

NEW CINEPHILIA TASTE: A STUDY ON ACADEMICS' TASTE IN THE CASE OF NETFLIX TÜRKİYE AND MUBİ TÜRKİYE ¹

Murat ŞAHİN²

ABSTRACT

This study examines the views of cinema academics, which can be called “new cinephiles” and “symbolic taste masters,” on MUBİ Türkiye and Netflix Türkiye streaming platforms. In the theoretical part of the study, the boundaries of taste are first emphasized in cultural consumption. Then, the views on the formation of boundaries formed by the consumption of cultural products were emphasized. Categorical boundaries play an important role in cultural consumption, dividing art as popular or elite and individuals as high or low culture. Bourdieu’s cultural capital theory emphasizes how individuals with high cultural capital create class distinctions. Previous studies have shown that upper-middle-class individuals or “cultural omnivores” tend to appreciate high and popular culture. With the emergence of digital platforms, these boundaries are being reconsidered. Research suggests that algorithmic recommendation systems on these platforms shape users’ tastes and potentially reinforce existing social and cultural divisions. This study used qualitative research methods and a phenomenological design to investigate the impact of viewing preferences and digital platforms on class divisions. The findings reveal that while these platforms increase access to a wide range of content, they reinforce class-based viewing practices. Characteristics of new cinephiles: Participants show a deep attachment to films and use various digital devices to watch them, suggesting a nuanced interplay between technology, cultural consumption, and social stratification.

Anahtar Kelimeler: New Cinephile, Taste, Movie Consumption, Netflix Türkiye, MUBİ Türkiye

YENİ SİNEFİL BEĞENİSİ: NETFLIX TÜRKİYE VE MUBİ TÜRKİYE ÖRNEĞİNDE AKADEMİSYENLERİN BEĞENİSİNE YÖNELİK BİR ARAŞTIRMA

ÖZ

Bu çalışma, “yeni sinefiller” ve “sembolik beğeni ustaları” olarak adlandırılabilen sinema akademisyenlerinin MUBİ Türkiye ve Netflix Türkiye yayın platformları hakkındaki görüşlerini incelemektedir. Çalışmanın teorik kısmında öncelikle kültürel

Araştırma Makalesi

Research Article

² Dr. Öğretim Üyesi
Ondokuz Mayıs Üniversitesi
İletişim Fakültesi, Samsun,
Türkiye

E-Posta
murat.sahin2@omu.edu.tr

ORCID
0000-0001-7533-8602

Başvuru Tarihi / Received
25.06.2024

Kabul Tarihi / Accepted
06.08.2024

¹ In this study, the data were collected within the framework of the “Ethics Committee Approval Certificate” issued by the “T.C. Ondokuz Mayıs University Rectorate Social and Human Sciences Research and Publication Ethics Committee” dated 23/02/2024 and numbered 2024-115.

tüketimde beğenin sınırları üzerinde durulmaktadır. Ardından, kültürel ürünlerin tüketimiyle oluşan sınırların oluşumuna ilişkin görüşler üzerinde durulmuştur. Kategorik sınırlar kültürel tüketimde önemli bir rol oynamakta, sanatı popüler ya da elit, bireyleri de yüksek ya da düşük kültür olarak ayırmaktadır. Bourdieu'nun kültürel sermaye teorisi, yüksek kültürel sermayeye sahip bireylerin nasıl sınıfsal ayrımlar yarattığını vurgulamaktadır. Önceki çalışmalar, üst-orta sınıf bireylerin veya "kültürel omnivorların" yüksek ve popüler kültürü takdir etme eğiliminde olduğunu göstermiştir. Dijital platformların ortaya çıkmasıyla birlikte bu sınırlar yeniden gözden geçirilmektedir. Araştırmalar, bu platformlardaki algoritmik öneri sistemlerinin kullanıcıların beğenilerini şekillendirdiğini ve potansiyel olarak mevcut sosyal ve kültürel ayrımları güçlendirdiğini göstermektedir. Bu çalışmada, izleme tercihlerinin ve dijital platformların sınıfsal bölünmeler üzerindeki etkisini araştırmak için nitel araştırma yöntemleri ve fenomenolojik bir tasarım kullanılmıştır. Bulgular, bu platformların geniş bir içerik yelpazesine erişimi artırırken, sınıf temelli izleme pratiklerini pekiştirdiğini ortaya koymaktadır. Yeni sınıfların özellikleri: Katılımcılar filmlere derin bir bağlılık gösteriyor ve onları izlemek için çeşitli dijital cihazlar kullanıyor; bu da teknoloji, kültürel tüketim ve sosyal tabakalaşma arasında incelikli bir etkileşim olduğunu gösteriyor.

Keywords: Yeni Sinefil. Beğeni, Film Tüketimi, Netflix Türkiye, MUBI Türkiye

INTRODUCTION

Categorical boundaries, even if they do not manifest themselves explicitly, can be present in almost all areas of social life. One of the areas where these boundaries are formed is the environments where culture is produced and consumed. These categorical boundaries sometimes have expressed the artwork as popular or unpopular with a cultural boundary and sometimes have evaluated people as a subject of taste in terms of stratification as high culture or low culture (Bourdieu, 1984; Gans, 2007). The relationship between culture and social class was first analyzed through the concept of cultural capital proposed by Bourdieu. Bourdieu (1973: 80), while introducing this concept, argued that the cultural capital of individuals with high culture forms a boundary with people from different classes. At the center of this theory is the distinction between “high” or “legitimate” culture and “mass” or “popular” culture.

