Review Article | Derleme Makale

A Study on MUBI's Economic and Symbolic Capital as a New Cinephile Space in the Digital Age
Dijital Çağda Yeni Sinefil Alanı Olarak MUBI'nin Ekonomik ve Sembolik Sermayesi Üzerine Bir Araştırma

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Abstract

This study aims to explore how MUBI, a digital streaming platform, transforms into a space for cinephiles and establishes its economic and symbolic capital in the process. Firstly, it stresses the evolution of cinephile, from the traditional cinephile to the contemporary cinephile, in light of technological advancements and the widespread use of the internet. Next, the strategies employed by MUBI are highlighted as it positions itself in the digital streaming field and solidifies its status as a company, thereby building its economic and symbolic capital. The findings reveal that MUBI has tailored its platform to cater to new cinephiles, offering arthouse film selections, festival coverage, the Notebook cinema magazine, and user comments on films. Particularly during the pandemic, MUBI showcased initial screenings and premieres of select films on its platform, distributed noteworthy festival films, and acquired companies producing arthouse films, securing a position in the cinema value chain. Ultimately, it has been observed that MUBI strategically appeals to the interests of contemporary cinephiles to enhance both its symbolic and economic capital.

Keywords: Cinephile, Space, Economic Capital, Symbolic Capital, Digital Platform, MUBI

Öz

Bu çalışma, dijital bir yayın platformu olan MUBI'nin sinefiller için nasıl bir alana dönüştüğünü ve bu süreçte ekonomik ve sembolik sermayesini nasıl oluşturduğunu araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. İlk olarak, teknolojik gelişmeler ve internetin yaygın kullanımı ışığında sinefilin geleneksel sinefilden çağdaş sinefile doğru geçirdiği evrim açıklanmaktadır. Ardından, MUBI'nin kendisini dijital yayıncılık alanında konumlandırırken ve bir şirket olarak statüsünü sağlamlaştırırken, ekonomik ve sembolik sermayesini inşa ederken kullandığı stratejiler vurgulanmaktadır. Bulgular, MUBI'nin platformunu yeni sinefillere hitap edecek şekilde oluşturduğunu, arthouse film seçkileri, festival kapsamı, Notebook sinema dergisi ve filmler hakkında kullanıcı yorumları sunduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Özellikle pandemi döneminde MUBI'nin, seçkin filmlerin ilk gösterimlerini ve prömiyerlerini platformunda gösterdiği, festival filmlerini dağıttığı ve arthouse filmler üreten şirketleri satın alarak sinema değer zincirinde bir konum elde ettiği tespit edilmiştir. Sonuç olarak, MUBI'nin hem sembolik hem de ekonomik sermayesini artırmak için stratejik olarak çağdaş sinefillerin ilgi alanlarına hitap ettiği görülmüştür.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sinefil, Alan, Ekonomik Sermaye, Sembolik Sermaye, Dijital Platform, MUBI.

Introduction

The spread of new communication technologies and the Internet has impacted various fields and brought numerous innovations. One of the effects of these innovations on cinema is the proliferation of devices for watching films, while another is the diversification of the viewing experience. To begin with, the widespread use of the Internet and the emergence of DVDs mark the initial impact of new communication technologies on cinema (Shambu, 2020, p. 7). The literature refers to the relationship between new communication technologies and cinema with terms like DVD players, home cinema systems, and digital streaming platforms. Furthermore, the literature emphasizes the shift of the viewing experience from cinema halls to various other forms. Additionally, a crucial change brought about by new communication technologies and the Internet in cinema is the expansion of digital streaming platforms. Internet-based digital streaming platforms, commonly known as Video on Demand (VoD) services, allow viewers to consume content anytime and anywhere. These platforms, OTT (Over the Top) video services, differ in content creation and revenue generation. Major platforms in this field include Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, Hulu, Apple, HBO, Disney+, Blu TV, and MUBI (Erkılıç & Erkılıç, 2021, pp. 108-109).

With new communication technologies, films can be watched on different devices. This situation, which comes with new technology, emphasizes new communication tools on the one hand and expresses the diversification of the viewing experience on the other hand. This situation, explained by the concept of convergence, refers to the presence of more than one content on the same device. However, it also highlights a cultural change (Jenkins, 2006, p. 3). The widespread use of new communication technologies has diversified the viewing experience and brought about a cultural change. Cinephiles, who perceive watching films as a ritual and go beyond that by incorporating films into their lives, discussing them, writing about them, and forming communities, have also been affected by technological advancements. In this environment facilitated by new communication technologies and the internet, a "new cinephile" has emerged (Shambu, 2020, p. 7).

Various studies have examined the impact of new communication technologies and digital streaming platforms on cinephile culture. Studies supporting the positive effects of these technologies on cinephile culture (de Valck & Hagener, 2005; Jullier & Leveratto, 2012) highlight their contribution to creating new platforms for cinematic discussions among cinephiles, facilitating easy film access and enabling film criticism. Conversely, studies arguing that new communication technologies negatively affect cinephile culture (Sontag, 1996) claim that the authenticity of cinema has been compromised and signifies cinema's death.

In studies on the impact of digital streaming platforms on cinephilia culture, concepts such as 'Cinephile 2.0' (Jullier & Leveratto, 2012) and 'New Cinephilia' (Shambu, 2020) have been developed. In Türkiye, there are thesis studies on the impact of new communication technologies on cinephilia (Torun, 2019; Yağcı, 2014), as well as a study (Turgut, 2022) that examines new viewing experiences based on Pierre Bourdieu's concept of taste and how it creates a distinction between classical cinephiles and new cinephiles. İpek (2021) explores the concept of cinephilia based on Bourdieu's concepts of taste and space, examining the experience of Başka Sinema in her study. Dikkol (2020), who analyzed the example of Blu TV using Bourdieu's concept of space, investigated the economic and symbolic capital of the platform in his study.

