

Conclusions

In her work on 'body genres,' Linda Williams evaluates pornography alongside horror films and melodramas.¹ According to Williams, what these three genres have in common is the immediate somatic response they elicit in the bodies of their audiences. In ethnic pornography, the body of the performers serves another crucial attribute, one that could be considered similar to the intermediacy assigned to the physical responses to these very films: the body of the actor is, ultimately, a marker of their ethnic 'Otherness.' Ethnicity, as a representative tool in the pornographic narrative, brings the supposed intermediacy of the body together with sociopolitical and economic tensions, and provides a resource to analyze the possible meanings of these elements through sexual pleasure.

This study has shown that ethnicity, as a sub-category in gay pornographic film productions, provides an extensive repertoire representing male sexualities in both Europe and S.W.A.N.A. regions.² It is, however, not enough to understand the different forms of representation as instances of stereotype formation or to argue that such representations are never reflective of the lived experience itself – especially because various forms of expression in pornography are always influenced by social and political realities.

Based on these markers, boundaries defining what can be shown and seen in the gay porn film market at a particular time and place are created, which also means that those distinctions are constantly redrawn and shift depending on various external factors that exceed our intimate, sexual pleasures. But it also shows that sexual pleasures can be implicit in reproducing and establishing certain conceptions of 'normal' homosexuality. These external factors, which ultimately change a demand in the market for particular representations in gay male pornography, were identified in this book as political, economic, and based on upward mobility. While this volume has shown that most of the movies in the gay ethnic porn genre portray gay men in a derogatory way, such platforms also provide a space for positive representation, or representation at all, for gay men from Europe and S.W.A.N.A. regions.

Up until now, most discussions around gay ethnic pornography were focused on country-specific case studies. Especially in the European context, most research has focused on discussing examples of ethnic pornography depicting French-Maghrebi or Czech men. For example, discussions of French-Maghrebi men are in great numbers while German-Turkish movie productions, who occupy a similar status as the French-Maghrebi ones, remained vastly understudied. On the one hand, these previous discussions provided a fruitful ground for a broader debate regarding the conceptuali-

1 Williams, 1991, 3.

2 Following the timeline of Maxime Cervulle as he charts the gay ethnic pornography in Europe with the very first movie of Cadinot, *Harem* (1984). See: Cervulle, 2009, 182.

zation and theorizing of ethnic pornographic productions. On the other hand, country-specific productions like the ones mentioned earlier disconnected the topic from its more comprehensive history and from the history of migration movements, especially those between Europe and S.W.A.N.A. regions.

In the European context, the inclusion of German-Turkish or Swedish-Russian examples in this book provides a more comprehensive approach to understand the role of 'post-colonial Europe' in contemporary settings of cultural production. Turkishness as an ethnic category falls under 'White-other,' ethically similar to Russian and Iranian people. In this way alone, this book demonstrated that whiteness is never a homogenous category and only exists in relation to an Other that is considered non-White, or 'not White enough.'³ It is fragmented, and the hegemonic/imperial/colonizing whiteness is only a particular form of whiteness. Against this background, the middle chapters of this book complement the idea of how ethnicization through sex is orchestrated by the power dynamics between ethnicities and how these ethnicities have been perceived, and eventually constituted, by each other. This study was able to show that 'White-other' as an ethnic categorization is often ignored or grouped under the non-White category, defined as Middle Eastern, which continues the colonial rhetoric for South-West Asia and North Africa. However, such grouping causes the erasure of particular ethnicities and limits our understanding of the hegemonic structure of 'Whiteness.' Therefore, several case studies in this manuscript related to the existing theory of gay ethnic pornography and how ethnicity as a sub-categorization reveals and enlarges the perspective of understanding the power dynamics encoded in sexual pleasure on a broader range.

The discourse analysis conducted in this study reveals that the under-examined examples of gay ethnic pornographic films provide a broad resource to understand political triumphs and insecurities embedded in relations between Europe and the S.W.A.N.A. regions, which help to fill a gap that is regularly avoided in discussions about post-colonialism and Orientalism. The three case studies, which constitute the body of this volume, attempted to fill in this gap, considering the existing studies carried out on ethnicity and pornography studies. Specifically, this doctoral study expanded the discourse on earlier European gay ethnic pornography and its current focus on specifically German-Turkish and Eastern European productions, such as the ones filmed in Russia. Besides the inclusion of these under-examined film productions, each chapter contributed to prior discussions of Orientalism and post-colonialism in the European context by investigating how these filmmakers and producers construct ethnic identity through different aspects of cultural representations and aesthetics. While contributions to the topic of ethnic male erotica in the U.S. or French-Maghrebi functioned as an indispensable base for this book, especially the lack of a discussion

3 Ergin, Murat. "Is the Turk a White Man?" Towards a Theoretical Framework for Race in the Making of Turkishness." *Middle Eastern Studies* 44, no. 6, 2008, 845.

regarding Russian and German-Turkish examples of gay ethnic pornography, makes this literary work fundamental to a more comprehensive understanding of Orientalism and post-colonialism and the ways that these categories can (and are) shifted or redrawn through class, migration, and recent sociopolitical events. Additionally, this publication suggests how different aspects of the production – financing, selection of cast and location, acting, payment, camera work, etc. – contribute to an overall narrative effect that articulates social norms. These aspects vary in each case study considerably and are depended on their unique historic positioning regarding geopolitics and power relations.

