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An Analysis on the Impact of Ethical Porn Discourse on the Communication of Pornographic Content Online

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Abstract

With the internet being more accessible and more faster than ever, online pornography have undergone tremendous change. The emergence of Web 2.0 brought porn tubes into existence, where enormous amounts of pornographic content were reached for free. At the same time, Web 2.0 enabled alternative pornographies to arise, ethical porn being one of them. Briefly described as pornographic content created ethically, ethical porn became an idea to gain increasing popularity. What was compelling about this idea was also the fact that consumers were required to pay for their porn. In academic circles, on the contrary, ethical pornography found itself a limited place. In awareness of this gap, this study aims at exploring the online ethical porn scene through two research questions: a) How do websites including pornographic content that claim to be ethical communicate such content? and b) “How do ethical porn websites present themselves in regards to the idea of ethical porn?”. Informed by Foucauldian discourse analysis, the research was conducted via performing structural mapping analysis and qualitative content analysis answering the two research questions, respectively. The findings inferred from the reviewed 33 ethical porn websites suggest that the communication of content is organized under the logics of fair-trade business model and that the sample of ethical porn websites are very diverse. In regards to websites’ self-positionings, the results show business model and production process to be the two emerging clusters feeding the discourse. The common trait found out was the difference of association with the ethical porn discourse. Both in terms of communication of content and websites’ own positions, websites either operated upon the logics of discourse or superficially gave an account of the discourse without revealing the actual practice of production. Contributing to the intersecting fields of digital media and pornography, the research creates a basis for future research on ethical porn, upon which very little is said.

Keywords: #ethicalporn #onlinepornography #Web2.0 #altporn #fair-trade
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1. Introduction

The internet has undeniably and irreversibly altered the way things are produced, distributed and consumed - pornography being no exception. Consumption of pornography has changed drastically due to increased access to the internet and the pace of its distribution online. The easier the consumption, the more the porn production became (Grebowicz, 2013). The amount of pornography online grew tremendously and is now the main source of income for the industry. Revenue granted from previous forms of pornography, such as DVDs and films, fell sharply against their online counterparts (Zecca, 2017). Later with the shift to Web 2.0, the online porn scene began to be predominantly shaped by porn tubes, whose hosting and streaming model are based on the video sharing platform Youtube (Slayden, 2010). Today, tube sites are considered to hold the monopoly of the online porn scene and are worth billions of dollars. Typically, they do distribute pornographic content for free (Ruberg, 2016).

Web 2.0 was perceived as an opportunity for greater participation (Slayden, 2010) and its allowance of user generated content were celebrated due to its democratizing potential (Wilkinson, 2017). Since Web 2.0, the online porn scenery witnessed the emergence of independent porn professionals and alternative pornographies (Zecca, 2017), which made talking about a monolithic porn industry harder than ever (Wilkinson, 2017). Marginalized groups got involved in the production of the narratives and aesthetics of porn (Pajnik et al., 2015) aiming at truthful, respectful and empowering representations of women and queer people (Maina, 2014) within an industry that is typically considered to be exploitative and abusive of female performers (Scott, 2016). Moreover, the arise of alternative economies challenged capitalist mode of production and in the distribution of pornography (Wilkinson, 2017).

In this context, there emerged a new take on labor and pornography. The new view centered on revealing hidden labor conditions and consent in the production process. Thereby giving birth to a conception of ethically produced pornography. (Scott, 2016) More and more, workers of porn industry called for consumers to pay for their porn to ensure the industry workers’ labor rights are granted and to combat against piracy and stealing (Lee, 2015).
Being a fairly new concept, ethical porn is understood and problematized differently by various actors. Within academia it was recognized as an alternative economy, namely fair-trade economy, proliferated in Web 2.0 era (Wilkinson, 2017) or a component of feminist porn (Maina, 2014; Taormina, 2013). Whereas advocates of ethical porn claim that its existence transcends genres (“What is Ethical Porn?”, 2017). In addition to the mismatch between academic knowledge and the porn industry’s conceptualizations, there is a lack of structured knowledge based upon empirical data on ethical porn scene.

While wondering if this new notion nourishing with Web 2.0, this research aims to explore online ethical porn scene by answering the two following research questions:

RQ1:
How do websites including pornographic content that claim to be ethical communicate content?

RQ2:
“How do ethical porn websites present themselves in regards to the idea of ethical porn?”. 

Theoretically speaking, this study approaches to the idea of ethical porn and answers the above two research questions through Foucault’s (1989) discourse theory. This thesis thus operates upon the its premises that a) discourse informs organization of information and b) discourse focuses on how things are thought and discussed. Informed by structured mapping analysis, homepage of 33 ethical porn websites were investigated to answer the first research question. For the second, qualitative analysis led by Foucauldian discourse theory was performed over the statements of websites found on their homepages or in their related tabs.

How porn is produced and distributed online has been undergoing rapid and fundamental changes. Surprisingly enough, discussions on those changes still rely on ‘guesswork’ (Attwood & Smith, 2014). This is believed to be due to a lack of media scholars’ interest in online pornography (Atwood, 2010; Attwood & Smith, 2014; Ruberg, 2016). Furthermore, while there exists a considerable body of literature on how technology and sexualities affect each other, the research on the internet as a mode of distribution is quite limited (Wilkinson,
2017). Therefore, this thesis is designed to be an exploratory research in order to discover online ethical porn scene, about which very little is said within academia. While consulting to the knowledge accumulated from outside academia, a critical distance is sustained to avoid close alignment with the claims of the porn industry. By fulfilling a gap, this research will try to contribute to the vibrant and complex area of digital communications at the intersection of pornography.

2. Background

By mid 2010s, there appeared to be an increasing number of articles on ethical porn, such as “3 ways to start watching porn ethically” (Dickson, 2015), “Is there such a thing as ethical porn?” (Williams, Z., 2014), widely circulating on internet. Discussions also appeared on how porn could be ethical widespread more and more people on online forums, among feminist and queer communities and at porn film festivals, like the Berlin Porn Film Festival, Toronto International Porn Festival. Escalated interest in ethical porn also emerged in mainstream media and found itself a place in big media outlets (Lust, 2015), lifestyle magazines (Chui, 2017; Skipper, 2015) and even in popular online movie and TV show streaming platforms like Netflix (“Hot Girls Wanted: Turned On”, 2017). It is hard to claim that there is a consensus on the definition of ethical porn, yet lending an ear to the initiatives which arose from the industry helps one develop an understanding of this newly emerging notion. One website which aims to provide a platform for discussions about ethical porn, “www.ethical.porn”, describes the notion as pornographic content created ethically. The scope of ethical porn, according to the website, is driven by ethical concerns and necessitates that require all actions to be fair, equitable and just for all stakeholders involved throughout the production process (“What is Ethical Porn?”, 2017). This definition at first sight may imply that any pornographic content created anytime and anywhere following ethical concerns could be ethical. But in fact, ethical porn is a very timely idea and so far, is mostly concerned with internet porn scene.

What makes ethical porn a contemporary concept is due to the fact that its rhetoric usually addresses the dynamics of online pornography. As advocated by activist and porn performer
Jiz Lee in their article, “‘Ethical Porn’ Starts When We Pay for It”, consumers should pay for porn since it is “the most direct way to ensure key ethical production values” (2015, para.5). Given the fact that a large amount of the online porn can be found on porn ‘tubes' for free (Ruberg, 2016), asking everyone to pay for porn might be a utopian visible. Yet interestingly enough, porn has seldom been free of costs prior to internet. Nor was it always readily available. In fact, examples of pornography from 19th century, for instance, were kept in exclusive spaces that lacked full public access (Williams, 2014). Additionally, consumption of pornographic material was not always a private matter prior to the digital age. Textual, photographic and printed forms in nineteenth and in early twentieth centuries were followed by cinematic expressions of porn in the second half of twentieth century (Attwood, 2010). It was more the latter than the former that paved the way for public representations of sexualities. The manner in which pornography is consumed returned to the private realm with the invention of home video technologies and later the internet (Lipton, 2012). Katrien Jacobs argues that today porn consumption is situated in-between private and public spheres, since while it is consumed privately it takes place within a public environment where consumers also continue socializing, purchasing goods, searching for information and so on (in Attwood, 2010).

Technological advancements made pornography travel through public and private spaces (Attwood, 2010; Lipton, 2012; Williams, 2004). The last known stop of this transformation has altered pornography consumption deeply and brought it to a brand new stage. Internet as a mode of distribution made it possible to reach pornographic material for free (Edelman, 2009) and in larger amounts (Grebowicz, 2013). Porn not only became free but also fairly easy to reach (Lee, 2015) thanks to the internet being more accessible than ever (Wilkinson, 2017). Even though the ease of accessing free porn might suggest the opposite, production and distribution of pornographic material is not free of costs (Tiara, 2016). This contradiction between the actual production processes and the way it is consumed has implications on the adult industry. Free offered porn is typically found on platforms known as tubes, such as Pornhub, YouPorn and XTube (Slayden, 2010) and in most cases they is distribute pornographic material for free in contradiction to the wishes and demands of films producers (Dickson, 2015). Not only that, but also these tubes rely heavily on user-generated content, which can be read as an another source of free content for the tubes (Ruberg, 2016; Slayden,
Apart from tubes, the internet porn scene in general is argued to be fed with pirated copies that are scanned, encoded or captured otherwise (Edelman, 2009). The stolen content means that producers earn less than the consumption of paid material. And as less is earned per production, magazines, porno shops, porn video companies and more sectors within the adult industry shrink in size and capacity (Lee, 2015). As a consequence, performers have to do extra jobs, in or out of porn business, for their economic survival (Bisley, 2017).

Even if stealing is missing from the picture, Erika Lust (2015) points out to the fact that there seldom exists information about who actually is behind the production. When challenges posed by free tubes to the whole of the pornography industry are compared to those of in creative industries like music or film industries, Karly-Lynne Scott (2016) admits there are resemblances yet still believes they differ from each other greatly. The stigma surrounding sex work is argued to be one of the most prominent reasons that make survival strategies in the porn industry more intricate than in other industries (Scott, 2016). This stigma about sex work, for instance, is believed to be the cause behind some leading companies in the business of payment solutions such as Visa, JPMorgan and Paypal, to refuse working with adult websites (Lee & Sullivan, 2016). In addition to that, legal framework in some countries restricts the production and distribution of certain pornographic material. To illustrate, images of bondage and discipline, sadism and masochism, dominance and submission and other related interpersonal relations, or shortly referred as BDSM (Williams, 1999), are considered to be violent and abusive in United Kingdom and thus are criminalized (McNair, 2014). Understandably, the legal framework might work as an additional factor for porn producers and even may run them out of business.

Given the statements of ethical porn advocators and the context of porn industry in the digital age, paying for porn appears to be not only about combating piracy or stolen content. It also signals the weight of production process. To illustrate, Jiz Lee (2015) claims that purchasing porn in exchange for money aids the attainment of basic labor rights for performers. Indeed, websites formed in an attempt to contribute proliferation of the notion of ethical porn, such as ethical.porn and ethicalporn.org, adopt a similar take regarding production process. On the latter website, which introduces itself as “a coalition of adult content producers, performers, consumers and supporters who believe responsibly-made porn is possible” (“What is the
Ethical Porn Partnership?”, n.d), it is written that ethical porn is to “advocate the health, welfare and working rights of those involved in its production” (“What is the Ethical Porn Partnership?”, n.d). Apart from the labor rights, consent appears to be another crucial matter. On both websites, consent and the necessity to prove consent through the transparency of production are emphasized to have central importance, especially to combat human trafficking and sexual violence. Moreover, the role of the consumer is also conceptualized to be an ethical duty to contribute into a system that ensures a fair, safe and respected environment and process. As Tarrant exemplifies, paying for porn becomes as usual as not shoplifting at groceries (2016).

While it is not possible to claim ethical porn advocates approach to the notion alike as peas in a pod, there seems to be tendency to prioritize the labor over the narratives or the aesthetics of pornography. In that sense, the notion of ethical porn slightly departs from some of its counterparts in alternative scene. Ethical porn is understood as an alternative within porn business. Many examples of alternative pornography, such as lesbian, dyke, queer and feminist porn, have emerged as a protest to under-representation or misrepresentation of sexualities (Lipton, 2012) and have aimed at a truthful and empowering representations of bodies that are not stereotyped (Maina, 2014). Ethical porn also appear to exceed the scope of do-it-yourself (DIY) or amateur productions, both of which are mostly proliferated with Web 2.0 and believed to change the labor dynamics of porn production in the sense that they have decreased the rewards (Ruberg, 2016). Whereas what is said on ethical porn also deals with bigger productions. Among alternative porn scene, the concept of producing porn ethically seems to occupy a unique space due its focus and take on labor.

As presented above, ethical porn is a notion put forward mostly by the industry itself. It is an idea born from within Web 2.0 and is seen as a part of the alternative porn scene though with its unique claims on labor. In the following chapter, a review of porn studies will be introduced covering previous research on the topic.
3. Literature Review

In the most broad sense, this research aims to explore ethical porn practices online. The literature review show that ethical porn is researched in relation to three different areas. Firstly, it is understood and discussed within the context of pornography studies and its evolution. Secondly, it is situated at the intersection of technology and sexualities due to the notion’s inherently online nature. Thirdly, ethical porn is seen as a part of alternative porn scene. Subsequently, literature review will be composed of three sections: a) an overview of the field of pornography to elaborate major scholarly discussions on pornography, especially Sex Wars b) introduction to how internet as a mode of distribution altered representation of sexualities revealing main approaches to and gaps of digital media at the intersection of pornography and c) proliferation of the alternative porn scene to address ethical porn’s position in this realm.