In the digital field, especially following the rise of Netflix, platforms targeting different audiences have also begun broadcasting. It can be said that MUBI, which primarily showcases arthouse films and aims to cater to individuals who enjoy "watching a large number of films, discovering new ones, and engaging in discussions and sharing these discoveries with others" (MUBI, 2023), has become a central platform for cinephile culture. Scholars have focused their studies on various aspects of MUBI, including its role in the digital transformation of cinema (Iordanova & Cunningham, 2012) the influence of MUBI Social—a now-defunct forum—on creating an online community (Hessler, 2018), the platform's purchasing and distribution strategies in the film market (Smits & Nikdel, 2019), as well as its curatorial business model and marketing rhetoric (Frey, 2021; F. Kaya, 2022). Additionally, several studies (Aboulaoula & Biltereyst, 2021; Evans & McDonald, 2013; Frey, 2021) have attempted to determine the reasons behind the preference for MUBI among its audience and to profile the platform's user base.

This study explains how MUBI (MUBI, 2023), a platform for new cinephiles, has formed its screening, distribution and production policies. It also focuses on what the platform's interaction with stakeholders in the field of cinema means and how it has become a cinephile cultural space.

Thinking Digital Streaming Platforms with Pierre Bourdieu's Sociology

Pierre Bourdieu's sociology is based on the following concepts: relational thinking, understanding different approaches together, and seeing the social universe as a field of struggle (Wacquant, 2016, pp. 57-58). Bourdieu prefers to consider these two ideas together by eliminating the duality of structure and agent. He accomplishes this in two stages: first, the external and given structures that shape an individual's behavior are emphasized (Bourdieu vd., 2014, pp. 17-24). Then, schemes of taste and perception, which are internal characteristics that shape the actions and interactions of individuals, are defined.

The fundamental concepts in Bourdieu's sociology are habitus, capital, and field (Bourdieu vd., 2014, p. 24). According to Bourdieu, habitus is the "system of predispositions" that shape individuals (Bourdieu, 2006, p. 9). Agents with similar cultural and economic capital tend to have a typical habitus in comparable living conditions (Jourdain & Naulin, 2016, p. 43). The significance of habitus lies in its role in creating differentiation in taste. The habitus in which individuals are situated influences their taste and practices, which are displayed based on the quality of their habitus (Tatlıcan & Çeğin, 2016, p. 324).

Another key concept of Bourdieu's sociology is capital. According to Bourdieu (2006, p. 27), access to different types of capital in the social sphere involves a struggle. Bourdieu (2010, pp. 45-47) identifies three general types of capital: "economic capital, cultural capital, and social capital." The first type of capital is economic capital, which can be immediately monetized and takes the form of property rights. The second type of capital is cultural capital, which can only be transformed into economic capital under certain circumstances and is expressed in terms of educational qualifications. The last type of capital is social capital, which consists of social networks, where "connections" are a practical element and correspond to the reputational status of individuals. Social capital can be converted into economic capital under certain conditions. On the other hand, symbolic capital is the form the other three types of capital "assumes when perceived through categories of perception" (Bourdieu vd., 2014, p. 108). Symbolic capital

represents how a particular form of capital is viewed by agents equipped to recognize its specific characteristics (Bourdieu, 2006, p. 111).

The concept of space is another crucial element for Bourdieu in interpreting agents' actions in the social realm. As a spatial metaphor, the field serves as the site where commodities, knowledge, and social positions are produced and exchanged, and actors struggle to acquire various forms of capital (Swartz, 2015, p. 167). While habitus shapes the actions of social actors from within, the field establishes the boundaries of this action from the outside (Wacquant, 2016, pp. 63-65). According to Bourdieu, the social universe comprises numerous fields, each possessing distinct characteristics. Each field experiences constant "conflict and struggle" with different variables while functioning with its specific types of capital and hierarchical structures (A. Kaya, 2016, p. 418). Furthermore, the field is crucial for uncovering the system of various predispositions towards which the agents within it are oriented by their habitus (Bourdieu vd., 2014, p. 91).

Wacquant (2016, p. 63) refers to spaces as power structures that impose rules, struggles, and autonomous spaces with their own set of rules. The fact that fields have their own rules requires those who want to enter the field to accept them. According to Bourdieu, spaces hold different values in the eyes of those who seek to enter them, and this value is often perceived as an illusion (Bourdieu vd., 2014, p. 104). It can be argued that each digital monitoring platform also contains various types of capital worth obtaining for viewers. To access these forms of capital, users must possess the qualities demanded by the field. In the case of digital monitoring platforms, this requirement sometimes involves economic capital for membership. At the same time, at other times, it is influenced by the quality of the content on the platform.

While Bourdieu explains the concept of the field in his sociology, he also focuses on on how production takes place in art. He explains this by exemplifying the production in literature through two different sub-field structures. Among these sub-fields, the limited production field includes what the agents do to present their productions for critical appreciation by other agents, not for economic expectations, but for symbolic capital such as recognition, appreciation, and gaining a position in the field. On the other hand, large-scale production includes those that operate with economic expectations, and the agents produce their products for consumers (Bourdieu, 2004, p. 115).