Studies (Lamont, 1992; Peterson, 1996) have emphasized the importance of culture in social stratification and interest in various forms of “popular” culture in reassessing the cultural sphere. These studies have shown that members of the upper-middle class have “cultural repertoires” defined as familiarity with different forms of both “high” and “popular” culture compared to members of the lower-middle class and that these people are called “cultural omnivores” (Peterson, 1996: 902).

Another development that made it necessary to re-evaluate these categorical boundaries in the cultural field has been the developments in the field of technology. With the spread of new communication technologies, there have also been views that new media weaken or reproduce these categorical boundaries (Webster, 2019).

Research on class and consumption has shown that the web and digital technologies have become essential to individuals' tastes (Savage, 2015; Friedman et al., 2013). With new communication technologies, the factors shaping individuals' tastes have shifted from human-mediated recommendation systems to recommendation systems used by digital platforms (Beer, 2013: 63). Arguing that digital platforms can reinforce rather than erode social and cultural boundaries because they are based on socio-cultural patterns, Morris (2015: 452) has discussed how this algorithmic cultural mediation involves the “fragmentation of individual cultural content (e.g., songs, movies, books, etc.)” and their “repackaging” according to new,

data-driven classification logics. At the same time, Beer (2013: 64) has argued that everyday consumption has shifted mainly to platforms and mobile apps in fields such as music or cinema. Thus, in digitized spaces, the construction of taste boundaries has become a techno-social interaction.

The abundance of content that digital viewing platforms make available, as well as their attempts to shape how and in what ways people interact with this content, necessitates reconsidering the relationship between viewing taste, consumption, and class. With the proliferation of digital platforms and the diversification of content, these mediums contribute to the reproduction of class inequalities by reshaping cultural taste and consumption. One of the areas where the distinction arising from the consumption of cultural products is experienced is the field of viewing. Preferred movies or TV series reproduce segregation through taste.

One of the areas where distinction arising from the consumption of cultural products is experienced is the field of watching. Preferred films and series reproduce distinction through taste. Various studies have been conducted on users' viewing preferences in television and cinema. Although these studies have focused on television, there have also been studies on cinema. In studies aimed at determining consumers' television viewing preferences (Bennett, 2006; Bennett et al., 1999; Kuipers, 2006), viewers were tried to be understood through their cultural capital and tastes. Blewitt (1993) and Chan and Goldthorpe (2005) aimed to reveal the preferences of cinema audiences by bringing a Bourdieuan explanation and determining the existence of a stratified cinema audience model.

In studies that try to reveal viewing preferences in cinema and television, film preferences have similarly divided into popular and art films, just as Bourdieu divided the cultural sphere into high culture and popular culture (Blewitt, 1993: 369). Barnett and Allen (2000: 147-148) have aimed to explain the importance of movie-watching practices in the cultural repertoires of upper-middle and lower-middle classes. In doing so, they have investigated the relationship between the concept of cultural repertoire, defined as familiarity with both high and popular culture, and the concept of cultural capital, defined as familiarity with high culture.

In the following period, with the development of the omnivore concept, studies have also been conducted to investigate whether it is possible to apply it to the viewing field. In their study, Lizardo and Skiles (2009) investigated whether Peterson and Kern's (1996) omnivore approach is appropriate for television. They also have examined the approach of "aestheticizing the popular" (Peterson & Kern, 1996) for popular culture to take hold among audiences with high taste as the distinction between high art and popular art blurs. According to Friedman, as the boundaries between popular and high culture blurred with the marketing of high culture to wider audiences, the products of contemporary "culture industries" such as "jazz, film, and rock music" were simultaneously aestheticized (2011: 351).

The spread of new communication technologies and the emergence of digital platforms make it possible to evaluate taste differently. In this new era, algorithmic recommendation systems and various applications that shape preferences can be said to shape the audience's taste. This structural transformation creates various communities of taste. Among these, it has been seen that there are "appreciation communities" with art-house content as well as platforms with popular content (Lotz, 2018: 492-493).

Another impact of the proliferation of new communication technologies and digital viewing platforms on cinema culture has been the change in cinephilia culture. In studies on the impact of digital viewing platforms on cinephilia culture, concepts such as "Cinephile 2.0" (Jullier & Leveratto, 2012: 147) and "New Cinephilia" (Shambu, 2020: 7) have been developed. It can be said that the new cinephile, along with technological developments, the cinema audience has undergone a transformation that can be expressed as omnivorous in the words of Peterson (1996). Among the "niche clusters" or "communities of taste" formed in digital spectatorship, platforms have hosted art house and popular content. MUBI has become an attractive platform for the new cinephile and features more art house content, and Netflix, which carries popular content, has constituted two of these environments.

