

3 *Men of Turkey: German Productions between Turkey and Germany*

The pioneering examples of French gay ethnic pornography introduced in the previous chapter were echoed by many Western European and U.S.-based porn film companies and independent film producers, who adapted the tropes of the genre to their various sociopolitical and historical contexts. The shift in the fetish ethnicity provides a resource to analyze the extent to which the White hegemonic canon in gay pornography is applicable. Besides the stereotypical dynamics of interracial gay pornography, where black men are fetishized for their 'race', diversified interest in gay ethnic pornography correlates with the broader and current influences of such alterations in fetishizing and being fetishized. After exploiting porn narratives involving Maghrebi men, the gay porn industry in Western Europe also turned their interest to Turkish men, another large immigrant group. The first major example of gay ethnic pornography centering Turkish men was directed by Jean-Noël Réne Clair. Released in June 1997 by JNRC Films, *Les Turks (The Turks)* featured a compilation of solo jerk-off scenes casting men of Turkish descent. The significance of various sorts of scenes, such as these solo jerk-off scenes, is to centralize the ethnic subject for the audience's observation. Most of these solo jerk-off compilations are supported by the description on the DVD jacket or the description on the website to help build an ethnic fantasy, which, in the examples of JNRC, are built around the idea of a straight male showing off for gay viewers. On JNRC Films' website, a descriptive text for the film reveals supposed stories from shooting the jerk-off scene of each cast member. For example, one description states:

This video has been a bit of a struggle to start with, because Paolo is a totally straight dude who is used to being admired by women. Thinking of other guys getting off while watching him was kind of strange to him. Nevertheless, after a while, the sexy male started getting more at ease in front of the camera and the result is worth checking out. That's if you like hung sexy hunks playing with their big cock!¹

As the description points to a narrative pattern where the 'default' Turkish man is straight or straight-acting, this exposure to the international gay porn industry broadens his sexuality. Additionally, the position of the director here is the one of a mentor who 'teaches' the actor how a Turkish man can open up about his sexuality, and of urban snobbishness regarding those living outside Western capital cities, similar to the metropole-periphery relations of colonialism. In his interview with *Du&Ich* magazine, a gay lifestyle and porn magazine from Germany, director Frank Ripplloh, who directed homoerotic cults such as *Taxi Zum Klo* (Taxi to the Toilet) (1980) and *Taxi Nach Kairo* (Taxi to Cairo) (1987), shares his observations regarding Turkish

1 See: <https://www.jnrc.fr/de/dvd/detail/5228-turk> (Last Access Date: 17.03.2024).

men, using similar rhetoric mentioned on the DVD jacket of the JNRC's *Turks* (1997). Ripploh states:

At first, it is irritating that almost every man, from bus drivers to village police officers, can be sexually turned on if the circumstances are favorable and the tourist adheres to the game's rules. Turkish men like to be sucked and are extremely anal-oriented. The finger is in the ass in no time, and if you don't want to be fucked like a mangy dog behind a bush, you must set the appropriate signals early; otherwise, it will happen. It is advisable to stay in control and know that putting a condom on a Turk is not always easy. Unfortunately, they are often too uneducated, and some people throw away the lifesaving *Lümmeltüte* (willy bag) with a macho gesture. And if the magic of the hot hours is so great, 'once is never,' [the global AIDS crisis of] 1993 no longer applies. 'One wrong fuck' is enough, says the American cleverly, and is right about it. Discussing AIDS with Turks beforehand, with hands and feet if you don't know the language, only produces misunderstandings and completely de-energizes the mood necessary for handsome Mustafa to get stiff while walking. Either you do without unprotected anal intercourse, or you always have the thing close at hand.²

Ripploh highlights that Turkish men refuse to be fingered, eliminating the idea that they could be bottom. The implication is that Turkish men have sex with other men to fuck any ass. Additionally, Ripploh's answer points out how the straight-men fantasy is built with complementing Orientalist clichés, such as the comments that signal animalistic desire and stigmatization of following safe sex practices. Because, according to Ripploh, Turkish men would refuse to consider it as a risk and refuse to make any concessions about. JNRC uses texts that have similar rhetoric as a tool that smooths the way for his films. These DVD jackets can also be considered homo-Orientalist literature produced through gay pornography. In his movie *Turks* (1997), JNRC constructs the protagonist's history through these descriptions, which function with the visual material that JNRC presents.

While the straight male fantasy, with its Orientalist undertones, is at work in these descriptions, the character names of some of the cast members in the compilation raise questions about both the elements that help to build ethnic desire and considerations of what authenticity means when it comes to ethnic pornographic fantasy. JNRC's movie *Les Turcs* provides a domain that contributes to the authenticity issues of this genre. In fact, this compilation from JNRC Films does not include a single Turkish cast member, and Jean-Noël René Clair did not even bother to give Turkish names to the characters in the movie. Yet, as always, pornography's play with the perception of reality is an important factor in its appeal. On the DVD cover, Jean-Noël René Clair places one of the characters in front of a digitally-modified image of a Turkish flag, visually strengthening the ethnic presentation of the porn package. Ironically, *Les Turcs* (Turks) does not offer anything in terms of real focus on Turkey or Turkish men,

2 Ripploh, Frank. "TÜRKEI: Zwischen Orient und Okzident—Teil 1: Der große Erlebnis-Reisebericht von DU&ICH-Autor Frank Ripploh." *DU&ICH* magazine, September 1993, 17.

but instead uses the identity branding as a catch-all for filming masturbation scenes from migrant men of color from elsewhere in Europe or the Maghreb, providing a blueprint for other gay porn productions in Europe. Using the flags of the nationalities of real or supposed backgrounds of porn actors became popular after JNRC did it. The DVD jackets of Collin O'Neal's *World of Men* series, Bravofucker's *Ramses*, *The Lebanese Fucker*, and BelAmi's *Greek Holiday*, provide some examples that followed these strategies to strengthen their visual codes, which evoke actors' ethnic identities as well as advance the overall narrative.

The fetishization of Turkish identity in Jean-Noël René Clair's film is considerably different from the U.S. version of gay ethnic pornography of the era as presented by Collin O'Neal, who introduced the genre to post-9/11 U.S. audiences via the series *World of Men*. Featuring films produced in countries across the world, including Argentina, Israel, Colombia, Lebanon, Spain, and Turkey, Collin O'Neal promoted gay ethnic pornography in the U.S. for almost a decade after Jean-Noël René Clair. However, it is important to note that O'Neal's films were the first pornographic representations of Turkish men that had been marketed outside of Europe. Despite the differences (between the more authentic presentation of Turkishness in Jean-Noël René Clair's films, and Collin O'Neal's white and muscled 'Turkish' models), both directors' appropriate ethnicity, 'race', and class in their eroticization of men. Freed from concerns of authenticity, the porn industry (cast members, directors, studios, etc.) marketed national identities to a global audience as a means of being performative and playful. After the first French films, two pornographic film production companies based in Germany – Zip Production and later Trimax Films – produced examples of gay ethnic pornography between Turkey and Germany, entering the European market with a unique narrative and style. Based in Hamburg and Hessen, these two companies were owned by men of Turkish immigration background (except for one white ethnic German). This chapter will consider these two companies by concentrating on a variety of different aspects of their works, including their history, narrative patterns, the position of the director and cast, media representation, production, and distribution. So far, there have been no studies focusing on Zip Production and Trimax Films and exploring their legacies through the lens of culture, gender, and pornography studies.

From the 1990s onwards, when the public attitudes toward gay culture became more and more liberal and gay imagery even enters the mainstream in Europe (specifically in Germany). A study on German examples of gay ethnic pornography enables a timely analysis of these different sexual and cultural productions that define and produce alterity. This local specification is especially productive since the Turkish immigrant community appears to be irreversibly embedded within German culture. The specific focus in this chapter on the relationship between German and Turkish identity will contribute to the overall discussions of gay pornography considering the interconnected relationship between post-colonialism, sexuality, and Orientalism. German-Turkish examples of gay pornography help to analyze the issue of ethnicity in the pornographic gaze in terms of social significance that are deeply permeated in Ori-

entalism and colonialism while unpacking questions surrounding generational labor migration as well as ethnic and religious otherness in comparison to the hegemonic structure of the West.

The focus here on the German-Turkish context of gay ethnic pornography shows how ethnic interest alters in different sociopolitical and economic contexts, and why it matters. Even though the German-Turkish context shares similarities with French-Maghrebi productions, it differs with regard to their relationship with both colonialism and migration dynamics. Additionally, the German-Turkish context provides various representations that contribute to the overall repertoire of gay pornography. For instance, while the first chapter discussed issues pertaining to colonialism, the German-Turkish context allows us to discuss labor migration in the context of the fetishization of ethnic identity in gay pornography. Therefore, in a broader European context, while these examples are comparable, they differ in each national context. These nuances also help to understand gaze relations and objectification. For instance, Turkish masculinity can be exoticized in Germany, but also within Turkey itself, and these two different scenarios are associated with different social circumstances. Thus, pornography provides a fertile ground for studying the structure of knowledge production, for example on the basis of studying audience demographics or the distribution of the copies. In the following sections, two film series will be analyzed, Zip Production – *Ahmet's Fuck Tour*, and Trimax Films – *Istanbul Boys*, considering their position in the European context of gay ethnic pornography.

3.1 Zip Production – *Ahmet's Fuck Tour*

Taking its inspiration from *JNRC Films* (Jean-Noël René Clair's studio), Zip Production was founded in Hamburg in 1995 and produced German examples of gay ethnic pornography based in Turkey. This is also around the same time that *JNRC Films* changed its approach from aestheticizing men in the Maghreb to featuring a completely new aesthetic of Maghrebi men in the *banlieues* of Paris. While we can observe *JNRC* now acknowledging and marketing the homo-Oriental potential of the *banlieues*, Zip Production producers Ben Tamam and Murat Bal decided to follow Jean-Noël René Clair's 'original' strategy. Even though both studio owners are from Germany, Murat Bal has a Turkish background, with his relatives having migrated to Germany as guest workers. Interestingly, Zip Production did not produce any movies in Germany, despite the appeal that potentially lies in the prevalent ethnic stereotyping of the cast members in German production houses. Instead, the producers decided to travel through Turkey to associate the *Men of Turkey* series to the cities they visited.

Zip Production was popular in the European mainstream porn industry for almost a decade, as the studio was specifically interested in shooting a series on Turkish men along with Trimax Films. As part of this choice, these two production houses dominated the market in Germany and received a notable interest in the gay porn film

market across Europe. Zip Production's most popular series was called *Ahmet's Fuck Tour: Men of Turkey*. It was their version of exploitative sex tourism, in which a German couple travels through Turkey in search of sex between locals – beginning with *Ahmet's Fuck Tour* and continuing with other productions where Turkish cities are named in the titles: *Men of Adana*, *Men of Istanbul*, *Men of Antalya*, *Men of Izmir*, *Men of Ankara*, *Men of Alanya*, *Men of Bursa*, and *Men of Edirne*. In addition to the *Men of Turkey* films, Zip Production also released compilation films with scenes taken from *Ahmet's Fuck Tour* under the names *Turkish Fuck*, *Men of Zip*, and *Zip Solo*. In addition to their Turkish focus, Zip Production later released a film called *Men of Marrakesh*, focusing on Moroccan men in a narrative that stylistically combines the works of the French porn directors Jean-Daniel Cadinot and Jean-Noël René Clair. *Men of Marrakesh* did not reach the success that the *Men of Turkey* series had, and only exists as one short compilation. Later on, under the pseudonym of BUM Videos, the producers of Zip Production released a DVD called *Yugo Power* that focuses on Eastern European men, which will be discussed in the following chapter.

3.2 Trimax Films – *Istanbul Boys*

Migrating from Erzincan, Turkey to Germany, in 1997 Şevket Şahin founded the porn production company Trimax Films in Frankfurt, Germany. He directed and produced his films in Turkey and Germany. Trimax Films grew to become one of the major forces behind the ethnic pornography trend in German and European mainstream porn. While Zip Production focused on exploiting the masculine men from Turkey, Trimax Films from Frankfurt introduced alternative ways of exoticizing Turkish men. After attracting attention with the *Şahin K.* films, the Trimax Films crew traveled to Istanbul to compete with Zip Production's *Istanbul Boys* gay porn series.³ The films in the series have titles such as *Burning Asses*, *Let's Enjoy It From the Butt*, *Horny Youngsters*, *Every Night From the Ass*, *C'mon and Drive Me*, *My Jealous Guy*, *Hungry For Ass*, and *Fuck Me Ali*.

