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Pink Porn Economy: Genealogies of Transnational LGBTQ Organising

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7.1 Introduction

Can the pink porn economy and its dissemination of commercial products, its ability to generate consumers and subjectification processes be regarded as a matter of importance for studies of national and transnational formations of queer belonging and politics?¹ What about the special pink economy of male same-sex pornography—does that have anything to do with the struggles of transnational LGBTQ rights today? In this chapter I will offer an affirmative answer to both these questions and reveal the importance of examining the pink porn economy when describing the development of forms of transnational networking and political activism for sexual rights. This chapter will analyse the understudied Nordic dissemination and politics of male same-sex porn

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magazines and its rhizomatic entanglement in transnational struggles for (homo)sexual rights in the last half of the twentieth century.

Today the pink economy is a widely used concept which has a variety of meanings.² To some it describes a consumer market which responds to the purchasing powers among certain groups of queer people. This type of seemingly classless consumer market is sometimes described as one that moved from being a marginalised fringe marketplace expressing the gay and lesbian activist movement—where things such as drinks and badges were sold to cover costs for social gatherings and activities—to a thriving industry including transnational companies that cater to prospective wealthy gay and lesbian consumers as well as to self-identified queer tolerant people. IKEA and Absolut Vodka are just two of the Swedish companies that (in Sweden and other western societies or globalised spaces) market themselves towards such groups.³ Others use the idea of the pink economy to describe spaces such as gay villages in large cities (Binnie 2004), or corporate hotels, nightclubs, shops, restaurants and cafés using the rainbow flag as part of their brand (Laskar et al. 2016).

The visibility of the neoliberal pink economy today might overshadow its deep roots in the past. However, the pink economy and its creation of sexual identities, consumers and dissemination of commercial objects has a history that is of importance both in unfolding gendered struggles against heteronormativity, and for comprehensible genealogies of today's transnational LGBTQ organisations.

In *The Globalization of Sexuality* (2004) human geographer Jon Binnie discussed how two polarised intellectual streams have been active in analysing the oppression of—and strike backs by—queers in history by regarding oppression as either merely cultural or merely economical. Where the former lacks class analysis, the latter tends to miss out human agency, motivation and desire. Rather, according to Binnie, culture and economy constitute each other and should be studied together when examining the production of sexual identities, cultures and communities. Failing to acknowledge the sometimes impossible task of differentiating between desire, subjectivity processes, consumption, organising and activism in same-sex history of the last half of the twentieth century thus distorts the analysis of the past's gay and lesbian strategies against heteronormativity (Binnie 2004, pp. 52–54). This chapter studies the

rhizomatic flows of pink porn economy magazines within an extended chronological frame, albeit focusing on the 1960–1980 period. Following pink economies via the dissemination of male same-sex porn facilitates a new intersectional analysis of transnational struggles for (homo)sexual rights in the last half of the twentieth century, intricately entangled as they were in desire, gendered subjectivity processes, consumption, organising and activism—to paraphrase Binnie. An analysis of *the pornographic content* in the magazines, however, deserves a separate study—especially the pictures of young, often brown boys, or the frequent orientalism in the short stories (supposedly written by the subscribers themselves describing their own sex tourism).⁴

Further, this chapter also examines the transnational activism and networks which connected the makers, disseminators and subscribers of male same-sex porn magazines produced in Denmark and Sweden in the 1960–1970s. The data are retrieved from the magazines' articles on economic and political activities, as well as their interviews with some of the agents and activists involved. To reveal the interdependence of culture, politics and economy I use Claire Colebrook's feminist engagement with and developments of Deleuze and Guattari's device of concepts. The description of the concepts (in italics) below follows Colebrook's *Understanding Deleuze* (2002).

Desire is used to describe *machinic processes* of increasing expansions, connections and creations (both in a human and post-human sense). The making and dissemination of pink porn links into a machinic desire that strives to expand contacts and relations for business, sex, politics and activism, and is thus a clear but previously neglected example of the politics of in-between. The pink porn desire machine sees no defined borders between the above activities: one person, idea or situation can connect to some or all of them. These desire processes comprise *rhizomatic connections*, i.e. random and in a decentralised manner: a subscriber can turn out to be an organiser of male-to-male sexual or political gatherings and actions, and thus become a link to new subscribers or future guests of a pink B&B. Hence each connection that is made rhizomatically may be a beginning of something unplanned such as a new idea, relation or activity. The desire process' rhizomatic connections and interactions, lacking beginnings and endings, shape *assemblages*: compositions of connections

and interactions such as relations, ideas, abilities (like pink social gatherings, B&B accommodations, contact ad magazines, organisations, political congresses and/or -actions, etc.). Those assemblages can rhizomatically also connect to or mutate into other assemblages (such as other pink businesses, ideas, persons, political or social activities, organisations, networks or congresses) in a never-ending transnational process. By using Colebrook's (2002) engagements in Deleuze's and Guattari's device of concepts the study can broaden, deepen and complicate the description of earlier queer strategies against heteronormativity by following the pink economy's rhizomatic connections with political activism—and vice versa: political activism's rhizomatic connections with the pink economy. Furthermore, by unfolding the one-sided targeting of male subscribers of pink porn and subsequently male formations of belonging and its consequences for future transnational LGBTQ organising and some of its aims and tensions, the chapter also seeks to shed more light on the genealogical partitions of lesbian vis-à-vis gay transnational networks and the frictions in their politics.

The chapter will begin with a discussion of the commercial production of male same-sex porn and its impact on the history of male same-sex sexuality transnational organising in Northern Europe. I will then show that it is important to expose this impact so as to both shed light on the production of (homo)sexual desires, subjectification processes, identities, cultures and communities and on the historical division between the lesbian feminist vis-à-vis gay national and transnational activism and politics that followed transnational organising into the new millennium.