3.1. Evolution of Porn Studies and Sex Wars

Early forms of pornography are found as early as in nineteenth century (Williams, 2014), even in Diderot’s well known fables (Williams, 1999). Yet what brought pornography to the scope of academia is relatively new. Sailing through different fields within social sciences, pornography as a distinct field finally settled in the 21st century, according to Williams (2014). The field is mapped by various anthologies, Linda Williams’ Porn Studies (2004), Porn 101: Eroticism, Pornography, and the First Amendment (Elias et al. 1999), and Pornography, Film and Culture (Lehman, 2006) are to name a few. The growth of the field can be said to accelerate with the establishment of Porn Studies Journal in 2013. Ethical porn practices have came into the picture even more recently, with what Lee and Sullivan claim as an increased interest in the ‘labor pornography’ (2016). It is, however, not possible to grasp why and how ethical porn attracted greater attention if famous ‘Sex Wars’ is not visited.

The field of porn studies have been predominantly shaped by Sex Wars, that can be briefly described as a debate of conflicting views regarding pornography. The eponym of the Sex
Wars is a conference held at New York’s Bernard College in 1982, named “Towards a Politics of Sexuality”. The conference was accused by some feminists, most commonly referred as anti-porn feminists, to advocate for a sexuality that is anti-feminist (Ryberg, 2015). The rivalry between anti-porn and their opponents, known as anti-censorship, pro-porn (Williams, 2014) or pro-sex feminists (Williams, 1999), grew into something more than a disagreement; an overarching framework to porn studies. The division of feminist stands has affected the field so much that almost any discussion on pornography visit the logics of Sex Wars.

3.1.1. Anti-Porn Feminists

Pioneered by Catharine MacKinnon, Andrea Dworkin, Susan Griffin and Susan Kappeler, the anti-porn camp is fueled by two major arguments. First one is the claim that pornography promotes misogynistic demeanor and acts (McNair, 2014). The second one is that it misrepresents the essence of female sexuality, which is argued to be non-aggressive and non-phallic in reality by anti-porn feminists (Schauer, 2005). Ryberg explains that the roots of anti-porn camp can be traced in sexual liberation wave of 1970s. Movements embracing sexual liberation were perceived to serve men by anti-porn feminists because they believe male domination and violence on women were normalized under the name of sexual liberation (Ryberg, 2015).

The discourse of anti-porn stand suggests that sexual liberation and its expressions, including pornography, work in favor of male domination. One of the pioneers of anti-porn feminism, Catharine MacKinnon, uses the well-known analogy of Pavlov's dog’s primitive conditioning to explain pornography. MacKinnon believes that pornography condition “sexual responses to abusive situations and to sexual subordination” (in Schauer, 2005, p.44). This conditionality is argued to be found in porn scenes by depicting female sexuality subordinate to the male sexuality. The reason these feminists are entitled as ‘anti-porn’ is not only their arguments against pornography but also their demand for pornography to be banned. In the leadership of MacKinnon and her fellows, anti-porn feminists requested government of United States of America to delimit the production of pornography (Ryberg, 2015). Those
feminists were highly influential on the US government, as their campaign contributed to the preparation of Pornography Report by the Meese Commission named after Attorney General Edwin Meese (Williams, 1999).

In the eyes of anti-pornography feminists, representation of sexualities in pornography serve for a logic of anti-feminist intentions (Williams, 1999). Robin Morgan’s famous slogan “Pornography is the theory, and rape is the practice” (in Williams, 1999, p.16) suggests that consumption of pornography fortifies patriarchy (McNair, 2014). Following this, the censorship demand was also backed by the claim that pornography is not only a representation but is an actual scene where men exercise power over women (Grebowicz, 2013). According to what Feona Attwood states in the Introduction to the book "porn.com: Making Sense of Online Pornography" (2010), porn is conceptualised as an equivalent of men's violence to women and of institutionalized male power within the discourse of anti-porn feminism.

The rivalry about pornography have been so influential that until the mid-1990s, there existed very few work on pornography that did not follow the discourse of anti-pornography feminism (Attwood, 2010). In 1990s, as argued by Brian McNair (2002), the Western world witnessed 'democratization of desire', which enabled the growth of sexual freedoms and diversity. The same decade was as well remarked with numerous research on pornography that do not necessarily follow anti-porn feminist discourse (Attwood, 2010). In this era and context, pro-porn feminists altered sex into a “subject of public debate, to an extent unprecedented in the history of the mass media" (McNair, 1996, p.22).

### 3.1.2. Pro-porn / Anti-Censorship Feminists

Pro-porn feminists differ from their anti-porn counterparts not only in terms of approaching to pornography. The rivalry exceeds the realm of pornography and be pertain to sexuality, power, knowledge and more. In this regard, Foucault’s theorization of power and knowledge is one of the most visited theorizations by anti-censorship feminists. Linda Williams, one of the most prominent scholars in the field of pornography, applies Foucault’s analysis of
history of sexualities (1978) and frames pornography around his notion of “knowledge of pleasure” (1999). This application enables theorizing the consumption of pornography not as a means to pleasure but as having the “knowledge of pleasure”. The pleasure is acquired from knowing what pleasure is like. Williams’ interpretation, therefore, understands pornography as one of the transfer points of knowledge that is capable of shaping sexualities (Williams, 1999). Accordingly, what causes the polarization between these feminist camps is not primarily because of the space pornography occupies, rather is due to the nature of sexuality. Following Foucault’s conceptualization of sexuality, pro-porn feminists do not see masculine sexuality as the causation of oppression on women (Williams, 1999). Sexuality, according to Foucault, is not a discovery of our hidden desires but is a creation and an ongoing process (Foucault, 1997). He argues sexualities to be not fixed nor natural, but a social construction that have been changing throughout the history (Williams, 1999). Moving on from his theorization, Linda Williams suggests that even physical reactions to porn like crying, laughter, having goosebumps, arousal or more, are culturally mediated than being uncontrollable reflexes (Williams, 1999).

Foucauldian notions of power and his conceptualization of sexuality is one of the major breakpoints of pro-sex feminists from anti-porn feminists, since the latter conceives pornography not as an adequate reflection of the true nature of female sexuality while the former do not claim there is a nature to sexuality at all (Williams, 1999). Grounded upon this breakpoint, pro-sex feminists stand against the condemnation and limitation of pornography for several reasons. To begin with, anti-censorship camp advocate for female sexuality not to be defined in a normative manner (Lipton, 2012). Anti-pornography feminists often rely upon the distinction of ‘hard’ against ‘soft’ when describing male sexuality against female. That hard vs. soft contrast imply that male sexuality is pornographic, while female sexuality is erotic (Williams, 1999). This take on male and female sexualities goes hand in hand with the idea that there is an essence to female sexuality (Schauer, 2005). Judith Butler’s queer theory, similar with pro-sex feminists, is critical towards anti-porn feminists' conceptualization of female sexuality under sexual difference. Butler argues that female sexuality is normalized with features like not being violent, aggressive or phallic, while not excluding some subtle lesbian elements (Schauer, 2005). Linda Williams underlines two fundamental flaws with regard to female sexuality as understood by anti-porn feminists. The first one is positioning
sexuality a priori to culture, history and power relations, as if it is something to be found in
the nature alone (Williams, 1999). In the broader feminist literature, whether culture or the
material comes first is a long debated topic and it can be traced in theorizations of gender by
Simone de Beauvoir and Judith Butler. Being one of the earliest feminist theorists in history,
de Beauvoir claims that gender is a social artefact build upon material sex. Decades later,
Butler challenged this differentiation of sex and gender claiming the differentiation itself is
discursive. To Butler, even what is claimed to be material is subject to culture (Butler, 1999).
Perhaps it is not completely accurate to claim the feminist stands differ along the lines of
Beauvoir and Butler’s theoretical positions against each other, perception of sexuality by
anti-porn feminists is in a close dialogue with how the latter challenge the former.
Additionally, anti-porn feminism's pursue of sexual difference is criticized by pro-porn
feminists for not to leave room for non-heterosexual sexualities. This point is particularly
interesting because one the most recognized anti-porn feminists, Andrea Dworkin, accuses
women who enjoy heterosexual relations as collaborators to the phallic enemy (in Williams,
1999). While at the same time, female sexualities are recognized mostly as a negation of male
sexuality (Williams, 1999). Butler (1999) names making sense of sexualities only through
heterosexual gaze with the notion of “heterosexual matrix”. Hence, to apply Butler’s
terminology, pro-porn feminists accuse anti-porn feminists to operate within the heterosexual
matrix.

Secondly, anti-porn counterparts are criticized for their generic victimization of women
(Williams, 1999). Arguments in regards to victimization of women, as Lipton (2012)
mentions, pay more attention to the non-mainstream porn productions than theoretical
debates. The emergence of lesbian, dyke, feminist and queer porn was celebrated by pro-porn
networks for challenging the anti-porn rhetoric that victimize female sexuality (Lipton,
2012). With the rise of internet, and especially after Web 2.0, alternative pornography scene
is believed to shift the aesthetics, modes of production and the value of pornography. The fact
that altporn have provided an alternative to mainstream pornography, which is found
problematic and sexist by pro- and anti-porn feminists alike, attracted great academic interest
(Maddison, 2013). As non-mainstream genres were mainly motivated by the idea of
representing the underrepresented (Lipton, 2012), it was argued by Linda Williams to
empower non-dominant sexualities and give agency to those who are condemned as pervert
(Grebowicz, 2013). Consequently, alternative porn scene displayed their alliance with pro-sex feminists. Thanks to the examples of altporn, anti-censorship feminists opposed to the arguments that see pornography as the major reason behind women’s oppression (Ziv, 2014). In other words, pro-porn feminists not only oppose the ban on pornography, but also support forms of pornographic expressions that deviate from the mainstream scene.

What constitutes 'mainstream' is a very contested question. Rosewarne (2017) explains mainstream as "values and practices participated in, and ascribed to, by most people" (p.403). Alternative to the aspect of outreach, mainstream porn has been described through its aesthetics, gender and sexual codes (Berg, 2017; Maddison, 2013). Saying that, mainstream pornography is also affected by the altporn scene. The effect of alternative pornographies on mainstream porn, according to Barcan (2002), which can be seen in mainstream businesses’ adaptations to ethical production’s fair-trade business model. Wilkinson also point to the fact that mainstream porn was pushed to adapt to niche and amateur pornography as the latter gain more and more popularity (Wilkinson, 2017).

3.1.3. Sex Wars as the ‘Compulsory’ Framework

Sex Wars has long been almost a mandatory step prior to enter into the field of pornography. It has shaped how porn was understood, theorized and researched; determined on what grounds porn studies were built; the way it evolved and informed other fields of study. The undeniable impact of Sex Wars and not having the possibility to ignore this framework on porn studies, on the other hand, were not free of costs.

First and foremost, even though Sex Wars accelerated rich and diverse theoretical discussions on mediated sexualities, it resulted in not producing new knowledge as such discussions “never go beyond superficial judgements about sexism” (Williams, 2014, p. 27). The unending debate between two oppositional camps, according to McNair, carries the risk to be too subjective and sooner or later to deviate from empirical data. For instance, inferences on how pornography is perceived were noticed to be explained through personal anecdotes and secondary sources than conducted research (McNair, 2014). Another fallacy of the
dominance of Sex Wars over pornography studies arises from the need to align with one or another. As mentioned above, porn studies is known for its close ties with non-mainstream porn scene. This, to Williams, forced porn studies to lose critical distance to the industry (Williams, 2014). Reviewing the field of pornography in her article "Pornography, porno, porn: thoughts on a weedy field", Linda Williams (ibid.) argues that the weight of being labeled as anti-sex feminist was considered to be too heavy to bare. Williams rightfully reminds that any porn production is after all commercial, thus shall be assessed critically. The strength of Sex Wars appearing as the framework to pornography studies is found problematic for another reason in parallel to the lack of critical distance. Both Maddison (2013) and Williams (2014) point to the optimistic attitude towards the alternative porn scene that resulted in an over-research of non-mainstream porn. Hence, mainstream pornography was not paid similar attention. All in all, Sex Wars works as a heavy glue sticking the field together around a focus yet its effects reveal serious gaps in the literature.

3.2. Pornography at the Intersection of Technology and Sexualities

How technology and sexualities affect and transform each other have been one of the major focus points of pornography studies. In the most traditional sense, academic approach to pornography has been based upon a distance between what is represented and what is real (Attwood, 2009). Ways of depicting sexualities have undergone changes and been represented via different forms, such as images, texts, movies. Accordingly, mediated sexualities have became a source of information for how we understand and experience sexuality, as Williams points out (2008). Not surprisingly, immense technological advancements have been under the scrutiny of many scholars from within and outside of porn studies in order to make sense of altering sexualities. One of the most remarkable contributions to the intersection of technology and our bodies was by Donna Haraway in her famous work A Cyborg Manifesto. Her notion, cyborg, asserts that we are “theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism; in short, we are cyborgs” (1990, p.191). Haraway’s theorization of human identities as machineries blurs the boundaries of bodies and technologies as they irreversibly blend with each other (Durham, 2016). Years later from the release of “A Cyborg Manifesto”, the literature on new media and technologies follow
Haraway’s footsteps by arguing that the boundaries of sex, gender and desires are constantly shifted by technological advancements (Attwood, 2010; Durham, 2016; Grebowicz, 2013).

