

HOW DIGITAL PLATFORMS IMPACT THE FILM INDUSTRY IN TURKEY?

A Master's Thesis

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September, 2018

HOW DIGITAL PLATFORMS IMPACT
THE FILM INDUSTRY IN TURKEY?

The Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences
of
İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University

by

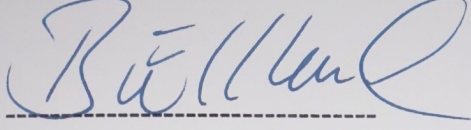
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In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for the Degree of
MASTER OF ARTS in Media and Visual Studies

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ANKARA

September, 2018

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Media and Visual Studies.



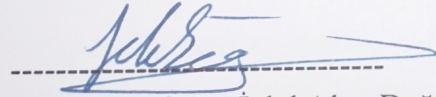
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Supervisor

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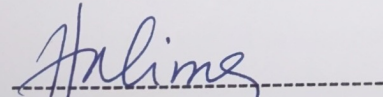
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ABSTRACT

HOW DIGITAL PLATFORMS IMPACT THE FILM INDUSTRY in TURKEY?

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Oligopolization of Turkish film industry in the point of distribution and screening concentrated on 2015 and film theaters have been condemned to mediocre, income-oriented comedies only for 'entertainment' culture. The companies already constituting a dominant force in terms of screening have also become active in the field of film production. In addition to these, after 2015, digital platforms, offering very large online content libraries in high quality, without advertising, and with affordable subscription fees compared to the prices of movie tickets, have begun to provide service in Turkey. Aim of this study is analyzing what traditional film industry and digital film platforms becoming widespread offer to viewers in accordance with the current dynamics of the cinema in Turkey. The possible impacts of technological developments on cinema have been discussed throughout the history of cinema. The study discusses how cinema audience influenced by the current digitalization brings the possibilities of cinema out of the movie theaters and makes them available at any moment. Additionally, the aim is to reach a conclusion about the current situation and future of especially art-house or non-mainstream productions.

Keywords: Blockbuster, Content, Independent, Platform, VoD

ÖZET

DİJİTAL PLATFORMLAR TÜRKİYE’DE SİNEMA SEKTÖRÜNÜ NASIL ETKİLİYOR?

Burcu Kandar

Yüksek Lisans, İletişim ve Tasarım Bölümü

Tez Danışmanı: Prof. Dr. Bülent Çaplı

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Türkiye sinema sektöründe dağıtım ve gösterim noktasındaki tekelleşme eğilimi, 2015 yılı itibariyle yoğunlaşmış, hali hazırda gösterim ve dağıtım anlamında domine edici bir güç teşkil etmekte olan firmaların üretim noktasında da faaliyete geçmesiyle sinema salonları yalnızca ‘eğlence’ kültürüne yönelik, gelir odaklı vasat komedilere mahkum olmuştur. Yine 2015 yılını takiben, çok geniş bir içerik kütüphanesine son derece makul üyelik ücretleri ile erişim imkanı sağlayan, özelleştirilmiş içeriğini yüksek görüntü kalitesiyle ve reklamsız sunan dijital platformlar Türkiye’de hizmet vermeye başlamıştır. Bu çalışmada; Türkiye’de geleneksel film endüstrisinin ve yaygınlaşmakta olan dijital içerik platformlarının izleyiciye sundukları, sektörün mevcut dinamikleri çerçevesinde incelenmiştir. Teknolojik gelişmelerin sinemanın geleceğine ilişkin etkileri sinema tarihi boyunca tartışılmıştır. Çalışma, sinemanın imkanlarını sinema salonlarının dışına taşıyan ve her an erişilebilir kılan mevcut dijitalleşmenin, Türkiye’deki sinema izleyicisini nasıl etkilediğini incelemeyi; özellikle bağımsız ya da ana akımın dışında kalan yapımların mevcut durumuna ve geleceğine ilişkin bir saptama yapmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ana-akım, Bağımsız, İçerik, Platform, VoD

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Cinema is an industry as well as being an art form, and this situation brings along the debates about the artistic production, position of the artist and the independence of the art work. In a capital-intensive industry, movies are considered as commodities which are produced, distributed and exhibited.

As in other branches of art, cinema has influenced by the current conditions of society, even if not abruptly. Since its beginning, cinema has been affected by technological innovations to the extent that it is influenced by social, economic and political developments.

Cinema, as the most inclined art form for industrialization, has been considerably dominated by the American film industry, Hollywood, that is rapidly adapting to the developing technologies and has never lost its influence in the international arena despite its ups and downs. Hollywood studios, which are known as 'big tenth' and

influential worldwide with their distribution channels, have determined the direction of the industry for more than a century.

Along with the changes which technology brings to it, there has always been debates that question the future of the cinema. The coming of the sound, for instance, later television and video technologies, were thought as a threat in front of the cinema. These concerns continued with the digitalization of film production.

Today, film is no longer a medium, which is based on the photochemical recording and replaying of movement on the projection of analogue 35mm material. Film has become a purveyor of image worlds and virtual worlds of seemingly unlimited scope. It is no longer an art form celebrated only at public screening, but a medium of cultural expression easily attainable through informal communication.

The current potential of digital technologies has extinguished all conventional methods and boundaries of them while opening the door of unlimited possibilities. Today, movies can be shot, edited, and distributed without a single film. And, as Sontag (1997) says, a film no longer has a standard size and screens at homes can be as big as the walls of living room or bedroom.