In fact, this was the only gay porn series Trimax Films had produced up to that point. The studio initially became popular with their straight porn films, notably featuring the porn star Şahin K. His films can be considered examples of straight ethnic porn films, in which the audience often sees Şahin K. having sex with non-Turkish cast members. After these films received attention from the mainstream media in Turkey, Trimax Films entered the gay porn market by producing the *Istanbul Boys* series,

3 Şahin K, Şahin Yılmaz or Şaban Acar (born 1968; Ortaköy, Aksaray) is a Turkish-German porn actor and director. He gained his fame by acting in over 170 low-budget porn movies from *The Istanbul Life* (ca.2003–2007) series. He received the best director award from Berlin Erotic Film Festival in 2002. His films are classified as ethnic European, Turkish, German.

directed by Metin Sözen⁴, featuring only Turkish-speaking cast members. While the series is named *Istanbul Boys*, none of the films depict scenes set in a particular Istanbul location. In contrast to Zip Production, Trimax Films did not authenticate their films using footage of urban views of Istanbul.

Contrary to stereotypical expectations that exist in gay ethnic pornography, there are almost no overly-masculine, hairy, Orientalized, macho alpha-male figures in the cast; instead, the young actors are smooth and more androgynous.⁵ Representations of bodies are far from the expectations of an ‘ideal,’ hairy, beefy, muscled Turkish man. This aesthetic resonates with that of the films produced by the Slovak porn studio BelAmi Boys which brought the twink concept to mainstream pornography. BelAmi Boys is a gay pornographic film studio with offices in Bratislava, Prague, and Budapest. It was founded in 1993 by Slovak filmmaker George Duroy, who took his pseudonym from the protagonist Georges Duroy from Guy de Maupassant’s novel *Bel-Ami*. The gay male bodies in *BelAmi Online* have no body hair, are around 22 to 25 years of age, and mostly white. The aesthetic style of BelAmi is limited to this stereotype, and the sexual positions between cast members are quite egalitarian and fluid, with most playing versatile sexual roles. Outside the clear Turkish ethnic focus of Trimax Films’ series, its approach to sexual performance could be considered as similar to the style of BelAmi, with both production companies adapting the narrative genres of U.S. mainstream gay pornography.

Trimax Films can be considered the first producer of Turkish-German gay ethnic pornography made for a target audience of Turkish-speaking people. Not focused on the (potentially bilingual) target viewer of the Zip Production films, Trimax Films centers both the Turkish-speaking community in Germany and Turkey’s own porn audience. Across the releases, Trimax Films added authenticity to their films through specific use of language, narrative, and marketing. The Turkishness in their films does not have the representation of stereotypical Turkish male bodies as its focus. Although these films advertise the fact that they are ‘100% Turkish,’ there are no significant landmarks shown to actually identify a location in Turkey. Similar to the situation with Zip Production films, the distribution of Trimax Films material was not legal in Turkey and the films became available to most of the Turkish porn film audiences

4 Şahin K and the news regarding his porn films are covered by Turkish media. He even participated in talk shows in Turkey, such as “Disco Kingo,” “Beyaz Show,” and “Dikkat Şahan Çıkabilir” in the early 00s.

5 I employed the term alpha-male as Scott Barry Kaufmann describes: “Alpha” males are those at the top of the social status hierarchy. They have greater access to power, money, and mates, which they gain through physical prowess, intimidation, and domination. Alphas are typically described as the “real men.” In contrast are the “Beta” males: the weak, submissive, subordinate guys who have a low status, and only get access to mates once women decide to settle down and go searching for a “nice guy.” See: <https://scottbarrykaufman.com/the-myth-of-the-alpha-male/> (Last Access Date: 17.03.2024).

See also: Russell, E.L. *Alpha Masculinity: Hegemony in Language and Discourse*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021.

only when online streaming became widely available. Despite the language barrier, Trimax Films still marketed their films in Germany through its official distribution page, which had a German top-level domain (Trimax.de).

3.3 Re-Orientalizing the Sexual Desire Towards Men of Turkey

Zip Production blended influences from two French gay ethnic pornography pioneers, Jean-Daniel Cadinot and Jean-Noël Réne Clair. Here, the context of Germany and Turkey and their history of labor migration makes the issue of class difference more significant, especially in the context of a sex tourism narrative between these two countries. In the movies of Zip Production, the directors adapted Cadinot's narratives, blending sex tourism with 'class tourism.' In this context, sex tourism works across an intersectional aesthetic, associating working-class masculinities and ethnicity. The narratives of the Zip Production movies mimic the Cadinot-style touristic gaze, with every episode of *Ahmet's Fuck Tour* leading off with an introductory scene about the city that Ahmet is traveling to. The audience sees the city from the perspective of someone inside a car on their way to meet the 'men' of the town. After Ahmet finds sexual partners in the city that he is visiting, most of the time the encounter ends up taking place in a two-star hotel room or a pension. The scene begins with masturbation or a soft sex scene or a short interview where the audience is offered minimal information of the cast member who supposedly is a local man of that city. After that introduction, the style of the movie transforms from Cadinot to JNRC, with the encounter becoming a hard-core porn scene between Middle-Eastern-looking men.

The narrative elements of Zip Production's films support Dyer's previously mentioned analysis of narrative content, while adding new class and ethnic markers that distinguish the filmmaking from other examples of gay porn. In the opening scene of *Men of Adana*, the camera shows some people traveling on the back of a truck, possibly seasonal field workers. They realize that they are being recorded by the camera and ask the man behind the camera where he is from. Once they learn that he is from Germany, they clap with cheer. Opening a hard-core gay porn film with such a scene points to the agency of the colonized and patterns of class-based sexualization and poverty as motivators for the director and his choice of point of view within the scene. The scene obviously plays with the stereotypical 'guest worker' image that is so common in Germany.

Moreover, this scene hints at how migrating to Germany became marketed as a social ideal for the working-class of Turkey.⁶ The Turkish men's cheering in reaction to the cameraman's answer that he is German contributes to the image of Germany as

6 Gokturk, Deniz, David Gramling, and Anton Kaes. *Germany in Transit: Nation and Migration, 1955–2005*. 1st ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007, 1.

the ‘savior.’ Since the 1960s, the labor migration phenomenon has had a big impact both in Germany and Turkey. For the Turkish working-class, migrating to Germany was idealized in relation to the socio-economic challenges in Turkey. On the one hand, political challenges pushed many minorities in Turkey to seek refuge in another country. These ethnic and religious minorities, such as Alevites, Assyrians, Kurds, and Yezidis, sought refuge in Germany as workers since it was the best option compared to the political situation at home. On the other hand, socio-economic factors pushed people from rural areas in general to find more opportunities for their future abroad. Beyond the actual act of labor migration, the idea – or dream – of becoming a migrant worker also played into a dynamic that put Germany in a post-colonial position. The existence of the porn scene with locals is a stark reminder of how this colonial positionality still exists in the working-class communities when the word ‘Germany’ is pronounced from a car’s window. This imagery and the ‘touristic’ Western gaze contain the ‘ethnic subject’ through a colonizing dynamic of viewing.

While Zip Production produced *Ahmet’s Fuck Tour* from a perspective that overlapped sex tourism and class tourism, Trimax Films’ take on gay ethnic pornography was based on cliché visual cues to remind audiences that the films are set in Turkey. The *Istanbul Boys* series was filmed with a script that provided the audience with a storyline not very different from other mainstream porn narratives. These storylines imitate U.S. mainstream porn films of the 1980s which were supposedly imitating real life – usually, a scenario in which a worker is fantasized about or fetishized his job. In the *Istanbul Boys* series, the fascination with the working-class mirrors the dynamics found in U.S. mainstream porn. There are storylines such as a young student looking for a flat and going to a viewing, during which the flat owner tries to seduce him, and they have sex. In another example, a feminine guy has bought a bed and does not know how to build it, so he invites someone to build it with him, but they end up talking about sex and then sleeping together. These storylines have no specific ‘Turkishness’ to them, except that the cast speaks Turkish. However, these storylines enable the audience to imagine and watch a mainstream porn narrative with a Turkish storyline that tries to distract from the hardcore structure of pornography through this newly introduced cultural elements. Imitating this American genre requires certain production elements (expensive equipment, celebrity cast, and set) that are difficult for an amateur porn studio to reproduce, an element that itself takes on meaning in the noticeable quality differences between the productions. By appropriating the high-quality register of U.S. productions with an ethnic concept, Trimax Films’ choices

engage with the debates at the center of the debates on *pornographic welfare* within the American mainstream pornographic film industry.⁷

The concept of *pornographic welfare* refers to the standardization of certain economic representations within the U.S. mainstream pornographic film industry: particular aesthetic choices and depictions of the body are meant to create a specific social and economic identity. The concept is also helpful for analyzing how narrative elements in ethnic pornography create a social hierarchy while instrumentalizing poverty. Trimax Films and its *Istanbul Boys* series is a prime example to consider through this lens, since they copied the narrative style of mainstream U.S. porn movies in the Turkish context. Different from both the French pioneers of ethnic pornography and their fellow German studio Zip Production, Trimax Films offered a new kind of fascination and fetishization of ethnicity while adhering to the typical mainstream narrative that is common with mainstream porn around the globe. To understand how these ‘ideal’ subject positions shifted in gay pornography, the example of Brandon Lee, who challenged stereotypical representations of effeminized or emasculated Asian (bottom) males in U.S. mainstream gay pornography, enables a base for a broader comparison. Lee, a Filipino-American gay porn star, was instead introduced as a strong top with a ten-inch penis. In a landmark essay, Richard Fung argued that the perceived insufficient masculinity of Asian men in mainstream gay pornography often leads to storylines in which white tops commodify or dominate Asian bottoms.⁸ Following Richard Fung, Tan Hoang Nguyen adds to this analysis of the sexual position of Asian men in mainstream gay pornography in the context of Brandon Lee, stating that:

On the one hand, through its gendered and racialized formal codes and narrative conventions, dominant film and video portray Asian-American men as feminized, emasculated, marginal subjects of representation. On the other hand, they also provide visual and aural access to how bottomhood can be experienced differently – socially, politically, and sensationally. That is to say, film and video mediate the pressures between bottomhood’s ideological and carnal effects.⁹

As Hoang points out, these racial codes might connect audiences to the scene by commodifying the subjects by their ‘races’ in ways that reflect wider social stereotypes. Up until Brandon Lee, Asian male representation in U.S. gay pornography was limited to the stereotype of effeminate bottomhood. Like Asian representations in U.S.

⁷ Tan Hoang Nguyen’s critical account of Brandon Lee explains how U.S. mainstream gay pornography provides non-white ethnicities with a certain type of sexual currency. See: Nguyen, Tan Hoang, “The Resurrection of Brandon Lee: The Making of a Gay Asian American Porn Star.” – In *Porn Studies*, edited by Linda Williams, 223–270. New York, USA: Duke University Press, 2004.

⁸ Fung, Richard. “5. Looking for My Penis: The Eroticized Asian in Gay Video Porn.” In *Asian Canadian Studies Reader*, edited by Roland Coloma and Gordon Pon. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017, 86–102.

⁹ Nguyen, Tan Hoang. *A View from the Bottom: Asian American Masculinity and Sexual Representation*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2014, 25.

mainstream gay pornography, Turkish performances in U.S. mainstream gay pornography were limited to certain stereotypes. A prime example is the work of the previously mentioned American gay porn director Collin O'Neal, who introduced the gay ethnic pornography genre to U.S. gay audiences via the series *World of Men*. This series includes films from countries across the world, including Argentina, Israel, Colombia, Lebanon, Spain, and Turkey. The introductory text for *World of Men: Turkey* states:

We admit it – we've always had a bit of a weakness for the look of Turkish men. Swarthy, hairy, built like gods, and usually possessing a nice, thick, and uncut butt-prodder Turkish penises. Collin O'Neal takes his terrific eye overseas yet again, and once again delivers a powerhouse fuck-load of powerful fuckers. We'll also freely admit that we love these films; nobody does more for international relations than this terrific line.¹⁰

As this statement makes obvious, Collin O'Neal portrayed Turkish males for the U.S. gay porn audience as powerful, masculine, hairy 'fuckers' who perform as tops. Yet, despite following in the footsteps of Jean-Daniel Cadinot's Orientalization of the ethnic identities, one popular actor, Aybars Türker – who is a migrant porn-star from Turkey – does in fact challenge these stereotypes, in a manner inversely similar to Brandon Lee. Aybars Türker, also known just as Aybars, challenged the stereotype of the hairy, macho, dominant-top Turkish man in gay pornography by performing versatile roles, and at times 'power bottom' roles taking 10-inch dildos in his ass with pleasure. According to the biography on GayHotMovies "Aybars Türker has concentrated on working with Raging Stallion, Cazzo Films, and Falcon Studios. He is quite talented and has starred in movies which involve 21 categories ranging from compilations to outdoor scenes."¹¹ In comparison to European examples of gay pornography, the positional versatility of porn stars like Aybars in the U.S. helped break down ethnic stereotypes in U.S. mainstream gay pornography.