Although there are various studies on the profile of the MUBI audience in foreign literature (Evans & McDonald, 2013; Aboulaoula & Biltreyst, 2021; Frey, 2021), there has yet to be a study on this subject in Türkiye; there is a study on MUBI

Türkiye that examines how the economic and symbolic capital of the platform was established (Şahin, 2024) and another study that examines the relationship between the platform and film festivals (Türkyılmaz, 2023).

Many studies on Netflix Türkiye have been conducted in Türkiye. Some of these studies investigate users' viewing experiences and user profiles. The studies were generally based on the concept of binge-watching (Tüzün Ateşalp & Başlar, 2020; Kulak, 2020; Ersin, 2023) and the viewing experience (Torun, 2021; Tanyeri Mazıcı & Can, 2021; Özgür, 2022).

This study examines the views of cinema academics, which can be called "new cinephiles" (Shambu, 2020) and "symbolic taste masters" (Bourdieu, 1984) on MUBI Türkiye and Netflix Türkiye streaming platforms. The reason for choosing these platforms is that MUBI has art house content while Netflix has popular content.

1. Pierre Bourdieu Sociology

Pierre Bourdieu, in *Distinction* (1984), revealed the fluid nature of taste. Bourdieu's research showed how cultural tastes and consumption practices are shaped by class background. In this study, Bourdieu demonstrated that cultural goods, from watching movies/series to music and fashion, are consumed as a product of class background and that people differentiate based on social class. Bourdieu utilized the concepts of capital, habitus, and field while revealing the relationship between cultural production and consumption.

Bourdieu (2010: 45-47) has mentioned three capital types: "economic, cultural, and social capital." The first type of capital has been economic capital in the form of property rights, which are instantly convertible into money. The second type of capital is cultural capital, expressed in terms of educational qualifications, which can be transformed into economic capital only in certain circumstances. The last type of capital is social capital, which consists of social responsibilities, where "connections" are an influential element and correspond to the reputational status of individuals, which can be converted into economic capital under certain conditions.

Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital has proven to be particularly influential. Bourdieu's introduction of this concept helped to show that class inequality is more

than an economic phenomenon. Inequalities are not only caused by the unequal distribution of financial assets; cultural resources such as education and taste play an essential role in creating and maintaining class distinctions and excluding oppressed groups from social and economic opportunities (Savage, 2000: 102).

Social capital refers to a network of relations owned and acquired through one's relationships of acquaintance and recognition in the social sphere (Bourdieu, 2010: 52). In other words, social capital is "the sum of potential resources." To the extent of the size of one's acquaintance network and in the light of the economic and cultural capital of the people with whom one is in contact, the individual has higher social capital (Jourdain & Naulin, 2016: 107).

Another essential concept in Bourdieu's sociology is habitus. According to Bourdieu, habitus is realized when social class members construct common "forms of classification, evaluation, judgment, perception, and behavior." The class habitus formed by people with similar practices and tendencies in the social universe has enabled these people to approach the social universe similarly and classify similarly (Tatlıcan & Çeğin, 2016: 326). In this sense, while habitus is the starting point of personal and class distinctions, it also brings social agents together in a typical habitus (Bourdieu, 2006: 22).

Habitus formation has been shaped by class background. The conditions of existence in which the individual grows up shape the formation of habitus as individuals adopt the ideas and values to which they are exposed. In doing so, the habitus has structured new experiences by the structures produced by past experiences (Bourdieu, 2006: 60).

The concept of space is another important concept of Bourdieu's sociology. As a spatial metaphor, the field has determined the structure of the habitus within the social environment. Fields refer to the arenas where goods, services, knowledge, or status are produced, circulated, and appropriated (appropriation) and the competitive positions that actors occupy in the struggle to accumulate and monopolize these different types of capital (Swartz, 2015: 167).

The concept of taste is based on what individuals consume among cultural goods and how they consume them (Bourdieu, 1984: 27-28). In the same work, Bourdieu has put forward the concept of “modes of acquisition” to refer to how individuals interact with cultural goods. Within the scope of the study, while what individuals watch among the movie or TV series options has constituted one aspect of taste, how they have watched these contents constitutes a different aspect of taste. While what individuals watch has constituted the preference between popular or mainstream content and art films, how they watch these contents can evoke movie theaters or digital platforms based on the concept of “modes of acquisition.”

Habitus has produced preferences and affinities for specific cultural goods, experiences, and modes of appreciation (Bourdieu, 1984: 18). In France in the 1970s, the dominant classes' acquisition mode was characterized by a “distanced” or contemplative appreciation of so-called forms of intellectual culture. In contrast, the subjugated classes' acquisition mode emphasized immediate gratification. The conditions in which habits are formulated have also produced how people interact with cultural products and show appreciation (Bourdieu, 1984: 316). It can be said that cinema academics also form an appreciation of their viewing preferences thanks to the cultural and intellectual accumulation they have acquired through education.

Bourdieu (1984: 135-140) argued that the education system allows individuals to master symbolic taste, language, and schemas to aestheticize and discuss intellectual culture. It can be easily said that cinema academics have various views about the viewing experience, with the symbolic taste masters acquired through their education.