The interactions of media technologies and pornography with each other are very diverse. Yet the literature on pornography alone does not provide necessary insight on the variety of approaches to this relationship. Borrowing from the literature on digital media, it is needed to briefly introduce the different stands regarding the impact of technology on society: techno-optimism, techno-pessimism and techno-determinism. The advancements in digital technologies were celebrated by many, who are mostly referred as techno-optimists, because such advancements were believed to enable an increase in participation, inclusive decision making processes, freedom for masses to speak their word, thus to boost participatory democracy (Fuchs, 2013). Techno-pessimists, on the other hand, argue that digital technologies are exploitative, abused for surveillance and content censorship by state and capitalist enterprises (Fuchs, ibid.). Critical of either celebrating or denigrating technologies, Van Dijck (2013) advocates for a connective approach that takes into account both exploitative and empowering sides of digital media. She, as well alongside with her techno-pessimist counterparts, warns not to grant technology a deterministic power as no media is devoid of socio-cultural aspects. Both Fuchs (2013) and Van Dijck (2013) strongly advocate that technology should not be isolated from power relations. Similarly, Haraway also thinks of technologies loaded with power relations and work as ideological instruments enforcing meanings (in Durham, 2016).

3.2.1. Understanding Pornography Studies With the Help of Digital Media Literature

Among pornography scholars, it is most commonly agreed that digital forms of commercial sex create new discourses, ways of communication, interaction, participation and socialization that can not be understood without technological advancements (Blair, 1999 in Pajnik et al., 2015). Vast differences are found in approaching to how technologies and pornography are related to each other and they will be reviewed with the help of digital media literature. To begin with, there are a great number of authors who have been noticeably
celebratory towards the inventions of digital age since they believe digital technologies have
democratized pornography, and sexualities in the bigger picture. Being one of the most
influential scholars in porn studies, Brian McNair (2002) proposed that from 1990s on
western world have been witnessing 'democratization of desire’ referring to growing sexual
freedoms and diversity. This increased democratization is, in part, due to the changing ways
in which pornography is produced and consumed online. McNair argues that the upsurge in
the will to produce sexually alternative content is due to sexualities becoming less regulated,
more commercialized and more pluralistic than ever in the western world. This will is
realized thanks to technological advancements’ allowance to escape the capitalist impositions
of market profitability on sexual content (McNair, ibid.). Pursuing McNair’s
conceptualization, Wilkinson (2017) asserts that online forms of pornography not only
fostered democratization of desire but opened the door to alternative economic structures that
are outside of capitalist mode of production and relations. The democratic spillover from
narratives and aesthetics to economies, to Wilkinson, made it impossible to talk about a porn
industry as a monolithic entity (2017).

The other side of the coin is that there are a great number of authors underlining the negative
aspects of digital technologies. It is believed that such technologies, more specifically the
internet, have perpetuated already harmful effects of pornography on society due to easy
access to and high speed of distribution available on the internet (Attwood, 2009). Those who
condemn pornography conventionally back their claims by the presence of violence in porn,
which in return cause further violence in society (Matebeni, 2012). When it comes to
comparing online pornography to its previously offline examples, anti-porn academics
together with a large number of journalists strongly advocate that the former are much more
violent than the latter (McNair, 2014). Accordingly, the threat pornography is believed to
pose became more serious because internet made pornography more mainstream and
acceptable (Cook, 2005). Lastly, and differing slightly, many do believe technology and
sociality are inseparable. One of the most remarkable contributions is by Feona Attwood
(2009), who argues that technology and sex are 'stitched together’. Her conceptualization of
technology and sexuality is reminiscent of Haraway's cyborg and paves the way for newly
emerging sexual relations. Before proceeding further, it is crucial to note that none of the
theoretical tendencies on the relationship between technology and pornography happen to
stand in an exclusive fashion. In other words, techno-optimism, techno-pessimism and the critique of techno-determinism do not exclude one another, rather co-exist.

While the digital media literature helps deepening one’s understanding of pornography studies, today only a few works demonstrate comprehensive analysis of transformations in porn caused by internet, as a mode of distribution (Grebowicz, 2013; Durham, 2016). Given the fact that the adult industry is one of the earliest adaptors to newly emerging technologies (Edelman, 2009), it is particularly interesting why the field have not developed as thorough as it deserves (Williams, 2014). This literature gap is noticed by scholars and is attempted to be explained with several reasons. One possible answer why there is a gap as such, not at all surprisingly, is believed to be due to the effects of Sex Wars. Linda Williams believes that Sex Wars have been a delaying factor to theorize and research pornography in the context of digital age (2014). Similarly, McNair argues Sex Wars to be a misleading factor. Because Sex Wars, as previously mentioned, resulted in personal opinions or secondary sources of information to be relied on more than empirical data, McNair claims research on online pornography are held to affirm positions than to actually investigate (2014). On the other hand, porn scholars celebratory of digital technologies are criticized for over-researching alternative pornography due to optimism they have for the altporn scene, thus belittling and overlooking mainstream pornography (Maddison, 2013; Williams, 2014). As shown above, pornography is one of the first addresses to be visited by digital advancements giving the tremendous effect the latter has on the former and vice versa. Accordingly, porn studies is criticised for not sufficiently handling this relationship and/or looking at the issue mostly from the perspective of alternative productions.

### 3.3. Alternative Porn Scene

Having been settled as a distinguished academic field in the 21st century according to Williams (2014), pornography have further proliferated thanks to the growing interest in the field, the increasing number of published books and conducted research and most importantly the establishment of *Porn Studies Journal*. As the field grew bigger and broader, the overarching framework of Sex Wars is noticed to be relatively weakened (Lee & Sullivan,
As a result, new areas of focus have emerged. One of them, labor of pornography, is at central importance for this research, since the discourse of ethical porn is mostly in relation to the labor behind the production and distribution of pornography (Lee & Sullivan, ibid.).

Lee and Sullivan in their article introductory to the second edition of Porn Studies Journal (2016) state that for so long studies overlooked the labor as they were more concerned with the representation and consumption of sexualities due to ongoing Sex Wars. Question of work came into the picture mostly through industry and technology than academia. Focus on labor was limited to the industrial and technological side of work hence included only audience and producers at the expense of neglecting performers as a stakeholder to porn business (Lee & Sullivan, 2016). Whereas more recently, both anti-porn and pro-porn camps share a common concern that labor issues require a closer look. In fact, the call for a more serious attitude to analyze labor have arose as a strong anti-porn stand (Lee & Sullivan, 2016). One of the marking characteristics of anti-porn feminism is the belief that misogynistic aesthetics and exploitative working conditions are inherent to porn (Wilkinson, 2017). When these are thought together, it is possible to interpret that, at least according to Lee and Sullivan (2016), the call for zooming into the labor conditions by anti-porn feminists is as an attempt to reveal the exploitative capitalist logic that are believed to be inseparable from porn. On the contrary, anti-censorship camp turned their head towards alternative forms of porn, since more and more porn productions claimed to put labor first and deployed an economic model in accordance with those claims (Scott, 2016). As well, alternative forms of porn are believed to counter the very problematic messages conveyed by mainstream porn (Wilkinson, 2017).

3.3.1. What Makes a Porn Production Ethical?

The labor rights of the performers came to the forefront as much as their empowerment and reveal of their sexual agency among alternative pornographies (Scott, 2016; Wilkinson, 2017). It was the increased attention labor of pornography has attracted and the celebratory attitude towards the online alternative porn scene that lead one to the idea of ethical porn. Increasingly, scholars underline ethics in pornography as a part of production and/or
distribution processes. In this regard, conveying labor conditions through practices such as interviews with performers, behind-the-scene material, have become increasingly prominent in light of a focus on ethical porn production" according to Scott (2016, p. 121).

Ethical porn has been mentioned almost equivalent with fair-trade business model. As Wilkinson (2017) reminds and both Mondin (2014) and Scott (2016) argue ethical porn to be enabled by alternative economic structures that are known as 'fair-trade', 'ethical' and 'socially responsible pornography' models that prioritize workers’ rights. Similarly, Tristan Taormino (2013) highlights the role of production process when describing what makes porn ethical. Taormino, however, sees ethical production processes mostly as a part of and a precondition for feminist pornography. Feminist porn is identified with productions that are fair and are implemented through an ethical process (Taormino in Berg, 2017). Activist, porn performer and one of the editors to the second volume of Porn Studies Journal Jiz Lee (2015) explains in their essay "'Ethical Porn' Starts When We Pay for It" how paying for porn helps the basic labour rights of performers to be met on set. Lee also underlines the fact that piracy of pornographic material leads to exploitation of performers. The sentiment is further shared by the #payforyourporn movement, which discourages viewers from stealing professional content by spreading the message that 'porn is worth paying for'.

It is difficult to claim there is a solid definition to or a shared common sense about what ethical porn refers to. However there is a strong tendency to align ethical porn with alternative porn scene - whether being about its economy, its aesthetics or what it represents or counter. Wilkinson (2017) believes ethical porn and many other sorts of alternative porn to break the singular economic logic of mainstream pornography. The way online arousing material is produced and consumed has long been characterised with a singular economic logic. It was after Web 2.0 that anti-capitalist, post capitalist or non-capitalist economic alternatives emerged with the capacity to survive (Wilkinson, 2017). Wilkinson (2017) bases her argument on Gibson-Graham’s (2002) work on ‘diverse economies’, which suggests that economy is not mainly capitalist but is diverse and has multiple dynamics (in Wilkinson, 2017). Maina (2014) pursues a similar approach to understand alternative pornographies, ethical porn being one of them, from a point of view of economy. Having a different focus from Wilkinson, Maina approaches to fair-trade business model to investigate alternative
porn productions’ relationship with their communities and their financial management. Fair-trade economy, a business archetype often used to refer to ethical porn in pornography studies, is formulated as a sustainable model marked with do-it-yourself (DIY) practices and community values (Maina, 2014). Mondin (2014) understands fair-trade business model close to Maina’s approach. Since most of the producers, explains Mondin, lack financial capital prior to launching their businesses, they rely on the support of their networks of friends and family. Fair-trade model also necessitates a community gathering around values and identities as the financial providers are usually the communities themselves. The producers, in return, ensure “ethical representation” of their communities (Mondin, ibid.).

The fact that fair-trade model is depended on their communities’ devotion to values is mostly thought in relation to feminist merits (Mondin, 2014; Maina, 2014). The Feminist Porn Book published in 2013 pretty much set the ground rules of the scope of feminist porn. Ethics and a business model following ethics are assessed as a must for feminist productions. Indeed, Tristan Taormino defined feminist porn through producing pornographic material in a fair manner where performers are paid reasonably and treated with care and esteem (2013). The key requirements of ‘organic’ porn requiring the care for performers have been theorized inseparably from feminist as well as also queer porn (Mondin, 2014). One of the reasons for fair-trade business model to be perceived almost as a synonym to feminist porn is also because feminist porn productions have been one of the earliest adapters to this particular business model (Mondin, 2014). In fact, the discourse of ethical porn has rarely been distinctively acknowledged. Berg (2017) interprets this tendency with fair-trade economics to arise as a respected alternative against the ‘fast-food’ means of production in mainstream porn where female sexualities are insulted.

Seeing feminist porn as equivalent of ethical production processes and values raises the question, echoing Maina (2014), whether mainstream porn is inherently exploitative. The possibility of mainstream porn’s following ethical forms of production, to Maina (ibid.) should not be disregarded since numerous producers and directors from outside of the communities indie, feminist or queer porn have expressed their commitment to ethical principles in their works. In fact, the voices from the industry suggest the same. On the website www.ethical.porn, it is stated that “ethical porn may include any genre, style, form,
As portrayed above, ethical porn has seldom been recognized, thus not problematized, discussed or researched in depth within academia. Not surprisingly, empirical data on ethical is easy to be found. In addition to the scarcity of research, there is a great difference between how the academic literature recognizes and how the industry conceptualizes the notion of ethical porn. Rather, there are pieces of information scattered all over the field and consequently there is a lack of structured analysis. As well, present studies on pornography in relation to digital technologies and internet were heavily constrained with the weight of Sex Wars. Still, the idea of producing and distributing porn ethical finds itself a remarkable place especially in association with alternative porn scene, fair-trade business model and feminist porn. In the following section, it will be elaborated how the notion in question, ethical porn, will be approached theoretically when answering the two research questions.

4. Theoretical Framework

Developing a theoretical framework for this study had several challenges. Firstly, ethical porn has not been acknowledged distinctively within academic literature. Rather, it was recognized mostly through a mode of production following fair-trade business model (Berg, 2017; Scott, 2016) and/or as a component of porn genres’ alternative to mainstream porn, especially feminist porn (Taormino, 2013). Secondly, the conceptualization of ethical porn differed in academia and the porn business itself, although they converseate with each other (Lee & Sullivan, 2016). Initiatives formed among the industry, like the websites ethicalporn.org and ethical.porn, as well as the claims of performers and advocators of ethical porn meet on a common ground that ethical porn is not merely an economic dimension or a component of a genre (Lee, 2015). It is, on the contrary, argued to be a unique take on pornography with a distinct discourse. Moreover, there hardly exists structured knowledge on ethical pornography. Given these challenges, the theoretical framework will apply academic tools and methods in order to provide a systematic analysis of the topic in question without
ignoring the voice of the industry. When doing that, Foucault's discourse theory will provide a theoretical basis to the research.

Foucault uses the term ‘discourse’ as a way to organize knowledge which is constructed upon social relations. Not exempted from power relations, discourse creates a systems of logic enabling to give meaning to the objects of we speak (Foucault, 1989). Foucauldian discourse mobilizes its categories in ways to serve for the proliferation of the discourse and the discourse, in return, constructs the subject (Butler, 1993). In other words, it provides a structure for us to think and speak the way we do about things and as a result we accept those structures as social facts.