The positional shifts initiated by porn stars like Brandon Lee and Aybars can be seen as a reactionary performance against their racial and ethnic misrepresentation in the mainstream gay porn film industry. These shifts should be considered in contrast to personal histories and relationships to migrant experiences and integration politics of the directors working in Europe for Zip Production and Trimax Films. Considering Collin O'Neal's *World of Men* series and Aybars Türker's performances in various production houses, it might be said that the influence of Zip Production's style was limited to European examples of gay ethnic pornography. As discussed before, the Zip Production movies are similar to Jean-Noël René Clair's style and his pornographic commodification of Turkish men. The authenticity of Jean-Noël René Clair's

¹⁰ See: <https://www.gay-dvd-shop.com/World-Of-Men/Collin-ONeals-World-Of-Men-Turkey.htm> (Last Access Date: 17.03.2024).

¹¹ See: <https://www.gayhotmovies.com/porn-star/194342/Aybars-Turker.htmlNeals-World-Of-Men-Turkey.htm> (Last Access Date: 17.03.2024).

examples of Turkishness and Collin O'Neal's white and muscled 'Turkish' men both play with notions of ethnicity, 'race', and class, even if from different perspectives. However, the videos of Trimax Films engage neither with the style of Jean-Noël Réne Clair nor the U.S. examples of Turkish-themed gay porn films. Trimax Films produced examples of gay ethnic pornography outside the standardized narrative. Both Brandon Lee's and Aybars Türker's performances provide new, non-stereotypical representations in porn for Asian and Middle Eastern gay audiences. However, examples of gay ethnic pornography exported from Europe rarely challenge the standard categorization of non-white performers in certain sexual positions. Nguyen writes that "as gay Asian and North American cultural critics and artists have noted, the playfulness and negation between looking and being looked at... fucking and being fucked, being top and being bottom, continue to be inaccessible for gay Asian men, who are relegated to only one side of the equation, that of bottomhood, if and when they figure in the equation at all."¹² Both the narrative tropes and aesthetics of Zip Production and Trimax Films complement each other in producing an archive of representations for minorities who do not see themselves in standard European gay porn.

The narrative elements of Zip Production's *Ahmet's Fuck Tour* mix elements present in early works of Cadinot – where he presents the North African city that he was visiting – and Jean-Noël Réne Clair, who shows scared yet excited migrant men in front of the camera. Every episode of *Ahmet's Fuck Tour* starts with an introductory scene about the city that Ahmet is traveling through in the episode. The audience sees the city from the perspective of someone inside a car, on his way to meet the men of the city. In the *Istanbul Boys* series of Trimax Films, every episode has a different theme, such as sex at the fitness studio, teacher and student, tenant and the landlord, repairman, etc. All in all, most of these episodes contain the ever-popular gay baiting narrative.

Each episode of Zip Production's *Ahmet's Fuck Tour* series can be divided into three categories based on the number of cast members in the scenes: single, duo, and threesome. The structure of solo sex scenes creates an intimate viewing experience where the actor is the center of a viewer's observation. In solo scenes, the point of view is directed from a subjective perspective. Although the viewing experience is still subjective regarding duo scenes, the issues of preferences and reciprocal pleasures become more apparent. It might distract from the one-to-one effect of solo performances. In ethnic pornography, if solo performers are the ones that are fetishized for their ethnicities, then the viewer's position or the director's lens are the ones who help build such a dynamic without needing more actors. Therefore, these three different forms of filming create various ways of operating ethnic desire. Although the narratives are built in the same way across these three different categories, the cinematic tools such as mise-en-scene, POV (point of view), and editing choices are deployed dif-

¹² Nguyen, 2014, 154.

ferently, demanding separate readings of how movies in each category represent masculinity in the German-Turkish context. In the solo performances of *Ahmet's Fuck Tour*, most of the scenes are filmed in the conventional solo shots often used in American porn films. This style gives viewers the sense of looking at a still picture rather than watching a moving image. In these solo performances, there is a power dynamic displayed through the camera angle that is further supported by the postures of the porn actors. Most of these solo scenes have been captured from a low angle that shows the performer as someone who is 'above' the viewer, higher-up, or even godly. This relates to the idea of elevating masculinity through cinematic tools in porn. When male characters are captured from a low angle, the viewer accesses their bodies from below, creating a hierarchy between the viewer and the viewed. In addition, the low camera angle makes actors' limbs look longer and bigger than they are. This enhances, for example, the penis size or the actual height of the cast member.

Low-angle shots are often preferred in porn movies in order to enhance the body image and size of the cast member, therefore creating an unrealistic image. This film technique was used extensively in the solo scenes of Ahmet's Fuck Tour, enhancing the masculine qualities and playing into the stereotypes of Middle Eastern men. Like the solo scenes from the movies of Jean-Noël René Clair where he focuses on Middle Eastern or North African migrant man, Zip Production went in the same direction by portraying these men in highly masculine ways through filming techniques for Western European/North American viewers – in addition to the dark skin, hair, sharp facial features, and masculine postures of the actors.

In most of the solo and duo performances in *Ahmet's Fuck Tour*, cast members are asked to introduce themselves and talk about what they are like in life and in sex. After that, they either start to interact with each other or masturbate in front of the camera. Most of the dialogues are presented with German subtitles of discussable quality. For example, in *Men of Adana*, there is a small dialogue between the cast members that is not quite audible. However, the German subtitles show almost four full sentences for it, in which the audience learns that the guy who is the bottom in the scene is hurting because of the top's penis size. Although it is not clear if this dialogue actually took place, the translation here is used for the purposes of exoticization, based on stereotypical ideas about Turkish (top) men. In *Men of Istanbul 3*, a male cast member who has sex with a trans woman talks to Murat Bal afterward, asking him, "Was it small? Your friend showed his little finger to you to signal that my dick was small before filming. My dick is bigger than that, but I got a little nervous because of the camera." Although the interview scenes in the beginning of each film seem to be very staged and shallow, the interviews that are captured after filming and edited in the movie help characters gain more personality.

These interviews are adopted from the style used in U.S. mainstream gay pornography where most of the cast is mocked by the studio's interview questions, which profess to express shock at the invented claim that many of the porn actors are having gay sex for the first time. To give a specific example, we can look at the audition tapes

of the label Sean Cody. Sean Cody, headquartered in San Diego (United States) produces content that offers online services and deals with straight acting, gay-for-pay themes, and marketed straight masculinity as gay sex. In a sense, a set-up that encourages gay sex without admitting that the men involved are gay. Some characterization tactics in Sean Cody's audition tapes are also available in the Zip Production catalog. Cüneyt Çakırlar has also noted that Cody's 'auditions' are similar to the 'talking head' intros of Zip Production films – enhancing, by authenticating, a form of straightness (exposed to gay gaze).¹³ However, the dominant muscle features of Sean Cody and the fact that the models are generally hairless are not seen in Zip Production films. As Craig Tollini describes, “the majority of Sean Cody's models, regardless of their position in anal sex, had the type of body expected in mainstream gay pornography, with defined abdominal muscles and developed arms and chest muscles.”¹⁴ Although Zip Production and Sean Cody differ in their aesthetics and use of bareback sex, the strategy followed in audition tapes bears similarities, which shows that the gay-for-pay narrative is common among genres. Straight male fantasy is instrumentalized in many different records.

In porn, interviews before the sex scenes aim to help us personify these 'bodies' and provide additional material to eroticize and exoticize the actors, exploiting for fantasy information their backgrounds, whether they have had sex with men, or even their body language which reveals if the cast members are excited or nervous about the gay encounter. In the Eastern European context, for instance, these types of interviews are instrumentalized to threaten straight men with blackmail and convince them to have gay sex for money. It is also important to note that these interviews are translated into German through subtitles that make *Ahmet's Fuck Tour* understandable for German and Turkish-speaking audiences, rather than leaving the meaning of the conversation to the imagination of the spectator. Most of the sentences are not perfectly translated, which actually seems to be an editorial choice made by the studio. Translating a dialogue incorrectly as an intentional editing choice plays with the language barriers and creates a meaning that is polarized in the comparative analysis of these dialogues or interviews. In *Men of Adana*, the audience is introduced to a jerk-off scene followed by a conversation. In this specific conversation scene, one of the actors says something quite short and hard to understand. However, the mumbling is translated from Turkish as “*es wäre schön, jetzt deine Votze zu ficken*” (*it would be good to fuck your cunt now*). This translation does not only refer to the anal penetration that did not yet happen, but also employs language that supports 'straight men fantasy' in gay porn.

13 Çakırlar, Cüneyt. Baiting the Straight: Cyber-queering Gay Male Pornography. [Unpublished Master's Dissertation, MA in Cultural Studies]. Istanbul Bilgi University, Istanbul, Turkey. 2002.

14 Tollini, Craig. “Different Portrayals of Masculinity in Gay Bareback Pornographic Videos: Comparing Sean Cody with Treasure Island Media.” *Porn Studies* 4, no. 4, 2017, 427.

In *Homo Exoticus*, Maxime Cervulle and Nick Rees-Roberts explain such strategies while referring to Nacira Guénif-Soulimas.¹⁵ Guénif-Soulimas mentions the compulsory heterosexuality-homophobia stereotypes assigned to young Arabs in France. This stereotype is diversified into other ethnic representations, which are instrumentalized by the alternative productions of the same subgenre.¹⁶ The subtitle here does not use the word ‘asshole’, instead replacing it with ‘cunt’, a perverse replacement that recycles typically heterosexual terminology. However, such translation choices help enhance the fantasy of heterosexual, bisexual, or even gay macho men performers that they enjoy the replacement of a vagina with an asshole.

Like the translation errors that function to catalyze the lustful expression of the desire for and between Turkish men, the background noises in these porn videos hint at similar patterns and intentions. In most of the solo scenes, viewers hear background noises like female moaning that is meant to show how the supposedly straight actors are watching heterosexual porn to get hard in front of the camera. As with the language and translation choices, the background noises in the *Ahmet’s Fuck Tour* play a vital role in enhancing the eroticization of the cast member by reinforcing the straight macho-male fantasy. These editorial choices come as no surprise, considering the subtitling and dubbing strategies that are widely common in the Western film industry. As Tessa Dwyer states:

In many ways, screen translation constitutes a battlefield, with war continuing to rage between its two dominant modes: subtitling and dubbing. This battle is at once historic and current, figurative and practical. It is also culturally specific. In the past, screen culture sub/dub debates have been most vocal in Western, English-speaking contexts where neither method is entrenched.¹⁷

Like the subtitles, the casting in *Ahmet’s Fuck Tour* helps to racialize the homoerotic exchange between Turkish men. Such an exchange varies in this series, which relates to social homoerotics through various preferences and trans-femme inclusion. In the *Men of Istanbul* series, audiences are introduced to two scenes where we see trans-femme cast members. To include such a scene that features a trans cast member was not typical for French and ex-Yugoslavian ethnic gay porn films but, in Zip Production’s *Ahmet’s Fuck Tour*, two different trans cast members participated in the set *Men of Istanbul 3* and *Men of Istanbul 4*. In French and ex-Yugoslavian/Eastern European examples of gay porn, it is hard to find a series that includes trans cast members. Aside from the scenes that include trans characters, it is hard to classify sexual roles – e.g., top or bottom – neatly in these Turkish production films. Like Zip Production, also

¹⁵ Cervulle, 2010, 74 and 75.

¹⁶ Guénif-Souilamas, Nacira. “De nouveaux ebbénismes intimes: le garçon et la fille beurette.” In *Les Féministes et le Garçon Arabe*, edited by Nacira Guénif Souilamas and Eric Macé, Paris: L’Aube, 2004, 101–112.

¹⁷ Dwyer, Tessa. *Speaking in Subtitles: Revaluing Screen Translation*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017, 47.