In *Distinction* (1984: 511-515), Bourdieu discussed how familiarity with intellectual culture is both developed and rewarded in education. It has also been argued that elite groups familiarising themselves with high culture through education can create opportunities to acquire social capital (Bennett et al., 2009). Thus, it can be argued that intellectual culture gains and retains value as objectified cultural capital. This is because access to this culture is limited only to those individuals who possess the embodied cultural capital required to access and appreciate it.

The relationship between culture and social class was first analyzed using the concept of cultural capital proposed by Bourdieu. In proposing this concept, Bourdieu (1973) argued that the cultural capital of individuals with high culture forms a boundary with people from different classes. At the center of this theory is the distinction between “high” or “legitimate” culture and “mass” or “popular” culture.

Research (Lamont, 1992; Peterson, 1996) has shown that culture continues to be important in social stratification. In addition, the interest in different forms of “popular” culture has necessitated a reassessment of the cultural field. These studies have shown that members of the upper-middle class have more extensive “cultural repertoires,” defined as familiarity with different forms of both “high” and “popular” culture, than members of the lower-middle class and have been labeled “cultural omnivores” (Peterson, 1996).

The concept of the cultural omnivore or cultural omnivorousness has become an important idea because it breaks down the privileged structure of intellectual culture in favor of the tastes of the ruling classes. Cultural omnivory has enabled consumers to consume content from all cultural levels. The concept of cultural omnivory has been used to delimit changes in the cultural products people consume and to capture changes in how people consume them (Bennett et al., 2009).

2. Class Distinction and Viewing Taste

Watching is one of the areas where discrimination arising from the consumption of cultural products is experienced. It can be said that preferred films or series reproduce discrimination through taste. In the media field, various studies have been conducted on viewing preferences in television and cinema. Although these studies have focused on television, there are also studies on cinema. In studies aimed at determining consumers' television viewing preferences (Bennett, 2006; Bennett et al., 1999; Kuipers, 2006), the cultural capital and tastes of the viewers were tried to be understood. Bennett (2006) found that occupational class and educational level stratify television viewers according to the traditional “high and low” distinction. The study showed that “new drama” and “new comedy” have an essential place among the viewing preferences of young and well-educated viewers. According to another result

obtained in the study, viewers with low educational levels and professional classes prefer TV series, quiz shows, and competition programs.

Lizardo and Skiles (2009) have investigated whether Peterson and Kern's (1996) omnivore approach is appropriate for television. Researchers have aimed to reveal the relationship between cultural capital and viewers' television preferences in another study on television viewers (Krolo, Tonković, & Marčelić, 2020: 3). In order to identify different patterns in television genre preferences, the researchers have used factor analysis to identify two types of television tastes: domestic television shows and foreign fiction television.

On the other hand, Blewitt (1993) and Chan and Goldthorpe (2005) provided a Bourdieuan explanation in their studies aiming to reveal the preferences of film audiences. They determined the existence of a stratified film audience model. In the period when Bourdieu analyzed the cultural field by dividing it into high culture and popular culture, film preferences were similarly divided into mainstream films and art films. Bourdieu stated that people not only have different approaches to art but also different tastes. Studies have shown that less educated people have a sensory and naïve taste that focuses on the re-presentation of the familiar and natural world. In contrast, more educated people have an intellectual and reflexive taste, focussing on form, style, and relationships with other arts. In the case of film, it can be said that the cultural capital of the audience shapes their film taste. While viewers with low cultural capital prefer popular mainstream films, viewers with high cultural capital prefer art house films (Blewitt, 1993: 370).

In their study, Chan and Goldthorpe (2005) have revealed the relationship between the cultural capital levels of theater, dance, and cinema followers and their preferences for works of art. Their study has been consistent with the general idea that individuals with high cultural capital are more likely to be culturally omnivorous and that lower-class members are more likely to be monogamous. Barnett and Allen (2000) have aimed to explain the importance of movie-watching practices in the cultural repertoires of upper-middle-class and lower-middle-class Americans. In doing so, they have explored the relationship between the concept of cultural repertoire, defined as

familiarity with both high and popular culture, and the concept of cultural capital, defined as familiarity with high culture.

According to Friedman, the boundaries between popular and high culture blurred as high culture was marketed to a broader audience, while the products of contemporary “culture industries” such as “jazz, film, and rock music” were simultaneously aestheticized (2011: 351). This restructuring of cultural hierarchies has disrupted the classical boundaries and patterns of cultural consumption, leading to the rise of cultural “omnivores” (Peterson, 1992). The field of surveillance, as well as many other areas of popular culture, has been organized in such a way as to “aestheticize the popular,” which Peterson (1992: 245-247) argues is necessary to achieve the effect of highbrow omnivorousness. The aestheticization of the popular may seem more logical, especially when digital platforms are considered. For example, although Netflix produces popular content, TV series can be cited as an example of aestheticizing the popular.

3. Method

In this study, the qualitative research method was used to reveal the opinions of cinema academics, who can be described as “new cinephiles” (Shambu, 2020) and “symbolic taste masters” (Bourdieu, 1984), regarding MUBI, which broadcasts arthouse films, and Netflix, which broadcasts films/series with popular content.