Therefore, overall, the findings of my content analysis contributed to the existing discourse that mainly focused on the French-Maghrebi examples of European gay ethnic pornography by bridging different productions from European countries, which were previously only distinctly discussed. The findings of my analysis supported the argument that ethnic differences, and the portrayal of these differences, is limited to the representation of different ethnicities, cultures, and socio-economical classes, such as the images of Turks and Arabs originating from a particular historical context, greatly influenced by colonialist and Orientalist discourses over the years. These stereotypical images also became the selling point for pornographic materials that helped continue reproducing these biases throughout Western Europe. Similarly, the same Orientalist and colonialist discourse that stereotyped Turks and Arabs through pornography shaped representations of Eastern Europe by re-generating the issues of ethnic otherness, socio-economic catastrophe, and political events. Throughout this book, the attempt was to demonstrate how these stereotypical representations in gay ethnic pornography could be altered and what these modifications would mean when compared to the previous examples. In order to do so, we looked at and analyzed recent examples of gay ethnic pornographic films in addition to the archival material, which represented the basis for this publication. For example, the inclusion of an analysis of GayHeim Studio's production enriched this book in that it demonstrated how gay ethnic pornography has evolved following Zip Productions, Trimax Studios, and Street Boys. GayHeim did so by adding narratives around migration and refugee status as part of the pornographic category. This recent example, again, confirmed the thesis that ethnic pornography, as a sub-category of gay pornography, is influenced by and responds to current political events as well as its previous history.

Furthermore, it became apparent how social movements such as FHAR (Front Homosexuel d'Action Révolutionnaire) or political consequences such as the collapse of the Soviet Union have affected depictions through the pornographic lens and how external factors influence the possibilities of pleasure between men, not just on a 'legal' level but also in terms of what pleasures are intelligible. Specifically in the narrative of gay ethnic pornography, these sociopolitical changes are more visible. Another example of this can be identified in 'interracial' porn films.

Although the focus of this research seems, at first glance, to be limited to porn studies, it does crucially contribute to cultural studies. The media archive from Zip Production, which can be found in the appendix section, has constituted an invaluable resource for this book in that it presents mixed reviews of these productions and demonstrates vividly how they are perceived in the German gay press. In addition to the interviews conducted with the filmmakers, this media archive made a significant contribution to the discourse analysis of the second chapter. Although the analysis and the presentation of the media archive are limited to the second chapter of this research, it contributes to the overall research by providing data from different media. Including this additional data from printed sources also enables possible research questions for future research. However, despite this trove of material, first-hand accounts, and comprehensive analyses, the effect of gay ethnic pornographic films on viewers and its correlation with society remains understudied. For example, examining whether the West perceives Arab male erotica or Turkish male erotica differently from the Arab or Turkish media would be a valuable contribution to the existing academic research.

While this book contributes to both post-colonial studies and Orientalism studies through pornography studies, it also enriches an understanding of recent and prior history. As the main starting point of this theme, this book builds on the vast research about French productions, especially Cadinot's films. Cadinot's shaping of this narrative as an Orientalist travelogue cannot be considered independent of sex tourism, therefore, it cannot be limited to one country alone but has to be considered transnational. This manuscript shows that the boundaries of sex tourism, one of the main elements of ethnic pornography, are not limited to an Orientalist narrative but also emerged in Europe in the form of sex work due to economic depression. This raises questions about how Orientalism is understood within the West/East Europe divide, as well as outside of Europe. Following the Cadinot films, it became obvious that the French ethnic pornographic productions are significantly influenced by both the immigrant visibility in France and the stereotypical images that reactively manifest themselves with this visibility. Although the first examples of ethnic pornographic films followed a narrative of Orientalist sex tourism in the Maghreb region, later examples evolved into narratives in France where immigrants or Maghrebi men from immigrant backgrounds take the center of the stage.