Trimax Films used cross-dressing, for instance in their film *Bekletme Beni (Don't Make Me Wait)*. In Zip Production's movies, trans-femme cast members appear in belly dancer outfits, the film even opens with a short dance performance by the trans-femme cast member. This belly dance performance also refers to *köçek* or *rakkas* dancers. As Şehvar Beşiroğlu describes, the *köçek* was typically a very handsome young male 'slave' or a Romani dancer, and the *rakkas* was usually cross-dressed in feminine attire and was employed as an entertainer who appeared between the 17th and the 19th-century era of the Ottoman peninsula.¹⁸ In *Ahmet's Fuck Tour*, a scene with a trans-femme belly dancer commemorates the legacy of *rakkas* and *köçek* dancers with a very modernized canon. The *köçek* tradition of gender-fluid dancing still exists in Anatolia as a dance by choice, as entertainment, but also as a survival form of labor assigned to men having feminine movements, where they are exploited. This inclusion enables a queerer or gender non-conforming reading of these films that challenges the stereotypical aesthetics of this genre. Yet, when the scenes with trans casts are included, *Ahmet's Fuck Tour* invites a more extensive discussion around femme or trans performance in Oriental homoerotic content. In the context of gay ethnic pornography, offering a visual variety by including trans identities or 'feminized' male actors also points to the issue of Orientalist voyeurism. This belly dancer performance and inclusion of trans-femme actresses shifts the aesthetics of gay ethnic pornography.

The 'European' staging of these films and the power dynamics regarding Europe, and its distinct histories of gender are destabilized as overly masculinized aesthetics and characterizations shatter and bring a new perspective highly linked to Orientalist clichés. Discussing the *köçeks*, Joseph Allen Boone states that "their very plasticity – their ability to be shaped and reshaped according to context, creator, reader, or onlooker – is what has made them so powerfully attractive to many homosexually inclined European sensibilities that have looked to the Middle East for confirmation of sexual possibilities denied at home."¹⁹ On the one hand, the belly dancer scene, which is a reference to the *rakkas* and *köçek* dancers in a particular homoerotic context, challenges the voyeuristic desire between adornment and estrangement. On the other hand, the masculinity of the sex partners of these belly dancers and trans-femme actresses re-assures stereotypical aesthetics of gay ethnic porn thanks to their overly masculine appearance. This particular scene proposes various readings from actors' or actresses' positions and what they represent, and also the viewer's part, considering the direct references imbued in Orientalist homo-erotica.

Such challenging dynamics also appear in Trimax Films' *Bekletme Beni (Don't Make Me Wait)* (2008) through a different aspect of homo-Oriental desire: the phenomenon of the *bath boy*. Here it is important to revisit the phenomenon of the bath boy

18 Beşiroğlu, Ş. Şehvar. "Music, Identity, Gender: Çengis, Köçeks, Çöçeks." [Unpublished Article]. Istanbul Technical University State Conservatory, Istanbul, Turkey, 2019, 5.

19 Boone, 2014, 86 and 87.

in Middle Eastern, especially Ottoman, history. Trimax Videos recreated the *bath boy* phenomenon, similar to the discourse around the *köçek* figure, which points to non-masculine Orientalized references through homoerotic social encounters. Like Jean-Léon Gérôme's *Snake Charmer* (1879), Trimax Videos pictured a young man bathing to charm an older man with more masculine features. The bathing fantasy of Trimax is similar to the belly dancing scene of Zip Production, and both scenarios heavily rely on the binary codes often implied in Orientalist homoerotic art. In contrast to the bath boy and *köçek* performances, rent boys challenge such narrative by presenting a straight-acting masculine young hustler concept. While Oriental desire is mainly fueled by the distinction between performances of femininity and masculinity, such desire is altered through the contrast of youth and overtly masculine attitude that is recognized in the narrative of ethnic pornography as well. In the historical records, we can find many visual artifacts that feature young men as the desired other by representing them as effeminate or feminized, a phenomenon where "constructions of masculinities are challenged and engaged."²⁰ By parodying often-used examples of homo-Oriental lust, Zip Production could widen their audience through sexualities. Cenk Özbay argues that engagement with transvestism typically exists in the culture of rent boys. He points out that the rent boy can be also fetishized or romanticized by trans people:

While transvestites enjoy the young virility and 'real' masculinity of rent boys, the latter are happy to show how masculine and sexually active they are by having sex with the 'girls.' In most cases, a transvestite mentors an inexperienced rent boy and she teaches him how to have good sex. Although it seems a mutually satisfying relationship, these escapades with transvestites are indeed very risky for rent boys. Transvestites can easily ridicule a rent boy for not having a sufficiently large penis or for not achieving a fulfilling sexual performance.²¹

According to Özbay, the rent boy phenomenon represents a cultural hybridization and theatrical display of exaggerated masculinity.²² This is the performative display of masculinity that Zip Production instrumentalizes as an asset to secure the masculinity of their actors. Unlike what they do in their solo videos, Zip Production movies do not introduce these actors, who interact with trans actresses through an interview. However, the aforementioned belly dancer scene enables these actors to perform defined heterosexual roles, unlike the non-binary gay versatility that exists in the Trimax Films releases. Further, the rent boy or 'gay-for-pay' phenomenon of performative masculinity in Turkey is echoed in the way migrant status is perceived in the German gay scene. In his autobiographical memoir, *Fucking Germany: Das Letzte Tabu oder mein Leben als Escort* (Fucking Germany: The last taboo or my life as an Escort),

²⁰ Boone, 2014, 88.

²¹ Özbay, Cenk. "Nocturnal Queers: Rent Boys' Masculinity in Istanbul." *Sexualities* 13, no. 5, 2010, 658.

²² Özbay, 2010, 649.

Cem Yıldız underlines how his migrant position enabled him to become a successful rent boy through performing specific tactics of masculinity and cultural codes of migrant Turkish men. In his book, he mentions that such interest towards Turkish rent boys exists in Turkish migrant communities in Germany due to the mutual trust that is built on discretion:

...Anderseits vertrauen sie mir wahrscheinlich eher, weil ich den Erst der Lage einschätzen kann und mich definitiv an das Gesetz des Schweigens halte, während die Deutschen ja ständig mit der Regenbogenfahne rumlaufen und am Ende noch in der Talkshow sitzen und alles ausplaudern. (While they probably trust me more because I can assess the situation first and definitely adhere to the law of silence, the Germans are always running around with the rainbow flag and at the end still sit on the talk show and gossip everything).²³

Both in Turkey and Germany, the rent boys will often make themselves more desirable through discretion, performing exaggerated masculinities, and leaning into their socio-economic marginality. Although the DVD covers of Trimax films have a disclaimer stating that the films are 100% Turkish, Trimax does not bring together a cast that would be considered ‘authentically’ Turkish. Instead, Trimax presents a variety of different possibilities and fantasies common to porn, only adapted to the Turkish context. However, in contrast, Zip Production aims to create a compilation of authentic Turkish men on camera, so scenes with trans cast members can be interpreted as a new vector in the re-Orientalization of the desire of Turkish men. Excluding these few scenes, the overall compilation of *Ahmet’s Fuck Tour* presents versatile gay sex encounters where sexual roles are not determined by the social and cultural norms of masculinity and femininity. In contrast, in Trimax Films scenes, the distinction between masculine and feminine is more determined. For instance, in *Istanbul Boys – Çapkın Gençler* (Rascal Youngsters), the audience is introduced to ‘daddy and twink role play’ – a dynamic never explored by Zip Production. In the movies of Zip Production, the bodies of cast members alone are the catalyst for the Oriental desire: hair, skin color, language, gestures, etc.

Similar codes and actions are deployed to increase pleasure in French gay ethnic pornography, where re-Orientalization is built through the neocolonial subject positions of the migrant men. Like the JNRC and Citébeur production houses in France, Trimax Films and Zip Production did eroticize and romanticize poverty in their productions. This comparison can be seen very clearly in Citébeur films in which, as Mehammed Amadeus Mack argued, the director “Chibikh was accused of eroticizing poverty and romanticizing a daily routine of confrontation that dominates

23 Yıldız, Cem. *Fucking Germany: Das letzte Taboo oder mein Leben als Escort*. Frankfurt am Main: Westend Verlag, 2009, 111.

Here, I translated the German version to English.

miserabilist representation of the suburbs.”²⁴ Without a doubt, Citébeur intentionally picks locations and outfits that fetishize the minority working-class in Paris. However, in the case of Zip Production and Trimax films, it can be argued that the romanticization of poverty was driven by a desire for authenticity. Citébeur’s releases came almost five years after JNRC, Zip Production, and Trimax Films.

Similarly to the way the construction of the Playboy Mansion, as Paul B. Preciado points out, invokes specific social codes that defined masculinity and social class, the memory of working-class and guest worker aesthetics were coded just as clearly in the films of Zip Production and Trimax Films through the use of particular design elements.²⁵ For instance, the house shown in the movie by Trimax Films is close to the local working-class aesthetics in its interior. In contrast, the architectural design of the house and its probable location evoke the homes where the guest-workers from Europe and middle-class Turkish people spend their holidays in Turkey; the portrayal of this house allows for a rich analysis of how these houses create meaning by their architectural and interior designs. Just like the sense of temporary that becomes important in the representation of almost unfurnished immigrant houses in the Jean-Noël René Clair Films, elements of working-class and guest-worker aesthetics as an alternative to the representation in the productions of Zip Production and Trimax Films reflect what these films mean architecturally. Unlike the empty, single bed stage design seen in JNRC Films, some of the movies by Zip Production are recorded inside houses that belong to the local men, with an emphasis on their actual interior decoration. Using these private spaces of actors, as it is done extensively in *Men of Istanbul 3* and 4, provides visual background information and situates the men in an economic and social context that is different from the blank space of JNRC Films.

In addition to these houses, hotel scenes in Zip Production’s movies also offer a sociological reading about access to sex and where and how homosexual sex can be accommodated. These neglected hotel rooms, which are essential elements, especially in French and German ethnic pornographic films, both create aesthetic integrity regarding the social identity of the working-class man in those films and reconstitute an exotic construction over it. The romanticization of poverty in the films of these three pioneering production houses can perhaps also be explained taking into account the difficulties of gay networking within discreet looking and marginalized middle- and working-class communities, which differs greatly in comparison to upper-class gays who have more resources and access to sexual intercourse or travel for sex tourism. In the movies of Zip Production, the film’s locations are either two-star pension rooms or traditionally decorated homes located in the working-class neighborhoods in the outskirts of the Turkish cities the producers visit. In an exclusive interview I car-

²⁴ Mack, 2017, 228.

²⁵ Preciado, Paul B. *Pornotopia: An Essay on Playboy’s Architecture and Biopolitics*. New York: Zone Books, 2014, 22.

ried out with Ben Tamam for this book, he explains how the casting process worked and how he engaged with the sex ghettos of Istanbul:

It was a very simple thing. We printed some cards with our name and a mobile phone number. We hang around in cafés or parks and if I saw someone that was my type, my Turkish friend spoke with him and asked him whether he would be ready to play in a film. Depending on the reaction, my friend went on. Sometimes he just gave our card and when we got a call, we talked about our project. Sometimes he told the guys directly what it was about. If you asked a Turkish or a young Kurdish man if he could get a shot (in front of the camera), he had to say yes, because of his male honor. A Turkish/Kurdish man always can jack off! And if he agreed, we went to a small, shabby hotel in Aksaray. Our first film was completely shot in the same place. Later we were more cautious, and we shot in several places, sometimes private, because we realized that there were criminals who wanted to steal our equipment (even though we had just two cameras) or who wanted to blackmail us because of our film. Luckily, it happened only once. And in this one time we were lucky, because the police did not believe the blackmailer, because the idea seemed so absurd to the police, that they did not even look into our pockets in which the recorded videotapes were.²⁶

The non-response of the police indicates the invisibility of such events in Turkish society and points to the perception of homosexuality and how the police view it as an absurdity. Additionally, there are structural implications in what Ben Tamam shares. How police take sides with Ben Tamam, a white tourist/producer who visits Turkey from Germany, makes him a credible source, considering the internalized racism even in such scenarios. Like Zip Production, Şevket Şahin and Metin Sözen faced similar situations and difficulties despite most of the movies seem to be captured in the same villa starring the same actors. For instance, Hasan Payla is one of the Trimax Films porn stars who took part in films some of which will be discussed later. In most Trimax Films, including their famous Şahin K. pornos captured in a villa, the interior changed according to the script. The villa is often decorated with an Oriental corner, floor carpets, and traditional pillowcases. In some bath scenes, a waist cloth is used, clearly referencing the Turkish hammams. These objects are fixtures of houses in Turkey and in the diaspora. In fact, such Oriental home decor is often more popular outside Turkey since it represents important cultural connections and histories. The symbols and items help individuals deal with homesickness or feel connected to their homeland despite the migration experience. Although Trimax films certainly included these elements to Orientalize the actors for Western audiences, these choices also have an inverse effect of helping migrant men or local Turkish audiences identify their sexuality with these cultural references in a process of self-Orientalization.