Phenomenological design, one of the qualitative research designs, was used in the study. In the phenomenological approach, a group of individuals who experience the phenomenon under investigation in all its aspects are studied. The phenomenological approach has revealed both the subjective aspect of individuals' experiences related to the phenomenon under investigation and the objective experiences shared with other people who experience this phenomenon (Creswell: 2018: 165-170). By employing this design, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of how cinema academics perceive and interact with these digital viewing platforms.

3.1. Population and Sample

The study population consists of cinema academics in Türkiye. The reason for determining the study population in this way stems from the assumption that cinema academics are included in the group mentioned by Bourdieu as “symbolic taste masters” (1984). The cinema academics who participated in the research were determined first by purposive sampling and then by snowball sampling. The purposive sampling method enables the researcher to select participants who best understand the research question (Creswell, 2017: 221). Purposive sampling is “the selection of units suitable for a predetermined purpose” (Neuman, 2012: 322). Snowball sampling, on the other hand, is a method in which “the researcher starts with a sample case and then determines other sample cases based on information about the relevant relationships from this sample case” (Neuman, 2012: 322). In this context, eight cinema academics were included in the research sample according to the saturation point method for the research. According to the saturation point method, the data collection process is terminated when new perspectives on data collection do not emerge (Creswell, 2017: 476).

Table 1. Socio-Demographic Data Of The Participants Of The Study

Participant Code	Title	Gender	Age	City
P1	Associate Prof. Dr.	M	36 - 45	Samsun
P2	PhD	M	36 - 45	İstanbul
P3	PhD	M	36 - 45	Afyonkarahisar
P4	Associate Prof. Dr.	F	36 - 45	Denizli
P5	Associate Prof. Dr.	F	36 - 45	Samsun
P6	Associate Prof. Dr.	M	36 - 45	İzmir
P7	Associate Prof. Dr.	F	36 - 45	Van
P8	PhD	M	36 - 45	Eskişehir

In Table 1, the participants interviewed are listed from P1 to P8. The name P symbolized each participant.

Ethical Permission Certificate

In this study, the data were collected within the framework of the “Ethics Committee Approval Certificate” issued by the “T.C. Ondokuz Mayıs University Rectorate Social and Human Sciences Research and Publication Ethics Committee” dated 23/02/2024 and numbered 2024-115.

3.2. Data Collection

The primary data collection tool in phenomenological studies is the interview method. The interview is one of the most effective data collection methods to learn people's experiences, attitudes, opinions, complaints, feelings, and beliefs (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018: 125-127). In this study, the phenomenological approach, one of the qualitative research methods, was used. Thus, the experiences and perceptions of cinema academics as new cinephiles and masters of symbolic appreciation regarding MUBI Türkiye and Netflix Türkiye were examined in depth, and the subjective and objective aspects of these experiences were revealed.

An interview form was prepared for this purpose. The first part of the form contains general information about the research, including the purpose of the research, details about the researcher, and confidentiality principles. The second part contains semi-structured questions to guide the interview and elicit in-depth responses.

The data were collected between February 25, 2024, and March 15, 2024, using a semi-structured interview form developed by the researcher. The open-ended questions in this form are as follows:

1. How is class distinction reproduced through individuals' viewing preferences on MUBI Türkiye and Netflix Türkiye as new cinephile spaces?
2. How do individuals from different classes use digital viewing platforms to access and interact with movies/series, and in what ways are these platforms used differently?
3. Do digital viewing platforms perpetuate class distinctions through viewing practices, and if so, how?
4. What are the views of cinema academics, as masters of symbolic taste, on class distinctions in viewing practices?

5. How do you define cinephilia?
6. What is your perspective on the impact of the city on cinephilia?
7. Has your viewing experience changed during the pandemic? If so, how did it change?
8. How would you describe MUBI Türkiye in your own words?
9. In what ways does MUBI Türkiye differentiate itself from other digital viewing platforms?
10. How would you describe Netflix Türkiye in your own words?
11. In what ways does Netflix Türkiye differentiate itself from other digital viewing platforms?

These questions aim to explore different ways of using digital viewing platforms, the impact of the classroom on viewing habits, and the specific characteristics and perceptions of MUBI Türkiye and Netflix Türkiye among cinema academics.

Interviews were conducted in the faculty room or via remote communication tools. With the consent of the participants, the interviews were audio-recorded. Each session lasted approximately 20-25 minutes.

3.3. Data Analysis

The voice recordings of the participants were transcribed and read by the researcher, and codes were created. The codes were re-read and analyzed, and themes were created using the inductive qualitative analysis method from the codes gathered under a similar roof.

All verbal expressions given by platform users in response to the questions in the semi-structured interview form prepared for this study were transferred to the computer environment, and all stages of content analysis (coding of data, finding themes, organizing and defining data according to codes and themes, and interpreting findings) were applied (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018: 237).

The data collected in the study were analyzed using the content analysis method. The purpose of content analysis is to summarize and interpret the data descriptively and inductively and to reach unrecognized codes, categories, and themes

by subjecting them to in-depth processing (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018: 238). In the data analysis process, the researcher examined the data, and the final form of the codes, categories, and themes of the research was reached. In each theme, the researcher interpreted the findings as a natural part of the research process.