Any discourse, as Foucault theorizes, exists within the spatiality of power relations (1989). He argues that power is not necessarily and solely a negative concept but also can be a positive force “for what it constructs in discourse and through knowledge” (Foucault, 1978 in Williams, 1999, p.3). The positiveness attributed to power is due to the fact that power relations are not formed without resistance. The resistance is the impulse behind creation and recreation and consequently makes it possible for one to be an active member to that process (Foucault, 1997). If to interpret Foucauldian discourse to the notion of ethical porn, the creative force leading the discourse is the notion of ‘ethics’. Ethics, in Foucauldian sense, is not a purely matter of morality. Ethics is backed by practice and the practice is led by ontological condition of ethics (Foucault, 1997). In his own words, "Ethics is not just a theory - it is equally a practice, an embodiment, a style of life" (Foucault, 1997, p. 281). In this regard, ethical porn will be understood as a practice led ontologically. Henceforth ‘ethics’ is seen as a positive force made use of to resist the existing practices of pornography whilst constructing its own discourse. Accordingly, the object of this research, ethical porn websites, are perceived as a part of discourse since it is believed the communication of content is organized within the logics of ethical porn discourse.

Foucault argues that a discourse shall be situated in specific historical conditions (Foucault, 1989). Therefore, it is not possible to claim that there can be found a set of ethics applicable to anywhere at anytime. To put it differently, what makes a pornographic material ethical might vary from one production to another. Whereas the sources giving space to ethical
pornography indicate that the discourse of ethical porn is mostly rooted in the Western world, particularly in the American context. Indeed, the heavy emphasis on American porn industry were criticized for the tendency of American context to spill over to all experiences. To illustrate, even to perceive porn industry through gaze of Sex Wars is found problematic because in many countries the porn industry are prevalent outside of the Sex Wars context (Tsaliki & Chronaki, 2016). Similarly, Maina (2014) addresses the fact that The Feminist Porn Book is mostly about productions of USA origin leaving non-USA productions out of the canon of feminist porn.

4.1. Critical Assessment of the Ethical Porn Discourse

If to pay attention to porn industry rooting for ethical porn, it is advocated that production and distribution processes should ensure consent and all parties involved shall enjoy their labor rights (“What is Ethical Porn Partnership?”, n.d; “What is Ethical Porn?”, 2017). Consensual production refers to a detachment from sex trafficking and violence that has long been experienced in adult industry (“What is Ethical Porn Partnership?”, n.d). Karly-Lynne Scott agrees with the industry in the sense that ethical porn is to promote ethical production practices, yet warns not to conflate reality with performance and end up in uncritical and unethical results (2016). In Scott's own words, "ethical spectatorship cannot arise simply from consuming pornography that claims to be ethically produced, but requires critical engagement that stands in opposition to the rhetoric produced by conventions that purport to reveal the hidden labour of pornography” (ibid., p.120). Following Scott, the research will remain skeptical towards ethical porn discourse since what is claimed to be ethical might not necessarily correspond to the real conditions on set and viewers, as well as researchers, might not be able to determine the truth from outside.

As mentioned before, alternative porn scene, including ethical porn and various other genres, was welcomed with optimism and celebrated for their role played in sex-positive activism, sexual empowerment of females and minorities by a great number of scholars (Ziv, 2014). Linda Williams warns researchers looking at alternative porn scene to remain critical towards their research objects. As contemporary porn studies, according to Linda Williams, lean more
towards anti-censorship camp to avoid being aligned with anti-porn feminists, preserving a
distance to alternative porn scene is sacrificed under the shadow of Sew Wars (Williams
2014). In like manner, the study preserve a critical distance to ethical porn productions that
fall in the scope of investigation.

It is vital to underline that remaining critical should not be interpreted as an attempt to
disrespect sex workers, devalue their voice or rights, sexual health and freedom in the adult
industry. Linda Williams says:

“Although I certainly want to respect the dignity of sex workers and support better, safer
working conditions for them, and although I also want to uphold ‘freedoms’ of speech and to
encourage diverse forms of pornography, I believe there is a risk in aligning our own work of
scholarship too closely with the work of the pornography industry” (2014, p. 34).

Along the line of Williams’ critics and as a necessity of Foucauldian power analysis, the
discourse of ethical porn will be considered as an area of power relations, that might or might
not be in reflective of the reality. The research understands critical assessment as being
skeptical to the discourse of ethical porn when it is used for marketability in denial of the
reality. Consequently, statements of a commitment to the ethical porn discourse will not be
taken for granted or as equal to the actual experience of porn.

While what is discussed above provides an overall structure to the theoretical framework, it is
still necessary to elaborate this framework in order to display to what it corresponds to for
ethical porn discourse.

4.2. A Closer Look to Labor

Labor pornography suggests approaching sex work as work prioritizing labor conditions
characterizes ethical porn productions with the convention to reveal labor conditions via
documentation. The advocates of ethical porn from the industry itself also believe what is
‘ethical’ is about making production processes transparent in order to guarantee the consent of the parties involved ("What is the Ethical Porn Partnership?", n.d). This suggests, as Lust exemplifies, visibly portraying who is behind the production and their experience during shooting (2015).

The expectation of such productions to display circumstances of labor are typically met with the preparation of materials like interviews with performers, post-scene and behind-the-scenes content that are supposed (Scott, 2016). These conventional materials, according to Berg (2017), usually revolve around a positive message about working conditions. Scott (2016) explains the positive tone found in these materials with the need to boost the idea of emotional attachment of performers to their occupation. These scenes are remarkably different from depicted sexual acts in their message, tone and visuals. In the behind and/or post scene interviews, performers look directly into the camera, speak as themselves than characters they enact and reflect on their experience during the shooting (Scott, 2016). These interviews or materials alike are at central importance since viewers may base their decisions whether the pornographic content is ethically produced or not (Scott, ibid.).

Revealing the labor conditions during the production process brings one to the discussion on the notion of authenticity. Authenticity have risen as a core concept within alternative porn communities, in fact as a distinguishable factor of feminist porn to many (Ashley, 2016). It is defined by Maina (2014) as an intention where bodies, sexual practices and pleasures are depicted as realistic. Expectedly, the concept of authenticity is inherited from the famous Sex Wars (Berg, 2017). The long advocation of anti-porn feminists for pornography to be banned was primarily based on the argument that porn is not representative of real sexualities. The feminist porn backlash was to make authenticity a central part to their production and consequently closing the gap between ‘authentic sex’ and ‘porn sex’ (Smith & Attwood, 2013). Previously, the concept of authenticity was used signal the exploitation of female performers (Scott, 2016). With the help of the leading contributor to feminist porn discourse Tristan Taormino and the release of The Feminist Porn Book in 2013, the meaning of authenticity lost its negative connotation and transformed into a reference to the empowerment of performers (in Scott, 2016). Authenticity also points to further notions,
agency and autonomy of performers. As authenticity is argued to strengthen the autonomy of workers and consequently enable them possess control over production processes (Lee & Sullivan, 2016). For instance, demolition of scripts proving authentic pleasure became a frequently used tactic in feminist porn productions (Mondin, 2014).

Strong emphasis on authenticity devoid of critical assessment might be problematic for two reasons. Firstly, it might create an illusion that authentic content does not include labor (Lee & Sullivan, 2016). Also, the requirements of authenticity may add up to the workload of the performers and workers (Berg, 2017). Authenticity occasionally implies scenes without scripts, especially for extra-pornographic content since performers are expected to talk about their own experience (Scott, 2016). However it is never certain whether performers declare their true opinions or not. For instance, some websites do contractually bind the performers to smile and put forward positive thoughts to refer to their performance (Scott, 2016). The power relations at play on the set can also distort the realness of extra-content. In some cases, performers expressed contradictory opinions on different mediums, saying the shoot was satisfactory on the interview but stating otherwise on a magazine (Scott, 2016). None of these examples concludes that authenticity works against performers at all times. Nor it can be argued that performers do not gain any power through authenticity. However a closer look on its effects on labor signals authenticity is not necessarily a reveal of working condition but a mandatory part of fair-trade porn logics (Scott, 2016).

Secondly, behind the scenes and similar content is argued to be dominated with ‘obligatory enthusiasm’ of performers loving their profession (Scott, 2016). As a matter of fact, Berg (2017) warns against the repercussions of prioritizing emotional attachment over financial needs. This might create a situation where political motivations work as the solely legitimate reason to get involved in the porn business and as a result, those who are in it 'just for money' may be marginalized (Berg, ibid.). The enlarged possibilities of sexual expressions can also be thought together with the rise of neo-liberalism where individuals emerge as a self-regulating unit (Attwood, 2010). Therefore ‘enjoying work’ or ‘being yourself” can be read as neo-liberal logic at play where work becomes a place of fun (Tsaliki & Chronaki, 2016). With this intention Berg (2017) argues that authenticity can mask labored processes while presenting itself as a “petit-bourgeois entrepreneurship”. At the same time, sex work is
a profession surrounded by stigma. Addressing to the this, Lee and Sullivan (2016) believe it is not the depiction of the act of sex that is hazardous for workers in the porn industry. The hardness of the profession, to the authors, is due to the fact that performers are deprived of their basic human rights, conditions ensuring their sexual health, dignity and more (Lee & Sullivan, ibid.).

In addition to what is said above, critical assessment of labor requires recognition of other aspects of labor that speak to broader issues. As Berg (2017) notes, the labor experience might not be the same for all performers. In the mainstream porn scene payments are typically arranged based on the sex acts performed, such as vaginal or anal sex, only women “girl-girl” scenes, double penetration (Berg, 2017). Categories of ‘race’ is another factor in determining the issued payments. Due to race categorizations, black women performers are paid remarkably less than their white counterparts (Berg, ibid.). As a result of, what Flowers calls, “racial fantasies” mainstream porn is fixated to, people of color have been overlooked or exploited in the industry (in Metebene, 2012). To put it differently, people of color in the mainstream adult entertainment industry are mostly hired not according to the necessities of performance but to fulfill what a ‘category of race’ suggests (Berg, 2017). Majority of queer and feminist porn producers, on the other hand, do not apply hierarchical categories of race, appearance or gender. As well, ethical porn productions offer slightly different work principles. For instance, there are some benefits granted to performers by feminist porn producers like allowing performers to work with their desired performers (Mondin, 2014). While hierarchical and discriminatory categorizations are demolished, alternative porn producers set their payment bar lower than their counterparts in the mainstream porn scene (Berg, 2017). Taking into account Berg’s (2017) careful examination of the labor conditions within mainstream and alternative porn scene, this study does not make labor visible as long as it is compatible with the claimed ethical concerns.

Foucauldian discourse theory suggests the logics of discourse shapes how things are organized. The discourse, then, feeds into the economic logic as well as the organization and the distribution of the production. Wilkinson (2017) understands application of fair-trade business models in the adult industry as an alternative formed to escape mainstream porn's capitalist and exploitative logics of economies. Internet as a mode of distribution, according
to Wilkinson, enabled alternative economies, thus broke the idea of pornography that is solely composed of mainstream examples (ibid.). Agreeing with Wilkinson's observation on how internet allowed alternative economies to emerge, the research follows Scott (2016) and Lee and Sullivan (2016) in the sense that economic logics shape the labor practices fundamentally. Yet it is crucial to note that the research does not argue what makes labor conditions better, meaning whether higher payment with so-called problematic representation in mainstream porn or lower wages with claimed to be better working conditions among alternative porn scene is preferable is not a question this study is after to answer.

4.3. The ‘Issue’ of Content

The increase in ethical porn productions is found in relation to the release from the Sex Wars dichotomy (Lee & Sullivan, 2016). The focus shifted from what is said, namely the sexual representation of female desires, non-normative sexualities and more (Lee & Sullivan, 2016) to how it is done, meaning the issues like wages, safety and health of workers. This labor oriented approach to porn productions raises the question on the content of pornographic material. The enquiry, to what extent content matters for ethical porn is answered very differently by various scholars and the industry itself.

The problem of content is mostly addressed through feminist and queer porn practices. Feminist as well as queer porn is believed to intervene into mainstream porn’s gender and sexual codes through creating representation of authentic female and queer desires (Berg, 2017) and ethical production processes are considered a must since it is believed feminist and queer politics requires ethical production (Maina, 2014; Taormino, 2013). Whereas ethical pornography supporters from the industry suggest the otherwise. For instance, Pandora Blake, running the website Dreams of Spanking, states that “Feminism is not a prerequisite when it comes to making ethical porn. Feminist porn is explicitly focused on women’s desires and sexuality. … Whereas I think it’s possible to produce male-gaze porn in an ethical and fair trade way. That means complete respect for performers, for their boundaries and consent.” (in Williams, Z., 2014, para. 11). Yet on some other platforms supporting ethical porn, it is argued that adult content should not contribute to "wider social inequalities via troublesome
post-production marketing” (“What is Ethical Porn?”, 2017, para. 4), therefore display concern over the content.

Scholars of porn studies as well demonstrate a pluralistic understanding on the content of ethical productions. Sabo (2013) believes ethical porn productions to be feminist because pornography is a genre delivering discourse on sex and gender (in Mondin, 2014). Mondin touches upon the question of content from a point of logics of economics. Mondin (2014) argues that porn productions which employ fair-trade business model potentially seek to reach out to a customer base that have been distanced to porn all together due to the lack of ethics in mainstream porn. Consequently, such productions, in accordance with the fair-trade business logic, aim to build customer confidence and therefore, content is not necessarily out of picture (Mondin, ibid.).