Before examining MUBI, one of the digital streaming platforms that particularly appeal to cinephiles, it is necessary to underline a few points about the aforementioned economic and symbolic capital. Firstly, we will analyze the characteristics of digital streaming platforms. Then, we will discuss the emergence of classic and new cinephiles in light of technological developments. Finally, we will examine MUBI's broadcasting journey and explore its economic and symbolic capital.

The Field of Digital Streaming Platforms and Cinephilia Culture

Internet-based digital streaming platforms, Video on Demand (VoD), enable viewers to consume content anytime and anywhere. These platforms, called Over-the-Top (OTT) video services, vary in content creation and revenue generation. In addition to these models, the Premium Video on Demand (PVoD) option has also gained prominence. Particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, when cinemas were either closed or

operating with audience restrictions, film production, and distribution companies offered the initial screenings of new films on digital platforms (Tezcan, 2021).

Platforms such as Netflix, BluTv, and MUBI function as stand-alone video-on-demand (VoD) services. These services are referred to as platforms that can be subscribed to by paying a fee without any additional requirements (Tezcan, 2021). In his study, Hagener (2016) discusses how watching films and cinephile culture have transformed due to the proliferation of digital streaming platforms. The widespread utilization of internet-based platforms represents a technological advancement in one aspect and a shift in the viewer's experience in another.

Hagener (2016, p. 186) analyzes the sources of online film viewing on digital platforms using three main models: free platforms, paid subscription platforms/video-on-demand (VoD) sources, and illegal platforms. The platforms in the first free model primarily consist of user-generated content, including YouTube, Vimeo, and Dailymotion. The options in the second model are based on subscription fees and provide exclusive, professionally produced material. Platforms like Netflix, MUBI, and Amazon Prime are included in this group. The options in the third model are free but operate illegally.

Technological advancements and the widespread adoption of the Internet have given rise to new platforms and viewing experiences. These changes in viewing experiences have also raised questions about the relationship between the audience and the film. Since the inception of cinema, there has been a fascination with examining the connection formed with films. The origins of classical cinephile debates can be traced back to discussions about the work of avant-garde artists and examples of art cinema. At the center of these debates was the magazine Cahiers du cinéma. This environment revealed the academic value of studying cinephilia. However, in the subsequent period, the culture of cinephilia was ignored by the emerging discipline of film studies (Elsaesser, 2005). This process, particularly the new environment that accompanied the events of 1968 and the counterculture era, marked a turning point for cinephilia culture. Under the pressure of new political priorities, film theory rejected the perceived structure of cinephilia in favor of stricter scientific methods, and the study of cinephilia was disrupted (Andrew, 2000).

The changes and diversification of viewing practices in the digital era have stimulated the study of cinephilia culture. These forms of thinking and writing about film encompass communities of cinephiles with varying levels of expertise, whether amateurs or experts. Film access has increasingly shifted towards television and, more importantly, home video. The introduction of the first VCR machines in 1975 radically transformed the habits and rituals of cinephiles. As noted by Barbara Klinger, the conditions that facilitated cinephile culture would now be "repositioned and rearticulated in complex interactions between media industries, commodity culture, and the private sphere" (2006, p. 55).

Susan Sontag characterizes these developments as a series of negativities and refers to them as the death of cinephilia. According to her, "If cinephilia is dead, films are dead (…). If cinema can be resurrected, it will only be through the birth of a new kind of love for cinema" (1996). There are also concerns that the spread of new viewing forms will destroy the authenticity and aura of the cinema screen (Quandt, 2009, pp. 297-298).

At the opposite end of the negative impact of new communication technology on the cinephile are those who take a positive approach to new possibilities. While classical cinephile advocates argue for artistic elitism (Jullier & Leveratto, 2012; Ng, 2009), those

with a positive approach to technology argue for the democratization of cinephilia (de Valck & Hagener, 2005, p. 13). The proliferation of new technologies impacts the cinephile's experience regarding film access and community building. Increased access to films is among the characteristics of the contemporary cinephile (Jullier & Leveratto, 2012, p. 149; Ng, 2009, p. 150). Digital platforms have revealed that the cinephile experience can occur in places other than cinema halls, so it is possible to reconceptualize cinephilia. Cinephile culture has differentiated from the classical cinephile culture with new media opportunities (de Valck, 2010, p. 138; Jullier & Leveratto, 2012, p. 153). Another change in cinephilia with new communication technologies has been the emergence of a heterogeneous perception of cinephilia by abandoning its homogeneous conception (Jullier & Leveratto, 2012, p. 147; Ng, 2009, p. 150).

Marijke de Valck also argues in her study that the proliferation of new communication technologies has positively impacted cinephilia (2010). The emergence of digital film cultures has witnessed the revival of cinephilia on a truly global scale. In the twentieth century, concepts such as "new cinephilia" (Shambu, 2020), "cinephilia 2.0," or "digital cinephilia" (Jullier & Leveratto, 2012) have been coined.

According to Shambu (2020), who argues that new communication technologies, especially the Internet, have enriched cinephilia culture and created new cinephilia, the advantages of the Internet are as follows: Firstly, the interpersonal practices of bloggers are the most prominent writing style through which twenty-first-century cinephilia can become legible. Secondly, Shambu emphasizes that the Internet has reversed the relationship between a diminishing number of active writers and many passive readers that defined the classical age of cinephilia (2020, p. 20). Thanks to the Internet, new cinephilia has moved away from elitist approaches and created a more democratic and multifaceted dialogue through the increasing use of social networking platforms (2020, p. 4). Blogging and sharing film-related images have created a treasure trove of online micro-criticism that organizes film-related thoughts into heterogeneous forms of Exchange (2020, pp. 21-29). Jullier and Leveratto (2012), in their article "Cinephilia in the Digital Age," define "cinephilia 2.0" as the diversification of film streaming platforms, increased access to cinematic information, the proliferation of cinephile activity spaces, changes in cinephile interactions, and the transformation of archiving thanks to new media.