7.2 Risky but Profitable Politics: A Backdrop

Much has been written about how, in 1948, Axel Lundahl Madsen founded the Danish homophile organization 'Kreis av 1948', which quickly changed its name to 'The Association of 1948' (Förbundet av. 1948), and his involvement in setting up a Swedish and Norwegian subdivision of the same organisation. Within two years, the Swedish subdivision changed its name to RFSL (Riksförbundet För Sexuellt Likaberättigande)—the national homophile and later gay and lesbian

liberation organisation established in 1952 and today the largest LGBTQ organisation in Sweden (Kristiansen 2008; Söderström 1999).⁵ There has been less focus on the part he played in transnational queer organising in setting up a pink porn economy.

By 1949 Lundahl Madsen and Helmer Fogdegaard had already started the Danish homo magazine *Vennen* (The Friend) for which they openly served as editors. The Danish 'Association of 1948' and its magazine quickly engendered public offence, spread by conventional media, and resulting in Lundahl Madsen's exclusion from the liberal party's youth league, of which he had been an active member until then. Axel Lundahl Madsen also fell foul of other activists in the 'Association of 1948' when he wanted to run the organisation commercially by using income from dances, other social events and the sale of drinks to pay for its campaigning work. When he could not convince the others, he left the association. Shortly afterwards the split he and his lover Eigil Eskildsen were involved in restructuring *Vennen* as a commercial magazine. It contained a mix, featuring articles on police harassment and abuse of homosexual activities, whilst also including pictures of young men and boys (Kristiansen 2008).⁶

Turning a profit out of the pink economy during the 1950s–1960s period should also be particularly highlighted in a context where homosexuality was criminalised or regarded as an illness, and where participation in homosexual networks—as in Lundahl Madsen's case—could lead to persecution by connoting moral decay and perversion with the practitioners which, if exposed, could lead to social stigma and/or unemployment.

The risks of being revealed as a pervert also contributed to an anonymising of activists or writers, and to a praxis where someone seeking homosexual encounters took considerable precautions (Kristiansen 2008; Söderström 1999). In 1955 the police raided the offices of the magazine *Vennen*, finding archives of pornographic images and the subscription register as well as contact addresses for customers, advertisers and models (some photographed in sexual poses when they were under 18 years old, the current age of consent). Following the prosecution and conviction of several individuals the Danish homophile movement became divided into two camps: for or against Lundahl Madsen and Eskildsen. Both men

had been detained in connection with the raid, charged with adultery with minors, and sentenced to jail terms. The consequences of the raid on *Vennen's* office left the magazine the victim of scandal and bolstered the opinions of those who considered homosexuality perverse (Kristiansen 2008).⁷

Despite the risks inherent in the pink porn economy the machinic desire captured in male-to-male same-sex pornography enabled the then publicly stigmatised couple Axel Lundahl Madsen and Eigil Eskildsen to lead a good life after doing their time in prison. They boldly adopted the joint surname Axgil (based on their first names) and expanded the production of pink porn and the mail order business. They continued to distribute contemporary Danish and foreign homo magazines, both pornographic and political, including *Vennen*, the Swiss *Der Kreis* and the German *Der Weg*. They also sold their own publication *Male Models* which, according to ads, contained more pictures than the other magazines on sale.

The commercial side grew in rhizomatic ways and assemblages in the couple's company, a company discreetly called DFT.⁸ According to an interview with Axel Axgil, they had soon built up a clientele of some 20,000 transnational mail order customers.⁹ According to yet another article, the Axgils advanced their mail order company for 'homoerotic literature' during the 1960s to 'become the largest of its kind in Europe, perhaps in the world' (*Viking*, no. 1, 1969, p. 2).

7.3 Discretion or Openness, Homophiles or Gay Liberation, Rural or Urban? An Ex-course

The Axgil couple's business and activities seem to challenge earlier descriptions of phases in western struggles for homo/sexual rights. The Norwegian historian Hans W. Kristiansen has described a shift from an older homo struggle phase to a younger phase in terms of a transition from a *discretion ideology* to an *openness ideology* (Kristiansen 2008). Yet when the American historian Leila Rupp discusses a homopolitical shift at the end of the

1960s and the early 1970s, she instead uses the terms the *older homophile phase* and the *new gay movement phase* to mark differences. Interestingly, Rupp also concludes that when studying transnational activism, it is harder to notice differences between such phases (Rupp 2011). This is, indeed, relevant when following the Axxil couple's production and transnational dissemination of male-to-male same-sex porn where discretion lives side by side with openness. Continuity rather than disruptions let the machinic desire expand transnationally. Assemblages of people, in political or economic activities, dwelled on a cosmopolitan culture of rhizomatic connections between subscribers, contact ads, conferences and tourism (cf. Meeker 2005).

The gay movement phase can thus also be linked to the spread of pink economy porn with roots back in the 1950s (and earlier) and the so-called homophile phase and its rhizomatic connections with early transnational organising and assemblages and its distribution of male-to-male pink porn magazines (for contacts/subscribers, politics and pleasure). The history of the Axxils, i.e. Lundahl Madsen and his partner Eskildsen, challenges both Kristiansen's and Rupp's division of homopolitical historical shifts. They were indiscreet and open, and rhizomatically connected in assemblages with people and organisations, nationally and transnationally, trying to spread magazines with pink porn and politics at large personal costs—whilst simultaneously making a living, enabling social and sexual encounters and political activities in both rural and urban regions transnationally.

Kristiansen (2008) also points out that the history of same-sex sexuality is often confused with the history of homo-activist movements, where the latter is seen as the politically more interesting and important story. The homo-movements' activism often takes place in urban areas and in large cities. While Kristiansen examines the history of same-sex sexuality and focuses on rural practitioners, Rupp studies the history of homo-activist movements where she marks *the coming-out phase* as a political milestone in it: there is a before and after coming out—both for the individual and for the collective. These two historians thus encompass the lives and politics of different kinds of practitioners of same-sex sexuality in the past. The practitioners lived in separate spaces—spaces that required different strategies for the practitioners to be able to live their

lives and spin threads of belonging. This was important to the pink economy's dissemination of porn and sex tourism. Rural areas did not offer the urban areas' opportunities for social encounters and growth of subcultures. Rural practitioners risked social stigmatization if visible and were perhaps not interested in taking on a homosexual identity in their everyday lives in an otherwise heterosexual hegemony (Norrmén 2001). Instead, some of them subscribed to magazines with male models and/or queer politics, got addresses for visits to urban areas, or made contacts via ads in the magazines. Thus, pink porn economies provided spaces for sexual and political relations across urban and rural areas, and across national borders.