Interpreting these discussions as if content to be handled with at two extremes, a total disinterest in content or an obligation of content to be feminist, is highly dangerous. For this study, indifference to content is not the path to follow, in alignment with followed Foucauldian ethics that does see the practice as a whole. However, it does not mean the content should be identified feminist and/or queer. The research also calculates the possible applications of the fair-trade business model by larger entities and does not shut the doors to enterprises from outside the feminist and queer communities.

As a final remark, this study understand pornographic content on the basis of Linda Williams’ (1999) theorisation, that pornography is “in a primary desire to arouse” (p.29). There have been other definitions formed for pornography, for example by Grebowicz as “material created specifically aid in masturbating” (2013, p. 4). However limiting pornography to masturbation is argued to be narrow since sexual arousal might not only be experienced through masturbation. It is believed that definition of pornography should not dictate a specific act to gain arousal.

In the light of the theoretical framework and in accordance with the aim of research to explore online ethical porn scene, the design of research will be presented in the following chapter.
5. Methodology and Research Design

The main interest of this research is to explore online ethical porn scene, looking at how do websites in claim to be ethical communicate their pornographic content they distribute and how do such websites present themselves in regards to the idea of ethical porn.

The biggest methodological obstacle of this research was to find out a compass allowing to access the object of research, ethical porn websites. As discussed elsewhere, ethical porn is not investigated in a systematic fashion within academia. Consequently, there are a few sources and guidelines present to detect ethical porn websites in the jungle of internet. To address these methodological challenges, a structured approach that provides tools to detect below-the-radar entities and analyze their features was initially needed to conduct the research.

Developed to fill the void in the field of mapping, Voniati, Doudaki and Carpentier’s (2018) methodological guide offers a structured approach for mapping analysis. Their approach has five components that makes detecting social entities possible. Firstly, it is based upon an operational definition of the social entity in question. Secondly, it enables a population-based process to mapping. Thirdly, it employs a registration instrument customly developed for each research. Fourthly, the registered data is gathered from multiple sources. And lastly, collected information is analyzed with the use of registration instrument (Voniati et al. 2018).

The proposed mapping analysis primarily serves to researchers who map social entities below the radar (Voniati et al., 2018). Developers of this mapping analysis strongly emphasize that the methodology should not be applied without necessary modifications. As well, it is advised that the social, cultural and political context should be addressed carefully (Voniati et al., ibid.). Websites distributing pornographic content that are claimed to be ethical productions are not typically considered to be social entities as Voniati, Doudaki and Carpentier's approach describe. Nonetheless, it is argued that this approach is still legitimate to methodologically inform this research for the following reasons. Social entities, to authors,
are marked with their distinctive existence and do have sociality within themselves (Voniati et al. 2018). Websites under investigation exist in a similar fashion, that is with a unique address. Moreover, most of the fair-trade business model examples are fond requiring sort of membership to the websites, which grants sociality to some extent. In order to ensure the presence of a certain level of sociality, the research will only include websites with such membership and/or subscription options.

Tailored for ethical porn websites, the mapping approach methodologically informed the research design, especially for the first research question: “How do websites including pornographic content that claim to be ethical communicate content?” In alignment with the logic of mapping analysis, the first research question will be answered in three sub-stages. Firstly, a number of candidate websites that claim to distribute ethically produced content will be gathered through multiple sources. Secondly, ethical porn websites will be identified with the help of operational definition. Lastly, homepages of the chosen websites will be examined based on how the found content found are conveyed.

5.1. Methods Used to Answer the First Research Question

Prior to data gathering and as mapping analysis suggests, an operational definition is prepared to identify the object of the study. The aim of an operational definition is to provide a set of criteria so that the researcher can qualify social entity in question (Voniati et al., 2018). Operational definition, in other words, enables a method to determine which websites to be included. Websites who did not meet the criteria were eliminated from the scope of the research. Initially, a definition of ethical porn websites, based on the theoretical framework presented above, was formed. When structuring the definition, it was searched a) self-identification of websites to be ethical in their production and/or distribution process b) requirement of paying for porn in accordance with fair-trade business logic c) uniqueness in existence d) being a social entity in a distinctive fashion. As well, since the research is interested in online ethical porn scene, its scope was limited to productions that use internet as a mode of distribution. The definition, then, was formulated as follows:
“Ethical porn websites are described as web pages unified under a unique domain name that distributes pornographic content in exchange for money to be consumed immediately online and includes a statement showing ethical concern regarding the production and/or distribution process”.

In alignment with the definition, main criteria were determined:

- The website distributes pornographic content of any sorts.
- The website has distribution of pornographic content as one of its main activities.
- The website charges its customer for the consumption of significant amount of pornographic content it distributes.
- The website presents information on the creator(s) of pornographic content.
- The website enables online payment method(s) that allows immediate consumption.
- The website enables purchase of pornographic content by anyone over 18 years of age.
- The website offers membership and/or subscription to the website.
- The website displays ethical concern regarding the production and/or distribution of the pornographic content.
- The website has a unique domain name.

Determination of main criteria was mainly composed of breaking down the definition of ethical porn that the research operates upon. As well, it was aimed at capturing as diverse forms of ethical pornography as possible in alignment with how pornography is understood in this research. It was paid attention to avoid websites that distributes pirated content.

The main criteria works to reach out to a whole population, as the adopted mapping analysis proposes. However the research, due to limitations of time and resources, will work with a sample of websites and understands Voniati, Carpentier and Doudaki's mapping analysis as a guideline to methodologically inform the research. In order to limit the research to a sample, two precautions were taken. Firstly, some additional criteria were added to the operational definition addressing the constraints on time, financial and human resource as well as to ensure websites are up-to-date. Secondly, the number websites to be included was restraint to
100 with the application of first come first serve principle, which will be introduced in detail below. The additional criteria are as follows:

- The sufficient parts of the content on the website are in a language that could be understood by the researcher.
- The website allows the researcher to proceed to the homepage of the website without registration.
- The website includes more than three unique content presented on the homepage by the time research is conducted.
- The website includes content uploaded in the year 2018.
- The website generates enough traffic to be ranked on alexa.com
- The website does not cause any harm to the software of the computer being used for the research.

The design of the main and additional criteria served to grant credibility to the research, which is key to a trustworthy and a valid study. To establish credibility in qualitative research, it is argued that those involved in a research must be identified in an accurate way (Elo et al., 2014). After the preparation of a solid description of the research object, sampling was needed. The strategy of the sampling had a challenge that recurred throughout the whole investigation process, that is ethical porn not being studied systematically within academia thus remain below-the-radar. In order to tackle this challenge, sampling strategy was not based on generalizability. For qualitative research, to Higginbottom (2004), the sampling strategy does not necessarily rely on generalizability but should be chosen in relation the methodology and the topic (in Elo et al., 2014).

In accordance with the sampling strategy, at first a list of 100 potential ethical porn websites was composed. The candidate websites were gathered from multiple resources that provides information on ethical pornography and/or suggests ethical porn productions. The sources searched were: the search engine Google using keywords “ethical porn” and “ethical porn website”; social media platforms Twitter and Instagram with the hashtag #ethicalporn and keyword “ethical porn”, the websites www.ethical.porn, www.ethicalporn.org, the 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017 programs of Berlin International Porn Film Festival and Toronto
International Porn Festival including parts of suggested producers, directors and the Feminist Porn Awards website (http://www.feministpornawards.com/). Additionally, Vienna Porn Film Festival, held for the first time between 1st of March to 4th March 2018 in Vienna, Austria was participated. The aim of participation was to explore ethical porn websites through its network, which as well aided to gain insight on the discourse of ethical porn. Following the review of 100 websites based on the operational definition, 33 websites were identified to be ethical porn websites as perceived by this research (See Appendix I). While selecting websites, it was also paid attention to the traffic they generated to understand their outreach. The website www.alexa.com were used to check their traffic and in order to avoid changes to occur over time, the traffic of all the websites’ were looked at on the same day, March 14th 2018.

When answering the first research question, only the homepages of the qualified websites were investigated. The reason to limit the research to homepages was due to the changing nature of websites. Expectedly, websites in terms of their structure did not have much in common but their homepages. As well, homepages function like a showcase at a store thus reveal the most, compared to other pages, about a website. The research does not conclude that the reviewed part of the websites portray all the characteristics of ethical porn websites; nor claims gathered information is representative of the data present on the website.

When analyzing how content is communicated, several questions were determined for gathering data. Arguing the discourse of ethical porn would be an influence in the display of content in alignment with Foucauldian discourse theory, the choice of enquiries are believed to give away necessary clues to answer the ways content is conveyed. These questions were recorded into a registration instrument, what Voniati et al. (2018) refer to as Mapping Index Card (MIC). The authors describe the MIC as follows:

"A MIC allows to register all relevant information about the units mapped; it may include the questions that the researchers themselves have to answer, on the basis of a wide variety of data-gathering methods. In this sense, a mapping analysis can be understood as a hybrid combination of survey and qualitative analysis, wherein the researcher fills out a questionnaire with open questions, but still structured by a well-crafted form" (p. 26).
Based on the available framework, the research constructed a registration instrument composed of the following questions: i) is there a requirement of age confirmation prior to proceeding to the website? ii) is registration mandatory before proceeding to the website, iii) is there a mention of the offered payment solution, iv) are there external links provided, v) are there any collaborations stated, vi) does the website have a slogan, vii) is there an explicit mention of target audience viii) could any content types be detected ix) are there any recurring themes regarding the pornographic content, x) are there an explicit mention of the identity of content creators, xi) what are the languages being used, xii) what is the country of location of the website, xiii) who is the owner of copyright, xiv) what is the number of tabs, xv) what are the names of tabs, xvi) what is the number of categories, xvii) what are names of categories and finally xviii) are there any links provided to social media accounts.

5.2. Methods Used to Answer the Second Research Question

This part of the research was mainly informed by Foucauldian discourse analysis (Foucault, 1989) and aimed at answering the second research question: “How do ethical porn websites present themselves in regards to the idea of ethical porn?”. Since a discourse is an overarch organizing the logic of speech and thought (Foucault, 1989) and the research is after how websites incorporate the logics of ethical porn discourse, qualitative content analysis was chosen as it was the most fitting method to the study’s theoretical framework.

Quantitative content analysis, to Hsieh and Shannon (2005), shall be used when frequency is searched in written material. Whereas qualitative content analysis is an enabler of interpreting a meaning in a text and detecting how values, ideologies and power relations appear in the content (Hsieh & Shannon, ibid.). The authors also underline that qualitative content analysis capture the characteristics of language because it enables bringing forward the context present in the text. The preference of qualitative content analysis also stems from the fact that there hardly exists a Foucauldian method of analysing discourse (Hook, 2001). Rather, Foucauldian discourse theory provides a framework for and informs the choice of research method.
The textual analysis of the selected texts were first categorized and then analyzed with summative approach to qualitative analysis. As Hsieh and Shannon (2005) formulate, summative content analysis a hybrid model shaped by inductive analysis was found to be a suitable method method as it is "an attempt not to infer meaning, but, rather, to explore usage" (p. 1281). In summative approach, the categories of coding are derived from the text under scrutiny and coding is followed by interpreting the context detected throughout the content. Since the study aims at understanding the online ethical porn scene and the second research question in particular is after discovering ethical porn discourse, a deductive approach to analysis was not found suitable.

It is necessary to clarify why a sort of textual content analysis when porn websites are filled with visual content. As stated numerous times, the study is interested in exploring online porn scene through looking at how do websites communicate their content and position themselves within ethical porn discourse. Foucauldian discourse theory as well suggests that a discourse shape how things are organized and communicate. Thus, what the pornographic content is about is an indirect interest for this research. Rather than analysing the pornographic content itself, how this content is conveyed matters more to the research. Saying that, limiting qualitative analysis to textual content does not mean a discourse is only observable in texts. Taking time and resource limitations into account, it was decided not to focus on all types of content. It is believed that textual content indicates patterns of discourse the most and as well textual analysis is the most familiar research method to the researcher.

The collection of the texts were limited to the homepage and a page that is considered to give information about the website itself. Typically, such pages were named “About” or “About Us”. On some of the reviewed websites, even though serving a similar purpose, “Mission”, “Philosophy”, “How it Works”, “Our House Our Rules” were the wordings preferred instead. Alternatively, some websites have chosen to have “Frequently Asked Question” without an “About” section. Furthermore, some websites did not have an alike tab, but pages that provide information on production and/or distribution process, such as “Performers, This Link is For You!”. 
The selected texts were analyzed in three rounds, leading the analysis from inductive to the theories. Initially, in vivo coding method was applied which is mainly coding with the use of text’s language (Saldaña, 2009). Based on the raw codes derived from the content, in the second cycle it was applied multiple codes, which is referred as simultaneous coding. Lastly, to detect similarities and differences among texts, pattern coding was employed (Saldaña, ibid.). Analysis were then conducted in harmony with the theoretical framework.

6. Ethics

A good research requires a careful review of ethics. This review, as Jennings (2010) explains, can be done with two different models; through ‘compliance’ where researchers demonstrate compliance to a set of rules or ‘reflexivity-based’ model where researchers are expected to express the ethical concerns raised during the conduct of research and accordingly justify their choices. Based on the framework Jennings provides, the ethical issues raised will be addressed via reflexivity-based model.

To Behi and Nohan (1995) ethical concerns occur mostly when human are involved in the research process. This study does not include any human in the sense that Behi and Nohan refer to. It is rather a ‘desk research’ and data is gathered from already available resources. In order to sustain consistency, the decision of inclusion or exclusion of the websites made in accordance with the operational definition.