The new cinephilia's authenticity, subjectivity, and marginality have transformed masculine predispositions and hierarchical levels. On the other hand, classical cinephilia, while based on auteurism, rejects the position of male-essentialist auteurs (Shambu, 2020, pp. 32-34). Jenna Ng (2009, p. 150) states that "these developments broaden cinephiles' film horizons, providing unprecedented access to foreign works and offering enhanced cinephilia worlds for new generations." According to Campbell (2009, p. 15), the main struggle of today's cinephiles is against commercialization. Campbell adds that the cinephile's struggle is not for culture and taste but to defend autonomy and the right to use technologies without commercial or institutional constraints.

With the decline of big-screen cinemas, the rise of small theaters, and the spread of digitalization, film festivals have become the last refuge for cinephiles. Film festivals "offer a seductive return to the classic cinephile with the promise of a unique, unrepeatable experience, providing a rare opportunity to see films on the big screen before they vanish or only reappear on DVD" (Czach, 2010). Due to the decline of other screening opportunities and venues, the film festival's big screen has emerged as a privileged

venue for art cinema cinephilia. Both North American festivals (Sundance, TIFF) and European festivals (Cannes et al.) have consistently emphasized their cinephile image by showcasing challenging films (Czach, 2010, pp. 139-140). As film festivals expanded their activities during this period, the ideas generated by films multiplied and led to collective viewing networks where cinephile culture thrived (Arenas, 2012, p. 20). Film festivals are crucial sanctuaries for cinephiles, occupying a space on the boundary between traditional forms of viewing. They serve as a threshold between the era when the only access to films was in cinema halls and the digital film streaming platforms (Elsaesser, 2005, p. 40). Film festivals are becoming a staple for contemporary cinema-goers (Hagener & de Valck, 2008, p. 25).

Casetti and Fanchi distinguish between cinephilia and telephilia. Cinephilia and telephilia were born in different historical circumstances. Cinephilia is the name of a project articulated in the 1960s to restore cinema as a work of art. The distinguishing aspect of cinephilia is the "rarity and originality of the work, as well as exclusion from commercial circuits for mass consumption." On the other hand, telephilia refers to a set of attitudes that demonstrate a deep identification or relationship with the medium of television or a longing for it. It pertains to the new viewing experience that emerged in the second half of the 1980s with the proliferation of recording and reproduction Technologies (Casetti & Fanchi, 2004, pp. 38-41).

Another field of study in the literature on cinephilia and cinephile culture is the distinction between film consumption and taste. Studies have been conducted on cinema and film consumption using Bourdieu's concepts of taste and field. These studies have generally focused on how film consumption takes place, how cinema is a field, and how the taste for the film is shaped (Cagle, 2016; Culloty, 2016; Fowler, 2016). In the literature on cinema studies, some distinctions are also made between film fans and cinephiles. Pierre Bourdieu's idea of "distinction through taste" (2021) comes to mind when considering the differentiation between film fans and cinephiles based on their viewing preferences. Chinita (2016, p. 29) explores the distinction between film fans and cinephiles by differentiating between high and low cultures.

MUBI's Broadcasting Adventure

Founded by Efe Çakarel, a Turkish entrepreneur, in 2007 under the name The Auteurs and later renamed MUBI, it can be said that the platform has gained a significant position in the global arena (Smits & Nikdel, 2019, p. 24). The MUBI platform characterizes itself as innovative and pioneering. The platform also defines its mission as "promoting art films and increasing the diversity of online film culture" (BBC News, 2020).

Frey (2021) analyzes MUBI's broadcasting adventure by dividing it into three periods. In the first period (2007-2012), MUBI aimed to promote "a singular cinephile understanding and an auteurist vision, supporting the art of film and ensuring that films reach audiences." Financial concerns were of secondary importance for the company during this period (Frey, 2021, p. 54). Since its early years, MUBI has maintained close relations with various components of the cinema industry, such as festivals, distributors, and producers. It has also identified its target audience as followers of arthouse cinema (Frey, 2021, p. 57). Each digital streaming platform has its film screening policy. For instance, platforms like Netflix and Amazon predominantly offer popular and mainstream films in their portfolios, while MUBI focuses on the arthouse film genre (McDonald & Smith-Rowsey, 2016). According

to Çakarel (BBC News, 2020), MUBI "set out to show independent, classic, and arthouse films."

In its second term (2012-2020), MUBI implemented several innovations in its broadcasting policy. The platform transitioned from a pay-per-view, partially ad-supported model to a completely ad-free service. Furthermore, MUBI adopted a broadcasting approach that involved screening 30 films per month. Throughout this period, the company enhanced its broadcasting policies and expanded its involvement in various aspects of the film value chain, such as finance, production, and DVD distribution (Frey, 2021, p. 69). In 2019, MUBI made production attempts with the film Port Authority, followed by Farewell Amor in 2020.

In its third period (after 2020), MUBI experienced a positive development in terms of the number of subscribers and viewership rates, despite the lockdown during the Covid-19 pandemic. In this period, the company continued the "film of the day" feature and introduced the opportunity to discover hundreds of other films that viewers could access on the site (Frey, 2021, pp. 71-72). Additionally, the company acquired a majority stake in The Match Factory to develop further its role in production, which it had initiated earlier (Yossman, 2022).