Although most of the movies from Trimax Films do contain these powerful cultural reminders, the studio will intentionally avoid sharing such details in a few films. For example, in another film from the *Istanbul Boys* series called *Sıcak Yatak (Warm Bed)* (2007), the audience is introduced to the same villa setting, yet the space has been

²⁶ Interview with Ben Tamam, 30th of May 2019, Schwules Museum, Berlin, Germany. See: *Appendix*.

remade into a homemade fitness studio. Even though the first half of the movie intentionally creates an illusion of a fitness studio, the second half of the film takes place in another room of the villa where a poster with horses in nature is hanging on the wall. Although the first part of the movie tries to avoid showing traditional Turkish visual cues, it was hard for the filmmakers to hide the souvenir-shop-like atmosphere of the set design in the villa for the duration of the movie.

The Turkish pastoral aesthetic is also featured on the DVD covers of Trimax Films. In most of the *Istanbul Boys* series, there is a background image that reflects the natural wonders of Anatolia. Waterfalls, valleys, curated parks, and even photos of holiday resorts figure on the DVD covers of Trimax Films. Besides representing Turkey's touristic and natural tropes, the DVD cover of *Çapkın Gençler (Rascal Youngsters)* (2003) even makes a historically-grounded joke: a daddy figure is positioned backward on a donkey, a direct reference to the Seljuk satirist Nasreddin Hodja. Nasreddin Hodja is a philosopher and storyteller from the 13th century who often uses dark humor to transmit his messages. To this day, he is a prominent figure in Turkish culture and literature whose stories are repeatedly included in the syllabi of primary schools across Turkey, since he represents the Seljuk roots of Turkish identity. However, such a reference on a gay porn DVD cover takes Nasreddin Hodja's satire to a new level, his identity recast as a gay Anatolian daddy figure. Of course, this joke could only speak to an audience who knows this story.

In contrast, for the Western audiences, the image might seem to reference the derogatory term *Ziegenficker* (Goatfucker), a derogatory term used in Western European countries such as Germany or Netherlands to describe men from North Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia. In a prominent example from March 2016, German satirist Jan Böhmermann called Recep Tayyip Erdogan, President of Turkish Republic, a goatfucker:

Böhmermann, among other things, called Erdoğan 'a man beating girls', and said that he is keen on 'fucking goats' and he would 'suppress minorities, kick the Kurds, hit Christians while watching child pornography.' Much of the rest of the poem is devoted to associating Erdoğan with various less accepted forms of sexuality. Böhmermann deliberately played with the limits of satire and said several times that this form of abusive criticism was not allowed in Germany.²⁷

As exemplified by this clash between Böhmermann and Erdogan, 'goatfucker' is still deployed as a nasty term that mocks non-white males by insinuating their lack of sexual socialization. Here, the image on the DVD jacket is also related to how Orientalism associates hypersexuality (or the animalistic excess) with the Orient. Here, bestiality is instrumentalized as a xenophobic tool of depicting class and 'racial' differ-

27 See: <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/feuilleton/medien/ermittlungen-gegen-jan-boehmermann-wegen-erdogan-gedicht-14163940.html> (Last Access Date: 17.03.2024). See also: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B%C3%B6hmermann_affair#cite_note-Schm%C3%A4hkritik_FAZ-7 (Last Access Date: 17.03.2024).

ence. It is racialized and framed as ‘anti-civilization’, where civilization is assumed as exclusively Western. Therefore, although this image on the Trimax Films’ DVD jacket may seem like a culturally specific inside joke, it is also an expression of the Westernized definition of anti-civilization, as indicated by a certain type of male sexuality.²⁸ Consequently, it can be said that the DVD covers of Trimax Films contain signifiers or messages that speak differently to multiple audiences at the same time. However, in contrast, it is hard to say that such ethnic or cultural references were present in the cover art for Zip Production films. Altogether, both Zip Production and Trimax Films provide a polyvalent libidinal space where audiences from different backgrounds could find something to engage with and jerk-off through the identity politics unfolding on screen. Scholars such as Rich Cante and Angelo Restivo point out how pornography creates a space to contend with identity politics:

After all, in its continual re-inscription of all spaces around us, all male pornography at some point becomes the field for the (utopian) reinvention of the world eternally promised by identity politics. Gay porn thereby presents a cultural critic with the complicated task of untangling the intricate knots connecting real historical beings not only to real historical spaces but also to the imaginary ‘subjects’ of historical discourse networks – as well as to the phantasmatically charged spaces where history is retroactively imagined to have played itself out, and where it will presumably continue to play itself out in the open book that is the future.²⁹

Besides creating an imaginary pornographic space through its films proposing multiple possibilities of identification, Zip Production also intervened in real-life physical homo-social spaces with their video release parties. In Tom’s Saloon & Tom’s Dancehall in Hamburg, formerly known as the P.I.T. club, Zip Production had their video release parties in early 2000s. They organized screenings for their films, which became homosocial spaces for their audiences in Hamburg. The *Men of Antalya* release party was one of the most significant video release party events for Zip Production, as it was promoted with flyers hung around gay spaces in the city. For decades, the P.I.T. club had a history of being a meeting point for leather fetish communities, even hosting the first exhibition of the Finnish homoerotic artist Tom of Finland in the 1970s. Some of the works from that exhibition were later re-exhibited with Tom of Finland’s notes in Galerie Judin in Berlin in 2020.³⁰ In the second half of the 2010s, P.I.T. club changed its name to Tom’s Saloon & Tom’s Dancehall as an homage to Tom of Finland.

²⁸ Glocalization, the simultaneous occurrence of both universalizing and particularizing tendencies in contemporary social, political, and economic systems. See: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/glocalization> (Last Access Date: 03.04.2024).

²⁹ Cante, Rich, and Restivo, Angelo. “The Cultural-Aesthetic Specificities of All-male Moving-Image Pornography.” In *Porn Studies*, edited by Linda Williams. New York, USA: Duke University Press, 2004, 143.

³⁰ See: <https://www.galeriejudin.com/artist/tom-of-finland/> (Last Access Date: 17.03.2024).

The in-person homosocial spaces created by Zip Production were not limited only to the video release parties in Hamburg. Zip Production also established a member organization called Zip Club to create a network of gay men with a specific taste in pornography. In response, the studio received letters from interested men outside Germany, even though their postcards advertising the club only appeared in German. Membership allowed members to receive new videos of Zip Production without shipping costs, invites to in-person events, the latest information about the company's productions, and a free gay scene guide. When Zip Production actively produced and marketed their films, the internet and especially social media were not as prominent or developed as today. Consequently, most engagement between the studio and their members, audience, and potential cast members took place in analog form. A review of these letter correspondences demonstrates a sustained interest in becoming members or filming with the studio from non-white and migrant populations.³¹ These innovative engagement strategies by Zip Production were later digitally replicated by the Citébeur production company of France as the Beur mobile application. Membership clubs, events, and the presence of these apps aimed to non-white users creates a neocolonial division between the gay communities in Europe.

3.4 The Soundtrack of Zip Production and Trimax Films

One of the elements that helped Zip Production re-Orientalize their releases was the music they selected. Oriental-sounding music has been used in many introduction scenes, suggesting to the audience that the cultural setting was Turkey. The featured music that is often used in Turkish celebratory events such as wedding ceremonies or child-circumcision gatherings. Most members of the audience from Turkey or the wider Middle East will recognize the traditional music and are likely to find it conflicting in relation to a gay porn scene. However, using such traditional music helps the visual image feel more 'authentically Turkish' by staging the 'Other' for Western viewers, for whom this music is foreign yet palatable.

Zip Production even released a soundtrack album recorded by *TayFun*, a Hamburg-based DJ who frequently performs live at Turkish weddings in Germany. This merchandising strategy of selling the porn soundtrack on a cassette is noteworthy given the gay context. Yet, releasing porn film soundtracks is not an unknown strategy in Turkish erotic cinema. During the 1970s, Turkish porn studios released soundtrack albums as LPs for underground promotion of their films. For instance, Figen Han, a pioneering actress of Turkish erotic cinema in 1973 released an LP album at the climax of her career called *Pisi Pisi – Haydi Bastır*. *Haydi Bastır (Go for It)* was also the name

³¹ Due to the data protection regulations, the exact numbers or personal information of the senders is protected.

of the erotic film in which she was the protagonist. On this album, Figen Han can be heard dirty talking or even moaning during the songs.³² Surprisingly, however, Zip Production's soundtrack album contained nothing particularly sexual. The songs produced by *TayFun* can be classified as folksy and traditional. Marketing such a product reveals the studio's strategy to appeal to customers' nostalgia or longing for their home country, a common marketing tactic towards migrant communities in Europe. In Zip Production's releases, the soundtrack goes on and off randomly, rather than introducing or supporting what's on-screen. Oriental tunes can be heard in the middle of the penetration scenes, and then fade out again unexpectedly. In contrast, Trimax Films used a soundtrack only during the intro and outro scenes to support text credits and images. Furthermore, the music choices of Trimax Films are of a Western generic style of music, mirroring the use of music in the 70s erotica films from Turkey that tended towards Westernized aesthetics through the use of memorable psychedelic rock tunes as soundtrack.

3.5 Acting and Porn Stardom in the Movies of Zip Production and Trimax Films

Due to the itinerant nature of Zip Production's releases, the studio limited its casting to men found in each featured city. At Trimax Films, however, a more open casting policy gave space for a range of actors including one young versatile porn star, Hasan Payla, who challenged Aybars Türker's sole claim to the versatile Turkish porn stardom. Hasan appears in multiple films during the *Istanbul Boys* series, and in each of them, we see him performing a different position or scenario. With a stereotypical twink aesthetic – featuring a skinny, young, short, and smooth body – he often performs versatile characters even within the same movie, switching between top and bottom roles. Such versatility does not exist in the Zip Production films. While Hasan Payla's career is perhaps limited to the *Istanbul Boys* series, his fluid performances made him a star. On the DVD covers of the *Istanbul Boys* series, promotional text reads:

These Turkish boys have a lot to offer. They throw a spectacular gay party, and it wasn't long before they got bored. What happens next is hot sexual encounter with each other. They are young, hairless, and ready to get dirty with each other. These guys are from Istanbul! Istanbul Boys.³³

In statements such as “these Turkish boys have a lot to offer,” the men's Turkishness is instrumentalized in a way that seems to reveal the producers' desire to ‘Turkify’ every pornographic sub-category, to make the films more marketable. The strategy also

³² Further, outside Turkey, there are numerous porn soundtracks albums that have been produced as supplementary marketing material for porn or erotic films.

³³ Text stated on the DVD jackets of *Istanbul Boys* series produced by Trimax Films.

demonstrates how Trimax Films sought to subvert the clichéd representation of hairy Turkish macho men, making Trimax Films a challenger to mainstream U.S. companies. The young and hairless – but ‘dirty’ – boys of Istanbul are bodies of a new racialized economy of homoerotic fetishization that mixes occidental aesthetics and oriental ideals of ‘beautiful boys.’ This in-betweenness of the actors’ representations recalls clichéd depictions of Middle Eastern homoeroticism, tropes which Joseph Allen Boone categorizes into three different styles: “First is the ubiquitous image of the beautiful boy as an object of ardent male desire. Second is the age-differentiated sodomy as the primary formation of male-male sexuality in Islamic culture. Third is the fantasies of hammam (or bathhouse) as a privileged spatial locus for male erotic encounters.”³⁴ In many ways, porn actor Hasan Payla could fit into all these three different categories of Middle Eastern homoeroticism in terms of his body type and self-presentation. However, he challenges the characterization of the ‘beautiful boy’ as a submissive bottom in racialized pornography. In Trimax Films, age-differentiated sodomy exists, but it does not fall into the orientalist cliché with a hypermasculine man encountering a male dancer or an effeminate performer.