Earlier narratives of the history of homosexuality in Sweden have described the Swedish organised homopolitical activism of the 1960s and the first half of the 1970s as weak, barely extant and isolated from the more solid sibling organisations found in Denmark, Norway and the Netherlands. These narratives often include a glance back to the 1950s and vibrantly organised Swedish homopolitical activities, transnationally and nationally (Wasniowski 2007; *Homo i folkhemmet* 2000). The data used in those narratives are retrieved from traditional sources such as various (or rather scarce) documents from RFSL and the International Committee for Sexual Equality (ICSE).

By following the pink porn economy and politics, however, other views on and conclusions about Swedish queer politics of the 1960s and 1970s and its transnational networks emerge.

7.4 The Machinic Desire of Pink Porn Economy and Politics

If we are to believe Axel Axgil's claims that DFT's mail order business was the largest in Europe, we must compare its potential profits with those of a similar American business: Directory Services Inc. (DSI). Minneapolis-based DSI was a successful mail order business directed towards gay men (they sold magazines, gay tourism guides, books, records, clothes, jewelry, etc.) that in 1967 had 14 employees in addition to the owner couple

Lloyd Spinar and Conrad Germain. The business's income totalled several million dollars, according to Germain in a 2008 interview. DSI also developed into an offensive representative for freedom of expression in its work against the censorship of homoerotic images (which they disseminated). At the end of the 1960s DSI won an acclaimed pornography court case—which was the start of a new generation of American gay magazines (such as *The Advocate*, which is still in publication) (Johnson 2010). Even if the Danish DFT only brought in about 10 percent of DIS's income, this would still have been a good base for several employees, for their trips abroad and for the production and distribution of free magazines, political flyers or other informative texts.

When Axgil's mail order company DFT expanded in 1967 by purchasing a large property, a former school in Sjælland, in the rural north-west of Copenhagen, the staff also expanded with the employment of another couple: the Swede Michael Holm and his lover/partner Dutchman Geurt Staal. Holm later became the editor of the Swedish magazine *Revolt!* and an increasingly important figure in the transnational activities of the national lesbian and gay organisation RFSL—for which he was elected as the international secretary. But before holding these positions, Holm became the political spokesperson in defence of DFTs pink porn economy activities.

Some of Axgil's former activities had been to receive or visit what they called active members (amongst their subscribers) to get to know them and introduce them to other men. These kinds of connections increased in the old school building in Sjælland, but still had to be undertaken carefully given that police agents might be amongst the subscribers. The new location allowed these connections to expand and include a B&B business, focused on male subscribers or contacts. Two years later, in 1969, DFT's plans included more inexpensive guest rooms, a camp site (as the B&B was constantly fully booked), a sauna and a swimming pool. DFT also helped tourists in other countries to find places to stay and carefully to meet other men for social and sexual encounters.¹⁰

After nearly three years, DFT's machinic desire and expansion of activities at the old school in Sjælland led to a business spinoff. Having lived and co-worked with the Axgils and playing a part in building the transnational network around DFT, Michael Holm and his partner/lover

Geurt Staal moved to the south of Sweden sometime around the turn of 1969/1970. Here they built a similar pink economy and political space—eventually expanding and moving to an even larger property.

Holm and Staal followed the model developed by the Axgils and purchased a former school building where they started to provide a space for social and political encounters and meetings. They offered B&B for national and international guests, ran a printing press, and both produced and disseminated their own magazines containing porn, politics and personal ads to subscribers. There does not appear to be any sense of this having been an acrimonious split—Holm honours and defends Axel Axgil in articles in the magazines he brought to or started in Sweden.¹¹

The machinic desire of pink economy and politics was thus in a process of self-improvement and by this time a sufficient number of connections had been produced to *mutate and deterritorialise* (other concepts of Deleuze and Guattari mediated by Colebrook 2002) activities into a new space—where it still connected to DTF (at least on a personal and political level). When they moved, Holm and Staal took the transnational soft porn magazine *Viking* with them from DTF. Shortly afterwards they changed its name to *Revolt!*—as the name “Viking” was already in use as a registered trademark in Sweden.¹² *Revolt!* contained (as had *Viking*) pornographic stories and photos—both of men and young boys (many of colour)—contact ads, announcements for gatherings and articles of political interest.

Claire Colebrook’s analytical description of how machinic desire continually expands by randomly discovering new opportunities and creating more and more connections, eventually self-improving through mutations and deterritorialisations, captures not just the pink porn economy of DTF and later Holm’s and Staal’s business. It also comprises the expansion of transnational queer organisations in connection with the pink porn economy.

7.5 Transnational Political Organising: IHWO and the Pink Porn Economy

Through the mail order business the Axxgils had corresponded with ‘several thousand isolated’ homosexuals in different countries and met with several of them and had had ‘hundreds as guests’, Michael Holm explained in an article (*Viking*, no. 1, 1969, p. 3). The Axxgil couple had, when necessary, provided addresses of lawyers and doctors (professionals capable of providing information on legal or medical issues of importance to the subscribers) or to nearby males for sexual and social meetings. This had led to more contacts, subscribers and B&B guests, and the realisation that a transnational organization was necessary began to develop.¹³

In the 1950s Lundahl Madsen had already started a contact service called the International Hobby Club’s World Organization (IHWO), but interest had been minimal. He was at that time also a member of the International Committee for Sexual Equality (ICSE)—then a strong and active political transnational organisation with members in several European nations. Lundahl Madsen tried to get *Vennen* accepted as a member of ICSE, but because of the above-mentioned scandal at the *Vennen* office shared with Lundahl Madsen’s pornographic magazines, ICSE delayed responding to the request. Lundahl Madsen wrote back in 1954, saying: ‘If our cooperation in [ICSEs] international work is not wanted, we intend to put our [*Vennen*’s] work on an international basis in the service of the homophile cause’ (quote taken from Rupp 2011, p. 1035).