Another essential feature of MUBI in its broadcasting adventure is how the films are selected. At MUBI, films are selected through a curation process. Conceptually, curation means "selecting and sorting, combining or separating, collecting, filtering or prioritizing" (Bhaskar, 2016). However, this does not mean that MUBI conducts a completely data-free process. The company uses country-specific information to determine which types of films are the most popular in the 200 regions where it is available. Algorithmic selection is sometimes used in this respect. However, the final programming for each country is determined by a team of around 50 people (Çakarel, 2015). MUBI's unique position on the digital streaming platform arises from the diverse film viewing preferences it offers to the audience. In contrast to Netflix's "watch everything you can" model, MUBI offers only one new film per day and aims to make each day's film feel like a festival-like premiere (Thomas, 2017).

MUBI was closely involved in film festivals as well. Company officials were present at prestigious events like Cannes and Toronto. MUBI distributed the films showcased at these festivals, thus reinforcing its feature as an art film platform. The MUBI brand is now more focused explicitly on art film content, targeting a particular audience and industry segment (Frey, 2021, p. 56). Another service offered by MUBI to its subscribers is The Notebook magazine. Through this publication, subscribers can learn about films and festivals, and read articles on various films. The platform was developed to inform cinephiles about the latest "quality" auteur films. Additionally, MUBI has created an online blog to provide information about films screened at international festivals (Smits & Nikdel, 2019, pp. 26-27). This approach of engaging with audiences through social networking on digital platforms has introduced a new interaction between cinephiles and new media/web culture. According to Hessler (2018), MUBI Social embodies the ultimate symbol of what Menarini and Tralli describe as the convergence of cinephile culture and social media.

MUBI's Economic and Symbolic Capital

In addition to algorithmic recommendation systems, which have emerged as a type of video-on-demand (VoD) platform due to technological innovations, new platforms like Jaman, MUBI, BFI Player, and FilmStruck have gained widespread popularity. These platforms are often referred to as niche platforms. They have their business paradigms, marketing rhetoric, philosophies of taste, choice architecture, and audience engagement (Frey, 2021, p. 1; Hessler, 2018, p. 5). As Lobato (2019, p. 64) points out, they specifically target cinephiles and operate globally by catering to small audiences in multiple countries as long as the license conditions permit.

The first issue to be considered when analyzing the economic and symbolic capital of MUBI is the change made by the company officials to the company's name. According to Hessler (2018), the company's initial name, The Auteurs, implied a classical auteurist and elitist approach, while MUBI is neutral and appeals to all kinds of content and audiences. Çakarel (2021) also explains that they chose the name MUBI to avoid any exclusionary meaning and to appeal to a broad audience. This explanation indicates that MUBI's initial broadcasting policy aligned with classical cinephilia, and the platform's name was determined accordingly. The name MUBI emphasizes diversity and the new cinephile culture by moving away from an auteurist and elitist understanding. It can also be stated that the company effectively utilizes its name in establishing symbolic capital. The company officials' statement announcing the company's vision on the website emphasizes the target audience they have identified: "MUBI is not only about discovering great new cinema or classic masterpieces. It is also about discussing and sharing these discoveries, which makes us like a little café... where we get together and think about alternative endings, directors' fictions..." (MUBI, 2023).

MUBI's initial focus in building its economic capital is determining the films to be screened. In this regard, the company adopts a curatorial approach. According to Hessler (2018, p. 5), MUBI's decision to incorporate curation into its marketing strategy is based on three primary expectations of the digital film exhibition and distribution network. These expectations include showcasing new films to align with the demand for constant innovation, acknowledging the dominance of producers and distributors, and the necessity to promote original productions. Initially, due to its limited economic capital, MUBI acquired the right to screen only select films that garnered significant attention, meeting the audience's expectation of continuous innovation. Implementing the "one film a day" policy exemplifies this innovative approach by acquiring the right to screen a limited number of films.

MUBI symbolically reinforces its presence in this field by participating in film festivals, thus maintaining its importance for its target audience. In line with the significance of festivals for new cinephiles (Czach, 2010), MUBI actively follows the leading festivals, resulting in increased economic and symbolic visibility. Furthermore, MUBI has collaborated with reputable institutions associated with arthouse cinema and festival culture in Türkiye, such as the Istanbul Film Festival, Filmekimi, and Atlas 1948 Theatre (Gazete Duvar, 2021). Through these partnerships, MUBI positions itself as a cultural trendsetter in Türkiye's digital cluster, effectively augmenting its symbolic capital in digital screening. Additionally, MUBI defines itself as "not an elite cinema, but cinema for everyone" (Çakarel, 2021) while continuing to cater to cinephiles through its screening, distribution, and production efforts. This platform policy aligns with the pluralistic and

democratic understanding of cinema expressed in the new cinephile debates (Jullier & Leveratto, 2012; Shambu, 2020).

Another issue that needs to be considered when analyzing the economic capital of MUBI is the approach of economic sub-fields. When approaching any company or organization within an economic field, it is necessary to consider that company in conjunction with the economic sub-fields in which it operates and the national/global economic structure (Göker, 2014, p. 298). According to Çakarel, the platform's share in the digital audience is as follows:

> The companies operating in this field are those whose primary business activities differ. For instance, Netflix has been primarily engaged in DVD distribution for many years. Conversely, Amazon is involved in entirely different ventures. Unlike these companies, MUBI's core business is centered around films. We entered this industry independently and built it from the ground up. Since 2020, MUBI has experienced approximately threefold growth. Currently, five hundred million people worldwide are subscribed to digital platforms. By 2025, this number is projected to reach 1.2 billion. As MUBI, we have identified fifteen percent of this figure as our target audience (BBC News, 2020).