Turning back to the casting by Zip Production, porn stardom like that of Hasan Payla is hard to come by since almost every episode introduces audiences to a completely different cast. While this makes sense given the traveling, location-based focus of finding men in each Turkish city, the audience oddly never sees Ahmet, the supposed protagonist of the series. With its POV solo shoots, one is not sure whether Ahmet is the camera itself, the camera operator, or the guy behind the cameras. This mystery helps the audience imagine themselves as Ahmet, fulfilling a sort of peeping fantasy. Cast members in Zip Production films were selected through rather old-school methods, as explained by Ben Tamam during an interview with the author of this book. Tamam explains how he mediates the invisible Ahmet character:

There is not really a specific reason behind the name, but the main actor of this film is the reason. He was one of our models in the first film. In this time, he just came out of prison. In fact, he breaks out and needs money urgently. He was a ‘professional thief’ and, as he told us later, there were a lot of situations where he could have stolen all our equipment. We were incredibly naive and easy-going. But for some reason, probably because we loved him and he loved us, we worked with him and he took care of the money in the car during the shots or watched our equipment. And he was ready to do anything in the film, so we came up with the idea of filming with him.³⁵

Although Zip Production did not pay attention to advancing the stardom of their cast members, they filmed scenes that support the depiction of Middle Eastern homoeroticism that Boone mentioned. In some of the episodes of the *Ahmet’s Fuck Tour*, actors took part in shower scenes that recall the oriental hammam fantasies or even Muslim

³⁴ Boone, 2014, 51.

³⁵ Interview with Ben Tamam, 30th of May 2019, Schwules Museum, Berlin, Germany. See: *Appendix*.

ghusl rituals.³⁶ While cast members do not perform pre- and post-sex *ghusl* actions, the shower scenes right after sex could hint to culturally knowledgeable viewers who have this religious background. In Turkish culture, *hammams* are an important semi-public social space where same sex participants perform cleansing and socializing, which is often associated with Islamic rituals. Since the usage of *hammams* is divided along gender binaries, their architecture acts as a catalyst for the imaginary of homosexual desire. The shower scenes in the Zip Production films contain aesthetic elements, such as audiovisual depiction, with culturally loaded meaning. The audience hears water; the cast members and crew converse while cleaning their bodies in the shower, similarly to the interactions in a hammam. These shower scenes help personalize the cast members and relate them to the audience by depicting non-sexual activities. Unlike the porn star status that Hasan Payla achieves in the Trimax Films releases, Zip Production builds up its characterization of the Turkish cast by staging relatable, real-life experiences that touch on cultural memory.

Overall, however, both studios avoided close personalization of their actors in terms of representing different types of ethnicities from Turkey. Like JNRC Films, Zip Production and Trimax Films avoided personalization by using vague derogatory terms towards the actors, much like in the movies of Citébeur. Especially in Zip Production films, which play with the sexualization of working-class aesthetics and poverty, the use of derogatory terms contributes to a sexual mythology of poverty and exoticism mirroring the ghastly reality of the social and political struggles faced by ethnic minorities in modern Europe. The films of Citébeur use the derogatory term *beur* to try to empower its subjects through its pornographic redefinition. In contrast, Trimax Films avoids such derogatory characterization with the Hasan Payla character. Similarly, Zip Production never introduces Ahmet as a *Kanake*, a derogatory term used against migrant guest workers, even though such terminology would have further consolidated the orientalist gaze of the series.

3.6 Media Coverage of Zip Production and Trimax Films in Germany

While Zip Production and Trimax Films both marketed their films primarily in Germany, it is almost impossible to find any information in German media archives about Trimax Films. In the appendix section of this book, a list of German media coverage of Zip Production films can be found, including interviews, reviews, and articles about

³⁶ *Ghusl* is an Arabic term that refers to the full-body ritual purification that is mandatory before the performance of various rituals and prayers, for any adult Muslim after having sex, for ejaculation, and for the completion of the menstrual cycle. However, *wudu* and sleeping can be done without performing *ghusl*.

the *Ahmet's Fuck Tour* series.³⁷ This appendix has a historical importance for several reasons: firstly, this archive is not readily available online or offline today since none of these gay community publications are still running. Secondly, these materials were classified and shared from personal archives only for the purpose of the research of this book. The archival material has been collected by Ben Tamam, producer of the Zip Production, who offered full consent to bring in his archive and the legacy of Zip Production's to a contemporary academic and artistic audience. This media archive is an important source of historical material to analyze the evolving representation of Turkish LGBTIQ+ communities in Germany, and to bring to light the gay ethnic pornographic history of Europe and the S.W.A.N.A. regions. This section will analyze nine German magazines – *Adam Plus* magazine, *BUDDY* magazine, *Du & Ich* magazine, *EuroGay* blog page, *Hinnerk* magazine, *KERLE* magazine, *PIM* magazine, *Playground* magazine, and *TOY* magazine – plus one Turkish and German bilingual publication called *LUBUNYA* distributed only in Germany. As these articles demonstrate, the Zip Production movies captured the attention of mainstream German gay media between 1999 and 2004. *Adam Plus* magazine and *KERLE* magazine did interviews with Ben Tamam, the producer of Zip Production, and the bilingual magazine *LUBUNYA* ran a feature with Murat Bal, the co-producer of Zip Production.

In *Adam Plus* magazine, the interview questions mostly focused on Tamam's vision, as well as speculation if the cast was in fact bisexual or gay. Additionally, Tamam was asked an interesting question about the relationship between Islam and gay porn production: "Did you indicate that Islamic fundamentalists make your work here in Germany more difficult? What do you want to say?" This type of questions usually inquires about the reaction of the audiences in Turkey eye-to-eye on Islam while ignoring the possible 'reaction' of Turkish gay porn viewers in Germany. Even questions in the Turkish–German bilingual magazine *LUBUNYA*'s interview by Hakan Tas asked a similar question on Islam and the 'difficulties' of producing porn in Turkey. Moreover, it is interesting to note that both *Adam Plus* magazine and *KERLE* magazine shared their Zip Production interviews with the same headline: *TÜRKEN-POPPEN* (Turkish bonking). These two interviews represent the Zip Production movies in terms that establish racial and ethnic otherness instead of acknowledging the strong existence of a Turkish identity in Germany.

Analyzing the prevalence of this subject across Ben Tamam's whole archive of ten different gay lifestyle and pornography magazines published in Germany, we find two titles that published six articles across six different issues. These are the *Buddy* magazine issues 58, 79, 82 and the *TOY* magazine issues 224, 227, 242. Nine out of ten magazines wrote about Zip Production in German, and as mentioned, one of them, *LUBUNYA* magazine, wrote bilingually in both German and Turkish. Four out of the ten magazines interviewed the producers of Zip Production, and six out of ten published PR

³⁷ See: *Appendix*.

material for their films or included reviews. Most of the film reviews highlight stereotypes about hairy, masculine, and discrete Turkish men. By emphasizing the discrete label in their reviews, these German magazines ignored the real-life homosexual identity of many of the cast members, instead of representing them as heterosexual men choosing gay sex for money. In addition, most of these reviews use made-up terms to overly exoticize their content – such as *Türkenhonig* (Turkish honey, which supposedly refers to sperm) or *Bosporusmänner* (Men of The Bosphorus). The second term *Bosporusmänner* later inspired German homo-Oriental literature as well. Bruno Gmünder, a German homoerotic publishing house, released two different stories set in Istanbul by Paul Adamson and Thomas Schwarz for their famous *Loverboys* series.³⁸ *Loverboys 134–Heisse Nächte in Istanbul* (2013) and *Loverboys 145–Männerspiele am Bosporus* (2015) are the two books where the German writers adapted gay ethnic pornography for erotic literature. Unlike the Zip Production approach centering local Turkish men, the books from the *Loverboys* series tell the story of two adventurous gay German tourists and their getaway in Istanbul. On the books' cover art, the famous Italian porn star Alex Marte represents Turkish men for the audience in Germany. This choice shows how the stereotypical language used to describe cast members in Zip Production movies later inspired homoerotic literature, where non-German nationals and ethnic identities became a tool for sexual commodification.³⁹

Taking a closer look at the interview features, three out of four start with the same question: “How did the idea come about?” This suggestive question immediately sets a tone for the reader that shooting a porn film in Turkey is very scandalous. The following questions were primarily variations on “how do the cast members react to starring in porn films?” and “what was your experience shooting porn movies in Turkey?” Overall, these interview questions create a perception that presents Zip Production films as a daring challenge to produce, even though one of the founders has Turkish background. Interestingly, though, in most of the interviews, the interviewee is Ben Tamam, a German national. In one interview for *LUBUNYA* magazine prepared by GLADT (Gays und Lesbians aus der Türkei – Gays and Lesbians from Turkey), we find Murat Bal, who has a migrant background, responding to the interview questions. Murat Bal mentions that his inspiration to start filming ethnic-style porn films came from seeing Arab boys during his holiday in the South of France. He noted that he has a great interest in the Arab men he had encountered in France, as this interest shaped his sexuality as well. He describes his experience in *LUBUNYA*

³⁸ *Loverboys* series are the compilation of 166 books in total that are published by the Germany based Bruno Gmünder publishing house. Each book in the series focus on a different story that is written by a different author.

³⁹ In addition to the Turkish representation *Loverboys* series also released a *Loverboys Classic 1: Ali, Sohn der Wüste* (Ali, the son of desert) where the author André Leroy told the homo-Oriental eroticism between Ali and Hassan in a desert.

magazine to document or expose the untold, which is, in this case, the sexuality of men in Turkey.

Similarly to Stéphane Chibikh, Murat Bal grew up with the experience of coming from a migrant background, even if they do not always engage with this part of their biography. When it comes to presenting ethnic stereotypes in their films, they represent an insider position that gives them the confidence to confirm stereotypes as facts for the Western audience. In her book, *Declining the Stereotype*, Mireille Rosello states that “in the context of ethnic stereotyping, the grammar of facts and figures, with its accompanying level of articulations, is fetishized; it is an open invitation to plunge into our list of preconceptions.”⁴⁰ Another author, Mehammed Amadeus Mack, also mentions how Stéphane Chibikh, “who now shies away from media engagement”, was critiqued by the mainstream gay media for flaunting culturally inappropriate stereotypes in his films.⁴¹ *Citébeur* came almost ten years after Zip Production, and, since then, the perception towards gay pornography has changed given that there is significant visibility in the media, academy, and culture industry. However, the ethnic coding employed by Murat Bal, Ben Tamam, and Jean-Noël Réne Clair comes from their ‘realistic’ approach to gay pornography as producers of the first examples in the genre in the 1990s and early 2000s. Interviews found in the Zip Production media archive confirm this journalistic or documentary approach. Although there are repetitive clichés that pornography consistently repeats, there is also a potential for films to render visible unspoken or ignored sexualities and make them topics of discussion in the media. Such a possibility can create more space for underrepresented gay communities to be recognized and self-actualized, all while being sexualized.

Beyond the interviews with the Zip Production producers, a review of *Men of Adana 2* made by the editors of *Du und Ich* magazine, Peter and Paul, for the December 2003-January 2004 issue, reveals loaded stereotyping common at the time in the review, the two editors are introduced as European porn film detectives. Such entitlement gives them the power to qualify the productions they are reviewing. Like most of the reviews in other gay magazines published in Germany, Peter and Paul use many clichés to introduce the actors as ‘hairy young Turks’ who are scandalously jerking off in front of the camera. They were shocked by how much these men could cum in front of the camera. Peter stated that he would love to have an operation to become one of them, as if the transition from one ethnicity to another is possible through medical procedure. In addition to this odd wishful thinking, Peter mentions that such movies would not be possible under the governance of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Paul responds to this remark sarcastically and states that Europe has a lot to learn from

⁴⁰ Rosello, Mireille. *Declining the Stereotype: Ethnicity and Representation in French Cultures*. Contemporary French Culture and Society. Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1998, 135.

⁴¹ Mack, 2017, 228.

those stallions.⁴² This specific review is a prime example of white supremacist rhetoric that alienates and antagonizes sexualities from outside Western Europe. Prof. Roderick A. Ferguson argued:

Locating sociological arguments about sexuality within white racial formations taking place in the early decades of the twentieth century also begs the question of how contemporary arguments about the socially constructed nature of sexuality might point to such formations in our present period as well.⁴³

According to Ferguson, the re-construction of homosexual identity in the late 20th century followed homonormative notions of the Western, white, middle class; this resulted in effectively marginalizing working-class and non-white gay and bisexual men. It is also possible to observe the risks attached to this normative construction of homosexuality from Murat Bal as well as Stéphane Chibikh, who in reaction fetishizes homosexuality on class and ‘race’ margins of society. Murat Bal mentions in the end of his interview that he tried many times to shoot porn films with Turkish men in Germany, but he could not convince anyone to participate. Taking his filming to Turkey, Bal admits the extent to which a colonial and/or Orientalist gaze is reproduced in the production of his films, despite the director’s Turkish-German background.