Operational definition was created in custom to serve for the purpose of the research and many websites were excluded from the matter of technicalities. For instance, not being up to date, the method of distribution they have adopted, like if the website preferred shipping over online distribution, low website traffic were some of the reasons that left websites out of the scope of the study. Other than that, there have been many websites that stated their commitment to ethical porn productions yet distributing pornographic content were not their main activity. As well, there have been ethical porn productions not having an independent website address thus not qualified for the research. Since first come first serve principle was implemented and the number of candidate websites were limited to 100, the research had to
leave numerous of websites out. It is crucial to underline that exclusion of websites does not conclude such websites to not be ethical porn websites. Nor, qualified websites are claimed to be representative of the whole ethical porn scene.

Similar to the exclusion of websites, the inclusion of the websites into the research is subjected to ethical issues. The research acknowledges its distance to the field thus its incapability to capture the complex network of ethical porn productions, their backgrounds and their practices in the industry. During the observation period prior to research, it was noticed that some websites claim others not to be feminist, gender inclusive and/or blamed them for other political and ideological reasons. However, these claims were not investigated as it is believed the research should not position itself according to the encountered opinions.

The study, after all, aims at exploring online ethical porn scene than raising an ethical discussion on the object of research. Nonetheless, the distance of the research to the field might have caused improper choices in methodology for reasons that the researcher is not aware of.

### 7. Study Results

Out of 100 candidate websites, 33 of them were qualified to be an ethical porn website as understood by this study. While the remaining 67 were excluded from the scope of the study. The reasons for exclusions were diverse, some websites were disqualified because of the limitations of the research, some due to technicalities. Although the findings in relation to the disqualified websites will not be used when the first research question is answered, it still provides crucial and relevant information about the online ethical porn scene.

To begin with, 5 of the websites were eliminated because of technicalities, they were not up to date or not in a language understood by the researcher or launched the virus protection program on the computer research was conducted. In terms of the latter, it is not possible to conclude whether the website in question consciously spread virus, yet it was decided that continuing searching on the website might be hazardous. This point is particularly interesting because the reviewed literature and information on ethical porn discourse about its business
model have rarely mentioned the rights and safety of the other side of the purchase, that being the customers.

Another finding was in relation to the financial independency of the ethical porn productions using internet as a mode of distribution. It was realized that some examples of pornography productions did not have a website on their own, yet still follow fair-trade business model via alternative means. For instance, 2 of the websites did not have an independent domain name but rather was a part of a website that offers payment solution, named Patreon. Their choice of payment solution enables productions to have their own page under Patreon. Operating under another websites’ domain signals that small enterprises with relatively less capital may be more vulnerable to the payment conditions. As well, they might rely more heavily on community support than their counterparts as reaching to the particular production necessitates information on how to navigate on Patreon’s website. This alone supports how Maina (2014) and Mondin (2014) characterize ethical porn productions with fair-trade business model, which is dependent on supporting communities. It is noteworthy to mention, there have been other ethical porn websites using Patreon without necessarily being hosted on it.

Another major reason for elimination reason was related to how pornographic content was distributed. 15 of the websites did not include pornographic content to be consumed immediately, meaning they offered post delivery. Among them, some did not include pornographic content at all. For instance one of the websites provided free photographs online and a paid magazine that is distributed through shipping. Other than that, some of the websites directed visitors to another website for pornographic consumption. This cluster of websites declared their commitment to ethical production yet did not use internet as a mode of distribution. This result illustrates that the scope of online ethical porn scene is quite larger than what this research will cover.

During data gathering, it was noticed that a producer of one of the candidate websites was claimed to harass their performers in a systematic fashion. Numerous performers shared their experiences online, how they were tricked into shoots that they did not consent to or were not informed about. The research does not aim to go after such claims and investigate them
deeply. However by no means this research dares to include a website that is claimed to act as opposed to the will of performers. As well, performers being forced to enact sex is fundamentally against the idea of ethical pornography. The accidentally gained information is a contribution to the theoretical framework even before analysing the findings in the sense that self-identification to be ethical should not be taken for granted. Similar to this, one of the websites displayed scenes and/or pictures of celebrities without declaring any consent or copyright. The candidate website was not only not ethical but also was an illegal business. The inclusion of the website to potentially be an ethical porn production was through one of the adult industry business awards. This extraordinary example displayed being awarded by well-known institutions does not guarantee ethical production either, in fact in this case prove the exact opposite. Hence let alone self-identifications, recommendation of websites to be ethical in regards to ethical porn practices should not be taken for granted.

Determining whether the website is an ethical porn website required self-identification. This meant, a statement, declaring the website included ethically produced pornographic content or including ethical concerns regarding the process, was searched. Considering the time limitation and to ensure consistency, such statements were searched only on the homepages and tabs implying information about the website to be found. 47 of the candidate websites did not explicitly stated that they were ethical porn websites and/or mentioned ethical concerns regarding the production and/or distribution process. What is more, few of the websites were mentioned to be ethical porn websites in other platforms, such as interviews, news articles or more, yet this self-identification was missing on their own websites. It was unfortunately beyond the resources of this research to go through interviews given to third parties, or gather broader data from the websites in regards to the ethical concerns of the websites over pornography production.

Lastly, the elimination process raised several issues about ethical pornography that were not explicitly addressed in the reviewed literature nor foreseen prior to data gathering process. The first issue was how to approach to productions run by self-employed activists, performers or sex workers, on which very little was said in the literature. As well, many websites run by individuals included content created in collaboration with others. What responsibilities, commitments and procedures are born out of a contract held between individuals are seldom
addressed. Another issue was the scope of pornographic material. Although the research operates upon a clear definition of pornographic content and does not intend to change its definition in between chapters, some candidate websites pushed the limits of pornography in unexpected ways. For instance a website run by an artist, http://stephaniesarley.com/, on which is found recreated sex acts and genitalia using fruits, vegetables, honey, pastry and more other food. Acts depicted resemble greatly to sexual acts of humans. The works of the artist are well recognized by the feminist, queer and ethical porn communities as observed. However the artist does not claim to produce pornographic content hence the website is not included to the study. Whereas it is compelling to claim the content is not pornographic. As Foucault claims, what is arousing is subjective and tied to spatiality (in Williams 1999). Thus subjectivity is an important concept in the definition of pornography as how content is presented, at which platforms, using what words or visuals might change from one person to another and over time (Durham, 2016). If Stephanie Sarley’s work can be perceived as pornographic by some, what does the ethical porn discourse offer in cases where are there non-human actors involved is in need of discovery.

7.1. How do websites including pornographic content that claim to be ethical communicate content?

The findings to answer the first research question display a complex picture of ethical porn websites and how do they communicate their content. To enable readers to follow the findings, the analysis of the data will be presented in sub-categories.

7.1.1. Basic Information of the Websites

To begin from the rankings, it is clear that websites differ greatly in the amount of they attract. Given the fact that the ethical porn website with the most traffic was globally ranked as high as 1420th on alexa.com by the time data was gathered, to what extent the ethical porn websites can be seen as a part of alternative porn scene remains as a serious issue to be stressed. Mainstream porn is defined differently by various authors, some highlighting the aspect of outreach Rosewarne (2017) while others stress the aesthetics and narratives (Berg,
2017; Maddison, 2013). It can be speculated that this amount of traffic signals a break from alternative porn scene or the aesthetic and narratives of alternative scene becoming more and more mainstream. Either way, Maina (2014) and Mondin (2014)’s projections about porn productions deploying fair-trade business model to rely on community support falls short in cases for the websites as popular as this.

When it comes to the country of locations, 24 out of 33 websites provided information on their address. USA was the most popular location for ethical porn websites, which not overall surprising given the dominance of American experience on the sphere of pornography (Maina, 2014; Tsaliki & Chronaki, 2016). Yet although American based websites were the largest group, majority of the websites were non-American. This alone does not necessarily mean that the dominance of American context and experience is demolished given the superiority in the number of websites located in USA. Rather, it illustrates that ethical porn is not a discussion only valid for American experience anymore.

The used languages show even more diversity than country of origins. Other than English, 7 other languages, German, French, Spanish, Dutch, Italian, Japanese and Chinese, were detected to be used by 18 websites among 33 websites. Operating a website just in one language may not be the true wish of a website but be in relation with the limits of their resources, which is typically the case for fair-trade productions (Maina, 2014). Translating every single piece of content necessitates the website to have proper infrastructure. For websites that are located in a country where English is not a formal language, not having content in English may attract less traffic, thus be less profitable. The almost mandatory usage of English for a wide outreach shall be recognized, especially for websites located in non-English speaking countries. Whereas the existence of the variety of languages display the will to even reach a greater audience.
7.1.2. Communication of Content In Relation to Business Model

How ethical porn productions under investigation maintain their business was one of the main focus of the content display. The business model constituting a large portion of the content found on the homepage was not surprising as the discourse of ethical porn is fed with paying for porn consumption (Lee, 2015; Lee & Sullivan, 2016) and fair-trade business (Maina, 2014; Mondin, 2014; Scott, 2016; Wilkinson, 2017). For this the further three sections, the offered payment solutions, target audience and collaborations, relations with communities and outer world, are detected as distinctive sub-categories when conveying the content on the homepages in relation to business model.

To start with offered payment solutions, only 10 websites have been noticed to provide information on their cooperation with relevant companies. Epoch, CCBill, Paypal, Dwolla and Patreon were payment solution companies detected on the homepages of the websites. What was interesting to notice that Paypal to collaborate with a porn website, given their previous decisions to ban working with porn productions (Lee & Sullivan, 2016). However this might be an exceptional case thus not reflect the overall experience of PayPal's relationship with porn productions.

Who is targeted by the websites were found to be a central matter to the presentation of content. Therefore, two different parts on the homepages were zoomed in: the slogans and if found, statements targeting certain audiences. To begin with, slogans were found on 16 of the websites used for the several purposes: to reveal features of pornographic content, producer of content, nationality of the website, ie. British, quality of the content, description of the performers, description of the website and directly describing target audience. Another indicator to grasp the targeted audience were the direct statements existing on the homepages. Call outs were addressed to “queer people”, “women”, “women and men”, “BDSM and fetish community” and “all variations of the gender known as woman”.
When slogans and audience targeting statements are thought together, it is seen that websites have chosen to mention specific communities or identities, like queer people, BDSM and fetish community. The emphasis on communities or identities may be interpreted as a result of fair-trade business logics, which requires close relation between producers and communities for sustainability (Mondin, 2014). Another reading would be the websites’ intentions to differentiate themselves from others and aiming at a niche market, which is also an indicator of fair-trade business model (Mondin, ibid). On the other hand, the fact that the other half avoided targeting specific audiences raises the question whether ethical porn discourse is being dismissed or not.

What was interesting to notice was the weight given to collaborations, relations with communities and outer world on the homepages. The nature of relations displayed were twofold: one was the external links provided that direct visitors to another website and the other one was the collaborations stated via allocating space for third parties without giving links. Majority of the websites, 24 of them to be precise, have provided external links for a variety of reasons. For example in the case of virtual reality websites, most of the external links present were to direct visitors to websites of technically competent devices. Additional way of using external links was in relation to websites’ ownership status. To illustrate, 4 of the websites have used external links as they were either owned by or own another website. Providing links were as well due to business partnerships, namely Affiliate Programs. to introduce briefly, an Affiliate Program is share of website traffic with other websites once the former is given space on the latter. When a website becomes an affiliate with another, it is paid a commission so website traffic is channeled (Pink and White, 2018). Apart from these, external links were given to assert the adult nature of content with “Restricted to Adults” label (www.rtlabel.org), to offline activities led by the website, for instance BDSM practices in private sessions, and to show political affiliates, such as Pay For Your Porn Movement (www.payforyourporn).

It was expected websites to forthright visitors to other websites that are an ally to ethical porn discourse, yet it was still interesting to observe websites sparing specific space for these connection. Under tabs named like “Links”, “We Recommend”, “Links we Love”, “Likewise”, porn websites, porn film festivals, sex blogs, books written upon the topic of
ethical porn and more were present. Whereas in the case of websites run by individuals, the provided links were usually the productions in which that individual took part. It is not known whether allocating this space is a result of a business agreement, or in the case of individual websites, a method of self promotion. Anyhow, the names of the tabs indicate that websites aim at making the visitor acquainted with the idea of ethical porn and its examples. Regardless of their commercial situation, significant amount of ethical porn websites are detected to lead one to other websites, which can be understood as another example to community support under the logics of fair-trade economics (Maina, 2014; Mondin, 2014; Wilkinson, 2017).

Apart from the above mentioned associations, some websites announced their collaboration with projects, like Fucking Against Fascism, and their support to political causes, for instance to Free Speech Coalition. These sort of shout-outs do add a dimension to what Maina (2014) and Mondin (2014) explain as a reliance on communities by highlighting the relations among the producers themselves for a greater cause.

The most frequent form of collaborations were the ones that contribute the websites’ visibility and credibility, namely the awards won or nominations to awards at festivals and awards ceremonies together with being in the Fall of Fame of adult industry rewarding organizations. Those websites have also included the title of the awards they have won or being nominated to. Some of the nomination categories, like “Best Alternative Website”, “Excellence in Alternative Erotica” or “Indie Porn Icon”, gives hints of a break from the mainstream porn scene’s narratives and aesthetics. Apart from the adult industry awards like XBiz, AVN Awards, in which websites compete regardless of their genres, there also are porn film festivals or awards that are known be genre-specific, Feminist Porn Awards and Toronto International Porn Film Festival are to name a few.