By 1968 ICSE’s position of influence was in decline, but there was still a need for a transnational organisation. The Axxgils then sent out an inquiry to the DTF network of subscribers and contacts asking whether there was any interest in setting up an organisation ‘for mutual assistance and friendship’ (*Viking*, no 1, 1969, p. 3). More than 1000 positive responses were received, and the time and context were ripe for dusting the name IHWO off, now slightly changed to the International Homosexual World Organization (IHWO) (cf. Söderström 2012). IHWO wanted to:

... work alongside already existing organisations for homosexuals and [had] in several cities contributed to forming new associations and clubs. We have members practically world-wide, albeit not in the Soviet Union or China, but in all other Eastern bloc states. We have great collaboration with clubs, associations and government institutions in Scandinavia, Finland, Germany, Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, Austria, France, Italy, Argentina, Chile, New Zealand, Colombia, Madagascar, Thailand, Japan. Our organisation was the sole European organisation to join the North American Homophile League and to attend their congress in Houston this year. (Viking no 1, 1969, p. 3, author's translation)

Michael Holm's description of IHWO captures a political part of the machinic desire that fed on the pink porn economics of DTF. IHWO had helped to start activist groups and clubs to support individuals (in Germany, Switzerland, France, England, Belgium, Argentina and Cameroon). Some of the clubs arranged dance evenings and other social events for self-identified queers, combined with activities aimed at informing/educating the local community. In a collaborative action with a club in Austria they sent a letter to all of the country's bishops (since they were the strongest opponents of softening the laws opposing same-sex sexuality), as well as to the Austrian newspapers. Later, an IHWO congress would send letters to the newly elected government (with copies to the Austrian press) to protest the penalties for homosexual acts—penalties which, according to Holm, were only exceeded by European dictators such as Franco's Spain. Moreover, IHWO provided legal aid support to imprisoned practitioners of homosexuality in states such as Italy.¹⁴

IHWO's magazine *UNI* was disseminated free of charge to members six times a year. In addition to photographs of half-naked young men and boys, there are, among other things, articles on homosexuality and legislation in different states, reports on queer subcultures, such as men in leather and their activities, reviews of film and literature, as well as cartoons and jokes. The magazine contents contained a mix of contacts, meeting places, politics and pornographic images and the majority of its contributors were members of IHWO. No less important were the ads or flyers attached within the envelope, through which IHWO also retailed

more pornographically oriented magazines.¹⁵ The contact matching reinforced DTF's commercial options. The different businesses and social and political activities on offer expanded and connected rhizomatically in a process of continuing support.

The board of IHWO consisted of Holm and Staal as well as the Axgils. When the label IHWO was revived in 1968, it quickly attracted criticism, especially in Denmark where wounds from the scandal around Lundahl Madsen and Eskildsen in the mid-1950s still lingered. Among other things, IHWO was criticised for being undemocratic and in 1968 this was a troublesome issue that quickly had to be addressed by the board. According to Michael Holm, the temporary board of IHWO had not been appointed through elections as members from various countries were unable to vote because of the criminalisation of homosexuality in their homelands. Democratic transparency could thus lead to imprisonment, unemployment and social stigma (something with which the Axgils were particularly familiar). In addition, Holm continued, electing a board in Denmark would lead to an overwhelming majority of the voters being Danes—which was not democratic either.¹⁶

7.6 Politics Connected to the Pink Porn Economy

Censorship became an urgent political issue for IHWO, perhaps since DTF's transnational stock of customers was the basis for the organisation's recruitment of members. The porn from Denmark and Sweden was forbidden in certain states and frictions arose when it was caught in border controls or invoked police harassments when subscribers were disclosed as male same-sex sexuality porn readers. Thus, some of IHWO's activities were related to getting the right to disseminate DTF's magazines across borders and the arguments used made reference to freedom of speech and the press. Interest in distributing the magazines was not just commercial, however. The dissemination was part of creating references for gay subjectification processes. Self-acceptance was considered important in breaking with previous degrading objectification processes.

As the chair of a Stockholm-based gay club wrote in *Revolt!* in 1972, the feeling of being isolated from one's surrounding community had to be removed in order to create a positive gay identity. Furthermore, any feelings of inferiority should be dispensed with and space for friendship and intimacy created. Local communities also needed to accept same-sex sexuality and positive references to same-sex sexuality while role models had to become available for young people. The strategies for change included introducing same-sex sexual education in schools and more public information so that same-sex sexuality could be normalised as a sexual alternative. Hence, conditions for an open culture had to be provided so that those practitioners of same-sex sexuality who might have internalised negative behaviours, such as self-hatred and self-imposed restricted lifestyles, could blossom in accepting and friendly environments and lifestyles.¹⁷ Strategies to achieve such goals were also debated in *Revolt!* and *Viking*. Thus, the work of distributing the magazines was not only about selling a commodity, but also about creating references for subjectification processes and stimulating organising strategies for self-identified queers to become a part of the surrounding heterosexual society.

Some of the political themes in the magazines and in the network of IHWÖ related to legislation—international comparisons were made. Other discussions focused on equality regulations regarding sexual rights. Comparing different international regulations on homosexual acts is common in the history of sexual politics. Claiming equality, or the same rights as are already enjoyed by others, has been a successful political strategy to achieve equalities. It was a method used by some of the subscribers of the magazine *Viking* when their copies were found by customs officers. In 1969 the magazine reported that 'In Holland, one of our members has protested sharply against the mail-censorship that was introduced there some time last winter—and he won. The mail censorship was quickly abolished after he made sure that the issue was brought up in Parliament' (*Viking*, no. 1, 1969, p. 5).

In Germany, 30,000 flyers against censorship were distributed by the magazines *UNI* and *Viking*, paid for by the profits from DTF's businesses. When the German chancellor, Willy Brandt, visited Denmark IHWÖ approached him with a letter about the issue and shortly

thereafter they received a reply that the censorship had been abolished. Although IHWO did not want to take credit for the success they nevertheless saw their efforts as contributing in part to a large movement for sexual equality in Germany (*Viking*, no. 6, 1970). ILGA, the international organisation for lesbian and gay rights, later made good use of this strategy of approaching politicians while they were on overseas visits.