4. Findings

4.1. The Number Of Films Watched By The Participants, The Media And The Tools They Watched The Films

One defining characteristic of the new cinephile has been their deep engagement with films, watching many and discussing them extensively (Elsaesser, 2005: 28). In this study, five participants reported watching 11 or more films per month, two participants watched 9-10 films, and one participant watched between 3 and 5 films.

All participants, reflecting the traits of the new cinephile, utilize digital platforms to watch films and TV series. Five participants also indicated that they watch movies in cinema halls and on digital platforms. When asked, "From which device do you watch films?" two participants responded that they use only a computer, four participants use both television and a computer, and the remaining two use smartphones and computers and televisions.

These findings suggest that the participants embody the characteristics of the "new cinephile" (Shambu, 2020: 7) or "cinephile 2.0" (Jullier & Leveratto, 2012: 147), integrating technology into their viewing experiences. This study highlights an audience profile deeply intertwined with technology.

4.2. Participants' Definitions Of Cinephile

The core of the participants' definitions of cinephilia is centered around a "passion for cinema." For Participant 2 (P2), being a cinephile involves understanding and interpreting reality and life through the lens of films. Participant 3 (P3) views a cinephile as someone who places cinema at the heart of their life, using it both for enjoyment and existential exploration. Participants 1 (P1) and 5 (P5) describe

cinephiles as individuals who appreciate films according to their tastes, with P5 emphasizing that cinephiles possess a refined taste in cinema.

Participant 6 (P6) aligns with the “cultural omnivore” concept (Peterson & Kern, 1992), defining a cinephile as someone with a broad film culture who watches both domestic and international mainstream and art films, as well as B-movie genre productions. Participant 8 (P8) highlights the importance of discussing films as an integral aspect of being a cinephile.

Overall, the definitions provided by the participants illustrate a diverse yet deeply passionate engagement with cinema, encompassing viewing preferences, cultural breadth, and critical discussion.

4.3. The Impact Of The City Of Residence On Cinephilia Culture

With the development of technology and the widespread use of the internet, the role of digital platforms in facilitating access to films for cinema audiences has become a point of debate. A crucial question arises: “What is the effect of one’s city of residence on cinephile culture?” All participants agree that cinema is an integral part of city culture. They believe that the city they live in significantly influences cinephilia culture.

In cinephilia culture, interacting with others who share similar tastes is as essential as accessing films. Participant 1 (P1) notes that living in a city with numerous film festivals “not only increases the opportunity to access films but also enhances interaction with others who have similar tastes, fostering a cultural environment that develops this appreciation.” Participant 3 (P3) underscores the importance of the city for cinephiles, stating, “the city becomes important if the cinephile feels the need for cinema talks, cinema groups, cinema halls.” Participant 4 (P4) highlights the city’s significance in fostering cinephile culture. Participant 5 (P5) emphasizes the connection between cinephilia and urban living, saying, “If the city where you live has a significant cinema culture, this permeates one’s personality and values.”

Conversely, some participants believe that while digital platforms mitigate some disadvantages of living in smaller cities, they do not eliminate them entirely. P1 asserts that although these platforms offer a wider range of films, they cannot replace

the enriching cultural environment that fuels a love for cinema. Thus, platforms do not fully compensate for the lack of a cinephile culture in certain cities. P2 mentions that the impact of one's city on cinephilia culture has lessened with technological advancements but has not vanished entirely, noting that major cities in Türkiye (Istanbul, Izmir, Ankara, Eskişehir) remain crucial for cinephiles. P3 adds that digital advancements have made cinema accessible everywhere, and the discussions and information integral to cinephile culture are also available online.

P4 points out that, in his city of Denizli, where film festivals are scarce, digital platforms alleviate but do not entirely remove the negative impact of limited film access. P5, who moved from a major city to a provincial one, says he could not maintain his cinephile identity without digital platforms but adds, "digital platforms alone are not enough to be a cinephile because cinephilia is linked to the act of going to the cinema." P6 reflects on his experience of living in a city with only two cinemas for five years, during which he could not watch many festival or art films in theaters. He relied on digital platforms to view these films during that period, affirming that cinema is fundamentally an urban culture.

4.4. Duration and Reasons for Participants' Subscription to Netflix and MUBI

In the study, participants were asked questions about their subscriptions to MUBI Türkiye and Netflix Türkiye. The first question was, "When did you subscribe to the platform?" Six participants reported having been subscribed to MUBI Türkiye for three years or more, while the remaining two had been subscribers for six months.

When asked about their reasons for subscribing to MUBI Türkiye, responses highlighted two main factors. The first was the platform's content. Participants mentioned that they subscribed because MUBI Türkiye features "arthouse films" (P1, P2, P6, P8), "festival films" (P2, P5, P6, P7), and "independent/alternative films." P2 elaborated: "My perception that independent/alternative cinema or festival/ arthouse films are or will be screened on MUBI after the box office made me prefer it."

P5 provided additional context:

"In 2014, in the city where I live, I noticed that festival films held in big cities were being screened on MUBI. Five festival films came to Samsun, and they were screened on MUBI."

