in the photo almost matched the color black, thus underlining the racialized view of the women. The copy inserted next to the women praised the "permissiveness of the interpersonal relationships" in Togo, among other things. Here the palm tree served as the frame and central icon of racialized and sexotized sexual opportunities.

The prevalence of the palm tree was as a visual guarantor of the exotic atmosphere, the warm tropical climate, and a symbol of increased sexual opportunity is also illustrated in the neologism "*Palmensexer*,"⁹⁶ which one sex guide from 1973, *Die Freuden von Bangkok und Singapur*, created for people who had sex under or around palm trees. The guide, otherwise aimed at a heterosexual male audience, went on to interlock the sexotization of bodies and spaces in a tongue-in-cheek chapter focusing on gay tourism, explaining that "dozens of transvestites and lanky, overly slim, soft-skinned Thai rascals [*Thaibürschchen*] walk around the beach area and are happy about every interested person who asks them for a closer look under the next palm tree."⁹⁷ For the author, these opportunities were indicative of a "soft Orient" where gender roles were blurred, advising readers that often one did not know if the object of their attraction was a young boy or a "short-haired, flat-chested girl."⁹⁸ However, once the tourist came into contact with a potential sex partner, according to the guide, "then the Gulf of Siam roars."⁹⁹ Sexual opportunity and gender transgression were therefore not limited to racialized bodies alone, but were enabled by and represented in specific references to space.

Moreover, sexotized spaces were understood to have a disinhibiting effect. By entering these spaces, tourists did not only hope to leave behind an anti-pleasure, German culture and uptight, disinterested, or closeted German partners but overcome their own inhibitions. Even as some travel guides and the press explicitly argued that ideas of Asian sexual permissiveness were mostly (sexual) wishful fantasies and pointed out the strict sexual morality in the travel destinations, they indicated just how common these fantasies were.¹⁰⁰ The sexotized space and the sexual ability of the inhabitants was even said to have rubbed off on the tourists and improved their own sexual skills. As *Sexparadies für Männer* promised, "the provocative beauty of the girls, the cheerful atmosphere and the informality of being together

⁹⁵ HAT, D06-Scharnow 5 1970–80, Die TS-Traumwelt mit dem Schutzengel Service, Touropa-Scharnow, Sommer '73, 38–39.

⁹⁶ Floreal, *Die Freuden von Bangkok und Singapur*, 50.

⁹⁷ Floreal, *Die Freuden von Bangkok und Singapur*, 101. It is unclear what the authors of the guide meant by the term "transvestite," which was used in other contexts both to enhance the exoticization of the space while also "warning" ostensibly straight tourists through the transphobic framework of deceit. As scholars like Dredge Byung'chu Käng and Rosalind Morris explain, late twentieth-century Thai sex/gender systems do not easily correspond to European systems, but instead cluster around the key terms "kathoei" and "tom" that referred to a multiplicity of socially meaningful sexual and gender identities. Dredge Byung'chu Käng, "Kathoei 'In Trend': Emergent Genderscapes, National Anxieties and the Re-Signification of Male-Bodied Effeminacy in Thailand," *Asian Studies Review* 36, no. 4 (2012): 479; Rosalind C. Morris, "Three Sexes and Four Sexualities: Redressing the Discourses on Gender and Sexuality in Contemporary Thailand," *positions* 2, no. 1 (1994): 15–43.

⁹⁸ Floreal, *Die Freuden von Bangkok und Singapur*, 100.

⁹⁹ Floreal, *Die Freuden von Bangkok und Singapur*, 101.

¹⁰⁰ Ole Helmhausen, *Kenia*, 1st ed. (Cologne: Hayit, 1987), 103; Abel: Was, Wie, Wo (1977): 35; Hilde Heim-Buchmann, "Tatort Berlin: Sex-Tourismus und Mädchenhandel," *Zitty* 11, no. 6 (1987): 31–37, 36.

can awaken a 'potency potential' that 'men' in Germany did not know or thought they had already lost."¹⁰¹ This atmosphere was even said to cure impotence: "No one should declare himself impotent until he has tested the girls of Manila," warned the guide, which prescribed a cure in Manila for those whose lust had died in the "tristesse of German bedrooms."¹⁰²

The physical landscape of tourist destinations could also serve a practical purpose, as beaches could be a potential meeting spot for sexual partners. Gay magazines from the 1970s and 1980s in particular reported on beaches that were congregating spots for sex workers. One unnamed contributor reported in *du&ich* in 1974 that after spending only ten or fifteen minutes on a beach in Senegal, he and his friend were approached by boys, "all very talkative and eager to make contact."¹⁰³ Nearby dunes could also offer privacy for an immediate encounter. As *du&ich* contributor Joachim Winter described in 1983, he was approached by a Tunisian youth who "saw exactly that the shrubbery began behind the dunes, thick and without a view from outside."¹⁰⁴ The dunes and beaches therefore merged imagined exoticism with practical opportunities to construct a landscape flush with erotic possibilities.