These examples show how the pink economy and strategies used to connect men for social and sexual encounters and political activities for gay rights, such as freedom of speech and the press, were rhizomatically connected and messily entangled within the pink economy's dissemination of male same-sex pornography.

7.7 IHWO Transnational Congresses: Bridging Decades of Politics and Organising

In 1968, IHWO arranged two meetings in Denmark for their members/subscribers. The first one was the more politically focused event and included lectures, discussions and excursions, while the second gathering was purely social with socialising activities and excursions to castles, bars and the Tivoli amusement park in Copenhagen. Members from 'several countries participated' in the meetings (*Viking*, no. 1, 1969, p. 5).

In May 1970, however, the time had come to call for an IHWO congress in Skåne, in the south of Sweden. Although Michael Holm may, in his article, have exaggerated the number of activities, working groups and individual efforts enabled by IHWO and discussed at the congress, the existence of a well-functioning transnational politically active network is revealed through his account. Congress participants arrived from Denmark, Norway, Germany, the Netherlands, France, Spain, Italy and Canada. As in the 1950s heydays of ICSE, scholars and lawyers were also invited. The lawyers' lectures would, promised Holm, be translated into Swedish and published as a serial in *Viking*. The various congress representatives reported on problems in their respective states and on proposed strategies to overcome them. The 1970 IHWO congress continued a process that begun the previous year to compare homosexuals'

situations in different countries and planned the production and distribution of questionnaires on legislation on homosexuality. The congress also discussed the contacts they had with members of Eastern European states and decided that *UNI* should be transformed from being a member magazine of IHWO into a proper magazine with texts in the Scandinavian languages, as well as in English, German and French.¹⁸

Another legacy of earlier sexual policies was the congress's public activities. The last day of the congress was transferred to the hotel Tunneln in Malmö, run by a 'friendly owner'. As announced in the regional daily newspaper a discussion was held in this public space, which was entitled 'What can the homosexuals themselves do to improve their situation in society?' (*Viking*, no. 6, 1970, both quotes at p. 7). The panel consisted of Bertil Hansson, chief physician and psychiatrist, the lawyer Edward Brongersma, as well as the editors Axel Axgil and Michael Holm, together with RFSL's chair Ove Ahlström. The assembled audience also participated in the debate—especially the younger members, as Holm later recalled. Answers to the question under debate included, for instance, that they should live more open lives, and that in order to gain tolerance from others they needed to accept themselves; and that they had to combat internalised prejudices against themselves as 'deviated from the norm' as well as fighting their own prejudicial treatment of other homosexuals (*ibid.*). An additional strategy was to disseminate information in schools, the media and workplaces. RFSL would later also make use of all of these strategies. The congress's public day closed with an equally public party, which was attended by about 350 people.

To return to the question of whether clear phase transitions can be seen in the history of the LGBTQ movement, such as a discreet versus an openness ideology, the pink economy of the Axgils, and of Holm and Staal, highlights a complexity which reveals that in their transnational work, openness and discretion strategies existed in parallel. This picture ties in with historian Leila Rupp's studies of transnational LGBTQ activism, where there were no clear divisions between an older homophile phase and a newer gay liberation phase. She compares the continuum in transnational organising with the development of queer national organising in

the USA—where an opposite trend in the development appears to have occurred: ruptures instead of continuity (Rupp 2011, pp. 1035f). As noted above, queer national organising in Sweden displayed more continuity than ruptures. In RFSL's national as well as transnational activities, strong links connected the networks of an older homophile and a younger gay liberation phase and their politics and activities. Ideas and strategies, as well as key persons, spanned the 1950s and the 1970s (Rupp 2011; Söderström 2012). Where RFSL's chair Ove Ahlström served as a link between the 1950s and 1960s, Michael Holm bridged the 1960s through the 1970s and into the 1980s. After working with IHWO and the UNI Club, he also became a board member of RFSL, elected to the position of international secretary by several congresses in the early 1970s—while earning his living from the pink economy business he ran with his partner Gert Staal in the south of Sweden.

To paraphrase Jon Binnie (2004) and, as this chapter shows, constructing an analytic binarity between culture and economy when examining the production of sexual subjectivities, cultures and communities is inappropriate when studying the rhizomatic connections of the pink porn economy in the doing of queer belonging in last half of the twentieth century. The description of the pink porn economy's rhizomatic connections with male transnational networks and policies are a clear example of the political activities in-between. Not just because the politics were not conducted by the state or recognised organisations or associations in the civil society, but because of the difficulties in separating pink economy networks from political networks. The fights for positive liberal rights such as the freedom to connect and assemble, or working for freedom of speech and the press by combating censorship of pink porn economy magazines, or by setting up tourist infrastructure for persecuted self-identified queers who longed to receive visits from, or to travel to meet, other males for sexual encounters, friendships and/or political activities, were all part of the machinic desire to rhizomatically expand and connect—politically and economically. Thus, the obstacles the pink economy met helped to shape political strategies and actions in a liberal direction.

Nevertheless, political work needs funding. In times when societal economical support was non-existent, the pink porn economy was a way to overcome hindrances by supporting certain activities and enabling male homosocial desire (Kosofsky Sedgwick 1986), subjectification processes and community building. Simultaneously the main policy demands that were shaped in doing so were based on getting the same rights as heterosexuals or becoming equal with that group. Pink porn economy was in that sense liberal—although some of the ideas on sexuality radically broke with heterosexual ideals and norms.

The genealogy of the male homopolitical transnational network in the pink economy's dissemination of male same-sex pornography also illuminates the frictions to come between gay men's and lesbian's involvement in the development of transnational organising in the 1970s and 1980s and continued into the new millennium. Different genealogies and contexts had given rise to different machinic desires and growths of rhizomes that might connect—or reject each other.