Companies like Netflix and Amazon, which operate on digital platforms, broadcast their content with substantial budgets and revenue from various sources. However, MUBI stands out as a company whose primary capital lies in film exhibitions. Cem Altınsaray, director of MUBI Türkiye, describes this situation as follows:

> We are not a big, rich company, but an independent platform showcasing independent films. We need more than millions of dollars in marketing capital. We are progressing with very small steps. The pandemic has had a positive impact on this process. During the pandemic, while people were confined to their homes, content became increasingly important across platforms. The content on these platforms often shared similarities. MUBI began distinguishing itself by featuring lesser-known directors and films (İKSV, 2022).

One concept that must be considered when analyzing a company's economic and symbolic capital is metal capital. In particular, it is easier for a company to thrive in the field with the economic capital of the state and its power. In this sense, an agent acting in the field without a meta-capital can only act autonomously if it possesses its meta-capital (Couldry, 2014, p. 667). MUBI operates in the realm of digital spectacle with its autonomous capital. Thus, as Couldry emphasizes, media can possess meta capital to legitimize their representations and categories of meaning in social life (2014, p. 668). MUBI's meta capital is expanding into other areas beyond its revenue from subscription fees. These initiatives encompass digital screenings, film distribution, and producer roles.

Besides screening and distribution, MUBI also takes on the producer role. Altınsaray (İKSV, 2022) discusses MUBI's involvement as a producer, highlighting their production attempts with the films 'Port Authority' in 2019 and 'Farewell Amor' in 2020.

> We are currently engaged in distribution and production, a process that began with broadcasting and has continued with curating. This process has naturally evolved due to the complexities of obtaining permission to screen and distribute successful films. Consequently, to bring these films to the audience, we have taken on the role of producers and partners right from the start. A production department has been established in London where incoming projects are evaluated. We participate in producing 15-20 percent of a film rather than the entire film.

Çakarel (BBC News, 2020) states that the production aspect of MUBI is necessary: "It is not possible to watch the film Roma anywhere other than Netflix, so MUBI has to get into the production business. MUBI should produce Alfonso Cuaron's new film so we can

show it here." MUBI's most recent production endeavor was "the acquisition of a majority stake in The Match Factory, one of the leading companies in arthouse cinema" (Yossman, 2022). Thus, MUBI is involved in a venture that impacts its symbolic and economic capital in the film industry. MUBI's strategy aligns with that of the production company, which primarily focuses on arthouse cinema, further emphasizing its target audience of cinephiles. Studies profiling the MUBI audience (Aboulaoula & Biltereyst, 2021; Evans & McDonald, 2013; Frey, 2021) have observed that the viewers are urban, upper-middle-class, and well-educated cinephiles.

While analyzing the economic and symbolic capital of MUBI, it is important to consider the platform's mode of production in the cultural field. At this point, Bourdieu's (2004) conceptualization of limited and large-scale production spaces can be applied. The limited sphere of production entails being open to experimentation and innovation, producing products that cater to refined tastes, and possessing symbolic capital primarily in the form of prestige and artistic fame. On the other hand, the large production area encompasses popular cultural products, with the primary focus being on acquiring economic capital (Johnson, 2023). It can be argued that Bourdieu's notion of limited and large production areas applies to popular films and independent cinema, serving as examples within the realm of cinema. This distinction between Netflix and MUBI can also be observed in the context of digital platforms.

In his study on the digital distribution of arthouse films, Herbert (2011) also mentions platforms' limited and large-scale production structures. He emphasizes that large-scale production companies aim to dominate the market. In contrast, limited production companies comply with competition laws but tend to develop criteria for evaluating their products within the limited production area (Herbert, 2011, pp. 23-24). A company that operates within the limited production area implements policies in line with its understanding of the environment. In this regard, MUBI has chosen to enhance its presence and visibility in the market by actively participating in film festivals and expanding its distribution networks from there. Thus, the company aims to create value through exclusivity in this field (Herbert, 2011, p. 14). It can be said that MUBI has increased its capital in the digital platform field, particularly by developing its symbolic capital.

Although this is a general view of the production areas of digital platforms, it would not be correct to separate these boundaries with strict lines. It can be said that Netflix aims to appeal to audiences outside its field by undertaking the production of Roma (2018, Alfonso Cuarón) and The Irishman (2019, Martin Scorsese). On the other hand, it is observed that MUBI aims to enhance its economic and symbolic capital by acquiring production companies. Additionally, the company's interest in festivals contributes to its economic capital through the screening and distribution of new films and the emergence of new projects through its production role. Furthermore, it enhances its symbolic capital by providing visibility in these areas.

The platform's site structure and ancillary media texts, such as the Notebook magazine, are also important when analyzing the economic and symbolic capital of MUBI. According to Jonathan Gray (2010, p. 18), media ancillary texts reveal many of a media text's less noticeable and even conflicting meanings. Engaging with ancillary texts encourages new ways of understanding or engaging with a text. For example, when analyzing the Notebook

magazine, one of MUBI's media subtexts, it can be said that the new cinephile community has been created for writing, reading, sharing, and interacting with films.