In the context of Germany and Turkey, the relationship between sex tourism and Orientalism transforms into a storyline where class differences arising from labor migration are played through pleasure, beyond being an Orientalist sex tourism experience. Likewise, in the third chapter, the presentation of sex work as 'easy money' in the face of economic difficulties, quite common in examples from the Czech Republic, also reveals how this dynamic has historically maintained its continuity. Although these case studies seem inherently different, they all suggest an interconnected perspective of the sexualization of ethnic others filtered by cultural representation and recasting. Despite the increasing xenophobia, anti-migrant sentiments, and political

movements in Europe, gay ethnic pornography provides a domain of knowledge regarding the anxieties caused by those right-wing movements through an exaggerated and caricature-like, yet pleasurable, perspective. Compared to the heterosexual examples of the analogous genre, gay ethnic pornography did this from an overly exploitative viewpoint that is placed between pleasure and frustration.

This book aimed to adopt a mixed-method approach that analyses discourses, representations, and experiences articulated across a different range of media and data collection, including analog and digital archival material and interviews with the filmmakers. Employing three primary geographical contexts helped the methodological approach to both challenge and articulate the understanding of ethnicity through pornographic media. Unlike the examples that distinctly expose the power dynamics between white and non-white identities brought about by culture, labor, and sociopolitics, the inclusion of some of the examples from Turkey and Russia helped to explore the articulation of ethnicity and sexuality through cultures rooted in socio-economic despair and considering their white-Other positions.

This book furthermore illustrates the retraced and shifted ethnic representation in gay ethnic pornography in Europe by focusing on the media produced by small-scale (amateur) and medium-scale film production houses, but it also proposes further research on how the topic of ethnicity is represented in self-distributed VOD (video on demand) platforms that porn actors use to publicize and distribute these videos. With the surge of social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube, the creator's presence and their bodies became the center of the content. Alternative media platforms such as OnlyFans, Just4Fans, and FanCentro allowed content creators to provide sexually explicit materials such as nude pictures and pornographic content to paying subscribers. With the progression of the COVID-19 pandemic, the demand for these platforms, both by content creators and paid subscribers, increased irreversibly. The labor market of the mainstream porn industry is often critiqued for the work conditions and treatment issues, which are now challenged by these alternative but popular ways of producing pornographic media content. Porn actors became the directors and producers of their own movies, becoming the primary profit makers of their productions.

Additionally, the content creation process allows for a more organically established relationship with customers and helps to build a personal connection between porn actors and viewers. Most of these content creators engage with the other content creators and their fans by including them in their movies. Such attempts help build a more sex-positive, inclusive network, which in turn affects the porn film viewing habits and changes the limitations on participation. However, it is also worth mentioning that although these platforms seem liberating considering the challenges of old-school porn filmmaking, they have their own ethical and financial problems. These platforms also profit from the content creators, including pornographic content creators, by charging them up to 20% of their revenue. The amount of profit varies from platform to platform. Even though it seems like an innovative way of content

creation that comes with empowerment and liberty, it may effectively reproduce, although altered, some of the critiqued structures of the mainstream porn film industry. In 2021, OnlyFans shared a piece of information that pornographic content will no longer be allowed by October of that year, citing Mastercard and Visa's card security concerns.⁴ The decision of OnlyFans to suspend the ban on sexually explicit content came after an intensive social media backlash and a consequent financial crisis. What this example also demonstrates is that these online platforms cannot be taken for granted, and that the so-called security concerns might push sex workers and content creators back into the hegemonic, old-school contractual agreement systems.

Ethnic pornography also exists within these self-distributed online VOD platforms. The Orientalization and the ethnicization of porn stars comes as a package that is easily attached to the porn stars' identity. Compared to the previous examples where porn stars have limited control over expressing themselves, in self-distributed online VOD platforms, these stars take over the control, bringing the subjective perspective to a more precise dimension regarding Orientalization and ethnicization of the pornographic subject. Including ethnicity as part of the porn star persona in self-distributed online VOD platforms alters gay ethnic pornography and sustains the subgenre from an evolving perspective. For example, gay OnlyFans stars from Turkey might be a good example, as they describe their ethnic identities in a self-fetishizing manner to their subscribers, presenting themselves as ethnic Oriental subjects, like in the case of Kurt Adam, or even Turkish Twunk, who describes himself as "a 22-year-old sugar boy from Turkey".⁵ However, their content avoids, for the most part, including ethnic or Oriental elements. Emerging porn stars like Kurt Adam or Turkish Twunk are also helping to shape a new trend in the porn film industry that is selling their content to mainstream porn film platforms.⁶ For example, NextDoorStudios, founded by Stephane

4 Taylor, Lorenz, and Alyssa Lukpat. "OnlyFans to Ban Sexually Explicit Content, Citing Partners' Pressure: Business/Financial Desk." *The New York Times*. New York, N.Y: New York Times Company, Late Edition (East Coast) edition, 2021.