Piecing together layers of contexts—such as the pink porn economies' demands for positive sexual rights with feminist lesbians' demands for negative sexual rights to protect vulnerable groups (which will be discussed below)—shows that the machinic desire of the male-focused pink porn economies rhizomatic flow encountered obstacles. One such obstacle was, as described above, the transnational homophile organisation ICSE's reluctance to accept the Axxil couple's *Vennen* as a member. And another obstacle was the 'Association of 1948', active both in Denmark and Norway, and its criticism of DTF's business and IWHO's undemocratic organisation. Furthermore, much later, feminist lesbians in the International Gay Association (IGA)—who pushed for renaming the organisation International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA)—offered similar criticism of the very basis of positive sexual rights on which the pink porn economy was based, by stressing the importance of negative rights for vulnerable groups, such as children and women.

7.8 The Lesbians: A Monkey Wrench in the Machinic Desire's Rhizomatic Processes

In the second half of the twentieth century self-identified lesbians, or homoerotically oriented women, do not appear to have constituted a target group within the pink porn economy, at least not within the data examined here. This seems to be one major difference between the genealogies and contexts of self-defined gay men's versus lesbians' transnational networking. The content of the magazines explicitly, and as a norm, offered references for male same-sex sexual subjectification processes and male communities of belonging.

Nevertheless, at the end of the 1960s the editor, entrepreneur and activist Michael Holm tried to involve lesbians as writers and readers in the magazine *Viking*, but he did not recognise that the white European gay male was the pink porn economy's norm and point of departure, neither did he understand gendered contexts and differences. His first strategy was to publish a soft-porn short story on lesbian sexuality written (according to the signature) by a woman, followed by some nude photographs of females. Holm also explicitly appealed for female co-workers:

Viking, just like other magazines for homosexuals, seeks FEMALE COWORKERS. Why is it so hard involve women? They often complain that they have no magazine that represents them. But then, come on ... we offer that space... (*Viking*, no. 1, 1969, p. 6, author's translation)

He eventually learned that using lesbian porn in a gay male normative magazine as a way to involve lesbians in the politics of the machinic desire of pink porn economy was not a particularly successful tactic. Later, Holm and other male gay activists were confronted by articulate feminist-inclined lesbians at the 'First International Gay Rights Congress' in Edinburgh, Scotland, in December 1974. Holm covered it for *Revolt!* under the headline 'We're here because we're queer' (no. 3, 1975, p. 25).

It was a well-planned and organised congress, according to Holm. Notably, of the approximately 350 participants from 15 different national

states, only 50 were lesbians (from Canada, the USA, Ireland and host state the UK). Holm's report covers the tensions that arose between feminist lesbians and a gay male faction led by Frank Kameny (of the US Mattachine Society) where the latter claimed that the main aim of gay liberation was equality with heterosexuals. On the contrary, the feminist lesbian faction, led by Elaine Noble (a politician from the US Congress), claimed that society's demands on women's and men's sex roles had to be dealt with to shape entirely new identities for lesbians and gays as individual humans and as a group. The lesbians were supported by the congress's feminist-inclined gay men (*Revolt!*, 3, 1975, p. 26). The tensions and debates led to a statement voted for by the congress on the second day: '1. Sexism will be the main theme of the congress. [Sexism was defined as oppression due to sex or sex-role interpretation.] 2. Future congresses must be organized by men and women together. 3. The congress states its support for the international women's movement' (*Revolt!*, no. 3, 1975, p. 27).

Shortly before the issue featuring the Edinburgh congress, *Revolt!* had published a report from a separatist lesbian gathering in Oslo, Norway, held in November 1974, which had been attended by 70 lesbians from Sweden, Denmark and Norway. They discussed lesbian organisational activities in the Nordic states and two major issues had taken centre stage. One was the difficulties of raising lesbian questions in male-dominated mixed homopolitical organisations such as the 'Association of 1948' in Denmark and Norway, and in the Swedish RFSL (these difficulties resurfaced in the debacle in Edinburgh over a month later). Another issue discussed in Oslo considered the negative response the lesbian groups received (especially the Swedish ones) when contacting the dominant (hetero)feminist organisations regarding joint rallies and marches.¹⁹

The two primary struggles of lesbian feminism have been analysed in many different national contexts: for the Swedish context, see, for instance, Hanna Hallgren (2008) and Emma Isaksson (2007); for North America see Leila Rupp et al. (2017) and Verta Taylor and Nancy E. Whittier (1992). However, the relation of these struggles to genealogies of the pink porn economy's transnational networks remains an under-researched field.

Obviously, the intersectional and gendered growths of different genealogies and contexts gave rise to different political claims and strategies. The calls for same rights as and equality with heterosexuals facilitated the pink porn economies' flow of magazines, goods and gay tourism. The ideological basis behind these calls lay in sexual liberalism and its tolerance for all sexual acts—as long as all involved gave their consent (Lennerhed 1994). The demand for gender and sexual roles to be considered when shaping altogether new identities for lesbians and gays as individual humans and as a group leans rather towards a vibrant discourse in the 1970s: the Freudo-Marxist tinted sexual radicalism where (all) people's oppressed inherent sexuality had to be liberated in order to enable a liberated society, free from oppressive behaviours and repression (Reich 1933; Marcuse 1968). In the late 1970s Michel Foucault's analysis of the horizontal dissemination of power would contest both the notion of consent, and of an inherent sexuality.

The rhizomatic growths, connections and flows of these different pre-Foucauldian claims and of lived experiences, genealogies and contexts, served as a feminist lesbian monkey wrench in the machinic desire of the pink porn economy of gay males and its rhizomatic network. As Diane Richardson has shown, the feminist sexual politics of the 1960s and 1970s were not based on claiming individual liberal rights (Richardson 2004), as in the pink porn economy's sexual politics (against censorship and in favour of the subscriber's right to receive and read porn magazines as well as the right to trade and travel across borders). Instead feminist lesbians, together with hetero feminists, criticised the private/public division insisting on the personal as political, that sex roles (gender) and its sexual roles and expressions had to change. Just like the suffragettes at the turn of the twentieth century, the feminists of the 1960s and 1970s were not demanding positive sexual rights—rather they demanded the right to be protected from sexual harassment, sexual violence and the sexualisation of women in the public space. They thus demanded what philosophers call negative freedoms, or negative rights, to protect women as a vulnerable group (from sexual exploitation) (Richardson 2000, p. 91), as compared to the positive sexual rights for individuals which the machinic desire of the pink porn economy sought.