Media outlets were given a similar significance to that of awards and nominations when considered the wide allocation of space. The logos of newspapers, online news platforms, magazines, journals and media productions at a broad display on the homepages if the websites in question have appeared on them. Interestingly enough, most of the media outlets were typically mainstream media channels, such as The Guardian, BBC News, The
Telegraph or Washington Post. Additionally, the logos of fashion and lifestyle magazines, such as Elle, Cosmopolitan, Vogue, GQ; online news platforms having an extensive outreach such as Vice News, journals like Forbes and Rolling Stones and media productions including HBO and Netflix were caught on the reviewed websites.

All in all, the communication of the information regarding the brand and business model of the websites is in perfect alignment with Foucauldian discourse theory. Organization and dissemination of information were structured under the logics of fair-trade business model, as proved in the space allocated for collaborators and directly speaking to the communities represented. Saying that, how ethical porn found itself a place in the literature was not at all times mirrored in practice. Although there were numerous indicators of websites under scrutiny to belong to the alternative porn scene, were there as much signals suggesting the otherwise. As well, the findings revealed that ethical porn, even at the level of informative content of websites, is much more diverse than the literature cover. From inclusion of non-human elements to productions individually led, the multi-dimensional character of ethical porn examples also forces one to reconsider the boundaries of pornography.

7.1.3. Communication of Pornographic Content

The convey of pornographic content was another crucial focus point on the reviewed homepages. This section deals with how and which type of pornographic content is segmented, labeled and distributed.

The investigated websites had a vast variety of type of content possessing pornographic elements, including texts, audio and real time broadcasts. The diversity of content types was not only limited to visual material understood in a traditional sense. Books, journals, podcasts, illustrations and even cartoons were examples of pornographic material found during research. The fact that there exists a mixed nature of content types is not a deviation from carrying pornographic bits, since pornography is understood according to Williams’ (1999) formulation as any material created to aid arousal. Nonetheless, the difference in content types expand the scope of ethical porn greatly since each form constructed through
distinct processes and with the involvement of various stakeholders. Linda Williams addresses this issue by differentiating visual and textual pornography. She defines pornographic films as “visual (and sometimes aural) representation of living, moving bodies engaged in explicit, usually unfaked, sexual acts with a primary intent of arousing viewers” (Williams, 1999, p.30). Williams separates film and written pornography from each other as the former includes sexual act as a performance (ibid.). Her separation, in other words, is based on the notion of performance notion. The overall emphasis on visual content both in the literature and within the ethical communities helps little to detect how ethical values would apply to productions where performance lacks.

Another interesting point was the fact same type of content was not named identically by the websites, most notably in visual material. Majority of them laid stress on the quality of the visual content, which, according to Edelman, is a strategy to have an edge over the free versions (2009). Wording also matters when artistic quality is stressed. To illustrate, preferring “film” or “movie” over “video” can be understood as an implication of artistic value. As well, content including non-human elements like cartoons, illustrations shed a light on another aspect of artistry involved in pornography.

Additionally, there are numerous types of content that are not necessarily pornographic but widely used in support of the pornographic material on the homepages. Blog posts, for example, were frequently noticed in this manner. Even though the content of blog posts are not known, what inferred from the headlines illustrate that visitors are not treated as mere porn consumers but as potential allies to ethical porn. They are expected to invest time and effort in exploring the website’s point of view on pornography. This is not at all surprising given the fact that the logics of fair-trade business model suggest a relationship of sustainable support than consumption (Maina, 2014; Mondin, 2014; Wilkinson, 2017). Furthermore, some websites, especially the one specialized in certain type of sexual practices like BDSM, offered offline gatherings. Offline activities might be both read as additional source of income and an effort for building a sense of community.

Another point to mention in terms of content types is the instances of continuity. Handful of websites, like erikalust.com, crashpadseries.com, makelovenotporn.tv, do present some of
their content in series. The relationality between different material comes across as a narrative than pieces of pornographic material uploaded to a website. Presenting the content through telling a story or via certain concepts can be a part of branding, yet is a feature matured enough not to neglect within ethical porn scene.

Categorization of pornographic content too offer a lot regarding the convey of content. First of all, it is necessary to explain what is meant by categories. ‘Categories’ refers to how pornographic materials were grouped on the homepages. Categorization with keywords should not be only understood as a solution enabling navigation through the content. Used in the form of tags, keywords appear as the smallest bit of information briefing pornography. Tags not only separate fantasies from one another, but also link categories to each other (Mazières et al., 2014). By doing so, keywords show “how hegemonic desires provide a path to other desires, and how these other desires can be subsumed in hegemonic ones (Mazières et al., 2014, p. 81). Keywords may have multiple purposes, from defining practices being portrayed to ethnic or cultural characteristics of performers, from revealing sex toys being used and more (Mazières et al., 2014).

Among the reviewed websites, keyword was the least preferred way for grouping content. The unpopularity of keywords among ethical websites may be perceived as a break from a mainstream pornography where insensitive language and normative usages of tags define fantasies. While at the same time, it might be in relation the technical capacity or to the volume of the website. Keywords have proven to be efficient in organizing content mostly for websites having large amount of data (Mazières et al., 2014). Thus, avoiding keywords might as well be in relation to resources or to the amount of data contained.

Some websites have chosen to categorize content based on their types, meaning different content types were presented under distinct titles. Videos, films, high quality videos, photographs are some of the examples to names of separators being used. This rather basic usage is often combined with other ways of categorization, through giving information on the content creators or the date of the content creation. For example, different websites have separated content with titles like “POC Porn People of Color in Adult Films”, “Girl-girl”, or “Real World Couples”. Titles often were visibly chosen to be different than mainstream
porn’s wording to define performers. While some others’ language adaptation, such as girl-girl, are considered to be a label seem to be ‘lesbian’ yet in fact being pornography produced by men and for men instead of a lesbian audience (Matebeni, 2012). Therefore it is not only the way of grouping content but rather the reference given with the choice of words that matters.

Lastly, description of producers were detected to be one of the key features of content display. Approximately half of the websites, 16 out of 33, included a description of the content producer. 4 of the websites, interestingly enough, presented the personal information about the producers, mentioning their physical appearance, background in profession, hobbies, age and even nationality. Some of the personal information also included gender and/or sexual identity yet it was still communicated in a personalized fashion. To explain better with an example, it was said ‘the producer X is themself queer’ than ‘produced by queer’. The remaining 12 websites provided a description of the producer in a non-personalized way. The descriptions varied greatly, “woman”, “non-binary”, “queer”, “ladies”, “relationship anarchist”, “lesbian”, “butch”, “in-between”, “shy” are only a few of the examples. One of the websites have even included why gender identity mattered for them “we have learned that women sexually express themselves more freely when another girl is behind the camera” (Yanks VR, 2018). Being personalized or not, significant amount of the websites expectedly made content producers visible on the homepage.

As can be seen, communication of pornographic content did not differ greatly from and supported the findings of how information on websites were conveyed. Similarly, the diversity of the types of pornographic content websites challenged the narrowed scope of ethical porn. So far, labor pornography, as explained by Lee and Sullivan (2016) deals with the labor of performers. Finding out content like illustrations, cartoons and podcasts invite for rethinking the variety of labor behind the content production. When it comes to presentation and grouping of pornographic content, the results once again demonstrated to be in synch with Foucauldian discourse theory. Visitors not being perceived as customers but allies and the very visible information present regarding the content clearly are ways to communicate content informed by ethical porn discourse. Nevertheless, the complex relationship of the websites to the logics of the mainstream porn scene recurred as well in this round of analysis.
Adopting the approaches, wordings and ways of grouping content of mainstream pornography, crucial amount of websites seem to depart from the alternative porn scene.

Answering the second research question, the next chapter will look at the positionings of websites in relation to the idea of ethical porn. In the light of the previous findings, following section will go beyond content communication and will try to discover the discourse of ethical porn in between texts.

7.2. “How do ethical porn websites present themselves in regards to the idea of ethical porn?”.

Performing textual analysis informed by Foucauldian discourse theory, this part answers the second research question. Prior to analyzing the findings, it is vital to grasp what were the patterns recognized how do the websites position themselves in regards to the idea of ethical porn.

To begin with, both the amount and the depth of the statements referring to their production processes were not the same on all the websites. Some of them limited their statements to the abstract use of values without necessary elaboration. For instance, less than half of the websites only stated that their content were produced with respect without mentioning what they understand from respect or how respect is reflected on their business. While the others, have deliberately explained their production processes and their business model. There of course were websites in between, which express their commitment to ethical porn productions with certain justifications or providing reasons, yet were not necessarily transparent about their production processes.

Another pattern noticed was in relation to the adopted language. It was exceptionally interesting that there were more websites that did not use the word ‘ethical’ than those injected ‘ethical’ as a word to their texts. It is not intended to claim that websites lacking the word ‘ethical’ do not operate in accordance with the logics of discourse. On the contrary, they still follow fair-trade business model, organize and disseminate their content accordingly
and display their commitment to ethical production process, though with different wording. Still, the rigid division yields to a non-cohesive language among ethical porn websites.

Noteworthy to mention before proceeding further, websites differed vastly in the nature of their business despite all were following fair-trade business model and its logics. For instance, a few of the websites were distributing amateur content uploaded by users, while some others were run by individuals or distributed content produced by numerous of production companies. Consequently, the intensity of what is mentioned in relation to business model varied greatly.

Once the texts were coded and further grouped in the search for ethical porn discourse, it was ended up with two main categories: business model and production process. Findings, hence, will be analyzed in accordance with the two appeared categories.

7.2.1. Business Model

In accordance with the results of first research question, business model were found to be one of two main clusters of issues touched upon throughout the texts. All of the websites required payment for the consumption of pornographic content, yet described their businesses with different characteristics, from fair-trade to profit sharing, from do-it-yourself to operating on the grassroots level, barter system and more. The characteristics altered based on the nature of the business model, for instance websites accepting pornographic content uploaded by users stressed that those who upload content would earn ongoing payment as the content was consumed. Share of created value, including the principle of ongoing payment, was one of the most highlighted matters, whether the websites distribute amateur content or not.

Equal pay and equal working opportunities were mentioned as a component of the business ethics, though by a very small number of websites. Equal pay might evoke gender equality, yet in the case of ethical porn websites it refers to paying the same amount of money to performers regardless of their experience in the industry, sexual identity, race or any other
reason. Though small in number, these websites demonstrate a break from mainstream porn’s business practices, where people of color earn less than their counterparts (Berg, 2017).

As a prerequisite, all websites qualified for this research are expected to charge money for the consumption of pornographic content. When the fair-trade model was explained, significant amount of websites conveyed this through laying stress on the responsibility of the consumer. Although found scarcely, some websites have brought the affordability aspect into the picture and declared their intentions to keep their prices at a level considering all classes.

Finding out labor practices determined in relation to and informed by economic model clearly supports Scott (2016) as well as Lee and Sullivan (2016), both of who claim logics of economy shape the labor conditions. The mechanisms of discourse theory, as predicted, are observed to be present in introductory texts. It was, nonetheless, met with surprise class perspective to arise, which paves the way for a fresh area of discussion for ethical porn productions. As well, awareness of affordability from a class perspective seem to mismatch the neo-liberal tendencies that are believed to be present in the practices of ethical porn revealing labor (Berg, 2017), at least at a level of discourse.

The qualitative analysis as well illustrated that a significant amount of websites have presented themselves to be different than others and unique in how they do what they do. The claimed difference was articulated with websites positioning themselves against the ‘adult industry’ or ‘mainstream porn industry’ since they were believed to have certain fallacies. The expression of fallacies included adult industry being involved in human trafficking and exploitation, free online content and piracy running creators out of business or making them gain less rewards, categorizations of content using a language not thoughtful of trans people and people of color and more. When the findings of the first research question thought in relation to mainstream porn scene, these statements suggest ethical productions’, at least those who explicitly mention porn industry’s challenges, loyalty to alternative porn scene. Whereas, continuous efforts of a significant amount of websites to outreach more and more people can be read as ethical porn scene’s will to become mainstream without being a part of already existing mainstream pornography that is found to be very problematic. The problems attached to mainstream porn were noticed to be mostly in relation to its aesthetics. Aesthetics
of mainstream argued to be ‘degrading to female pleasure’, ‘stereotypical’, ‘not inclusive of
different sexualities’, ‘have unsophisticated narratives’, ‘being unpleasant’ and ‘targeting
while male audience’. The formulation of how mainstream porn scene was not well-perceived
also gives clue on the previously raised question about ethical porn scene’s relationship with
the mainstream. A weight on aesthetics shows that mainstream porn scene is understood in
relation to its aesthetics and narratives, as Berg (2017) and Maddison (2013) formulate.
Therefore, outreach seem to not matter alone for understanding the reviewed ethical porn
websites’ perception of mainstream.

As well, a great majority of the websites were observed to build themselves as an alternative
to their counterparts through offering something unique. For almost most of them, the
uniqueness was presented as equal to 'realness', or as the literature informs, to authenticity.
Those who address to authenticity in their texts, without an exception, understood it as a
matter of content. None of the websites made their visitors walk through the labor process of
creating content to reveal working conditions. Recalling Berg (2017) and Scott (2016),
presentation of authenticity only in synonyms with content might hide labor behind and/or
create misconception about the actual practice of labour. In this regard, Berg’s (2017)
projections are supported in the sense that labour is made visible as long as it serves for the
authenticity of content.