5 Wolf Man, the name also refers to the wolf tattoo on his chest, and it is also a symbol for Turkishness considering the myth that Turks came from wolves. See: Aslan, Namik. "About the Meaning of the Motif Term and the Wolf Motif in Turkish Origin Myths." *Milli folklor* 11, no. 87, 2010, 72–77. Twunk is a term to describe a gay male between the ages of 18–25 who has beardless young man features and a body of a hunk muscular man. According to Nick Haramis, the word twink and twunk originated from the British word 'twank,' a derogatory word for gay sex workers. See: Haramis, Nick. "The Age of the Twink." *The New York Times* magazine, 14th of May 2018, 34.

(<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/14/t-magazine/age-of-the-twink.html>) (Last Access Date: 17.03.2024). See: <https://onlyfans.com/twunkturk> (Last Access Date: 15.02.2021).

6 In June 2023, Turkey banned nationwide access to the adult subscription site OnlyFans following a court order, which came after a conservative-led campaign against the platform's pornographic content. However, content creators and subscribers can access OnlyFans through changing their VPN locations. See: <https://bianet.org/haber/turkey-bans-onlyfans-following-court-order-280055> (Last Access Date: 10.07.2024).

Sirard, co-founder of BuddyProfits and one of the remarkable gay porn production houses in the U.S., collaborated with Kurt Adam in a movie called *A Night in Turkey* in 2022. Kurt Adam appears in this film with Tyler Wu, an Asian American porn star visiting Turkey.

Like Kurt Adam, several emerging porn star actors around the globe reproduce the narrative of gay ethnic pornography. In the neocolonial context, the question to be asked is how these self-distributed platforms Orientalize and ethicize themselves as sexual subjects. While this book brings together an expanded corpus of the physical productions of gay ethnic pornography, it also opens a threshold for further research that is triggered by the new technologies and social circumstances. Further research on ethnic representation in self-distributed gay pornography will contribute to the discourse and enrich it in the light of changing technologies for porn viewing and producing experiences.

One of the main challenges throughout the writing of this book was accessing the physical and online materials. The very existence of the video stores or sex shops specializing in pornographic media (VHS, VCD, DVD) is challenged by the new media technologies that transferred most of the physical materials into a digital format. The transition from analog to digital caused an erasure issue for the small-scale production houses that could not market their former physical productions on digital platforms or did not have the resources and followers to do so profitably.

Regarding digital media, most small-scale production houses were only available on 'pirate' gay porn streaming platforms. Their online 'life expectancies' depend on either the life of the uploader's account or the life of that platform. These gay porn streaming sites often do not include proper credit information about the movies they publish. Therefore, the central part of this research depended on accessing private archives that preserved physical DVDs of these productions. Although a handful of institutions maintain gay cinema and arts, small-scale productions and pornographic movies are generally not considered artistic productions that need to be archived. The future of these streaming sites that function as a free online archive format mainly depends on challenging right-wing politics and regulations regarding their sustainability and the challenges mentioned above. The access issue, as demonstrated in the second chapter regarding Turkey's porn film audience and their access issues, could be an example of this situation. As a result of the access issues challenged by technological developments, financial concerns, and politic circumstances that deem pornography's place in the arts and media institutions and archives questionable, sampling issues and limited access to the media products restricted a broader discussion for this study.

Based on the findings, this thesis has significantly contributed to the academic discussions about gay ethnic pornography in Europe. This thesis demonstrated the mechanisms of ethnicization and how these mechanisms can be altered through the lens of sexual pleasure between men. This publication aims to show how under-examined areas of ethnic pornographic content contribute to the overall discussion from a cri-

tical view, while filling the gaps of the previous literature that could not connect. The methodological approach of this study proposes an innovative path considering the previous textual base of pornography studies by broadening its structure to further inclusion of archival data and interviews. The book aims to utilize this specific combination of different methodologies to explore the new frame of exoticization and eroticization of poverty and what ethnic differences tell us about the gaze, while addressing issues of ethnicity and the narrative of sexualities in the politics of the representation within European gay pornography. This book demonstrated that the narrative of European ethnic pornography is a dynamic one and that is constantly evolving around issues of cultures, economics, politics, and technology. While this investigation concentrates on productions before the onset of online content subscription services, it also raises the question of how gay ethnic pornography is reflected through the new media.

Pornography allows both the producer and the consumer to see the body as a cultural object reflecting the norms and values of the majority of society. While pornography allows observing the body that represents the social norms and values embedded in them, it also reveals how these social norms and values are structured. The integration of ethnic minorities into particular geopolitical rhetoric perhaps is nothing new; however, male erotica exploits such weaponized rhetoric through sexual pleasure and turns it into an area of communication and negotiation for socio-economic and cultural differences. Pornography studies, as a recently emerging field in academia, support contributions to culture, arts, and media studies from a perspective often stigmatized and overlooked. My hope is that this book can help to challenge these counterpetitions by reminding us of the knowledge that pornographic productions carries within.