Conclusion

The study investigates how the economic and symbolic capital of MUBI, which showcases examples of arthouse and independent films and identifies the new cinephile as its target audience, is formed. The study focuses on how the platform's relationship with various components of the cinema sector, such as festivals, and its policies in the cinema value chain, impact its position in the digital monitoring field and its economic and symbolic capital. Additionally, the study explores how these factors contribute to constructing the new cinephile culture.

The impact of new communication technologies and the internet on cinema has led to the proliferation of devices on which films are watched and the diversification of the viewing experience. In this process, digital streaming platforms have also become widespread, and platforms catering to different target audiences have started broadcasting, especially following Netflix's success in the field. It can be said that MUBI, which targets arthouse and independent films and supports the new cinephilia culture, has secured a place in this industry. During the same period, discussions on cinephilia culture began to emerge. With the influence of technological advancements on cinema, there has been a shift from the classical cinephilia culture, which includes an auteurist and elitist understanding, to the new cinephilia culture that embraces technology. Consequently, while analyzing the economic and symbolic capital of MUBI, the characteristics of the new cinephile identified as the platform's target audience have also been taken into consideration.

The company, which has set a small area in the cinema sector as its target, has maintained its relations with various sector components, including festivals, producers, and cinema enthusiasts in the public eye. As a result, it has built its symbolic and economic capital. In particular, the symbolic capital has been enhanced through factors such as the change in the platform's name, indicating a shift from traditional cinephile to the new cinephile, gaining visibility by participating in festivals, and selecting films with the endorsement of curators.

It can be said that the company, which showcases independent and arthouse films outside of popular cinema, increases its symbolic capital by giving the impression that it prioritizes artistic concerns rather than commercial priorities within the limited production area, as expressed by Bourdieu (2004). This situation is seen as a space for the new cinephile taste of the urban upper middle class and educated segment. It has been observed that user comments about films in the company, on Defteri magazine and website, function as media subtexts that reflect the characteristics of the new cinephile, such as writing, reading, and discussing films. It has been concluded that this aspect also contributes to the symbolic capital of the company.

In line with its target audience, MUBI aims to gain visibility in a broad range of areas where cinephile culture exists, including distribution, production, festivals, and cinema magazines. Consequently, it aims to acquire economic and symbolic capital by creating its meta-capital. By entering the screening and distribution business, MUBI has recently been actively involved in the film industry, engaging in magazine publishing and production. The platform presents films at festivals and has gained visibility in all areas related to cinema.

It has been determined that MUBI has successfully carved out an entire space for itself in the digital platform industry, catering to its target audience. To achieve this, MUBI initially establishes its symbolic capital in this domain and leverages it to build its economic capital. Furthermore, it has been observed that MUBI has strategically developed its symbolic and economic capital by catering to the interests of the contemporary cinephile.

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Dijital Çağda Yeni Sinefil Alanı Olarak MUBI'nin Ekonomik ve Sembolik Sermayesi Üzerine Bir Araştırma

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Genişletilmiş Özet

Yeni iletişim teknolojilerinin ve internetin yaygınlaşması birçok alanı etkilemiş ve beraberinde çeşitl i yenilikler getirmiştir. Bu yeniliklerin sinema üzerindeki etkilerinden birisi film izlenilen aygıtların çoğalması iken bir diğeri ise izleme deneyiminin çeşitlenmesi olmuştur. İzleme deneyimi sinema salonlarından çıkarak farklı ortamlarda yaşanmaya başlanmıştır. İnternet tabanlı olan ve Talep Üzerine Video (VoD/Video on Demand) olarak ifade edilen dijital izleme platformları, izleyicinin içeriği istediği herhangi bir zaman ve mekânda tüketmesini ifade etmektedir.

Yeni iletişim teknolojilerinin yaygınlaşması izleme deneyiminin çeşitlenmesini sağladığı gibi kültürel bir değişimi de beraberinde getirmiştir. Film izlemeyi bir ritüel olarak gören ve bunun ötesinde yaşamını filmlerle kuran, filmler hakkında konuşan, yazan ve topluluklar oluşturan sinefiller de teknolojik gelişmelerden etkilenmiştir. Yeni sinefil olarak kavramlaştırılan bu sinema tutkunları teknolojiyle etkileşimli bir konumda bulunurlar.

Yeni iletişim teknolojilerinin yaygınlaşmasının sinefil kültürü üzerinde olumlu ve olumsuz sonuçları olduğuna dair literatürde tartışmalar bulunmaktadır. Olumlu yaklaşımda bu yeniliklerin sinefiller için sinema üzerine yeni tartışma ortamlarının oluşumuna katkıda bulunduğu, filmlere kolaylıkla erişimin mümkün kılındığı ve filmler üzerine eleştiri yazılarının yazılmasına olanak tanıdığı üzerinde durulmaktadır. Diğer taraftan yeni iletişim teknolojilerinin sinefili kültürüne olumsuz etkisi olduğunu savunan çalışmalarda ise sinemanın otantikliğinin kaybolduğu ve sinemanın sonunun geldiği belirtilmektedir.