In contrast to the rich materials found about Zip Production in this media archive, Trimax Films was almost invisible in the German gay media of the time. There could be two main reasons for that. First, we need to remember the disclaimer in the lower half of the *Istanbul Boys* series that specifies that the films as ‘100% Turkish.’ Unlike in the Zip Production, Trimax Films does not add German subtitles, and credits are written in Turkish, suggesting that the target audience of Trimax Films are people who really speak Turkish. Then, Trimax Films did not market or advertise their films in Germany as Zip Production did: they marketed their films online and not necessarily to German-speaking audiences. In fact, the marketing languages of Trimax Films were Turkish and English.

3.7 The Distribution of Pornographic Media in Turkey and Technological Developments

The many legal restrictions on pornographic film distribution and production shape the demographics of the audiences. In order to understand how class differences play

⁴² See: *Appendix*.

⁴³ Ferguson, Roderick A. “‘race’-Ing Homonormativity: Citizenship, Sociology, and Gay Identity.” In *Black Queer Studies: A Critical Anthology*, edited by E. Patrick Johnson and Mae G. Henderson. Duke University Press, 2005, 53.

out across geographies, culture, and politics, the main audiences for German-Turkish gay ethnic porn films in the 90s and 00s can be split into three groups:

1. The *German audience*, which was the main target audience for these films as they were marketed first in Germany, mostly in Berlin, Hamburg, Frankfurt, Cologne, Stuttgart, and Munich.
2. The *Turkish-German audience*, whose members live in Germany and therefore would have relatively easier access to these films.
3. The *Turkish audience*, whose members could only gain access to these movies online when porn became more easily accessible around 2004.

In Turkey, selling or producing pornographic films is illegal. According to article 226 of the Turkish Criminal Code, pornographic film distribution, production, and even storage are all illegal activities.⁴⁴ However, even prior to widespread internet access, Turkey had a 'pirate' film market that allowed people to buy VHS, DVD, and VCD versions of porn films on the street or under the table in film stores. In addition to the genuine risks and harms involved in porn production, there is also risk and harm to gay porn consumption in heteronormative or conservative societies. Therefore, it is hard to say what the buyers of these Germany-based ethnic porn production companies looked like in Turkey before watching pornographic films online became popular.

From 2004, however, pornographic film streaming became more common when porn blogs gained traction on alternative streaming platforms to *YouTube*, which does not allow pornography. *Pornhub*, *RedTube*, *YouPorn*, *PornMD*, *Tube8*, and *Xhamster* all became leading streaming platforms during the first years of their subscription-free porn streaming model. Later, *Pornhub* declared its monopoly by taking possession of *RedTube*, *YouPorn*, *PornMD*, and *Tube8* and sharing these platforms under the central *Pornhub* name. *Xhamster* is still the only competitor to *Pornhub*, which has maintained its sustainability with an optional premium subscription system since 2012. These digital platforms allowed audiences in Turkey to stream German-produced Turkish gay porn movies. From 2004 to 2011, pornography on the internet was not under any kind of government control or censorship in Turkey.

In 2011, however, the ruling party of Turkey, *AKP-Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* (Justice and Development Party), decided to issue new regulations on internet usage, which has allowed government filtering of websites that include 'obscenity' or 'sexual solicitation.' As a response to such laws, by 2011, the internet pornography audience of Turkey had already begun using VPN proxy routers to gain access to pornography via an IP address located in a different country not bound to such restrictions. However, the knowledge required to do this again limits the audience of internet pornography to those who are digitally savvy enough to operate VPNs. Therefore, the audience of

⁴⁴ Türk Ceza Kanunu Madde 226 (Turkish Criminal Code No.226). See: <https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.5.5237.pdf> (Last Access Date: 17.03.2024).

gay ethnic pornography in Turkey after 2011 likely consists of younger people with the know-how to use free VPN proxy providers, or older audiences who acquired such knowledge or access by themselves or with the help of an acquaintance. Feona Attwood pointed this speculative side of online pornography with the note from Henry Jenkins: “at the center of controversy surrounding any new media, as the public adjusts to the larger shifts in the ways an emerging medium, shapes our relations to time and space or transforms the borders between public and private.”⁴⁵ As a result of such social shifts that redefined the borders of public and private in a society, Turkey became one of the countries who scapegoats legal online pornography by associating it with child pornography, and terrorist or illegal activities.⁴⁶

Additionally, by law, Turkey’s internet censorship of pornographic content should be limited to instances of child abuse and sexually explicit media. In April 2011, the Telecommunications Directorate of Turkey (known as TIB) released a list of 138 words which were prohibited search terms on the internet. ‘LGBT’, ‘homosexual’, ‘transvestite’, ‘gay’, ‘transgender’, and ‘lesbian’ are some of the words that were included in the list.⁴⁷ These increasingly conservative regulations impact access to gay pornographic material in Turkey. These technological and legal divisions of the porn audiences lead to a sociocultural division in gay ethnic pornography and limits its scope to reaching audiences mainly within the borders of Europe.

3.8 Ethnic Pornographic Productions in Germany: Street Boys and GayHeim

Over the years when Zip Production and Trimax Films were active, ethnic porn film production in Germany between 1995 and 2005 is, according to the archives, limited to a single series of films. Director Marcel Bruckmann from Düsseldorf produced the first examples of gay ethnic pornography with an all Turkish-German cast between 2003 and 2007 in collaboration with his production company Street Boys, Man’s Art, and, XY Films. Marcel Bruckmann is a prominent figure in the porn film industry, as he is one of the founders of TitanMen Productions, a well-known gay production house in the U.S. He also received several awards for his achievements, including the lifetime achievement award during the HustlaBall Awards in 2009. Bruckmann produced a four-film series explicitly focusing on Turkish men in Germany. It is called *Turkish Cum Guns* (2003–2008), a compilation of solo and duo films that portray Turkish men from dif-

⁴⁵ Attwood, Feona. *Porn.Com: Making Sense of Online Pornography*. Digital Formations. New York: Peter Lang, 2010, 1.

⁴⁶ Altintas, Kemal, Tolga Aydin, and Varol Akman. “Censoring the Internet: The Situation in Turkey (originally Published in June 2002).” *First Monday* 7, no. 6, 2007, 2.

⁴⁷ See: <https://www.amnestyusa.org/internet-freedom-in-turkey-system-error/> (Last Access Date: 17.03.2024).

ferent cities in Germany. The first two series, *Turkish Cum Guns 1* and *2* (respectively 2003 and 2005), mainly depict solo jerk-off performances by the actors in a photography studio.

The film starts with a slideshow introducing the actors, showing their portraits, stating where they come from, how old they are, and saying their names. In the second series, this introduction slideshow changed to a more visual one by depicting the hometown of the actors. After the introduction slide, the movie starts with the solo pieces accompanied by oriental music in the background.⁴⁸ Following the solo performances, the series continues with duo performances where the audience sees actors having sex either in the photo studio where they performed solo scenes or in a room that is turned into a fitness studio or a bedroom. These duo performances of the series' first two films are similar to what Trimax Films did. Even the fitness-studio scenario of Trimax Films is appropriated in exactly the same style but with different actors. Contrary to Zip Production's and Trimax Films, the first two films of the series did not include much dialogue or an interview with the actors. There are also actors with Arabic names, such as Rashid, who perhaps represents more than just the Turkish actors, even though this was not the intention of Marcel Bruckmann. In that sense, the movie is structured similarly to JNRC: both followed similar strategies of typecasting their actors according to the theme.

The 3rd and 4th series of the film include German cast members and a more structured storyline of role-plays. These role-play scenarios depict a technician or repairman fantasy. Those fantasies also rely on the fact that those were the jobs many Turkish people did after migrating to Germany as guest workers. Their sexual positions toward Germans in these two films are also chosen to illustrate migrants and people with migration backgrounds between fear and fascination. During the series' last two films, although actors with Turkish migration backgrounds are sexually versatile here, they perform as top/active when a white German actor is involved. Sexual preference or positions should not be seen as defining broader subject positions; it reproduces the prejudices and stereotypes of anal sex between men.⁴⁹ These stereotypes have been challenged by new terminologies such as 'power bottom' or 'submissive top' that have become a trend in the alternative gay porn scene recently; the common knowledge is still to associate top/penetrative acts with dominant sexual power.⁵⁰ Besides the sexual power politics, such sexual positions provide a cultural excess of masculinities through

48 Most of the cast members' names and hometowns have been misspelled in the introduction slide; for example, Recep has been written as Recip or İskilip, an Anatolian town near Çorum, written as İskilib.

49 Ravenhill, James P., and Richard O. de Visser. "It Takes a Man to Put Me on the Bottom": Gay Men's Experiences of Masculinity and Anal Intercourse." *The Journal of Sex Research* 55, no. 8, 2018, 1033–1047.

50 See: <https://www.thehomoculture.com/2015/01/04/power-bottom-101/> (Last Access Date: 17.03.2024)

antagonism and resemblance.⁵¹ Versatility plays a compensation role, considering masculinity's assignment through the binary codes of sexual positions. However, such versatility does not exist between white Germans and Turkish actors, which places them close to the narrative created in *Cadinot* and *Citébeur* films and the ways they pictured Maghrebi men together with white French actors.

Different from the films produced in Turkey, *Turkish Cum Guns* also have stylistic differences. Their fashion choice for the movies represents Turkish underground music and street fashion from Germany, especially Berlin. Due to U.S. sanctions after the Second World War, the presence of U.S. soldiers was heavy in Berlin, and their socialization with migrant societies of Berlin, such as Turkish people around the wall, introduced the U.S. cultures, such as Hip-Hop and R&B, to these communities.⁵² Especially after the attacks of the NSU movement (National Socialist Underground/ Nationalsozialistischer Untergrund) targeting mainly single migrant guest worker men from Turkey since the early 00s that were met with reactions from all migrant groups, and the young Turkish migrant community responded to the Neo-Nazi attacks with their Hip-Hop music.⁵³ Bands like Islamic Force, Karakan, Cartel, and musicians like Killa Hakan became popular in the Turkish-German communities. Like music, activist groups also reacted to growing Neo-Nazism in Germany and responded with their revolting manifestos, such as the 'Kanak Attak Manifesto.' According to the ARD, the German regional public broadcasters organization's online outlet: "originally, the word 'Kaname' referred to the inhabitants of an archipelago in New Caledonia, an archipelago in the southwest Pacific and almost half of the inhabitants of this archipelago are Kanaks. The word probably comes from the Hawaiian term for 'man' (kana)."⁵⁴ After the 1970s, the word was used as a derogatory term to describe migrant guest worker men: Italians, Greeks, Spanish, and especially Turkish men. Later, young migrant communities turned the tables and are now confidently calling themselves 'Kaname', just like American black rappers who call themselves 'niggas' (NdA: used in this specific context to reflect the slang used by African-American rappers in songs and real life and not in reference to dynamics of said word). In the Kanak Attak (Kanak Attack), the community group describes their common position as: "an attack

51 Hart, Trevor A., Richard J. Wolitski, David W. Purcell, Cynthia A. Gómez, Perry N. Halkitis, and The Seropositive Urban Men's Study Team. "Sexual Behavior among HIV-Positive Men Who Have Sex with Men: What's in a Label?". *The Journal of Sex Research* 40, 2003, 179–188.

52 See: 140Journos documentary about Killa Hakan and underground Turkish Hip-Hop from Germany: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p46QYOqXuI8&ab_channel=140journos (Last Access Date: 17.03.2024).

53 McCarthy, Margaret. *German Pop Literature: A Companion*, edited by Margaret McCarthy. Berlin; Boston: De Gruyter, 2015, 101.