That was the first time I noticed this platform; festival films, rare works not available in many places, and important directors made the platform stand out to me. Since then, my wife and I have been subscribing alternately.”

The second reason cited for subscribing to MUBI Türkiye was its affordable subscription fee, as mentioned by P1 and P6.

Another question posed to MUBI Türkiye subscribers was, “What do you pay attention to when selecting content?” P1, P5, and P6 indicated that they primarily focus on directors when choosing films on MUBI Türkiye. P6 elaborated: “I usually try to watch all the films of a director on the platform chronologically if all films are available.” Similarly, P5 noted that director retrospectives heavily influence his choices: “Director retrospectives are very effective for me; it is an enjoyable experience to watch most of a director’s films and observe how they have evolved or remained consistent over time.”

Another inquiry asked subscribers about the opportunities offered by the platform, such as the application, interface, and content. P1 and P2 found the platform’s interface lacking. P1 acknowledged that this shortcoming could be overlooked due to the variety of content available. P2 explained: “I think they are quite unsuccessful with the interface; it is often difficult and challenging to even find the films that are showing.” P6 echoed similar sentiments, noting his frustrations with the interface, particularly when accessing the platform via TV: “I have serious problems finding, researching, and discovering content when connecting from the TV, not from the computer, because the application and the interface are unfortunately not user-friendly.” Conversely, P5 expressed satisfaction with the platform’s interface: “The interfaces on mobile phones, tablets, and TVs are quite simple and practical.”

4.5. Participants’ views on Netflix and MUBI Türkiye

In the study, participants were asked about their subscription history with Netflix Türkiye. Six participants reported subscribing for three years or more, while the remaining two had been subscribed for six months.

Participants’ reasons for subscribing to Netflix Türkiye were varied. The primary motivation was the popularity and entertainment value of Netflix’s content

(P1). Additionally, the platform's original productions were a significant draw for some (P2 and P6). P6 mentioned subscribing specifically to watch Netflix's original series. P5, a dedicated series enthusiast, shared:

"I have been watching Netflix since CNBC-e closed down. Initially, DVDs from the USA were very expensive, but once Netflix became a platform, I subscribed immediately. Netflix is my go-to for TV series. While it offers cinema films, they don't interest me as most are conventional. 'Roma' was the standout film on this platform."

Technical features also played a crucial role in participants' decisions to subscribe. P3 and P4 highlighted the ease of watching on smart TVs, accessibility from multiple devices, speed, and absence of ads. P4 also appreciated the platform's content control features.

Another question posed to Netflix Türkiye subscribers was, "What do you pay attention to when choosing content?" P1 and P3 noted that their current state of mind plays a significant role in their content selection. P3 also emphasized the influence of past experiences and explained: "The main factor in my choice of films and series is if the subject interests me. However, I also succumb to social pressure—everyone is watching it, haven't you seen it yet? It can be a bit embarrassing." P1 mentioned that prior knowledge about the film or its director influences his choices. P2, P4, and P6 stated that they rely on Netflix advertisements, the platform's most-watched lists, and IMDb scores when selecting content.

When asked about the opportunities offered by the platform, such as its application, interface, and content, all participants praised Netflix Türkiye's interface. P1, who noted that the application's effectiveness encourages users to spend more time on the platform, explained: "I find the interface successful. The presentation of content in categorized groups, the short explanatory information about films, and the ease of switching between films or episodes make it user-friendly and increase the time I spend on the platform."

Another question asked to the participants was "How would you define MUBI and Netflix in your own words?". Among the expressions used by participants to describe MUBI Türkiye are phrases such as "a platform where art films, festival films, classic and independent films are screened." P1 views the platform as one that "tries

to create an alternative taste for cinema.” Similarly, P2 describes MUBI as a place for both old and new alternative or art films. P5 highlights MUBI’s role in cultivating new cinephiles in Türkiye, noting, “Quality directors, rare films, and cult works are grouped in the interface. Thus, it enables the formation and nurturing of different tastes.” P6 praises MUBI as “the best platform to watch old movies and festival films.” P7 defines MUBI Türkiye as “an online movie streaming platform that offers carefully selected, quality movies for moviegoers.” Finally, P8 considers MUBI Türkiye “an important alternative to mainstream cinema for those with a high sensitivity to cinema and art films.”

Another question posed to the participants was, “How would you define Netflix in your own words?” Among the responses, the characterization of Netflix Türkiye as “a platform that hosts popular content” stands out. P1 describes Netflix Türkiye as a platform that “offers popular content and provides a fun time.” P4 sees it as “the locomotive of the culture industry,” offering popular content without artistic value. P6 characterizes Netflix as “a platform where I sometimes watch productions to unwind after a tiring day or week,” noting that beyond popular TV series and some mainstream movies, it lacks appeal for him. Similarly, P8 describes it as “a medium that serves popular cinema.”

P5 highlights the platform’s “fast and permanent solutions,” noting its rapid entry into the Turkish market: “Turkish TV series and movies are also being added to the platform, signaling market growth. Some directors have started to premiere their works on Netflix. It can be defined as an emerging sector.”