Dijital alanda özellikle Netflix'in etkinliği sonrası farklı hedef kitlelerine yönelik platformlar da yayına başlamışlardır. Daha çok arthouse film örneklerini gösteren ve hedef kitlesi olarak "çok sayıda film izleyen yeni filmler keşfeden, aynı zamanda tüm bu keşifleri tartışan ve başkalarıyla paylaşan" ve bu özelliğiyle "yeni sinefil" ya da "Sinefil 2.0" için yayın yaptığı anlaşılan MUBI'nin sinefili kültürü için ön plana çıkan bir platform haline geldiği söylenebilir. Bu çalışmada kendini yeni sinefiller için yayın yapan bir platform olarak gördüğü anlaşılan MUBI'nin gösterim, dağıtım ve yapım politikalarının nasıl oluştuğu, platformun sinema alanındaki paydaşlarla etkileşiminin ne anlama geldiği ve sinefili kültürü için nasıl bir alan halini aldığı üzerinde durulmuştur. Özetle çalışmada MUBI'nin ekonomik ve sembolik sermayesini nasıl kurduğu Pierre Bourdieu'nun alan yaklaşımıyla açıklanmaya çalışılmıştır. Çalışmada geniş bir litaretür taramasıyla elde edilen bilgiler platformun özellikleri doğrultusunda betimsel analiz yöntemiyle analiz edilmiştir.

Dijital izleme platformlarından biri olan ve özellikle sinefiller için içerik bulunduran MUBI'nin ekonomik ve sembolik sermaye bağlamında analizi yapılmadan önce aşağıda birkaç hususa değinilmiştir. İlk olarak dijital izleme platformlarının ve özelliklerinin neler olduğuna yer verilmiştir. Daha sonra klasik sinefil ve teknolojik gelişmelerle ortaya çıkan yeni sinefil kavramları ele alınmıştır. Son olarak ise MUBI'nin yayın serüveni ve ekonomik ve sembolik sermaye analizi yapılmıştır.

Çalışmada, arthouse ve bağımsız filmlerden örnekler sergileyen ve yeni sinefilleri hedef kitlesi olarak belirleyen MUBI›nin ekonomik ve sembolik sermayesinin nasıl oluştuğu araştırılmaktadır. Çalışma, platformun festivaller gibi sinema sektörünün çeşitli bileşenleriyle kurduğu ilişkinin ve sinema değer zincirindeki politikalarının, dijital izleme alanındaki konumunu ve ekonomik ve sembolik sermayesini nasıl etkilediğine odaklanmaktadır. Ayrıca bu faktörlerin yeni sinefil kültürünün inşasına nasıl katkıda bulunduğu ortaya çıkarılmaya çalışılmaktadır.

Yeni iletişim teknolojileri ve internetin sinema üzerindeki etkisi, filmlerin izlendiği cihazların çoğalmasına ve izleme deneyiminin çeşitlenmesine yol açmıştır. Bu süreçte dijital yayın platformları da yaygınlaşmış, özellikle Netflix'in bu alandaki başarısının ardından farklı hedef kitlelere hitap eden platformlar yayın hayatına başlamıştır. Arthouse ve bağımsız filmleri hedefleyen ve yeni sinefili kültürünü destekleyen MUBI'nin de bu sektörde kendine yer edindiği söylenebilir. Aynı dönemde sinefili kültürü üzerine tartışmalar da ortaya çıkmaya başladı. Teknolojik gelişmelerin sinemayı etkilemesiyle birlikte auteurist ve elitist bir anlayış içeren klasik sinefili kültüründen teknolojiyi kucaklayan yeni sinefili kültürüne doğru bir kayma yaşanmıştır. Dolayısıyla MUBI'nin ekonomik ve sembolik sermayesi analiz edilirken, platformun hedef kitlesi olarak belirlenen yeni sinefilin özellikleri de göz önünde bulundurulmuştur.

Sinema sektöründe küçük bir alanı hedef olarak belirleyen şirket, festivaller, yapımcılar ve kamuoyundaki sinemaseverler de dahil olmak üzere çeşitli sektör bileşenleriyle ilişkilerini sürdürmüştür. Bunun sonucunda da sembolik ve ekonomik sermayesini inşa etmiştir. Özellikle sembolik sermaye, geleneksel sinefilden yeni sinefile geçişi ifade eden platformun isim değişikliği, festivallere katılarak görünürlük kazanması ve küratörlerin onayıyla film seçmesi gibi faktörlerle güçlendirilmiştir.

Popüler sinemanın dışında bağımsız ve arthouse filmleri gösteren şirketin, Bourdieu'nün (2004) ifade ettiği gibi sınırlı üretim alanı içerisinde ticari önceliklerden ziyade sanatsal kaygıları öncelediği izlenimi vererek sembolik sermayesini artırdığı söylenebilir. Bu durum kentli üst orta sınıf ve eğitimli kesimin yeni sinefil beğenisi için bir alan olarak görülmektedir. Şirkette, Notebook dergisinde ve web sitesinde filmler hakkında yapılan kullanıcı yorumlarının, yeni sinefilin yazma, okuma ve filmleri tartışma gibi özelliklerini yansıtan medya alt metinleri olarak işlev gördüğü gözlemlenmiştir. Bu yönüyle de şirketin sembolik sermayesine katkıda bulunduğu sonucuna varılmıştır.

MUBI, hedef kitlesi doğrultusunda dağıtım, yapım, festivaller ve sinema dergileri gibi sinefil kültürünün var olduğu geniş bir alanda görünürlük kazanmayı amaçlamaktadır. Böylelikle meta-sermayesini oluşturarak ekonomik ve sembolik sermaye edinmeyi hedeflemektedir. MUBI, gösterim ve dağıtım işine girerek son zamanlarda film endüstrisinde aktif olarak yer almakta, dergi yayıncılığı ve yapımcılığı yapmaktadır. Platform, festivallerde filmler sunmakta ve sinemayla ilgili her alanda görünürlük kazanmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sinefil, Alan, Ekonomik Sermaye, Sembolik Sermaye, Dijital Platform, MUBI.