The struggle for positive versus negative sexual rights and freedoms has been a constant tension within mixed-gender queer communities where people are also inevitably situated in differently powered intersections of structures and discourses. These struggles can be framed as emerging from different genealogies or root systems, where different machinic desires' rhizomatic connections have been growing in different directions and perhaps been resisted, rejected or destroyed when approaching each other.

7.9 I(L)GA's Credibility and the Troublesome Genealogies of Pink Porn Economy Networks

In August 1978, a new international collaboration was organised during the annual meeting of the Committee for Homosexual Equality (CHE) in Coventry, England. At this time CHE was a reforming organisation with members from Wales and England, but this annual meeting was attended by another 36 activists from Australia, Canada, Denmark, as well as other parts of the UK, France, Italy, the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, the Netherlands, Sweden and the USA. The political aim of the meeting was to create a transnational association for homosexuals where different nation-based demands and actions could be strengthened to achieve common political goals and strategies.²⁰ The new body was called the International Gay Association (IGA).²¹

During the IGA's 1980 spring conference in Barcelona, the question arose as to whether or not lesbians should work together with gay males for the liberation of both lesbians and gays. Of 136 delegates from about 70 member organisations and associates, or loosely linked organisations from 22 countries, around one-sixth were women (21 women and 115 men, respectively) which was considered a problem. Shortly after the conference the IGA established a lesbian secretariat, the International Lesbian Information Secretariat (ILIS). ILIS was established with the intention of facilitating communication between 'gay women' and to organise a transnational 'gay women' conference before the upcoming

regular IGA annual meeting. The lesbian secretariat was given its own space in the IGA newsletter from July 1980.²² Six years later, at IGA's 8th Congress in 1986, the organisation decided to include the word lesbian in its acronym, and thus became ILGA.²³

The first international lesbian conference of IGA, however, was held in Amsterdam in December 1980. The general themes were the question of how lesbians would grow stronger transnationally, and how they could influence IGA's policies. Again, the attending lesbians wanted to discuss how they could collaborate with the males within IGA—in which ways and on which issues? Gendered issues were on the agenda, such as the unequal social positions of women and men and the problems this could cause when looking to collaborate. One specific discrepancy between lesbians and gay males was brought up relating to issues regarding lesbians as mothers responsible for children.²⁴

In one of the Amsterdam conference workshops questions were asked about children's sexuality and the oppression of children. The workshop participants questioned whether it was possible for children and adults to ever have an equal sexual relationship (as claimed by the paedophile members of IGA). The discussion about adult sexual rights in relation to children's needs for the negative right to be protected from abuse was prompted by the fact that paedophilia groups were part of some of the IGA's member organisations. In that workshop, lesbian IGA members raised an issue that became increasingly problematic for the organisation in the years to come—namely whether the age of consent was protective or oppressive of children and whether paedophile rights were an issue that was appropriate to pursue by a gay/lesbian/feminist movement.²⁵ However, in the 1980s, this was an issue not considered by the then gay male-dominated transnational movement which, as I have shown, was rhizomatically entangled in decades of exchange of and politically networking around the distribution of male same-sex porn, including images of nude boys.

Following the feminist IGA lesbians' raising of the paedophile issue during the Amsterdam conference not much happened until ten years later, during the ILGA World Conference in Stockholm in 1990. Paedophilia was again discussed as an abuse of the rights of children (who were seen as a vulnerable group to be protected), which resulted in a

resolution distancing the ILGA from paedophilia. However, it was not until 1993 that the ILGA was firmly forced to take a stance on paedophilia—and this only after the organisation had experienced problems with its long-held (since the IGA Barcelona conference in 1980) and hard-won accreditation as a nongovernmental organisation (NGO) in the UN's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). The joy over being accredited was brief as news media in the United States rapidly exposed the American paedophile organization North American Man/Boy Love Association (NAMBLA) as a member of the ILGA. Notably, NAMBLA had been the first North American organisation to join the IGA (Sanders 1996).

At this point the ILGA had to guarantee that no paedophile groups remained as members of the organisation. The umbrella organisation addressed the issue in several ways. The ILGA's executive committee emphasised children's rights to protection from abuse in a statement from 1993. During the 1994 ILGA World Conference three paedophile organisations were excluded and a statement declared that 'Groups or associations whose predominant aim is to support or promote pedophilia (sic!) are incompatible with the future development of ILGA' (Sanders 1996, p. 99).

Still, it was not until 1995 that the ILGA made a public and official declaration against paedophilia. By then the paedophilia issue had caused a national political backlash for LGBTQ organisations in the USA. The Christian right was especially active in lobbying against the ILGA. As a result, 5000 LGBTQ organisations fell under scrutiny by, among others, US embassy officials around the world. This investigation led to results. In the fall of 1994, the US Embassy in Germany found that ILGA member VSH in Munich had a paedophile group which had used VSH's premises for meetings. Consequently, the ILGA was considered incapable of fully controlling its members and finally lost its consultative NGO status in ECOSOC (Sanders 1996). Despite these pressures, it was not until 1997 that the ILGA demanded written assurances from its member organisations in which they officially declared that they did not engage with paedophiliac groups. The length of time in achieving this strong stance seems to have been an effect of the transnational network's deep roots and messy entanglements in the pink porn economies where the

sexualisation of young boys was regarded as a non-issue or as a positive sexual right of consenting parties. Despite the ILGA's final decision to exclude paedophile groups, the damage had already been done to its reputation. It took another 17 years before the organisation gained consultative status in ECOSOC, on 27 July 2011.²⁶

7.10 Conclusions

In this chapter, I chose to survey pink porn magazines covering a time span focusing on the 1960s to 1970s, including retrospectives to the 1950s and glances into the 1990s and the new millennium. Concepts like rhizome and machinic desire help to analyse how pink porn economies expanded in decentralised and unpredictable ways, and brought together or connected producers, disseminators and subscribers of male same-sex porn magazines produced in Denmark and Sweden. The magazines contained politics, debates, pornographic stories and photos—including images of young boys, which later became increasingly problematic with regard to transnational political work and networks rooted elsewhere.