Another question posed to the participants was, “In what ways does MUBI Türkiye differentiate itself from other platforms in the field?” P1 highlights that MUBI Türkiye caters to a more elite audience by offering films that appeal to artistic tastes. Similarly, P3 notes that the platform attracts viewers with sophisticated preferences. P2 emphasizes that MUBI sets itself apart by screening a mix of old and new alternative or art films, or at least claiming to do so. P5 underscores that the platform prioritizes art films over commercial and conventional cinema, stating, “On the platform, it is possible to come across many films that no one remembers except those whose profession is cinema. It is possible to meet directors representing world-famous

movements. I think MUBI should be recognized for not limiting its content to viewership rates and placing commercial cinema in the background.” These responses collectively suggest that MUBI Türkiye stands out for its commitment to high-quality, art-centric content that appeals to a discerning audience.

P6 highlights that “MUBI is the only platform where I can find old films, festival films, and sometimes the complete works of a director,” emphasizing its unique and positive differentiation. P7 underscores MUBI’s curatorial selection strategy, noting that “it sets itself apart from other digital viewing platforms with its original and diverse range of films, contributions to cinema culture, and special features.” Similarly, P8 points out that the platform distinguishes itself by focusing on art and independent cinema productions.

Another question posed to the participants was, “In what ways does Netflix Türkiye differentiate itself from other platforms in the field?” Responses centered on Netflix Türkiye’s distinction through its large audience base, popular and original productions, and unique content strategy.

P1 noted that Netflix has crafted a distinct style in terms of original content and shaping the viewing experience. They added, “It has a brand value by being a pioneer as a digital content provider. It differentiates itself by offering serialized content with all episodes available at once, producing content under its brand, and considering the audience profile.” P2 highlighted the platform’s extensive and constantly updated content library. P4 attributed Netflix’s vast content to its large audience and high revenues, explaining, “It is quite good from this perspective. As the budget increases, the duration of series shortens and quality improves. Other platforms share similar characteristics, but Netflix stands out in this regard.”

P8 emphasized Netflix’s production of high-quality content, citing films like *Roma* as examples that broaden the platform’s target audience and enhance its position in the industry. This illustrates Bourdieu’s concept of small-scale and large-scale production fields. According to Bourdieu (2004), the limited sphere of production, characterized by symbolic capital, allows for experimentation and innovation, producing works that appeal to high taste and artistic prestige. In contrast, the large-

scale production sphere includes popular culture products, driven by economic capital (Johnson, 2023).

For digital platforms, this distinction is evident in the comparison between Netflix and MUBI. While Netflix typically represents large-scale production with popular films, it occasionally ventures into high-art territory with productions like *Roma* (2018, Alfonso Cuarón) and *The Irishman* (2019, Martin Scorsese). This strategy demonstrates Netflix's aim to appeal to diverse audiences, including those outside its traditional field.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to reveal the views of cinema academics, which can be called "new cinephiles" and "symbolic taste masters," on digital platforms. Thus, it was determined whether the class distinction that can be formed through taste is reproduced on digital platforms. It was revealed how MUBI Türkiye and Netflix Türkiye reproduce cultural consumption and social stratification.

One of the research results is that cinema academics have different viewing habits and preferences. It has been observed that the participants follow MUBI Türkiye for art cinema and festival films due to their refined tastes and professional interests. According to the participants, MUBI Türkiye is differentiated from other platforms due to its quality and alternative content and appeals to an audience that attaches importance to cultural taste. This situation points to MUBI Türkiye's high cultural capital, which Bourdieu emphasizes.

The participants' positive opinions about Netflix Türkiye stem from the platform's vast repertoire of popular and original content. Other attractive aspects of the platform for the participants are its ease of access and user-friendly interface. Netflix's production and broadcasting of popular content are compatible with mass consumption patterns. Netflix's focus on popular content aligns with mass cultural consumption patterns and attracts a large and diverse audience. The fact that the participants like and follow Netflix's popular content reflects the cultural omnivore, which refers to the consumption of high and popular cultures. The fact that Netflix includes productions such as the film *Roma* alongside its popular content is

reminiscent of Bourdieu's small-scale production area that appeals to high taste and large-scale production area that appeals to popular taste. Thus, Netflix opened the target audience of the film Roma to include people from the popular to the high culture.

Participants state that cinema co-exists with the city, so the city and cinephilia culture complement each other. Cities with a living cinephilia culture include film festivals and discussions on films. In this respect, the participants acknowledge that although digital platforms soften some disadvantages in regions without festivals and discussion opportunities, they accept that cinema culture cannot replace its own cultural and social interactions.

This research highlights the complexity of digital platform use among film academics in Türkiye and shows how these platforms challenge and reinforce class divisions. MUBI Türkiye and Netflix Türkiye address different aspects of the cinephile experience, reflecting broader trends in cultural consumption and social stratification. The findings suggest that while digital platforms offer new ways to access and engage with cinema, they also perpetuate existing cultural hierarchies and shape the contours of contemporary cinephilia.

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Çalışma tek yazarlı bir çalışmadır.

Çalışma kapsamında herhangi bir kurum veya kişi ile çıkar çatışması bulunmamaktadır.