54 See: The article from Gabrielle Trost published on *Planetwissen* web page: https://www.planetwissen.de/geschichte/deutsche_geschichte/geschichte_der_gastarbeiter/pwiewissensfrage550.html. (Last Access Date: 17.03.2024).

against the ‘Kanakisation’ of specific groups of people through racist ascription which denies people their social, legal and political rights. Kanak Attak is therefore anti-nationalist, anti-racist and rejects every single form of identity politics, supported by ethnic absolutist thinking.”⁵⁵

Such strong movements in the social and cultural underground are usually reflected in ethnic pornography through fashion, as the cultural aesthetics of such movements were present in the *Turkish Cum Guns* series, both in the films and on the DVD jackets. Compared to the aesthetic style of Citébeur, it shares similarities, and the overall European version of gay ethnic pornography puts the men from the S.W.A.N.A. regions in their focus signals to the existing social issues of Europe. Although *Turkish Cum Guns* did not include interviews that might enrich these discussions regarding the style of their actors, such representation carries the knowledge that such protest reactions existed in gay cultures. Ethnic pornography as a genre provides a base to trace and analyze such knowledge. *Ahmet’s Fuck Tour* by Zip Production, together with Trimax Films’ *Istanbul Boys* series and the *Turkish Cum Guns* series by Street Boys productions, provide complementary data concerning post-colonial mobility and the issues of gay sex tourism. While the films of Zip Production point to a traditional sex tourism narrative and Trimax puts a mainstream twist to gay porn in Turkey, the productions of Street Boys handle the issue of desire toward migrant men from Turkey within a German context. Such a chronological rerouting narrative of gay ethnic pornography between Germany and Turkey also points to the problems of authentic desire and how such desire alternates with regard to the migrant Turkish men in Germany. The diversifying interest that shifts from the Orientalized Eastern destinations, such as Turkey, to the ghettos of Berlin shows how the issues of ethnic desire subverted the multicultural gaze. The *Turkish Cum Guns* did not come out as an intervention like the *Kanak Attak Manifesto*, which, as Fatima el-Tayeb argued, “shifted the focus from the racialized subjects to those engaged in racializing them.”⁵⁶ However, the data that we can collect based on the *Turkish Cum Guns* series helps us to demonstrate the unexamined agency of migrant men and the representation of their sexualities through porn film series. Additionally, the *Turkish Cum Guns* series and the subsequent productions from Germany offer ways to analyze the everyday experiences and marginalization of second- and third-generation migrant men through representations of ethnic desire.

One of the actors from the series also appears in a film by Marcel Bruckmann titled *Turkish Delights in Berlin*, available on online gay porn streaming platforms.⁵⁷ However, the information regarding this film is not credited on any porn streaming platform. Looking at the styles of the movie he directed, this footage visually corres-

55 See: https://www.kanak-attak.de/ka/about/manif_eng.html (Last Access Date: 17.03.2024).

56 El-Tayeb, Fatima. *European Others: Queering Ethnicity in Postnational Europe*. Difference Incorporated. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011, 151.

57 See: <https://gaysporno.xxx/vd/3194298-turkish-delights-in-berlin/> (Last Access Date: 17.03.2024).

ponds to the films he produced for the Man's Art Productions. Since the DVD collection of Man's Art or Marcel Bruckmann's other productions are unavailable today, this film will remain a mystery. This six-minute-long film takes place in Berlin, Germany, and narrates a homoerotic encounter between a German customer and a *döner* kebab chef. *Döner* kebab is used here to identify Turkish men while catalyzing a gay fantasy around guest worker migrant men. In the opening scene, we see the customer running in a rush while the camera captures the landmarks of Berlin.

After a long run, the German man sees an offer for a bottle of water and goes into the store to buy one. Before his entrance, the chef was jerking off looking at a straight porn magazine. Once the customer goes in, he zips his pants and asks what he wants. After buying a bottle of water, the German customer leaves, but he realizes that he forgot his mobile phone and once he goes back to pick up his mobile phone, he sees that the chef keeps jerking off naked and he keeps watching until the chef came in a bowl of *döner* kebab sauce. Besides being an exceptional example of the tropes of gay ethnic pornography in Germany, the film hints at a national trope that angers migrant guest workers in real life. According to a VICE Germany interview done in 2017 with a *döner* kebab restaurant owner in Germany, the question about ejaculating in sauce is one of the most asked questions and rumors that he has heard.⁵⁸ In addition to the VICE interview, the German news magazine *Der Spiegel* reported that German police had complained about a *döner* sauce containing sperm.⁵⁹ This coverage, and especially the reporting by the established German magazine *Der Spiegel*, demonstrates that this narrative became a commonplace, under the form of an urban myth. Despite the hostile intention of this accusation, the invocation of this urban myth in gay pornography was shown to be part of the pleasure.

The series mentioned above is not the only example produced in Germany on this theme. Following the Syrian Civil War, the refugee crisis became a significant sociopolitical issue in Europe and Asia Minor. Since then, refugees and their alleged sexual interests have been depicted in the mainstream media, including documentary films, TV programs, and photography. For example, Turkish documentary film director Ayşe Toprak directed *Mr. Gay Syria* in 2017. The movie's synopsis on the online streaming platform Mubi states: "*Mr. Gay World* contest promises two gay Syrian refugees in Istanbul an escape from their lives and an answer to invisibility..."⁶⁰ Besides the film's powerful therapeutic resistance message, it portrays the Western world as the last resort to find peace and happiness.

58 See: https://www.vice.com/de/article/wnzxnm/10-fragen-an-einen-donerverkaeufer-die-du-dich-niemals-trauen-wuerdest-zu-stellen?fbclid=IwAR2Un2eflCXtGbUoHtNvoa-l3vWFTOZMUDq-qeZ2m4yS_n6lxTl9kqKpOmk (Last Access Date: 17.03.2024).

59 See: <https://www.spiegel.de/fotostrecke/moderne-mythen-zu-schoen-um-falsch-zu-sein-fotostrecke-108127.html> (Last Access Date: 17.03.2024).

60 See: <https://mubi.com/films/mr-gay-syria> (Last Access Date: 17.03.2024).

2017 is a noticeable year considering the refugee visibility in mainstream media as well as in pornography. In 2015, the then-chancellor Angela Merkel welcomed one million refugees from Syria, naming the situation as extraordinary in terms of the challenging conditions of it. 'Refugees Welcome' became a famous slogan in the pro-refugee movements of Germany. The porn-film market also capitalized on the indie-porn scene's 'Refugees Welcome' motto. Swedish porn film producer and director Erica Lust produced *Refugees Welcome* in 2017, directed by Canadian filmmaker and photographer Bruce LaBruce. Refugee-themed gay porn movies mainly positioned non-refugee actors and the producer Erika Lust as sexual saviors who liberated refugees from the homophobic and anti-modern South. Even the synopsis of the film characterizes refugees as poetic and almost pitiful: "When Erika received a confession about the experience of a Syrian refugee and his recent arrival in Germany, she could think of no better guest director for the job than the prolific yet controversial Bruce LaBruce."⁶¹ *Refugees Welcome* (2017) positioned its protagonist, a Syrian refugee named Moonif, as a vulnerable character who is beat up by the fascists. In the usual scenario of gay pornography, especially in France, migrant men or Arab men are portrayed as hypermasculine and macho. However, Erica Lust's sympathy for the experience of a Syrian refugee failed to show how intended vulnerability and anti-refugee violence are systemically experienced and what it says about sexual pleasure. Instead, the film repeated the standard view of Western media, which does not give space to the refugees to speak for themselves.

In addition to examples of the indie-porn scene such as *Refugees Welcome* (2017), refugee-themed gay porn films also found their place in the amateur gay porn scene in Europe. For instance, a newly established porn film company in Munich (Germany) called GayHeim.de (GayHeim means the house of gays) produces examples of gay ethnic pornography that include Turkish, Iranian, Greek, Croatian, Brazilian, and German men alongside a category of men characterized as 'Flüchtlinge' (Refugees). As this example demonstrates, new trends have evolved within the realm of gay ethnic pornography, especially in Germany, that are significantly influenced by recent political events such as the European refugee crisis over the course of Syrian Civil War that started in 2011. For instance, in 2021 GayHeim.de has released a video called *Refugee fucks naked German-Turkish in Munich/Germany*.⁶² They arguably capture the spirit and use the word 'refugee' as an exotic Oriental tool to sexualize one of their cast members. Furthermore, what is interesting about the movies of GayHeim is that they are, after Zip Production and Trimax Films, one of the first porn film houses to produce films in Germany and to include actors from different ethnic backgrounds, including refugees.

61 See: <https://erikalust.com/films/refugees-welcome> (Last Access Date: 17.03.2024).

62 See: <https://www.icegay.tv/de/movies/2402521/fluchtling-fickt-naked-deutsch-trke-in-munich-germany> (Last Access Date: 17.03.2024).

In a way, GayHeim creates a power dynamic between Arab men, refugees, and others. Before GayHeim, the power dynamic was divided between migrant men from S.W.A.N.A. and the West. GayHeim followed the similar power dynamics that Zip Production and Trimax Films instrumentalized by adding undefined sub-categories – such as ‘Southern (Südländer),’ ‘Refugees (Flüchtlinge),’ ‘German-Turk (deutsch-türke),’ and the antiquated national identity ‘Yugo’ (meaning Yugoslavian) – to speak to the ethnic pornography audience with an updated terminology. Looking at the entire filmography of GayHeim, it is hard to find any white German cast member beyond the very first productions.

GayHeim is a low-budget production house that produces amateur films with amateur porn stars. However, it is an important example to represent Germany’s current cultural and social frustrations from a raw point of view. Although GayHeim does not develop a solid visual aesthetic like Citébeur, they still manage to reflect populist right-wing rhetoric and stereotypes directed at migrants or refugees through the marketing of their movies. This also shows that the recent European productions of gay ethnic pornography are not only bridging Europe with S.W.A.N.A. regions, but they reflect the post-colonial power dynamics and current frustrations within Europe through the gaze relations.

The refugee theme seems to be increasing both in gay and heterosexual pornography due to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Ukrainian refugee men have not become a topic in gay pornography until now, although it is hard to say the same for Ukrainian refugee women. Especially on online streaming platforms, the quantity of the data regarding refugee-themed pornography is high. According to Mohammed Amjahid’s article on Zeit.de, the world’s largest online porn platform, Pornhub, claimed to be removing refugee-themed pornography, referring to the issue as a ‘very delicate matter.’⁶³ However, refugee-themed pornography still exists in the libraries of Pornhub and Xhamster today. Besides the online porn streaming platforms, self-distributing platforms are on the rise, and examples of refugee-themed porn movies are also emerging on such channels.

Apart from GayHeim, it is almost impossible to identify active gay ethnic porn productions in Germany today in terms of studio made gay porn film production, except for the self-distributed porn film platforms such as OnlyFans or Just4Fans. However, it is possible to say that ethnic porn or porn stars create their porn personas through self-Orientalization on these platforms. This also applies to actors living in Turkey and working through self-distributed porn content platforms. Just as VHS and DVDs have been replaced by digital media, homemade porn will soon be taking the place of current production companies. Here, the interplay between performance and performativity appears to lean heavily toward performance/identity, diverging from

⁶³ See: <https://www.zeit.de/gesellschaft/2018-05/sexisms-refugeeporn-refugees-pornography-germany-analysis> (Last Access Date: 17.03.2024).

the traditional emphasis on storyline prevalent in studio-based pornography. Porn stars now actively market their identities and performances as primary selling points, a departure from the narrative-driven approach of studio productions. This shift prompts suspicion regarding the decline of ethnic pornography production in Germany today. It raises intriguing questions about the evolving landscape of post-national identities in Europe, positing pornography as a lens through which to examine these cultural phenomena.

A proper analysis of gay ethnic pornography filmed and distributed between Germany and Turkey remained untold until now. Pornography is a highly interesting cultural product to consider the phenomena of post-national identities in Europe today. Its position outside the mainstream media and the colonial legacy of 'high art' makes pornography more accessible yet underestimated. Two leading production houses, Zip Production and Trimax Films, authenticated the men from Turkey with visual and cultural references, which allowed the mixed audience to either identify with the actors or fetishize them (or both at the same time). It is often taboo to talk about the politics of gay sex in the context of labor migration, or how ethnic differences inspired cultural production, such as pornography. The recognition that Zip Production and Trimax Films received influenced *Street Boys* and the *GayHeim* series. Such influence helps the power issues of European post-coloniality translate through a pornographic lens. Transnationality and the mobility of pornography carry its recent memory within, and it reveals how the tropes of Orientalism are coded and decoded through viewing and filming sex between men.

In these films, there seem to be two forces of fetishization at work that are embedded in ambivalence. On the one hand, to some audiences, these films can be made only through a 'gay-for-pay' scheme and they invest in the scandalousness of the imagery produced. On the other hand, it works as an eroticization and Orientalization of Turkish men, of their culturally embedded homosociality, and of the queer proximity it bears toward fluid masculinity. One of these positions may be more sex-positive, and, within the Turkish context, such representations might be empowering for those struggling to navigate their desires. The archival material present in the appendix of this chapter, specifically the letters from the audience, shows a connection and resemblance between the actors of Zip Production and the migrant men from Germany who wrote the letters. Audience reception, PR material, interviews, and the film materials themselves, point out the issue of navigating desire in a post-colonial context through intergenerational mobility, in this specific example. Although the effect of these might not fulfill the word 'empowerment' in this chapter's conclusions, comparing the negative assessments of the examples in the previous chapter, I wanted to use this word as a reminder of the positive potential that might lie in these films. These movies carry a kind of knowledge that elucidates the ignored topic of post-colonial politics of sexuality in Europe.