The method following over time enabled new insights into the understudied genealogies of politics in-between queer transnational networks. This study has highlighted the sometimes-impossible task of differentiating between desire, subjectivity processes, consumption, both organised and grass-roots activism in the last half of the twentieth century's history of human sexualities. Taking a chronological approach to the pink porn economies' politics has shown that analysing the past is important in illuminating how culture and economy have been constituting each other. Moreover, the method has shed light on how culture and economy need to be studied together when examining the networks of importance in producing sexual identities, cultures, policies and communities of belonging—while excluding others.

Furthermore, this chronological study of pink porn magazines has broadened the view of same-sex sexual politics to include more than traditional organisational work and ad hoc political activism, or arranging for social encounters, by also including politics in-between, such as the

mix of commercial interests with organising political and recreational activities. This chronological approach has thus helped to contest the shift from what Hans W. Kristiansen refers to as a discretion ideology and an openness ideology. In my data the shift becomes vague both nationally and transnationally, and it is continuity rather than ruptures that links the past, present and future via key persons and the machinic desire to connect and expand.

The transnational communities of queer belonging created by the common interest in consuming male same-sex porn and making contacts with fellow magazine readers, was one precondition for the development of policies to challenge the state's censorship laws. For instance, the pink porn economy used liberal demands such as freedom of speech and the press, as well as the right to assemble freely, in their struggles to disseminate magazines and to meet socially or to engage in politics. Gathering people, whether for recreational, political, or economic activities, depended on a cosmopolitan culture of rhizomatic connections between subscribers, contact ads, conferences, activism and tourism, and at the same time shaped certain queer communities of belonging while also excluding others. Furthermore, the networks established by agents and through political strategies via the trail of consumers of male pink porn would later become parts of the genealogy of traditionally organised associations such as the ILGA in which the Swedish National Association for Sexual Equality (RFSL) became a powerful vehicle in the 1980s and 1990s.

Feminist lesbian members of the ILGA were already in the 1980s criticising the very fundament of positive sexual rights on which the pink porn economy was based by stressing the importance of negative sexual rights for vulnerable groups such as women and children. The issue arose due to the ILGA's then liberal attitude towards organising paedophilic groups. Although feminist discourse and power analysis had grown stronger in the ILGA by the 1990s it was not until 2011, however, that the ILGA's political desire to be accepted as an NGO in the UN's ECOSOC seriously uprooted and overtly did away with the last threads of the traditional male same-sex transnational network's roots in sexual liberal attitudes towards paedophilia.

Notes

1. Queer in this chapter is used as an umbrella term for sexualities that have been regarded as deviant from the heterosexual norm, and for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans* (meaning various transidentifications) and queer identities over time. The different terms in the acronym LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans*, queer), will be used when the data uses it.
2. 355 000 000 hits on the web in a couple of seconds (retrieved 23 May 2019).
3. https://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/27/business/media/absolut-heralds-its-marketing-to-gay-consumers.html?_r=0 (retrieved 23 May 2019); <https://www.out.com/news/2019/5/21/ikea-bags-now-come-rainbow-thank-you-gay-jesus> (retrieved 23 May 2019).
4. See Laskar (2017) on the magazine *Revolt's* 1970s–80s framing of men and boys in Arabic countries as promiscuous homosexuals to be compared with today's homonationalist accusations in the West of Muslims as homophobic and its making of *the Orient* as an antidote or sexual Other to Western sexualities (cf [Massad 2007]).
5. The acronym is still in use, but in 2007 the name of the organization changed from National Association for Sexual Equality (Riksförbundet för sexuell likaberättigande) to National Association for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer rights (Riksförbundet för homosexuellas, bisexuellas, transpersoners och queeras rättigheter).
6. See also *Viking*, 3–5. No. 10, 1970; Interview with Axel Lundahl Madsen by Michael Holm.
7. Lundahl Madsen said in an interview 15 years later that the raid was executed after an article in *Vennen* where the medical doctor Jarl Wagner-Smith seriously criticised the police for provoking men into committing homosexual crime (beautiful youngsters were used as seductive lures). *Viking*, no. 10, 1970, p. 4.
8. I have no source for the meaning behind the acronym.
9. *Viking*, no. 10, 1970, pp. 3–5.
10. *Viking*, no. 1, 1969, p. 5.
11. For the move to southern Sweden, see *UNI* no. 12 (no year, probably sometime between 1968 and 1970).
12. *UNI*, no. 12 (no year, probably sometime between 1968 and 1970).
13. *Viking*, no. 1, 1969, pp. 3–5.
14. *Viking*, no. 6, 1970.

15. *UNI*, pp. 1–12 (without year). About the move to Teckomatorp, see *UNI*, no. 12 (without year, probably between 1968 and 1970).
16. *Viking*, no. 1, 1969, p. 4.
17. *Revolt*, no. 3, 1972.
18. *Viking*, no. 6, 1970.
19. *Revolt*, no. 1, 1975, pp. 16–18.
20. *IGA Newsletter*, vol. 1, no. 1, Nov. 1978.
21. International Gay Association (IGA) and the increasing internationalisation of the struggles for same-sex sexual rights is remarkably unexplored.
22. *IGA Newsletter*, vol. 3, no. 2, July 1980.
23. ILGA's official site, <https://ilga.org/ilga-history> (retrieved 3 October 19).
24. *IGA Newsletter*, vol. 4, no. 1, June 1981.
25. *Ibid.*
26. Se *ILGA NEWS*, <https://ilga.org/ilga-ecosoc-status-controversy> (retrieved 29 October 2019).

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Revolt! 1970–1980.

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Web Resources

ILGA NEWS.

ILGAs official site.

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