The construction of space was necessary for these tourist encounters. Not only was it understood as abstractly linked to sexual pleasure and racialized bodies, but it provided new, practical opportunities, even if some of those opportunities only existed in the minds of tourists. Sex under the palms, the proliferation of bars and saunas, the hidden quality of dunes, and the relaxed dress code of the beach that offered a chance to show and gaze at (half-)naked bodies were all generative of sexual pleasures that could not be found at home. Coupled with the idea that tropical destinations could have a disinhibiting effect for both tourists and locals alike, space operated in tandem with bodily fantasies and civilizational frameworks. All three could, for white, West German tourists, offer new remedies for the frustrations of sex at home, expressed for a post-1960s context through the re-articulation of overlapping colonial tropes.

Conclusion

When we take an integrated approach to the history of tourism, three significant points of convergence come into view. The material context in which West German travel was situated structured the experiences of men regardless of sexual identity. The expansion of package tours offered by major tourist companies like TUI and NUR both provided new opportunities for West German men as well as new points of discontent. Men participating in overlapping gay and straight networks of travel sought to ameliorate these discontents in connected, parallel, and sometimes separate ways; however, the shared travel worlds that these men inhabited generated experiences that cannot be easily disentangled along the lines of sexual identity or separately-understood markets. Similarly, the proliferation of publication and information networks, specifically but not exclusively guidebooks, provided similar points of access, blurring lines between gay and straight. Even more so, some guidebooks attempted to cater to both groups, or offered visions of heterosexuality that were unstable or even, uneasily, queer(ed). The often-erased yet occasionally referenced possibility of bisexual experiences, and the certainty that bisexual men were also participating in sexualized travel, further troubles stable categories of gay and straight and the assumed division between them. Finally, and perhaps most importantly to our analysis of sex tourism, agencies and publications both bartered in the language of racialized desire, which their customers rearticulated and repurposed, sometimes in contradictory ways, placing them in a much longer history of sex and (post-)colonial travel. Although racialized desire was often deeply

¹⁰¹ *Sexparadies für Männer*, 81.

¹⁰² *Sexparadies für Männer*, 133, 132.

¹⁰³ "Abenteuer Senegal," *du&ich* (November 1974): 16.

¹⁰⁴ Joachim Winter, "Heiss geht's her im Hammamet...," *du&ich* (January 1983): 17.

gendered, gay and straight men, as well as bisexual men and men whose desires eschewed categorization, drew on shared cultural languages to describe and market the appeal of travel to spaces marked by what they believed to be racial or civilizational difference. In highlighting how similarly they sexualized these spaces and how their projections often paralleled each other, we can interrogate how overlapping fantasies were embedded in a common cultural framework (especially in relation to race and exoticism), but also in their negotiations of the sexual revolution.

In view of these connections, breaking down analyses of sex tourism along the lines of rigid categories makes little sense, or, at the very least, cannot be universally applied. Histories of sexuality often still cleave to a hetero/homosexual binary, and there are good reasons to chart such a division. However, even if sources often reify this essentializing, dichotomous separation, we should not uncritically replicate it in our analytical frameworks. Furthermore, even when adhering exclusively to categories as they were used in historical context, straight and gay men did not desire in completely separated contexts, nor does “gay” function as an easy umbrella category for the multiplicity of non-normative desires and identities in the 1970s. Our analysis has shown how fruitful it is to ask to what extent desires and sexual acts were shaped by a common cultural context, made all the more pressing by an attention to race.

The Federal Republic of Germany provides a particularly rich case in which to conduct this analysis. West German markets were deeply important for both tourism and sex work. Scholars of both sex work and tourism, including Truong, have pointed to the high rates of German international travelers, while West German companies such as Neckermann and TUI operated networks that well exceeded the bounds of the Federal Republic.¹⁰⁵ In the twin aftermaths of the rapid expansion of the West German postwar economy and the sexual revolution, the growing tourism industry provided a useful way for West German travelers to navigate their discontent with societal change on the terrain of racialized desire. The shared set of cultural language through which men regardless of sexual orientation articulated desire for men and women of color furthermore entrenches late twentieth-century West Germany within a longer history of colonialism. In studying the specificities of West German tourism and taking together gay and straight travel in all their divides and interconnections, it becomes clear that the history of the sexual revolution cannot be disentangled from histories of racism.

¹⁰⁵ Kopper, “The Breakthrough of the Package Tour,” 67–92, 137–38; Truong, *Sex, Money and Morality*, 175.