Similarly, autonomy of the workers were expressed through websites positioning themselves
as being different than others or having unique qualities. Regarding the autonomy, two points
were noticed to cast a new light on the matter. First one was workers being understood as
broadly as possible. Despite being described with different words, websites mentioned by
granting more autonomy to performers over their work, providing all the stakeholders
necessary skills and resources. Secondly, autonomy was approached as a necessity for
producers, performers and workers to strengthen themselves and finally, change the scene of
adult industry. This scarce blend of business model with merits carry the notion of autonomy
away from being only about worker’s control over performance (Berg, 2017) and transforms
it into a path to successful career path. Some websites, accordingly, attracted attention to the
hardships to be possibly experienced by newly emerging directors, producers, artists as they
lacked information. To meet these needs, websites offered guidance to the newbies in the
business. It was already observed that collaborations among ethical porn productions to be at the forefront of content display. Yet textual analysis revealed a more grift network of cooperation perpetuating the logics of business model to inform labor conditions, as suggest by Scott (2016) and Lee and Sullivan (2016).

Relations with users constituted another crucial aspect of business model as found out in the textual analysis. What came across as a strong concern in this relation was the notion of security. There were numerous criteria organizing the relationship between the website and its users. For instance, assurance of privacy of personal data, not issuing unauthorized billing and responsive customer service were some of the issues touched upon. Other than these, software production, providing a spam and virus free service were other promises given by the websites. Not only protecting the customers from unwanted attacks to their privacy or devices, a pleasant user experience was also presented as a value by some websites. Since the functioning of the business model does not rely upon advertisements, pop-ups covering the great amount of the device screen was advertised as a plus. Once again to resort to Edelman (2009), a detailed explanation of customer relations can be thought in relation to winning an edge over free websites, who are found to be chosen by people to avoid their personal data to be stored and/or being tracked.

The relationships with the communities and with the outer world was a noteworthy category regarding the business model. Websites demonstrating political motivations underlined that the distance them and their communities were as little as possible. For instance the website Queer Porn TV (ttp://queerporn.tv/) positioned itself to be grassroots and operate by and for their communities. Queer Porn TV sets a great example of what Maina, 2014) and Mondin (2014) mean by fair-trade businesses need to gather communities around values to grant sustainable financial support.

If to shift focus from communities to the outer world, many websites were noticed to collaborate with or donate to non-governmental organizations, movements and festivals. While some of these projects were relatively more related to pornography, such as supporting free speech against censorship or organizations working on AIDS, there were also human rights organizations, like Amnesty International, whose area of work is greater than adult
industry. As well, it was realized that porn film festivals and events alike have given great emphasis by the websites, which was also observed in the communication of content. Some of the websites were born thanks to the influence of the festivals and networks. As similar to the results of the first research questions, festivals, especially if any awards were won or if the website was nominated, ensured credibility to the websites. The findings of both research questions suggest that festivals, awards and alike activities are strong institutions contributing to ethical porn productions.

The findings of textual analysis regarding the business model were mostly in support of the theoretical framework. The labour conditions, as claimed in the texts, were constituted under the logics of economics (Scott, 2016; Lee & Sullivan, 2016) as seen in statements on equal pay, ongoing payment and shared values. In a more general sense, the information on business model were noticed to be fed by ethical porn discourse. The autonomy of the performers as well as the producers and workers were described as a priority to the business. Moreover, the nature of relationships with supporter communities and the outer world were explained again in accordance with what discourse theory suggests. In fact, such relations were observed to refer to a more complex and a broader network than the literature covers. Porn film festivals, industry awards and events alike were at a central importance for the credibility of the websites. The relationships with the customers, on the other hand, were mainly devoted to provide them advantages over free alternates.

The results of the qualitative content analysis was informative on how online ethical porn scene is related to mainstream pornography. While the findings of the first question highlighted a controversy about websites affiliation with mainstream industry, the textual analysis suggested that websites under scrutiny do not perceive mainstream pornography in terms of its outreach and rather challenge its aesthetics and narratives. In other words, websites, who find the messages of mainstream examples problematic, did not show any intend to remain below-the-radar regarding the amount of people they reach.

The notion of autonomy was expressed only in relation to the realness of the depicted sexual acts. As Berg (2017) warns, making labor visible as long as it is compatible with the ethical porn discourse is hazardous for hiding labor or to create an illusion about the work.
environment. Saying that, the scope of autonomy was observed to expand beyond the performers and include workers and producers as stakeholders of the porn business.

Before proceeding further, it is necessary to recall that what is inferred above is limited to those elaborating their perception of ethical porn. About half of the other websites touched upon the idea of ethical porn only superficially in claim to prove their ethical production process, which will be discussed in detail in the following part, and did not demonstrate further devotion to the idea of ethical pornography. Therefore what is inferred from the texts should not be generalized to all the sample.

**7.2.2. Production Process**

Statements about the production process constitute another cluster and they appeared to relate to several notions, one of them being the work environment. The conditions on set and the general environment was one of the most stressed features regarding the production process. However the way production process was stressed mostly followed either of the paths: using ethical concerns with transparently describing the process or mentioning ethical concerns at an abstract level without referring to actual process. Examples to the latter included words like “respectful”, “at a human level”, “comfortable”, “safe” or “ethical”, yet lacked explanation about what those merits refer to in practice. In fact, one of the websites claimed they offered “ethical wages” without specifying the range of payment or whatever ‘ethical wage’ means. Therefore, what work environment and conditions are like was left to the imagination of the reader.

Apart from that, there was a strong emphasis on the emotional aspect of work environment noticed in the words like “fun”, “people loving what they do”, “having good time during shooting”. Enjoying work, as mentioned before, can be both seen as a legacy of Sex Wars due to which ethical porn productions seek ways to detach themselves from anti-porn feminist discourse (Scott, 2016) or as an outcome of neo-liberal economics behind which labor processes are hidden (Berg, 2017; Scott, 2016). Lee and Sullivan (2016) interferes right in this point saying both enjoying and not enjoying sex work is possible if sex work is seen as
an occupation. Nonetheless, since websites following a path that lacks depth and transparency in the way production processes are expressed do not go beyond those words, it is not easy to speculate on the validity of either ends.

Mentioning of values without elaboration was criticized by one of the reviewed websites, www.domai.com, on which it is stated that they treat their members with respect. They explicitly underline that respectful treatment is not a “marketing technique masking something we’re not”. When it comes to marketability of the ethical porn, another website took the exact opposite position from www.domai.com. The website www.troublefilms.com advised users, who upload their own pornographic content, to prepare additional documents like behind the scenes photos, interviews, a letter of consent, testing copies or “anything from your process is incredibly helpful to me and can be good for marketing your work”. While materials like a letter of consent or testing copies is to convey the consensual production process hence in accordance with labor pornography, it is clear that such material will also serve for marketing purposes.

The emerging second pattern, where websites elaborate how they understand ethical porn discourse and how it is practiced, was explanatory of production process at each stage. Given the complex nature of businesses, websites have expectedly shed light on different aspects of their production process. For instance, websites accepting user upload mainly provided information on methods of creating content, terms of approving uploaded content, payment conditions and more. In fact, most websites accepting amateur content stated the exact amount of payment and ongoing payment, which borns out of created value principle.

Additionally, most of the websites, on which this pattern is noticed, politically motivated the practice of their production process and overall their involvement in pornography. Accordingly, the issues touched upon in regards to production process were found to go beyond labor. To illustrate, the website www.indiepornrevolution.com warned their visitors to respect the pronouns of performers and stated that they would ban the visits of those in violation. Another politically rooted value was about cultural appropriation. Being against cultural appropriation, the same website stated that people who embody mohawks, dreadlocks or similar styles in a disrespectful way would not be casted.
When it comes to casting, the most frequently appeared notion was inclusiveness and being against discrimination. Inclusive approach meant that casting is open for any performer with any body size, gender identity, sexuality, disabilities and more. Inclusiveness comes into the picture not as a casting attitude but as an overall approach to business. The grassroots websites have expressed that they share their resources, for example their studios or their website, as a distribution point for other producers, directors, performers and communities. Such websites also offered advantages to specific to their networks. For instance, two of the websites grant lifetime membership to their performers. Websites on which the pornographic content is revolved around the practices of non-mainstream sexualities were noted to offer assistance in practice of sexualities through guidelines, offline events and more. Sharing resources, in case these websites, even exceeded the boundaries of their communities. To illustrate, one website offered their location as a space for public to gather in the greater good of benefiting local communities.

The examples to the second pattern seem to support Foucauldian understanding of ethics in the sense that practice and ontological condition of ethics constitute a whole (Foucault, 1997). In other words, it was observed that application of ethics were not limited to labor conditions but shaped the overall practice at least on the basis of claims. As well, and in accordance with the wholeness of logics of Foucauldian ethics, political motivations were present in the reviewed texts.

The rights of workers, from performers to crew, have appeared to be one the most central issues addressed in relation to production process when textual analysis was performed. The presence of labor rights alone strengthens the validity of labor pornography as described by Lee and Sullivan (2016). Sexual health was one of the most frequently appeared topics in relation to labor rights. Methods to ensure sexual health of performers were noted to be numerous. Initially, the results of mandatory Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) testing were shared amongst the performers. Once being informed, performers then choose to use protection or not.
Labor rights were also portrayed through the safety of the workers. To ensure safety at work, few websites declared that they meet the requirements of administrative bodies on occupational safety requirements in USA, such as OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health). Interestingly, payment to workers were often conceptualized as a matter of business or a stage of production process but rather as a labor right. Similarly, professional treatment at work as well as well and fair payment to performers were conceptualized as a right of workers.

To go back to the first emerging pattern, were there websites that did not stress labor rights at all. Rather, the attractiveness, the beauty and the talent of the performers were highlighted. Some even stated to be proud to handpick their performers. As a response to such positions, www.domai.com stated that their “models and photographers are not just a ‘resource’ or ‘the talent’”.

Last but not least, the notion of consent appeared to be central concept to production process. Consent was not understood only as narrow as performers approving their role and practices to enact. For example, www.crashpadseries.com mentioned that negotiation of boundaries between performers and directors, informing crew on such boundaries are to sustain consensual production process.

The findings on the production process, which appeared as one of the main clusters of ethical porn discourse during content analysis, strongly underlines the division between ethical porn websites which make use of the idea of ethical porn detached from the actual practice and those operating under the logics of ethical porn. The first group of websites not only superficially resort to the idea of producing content ethically, but also avoid providing any information about their production practice. Whereas the second group of websites demonstrate alignment with ethical porn discourse through providing information on their production process. Stress on sexual health, consent, labor rights, fair payment shows that labor is put in center within production process. As well, the fact that political considerations shape the how production is shaped and maintained addresses to an understanding of ethics that is not separated on the basis of ontology and practice.
8. Conclusion

The idea of producing pornographic content ethically has emerged in 2010s thanks to allowances of Web 2.0 and is met with increasing attention as the days pass. Despite the growing interest, little is said upon. Realizing this gap, the research aimed at exploring ethical porn scene hoping to contribute to the field of digital media at the intersection of pornography studies.

On the way to this discovery, the study answered two research questions: “How do websites including pornographic content that claim to be ethical communicate content?” and “How do ethical porn websites present themselves in regards to the idea of ethical porn?” In the light of Foucault’s (1989) discourse theory, structural mapping analysis developed for below-the-radar social entities (see. Voniati et al., 2018) and qualitative content analysis were performed, respectively.

In regards to communication of pornographic content, the findings suggest three important things worth underlying. First and foremost, fair-trade business model, which constitutes ethical porn’s logics of economics (Lee & Sullivan, 2016; Scott, 2016; Wilkinson, 2017), is a fundamental factor in the organization and communication of content. Secondly, the examples of online ethical pornography is very diverse in terms of content type and actors being involved in the production process. This diversity pushes the boundaries of pornography by questioning what makes a content pornographic or non-pornographic. As well, in cases where there is the presence of non-human elements in pornographic content and is there lack of performance in the creation process, the already scarce literature is without answers. Thirdly, there is a clear-cut division among the reviewed websites in their reliance on discourse. While there are websites who convey their content compatible with Foucauldian discourse theory, there also are others superficially relate to the idea of ethical porn only for promotion.
When it comes to websites positioning themselves according to the idea of ethical porn, there were two remarkable results to lay stress on. Firstly, the results of content analysis demonstrates two clusters of ethical porn discourse - business model and production process, labor being a central focus to the latter. Secondly, as well speaking to the findings of previous research questions, not all websites operate on the ethical porn discourse. On the one hand, there are websites that position themselves and organize the communication of content compatible with ethical porn discourse. While on the other hand, there are websites which demonstrate ethical concerns but do not reveal their production processes.

In the aftermath of the analysis, the most immediate conclusion is the lack of literature available on ethical porn. It is not at all surprising given the contemporary character of producing pornographic content ethically. Saying that, what changes does pornography undergo due to technological advancements is an area that still rely on guesswork (Attwood & Smith, 2014) and is awaiting to be discovered.

The study is not designed to be representative of the whole ethical porn scene. Still, it is believed that its results cast light on opportunities for possible future research. The investigated sample of websites is found to owe their existence to a mixed nature of relationships. At a level of discourse, the idea of ethical porn is fed greatly by feminist, queer, indie and alike alternative porn genres. Although appearing as a part of alternative porn scene, ethical pornography more and more finds itself a place in mainstream media outlets, let alone its influence on mainstream porn industry. Additionally, the findings signal the reliance of ethical porn websites on porn festivals, business awards and other similar events. Therefore, there is a great need for a comprehensive statistical analysis of the networks of ethical pornography. Only with this empirical data would it be possible to make sense of the complex network of ethical porn communities and to find out more about the discourse of ethical pornography.

This research have hopefully been a humble contribution to the field of digital media in relation to pornography. Despite being a challenging journey with a few guidance, the conduct of this study, hopefully, will evoke further investigations on the topic of ethical porn.
9. References


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## 10. Appendix I

List of the Qualified Websites:

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