As online platforms become more widespread and more reliable, and content transfer becomes easier, the number of digital media consumers is increasing (Agarwal & Agarwal, p. 170). Especially after 2010, the landscape of the film industry has

significantly changed with digital platforms such as Netflix, Amazon, iTunes and YouTube which reshape the ways of not only production and distribution but also the habits of audiences (Alexander & Blakely, 2014).

According to Tryon (2013), that audience can decide what, where, and when to watch, from which screen, leads to a democratization in the movie industry. In an environment they move without considering schedule or program regarding the content, audiences' decisions have become as important as content providers. Various devices from smartphones to tablets or laptops giving audiences freedom in terms of mobility have considerably changed the way of image consumption culture. While the cinema is a medium requiring the absolute attention of audiences and the light of a smartphone is unpleasant in most cultures, for instance, the younger generation considers web surfing or social media on mobile phones more valuable during a movie.

According to Thjim (2014), in film theaters, there is a decrease in the number of audience and changing trends do not keep alive their nostalgic charm about theaters. According to a report published by PWC (2018), decisions on how to spend time and attention are increasingly affected by social media and recommendations from algorithms. This, in the presence of an infinite content universe, leads consumers to have a narrower and more homogeneous content selection since they directed the content they are “most likely to like” which is an average of what they viewed before and what is the most popular (p. 33).

Access to moving images and knowledge about moving-image culture is no longer regulated by the institutional frameworks created the film culture of 20st century which are festivals, cinemas, reputable magazines or printed media (Hagener, et al., 2016, p. 7). While their curators can decide what people can or cannot watch, Netflix, Amazon and similar platforms have great influence to shape moving-image culture of today.

The digital technology over impressing the filmmaking business, may affect the ways of independent filmmakers in a positive manner. In addition to establishing a deeper and sustainable relationship with their audience, thanks to digital platforms, they have been able to find models of more direct funding and digital distribution (Gubbins, 2014). Besides the possibility of releasing films online simultaneously with theaters, film piracy has substantially ended (Agarwal & Agarwal).

Even if the experience of to see a movie has changed in parallel with the technology, the movies are still considered as a temporary commodity of service which companies try to utilize for maximizing their revenue along with the distribution chain (Savage, 2014, p. 10). As Anderson (2004) mentioned, the audience suffering from the “tyranny of lowest-common-denominator fare” for a long time, subjected to the blockbusters and manufactured pop. Now, platforms offer commodities, that target average taste and the smallest common denominator, to the viewer as if their own preference.

1.1. Research Question

Expanding availability of ‘Video on Demand’ platforms and the opportunity of accessing the audio-visual content through an online interface may be evaluated as it will be the end of the cinema industry in the traditional manner or it will bring again a transformation throughout the industry by creating a more democratic environment at the point of access to artistic content.

This study aims to analyze the impacts of video-on-demand services becoming a rival to motion picture theaters by making their content libraries accessible at any time and any place to the Turkish film industry.

The research question of this study is whether the movie theaters in Turkey will be influenced by the changing film viewing practices as a result of the opportunities brought by the digital film platforms. Whether the discussions that the movie industry or movie theaters have a short life span valid for the cinematic environment of Turkey or not is also another question in focus.

1.2. Methodology

The quantitative analysis is used as the methodology of this research. Three video-on-demand platforms, or services, are handled within the scope of the study: Netflix,

BluTv and MUBI. These platforms have been providing subscription video-on-demand, or SVoD, services in Turkey: The reason for these platforms' selection is that they use the paid membership as income model and do not contain advertisements. Based on the recent years' numerical data about the theaters, released films, tickets and audience, a conclusion on the current status of the motion picture industry in Turkey is attempted to reach. A prediction is made about the future of movie theaters, by way of comparing the situation of movie industry and the data belonging these three platforms.

In the second chapter, after the introduction, the history of digital revolutions experienced by the cinema industry will be reviewed. Literature on video-on-demand will take place in this chapter and the debates on the future of cinema as the main focus of the study will be mentioned.

In the third chapter, the current cinematic environment of Turkey will be examined in order to see the conditions that drive people to digital content platforms instead of watching movies in traditional theaters and in order to make an interpretation about the future of independent cinema by looking at today's circumstances. The data especially belongs 2000s is taken into consideration in the course of analysis. Time frame of 2015-2018 is specifically has an importance since this interval covering the period that 51% of MARS Entertainment, which has dominated the industry by force of merging distribution and projection activities, is sold to a foreign company and also the period it started to playing an active role in the film production phase. The

two major SVoD platforms, Netflix Turkey and BluTv started their activities in the local market also within the same period, 2016.

In the fourth chapter, the digital platforms serving as SVoD in Turkey with monthly paid membership model, Netflix, BluTv and MUBI are analyzed and compared in terms of genre, production year and number of films which are included in their -particularly domestic film- libraries.

And lastly, in the light of information regarding the current industrial conditions, a conclusion will be drawn on how the film industry and the audience is impacted by the digital platforms. The final section will also include an evaluation regarding the future of independent filmmaking.

The scope of the study is restricted by Turkey as a territory or as an industry. Each country has different industry structure with specific features and dynamics, and this kind of a study would not be enough in order to reach a result which covers the worldwide. Platforms owned by cable TV broadcasting companies or telephony operator companies are excluded from the scope of the study, and, only the platforms that provide content in the online channel are included.

Another restriction is the lack of data regarding the yearly subscribers of each platform for the Turkish market. Again, there is almost no data on yearly amount of tickets sold for the film festivals in Turkey.

The transformation of cinema into digital data has made it very difficult to protect movies against piracy. Illegally watching, downloading or sharing movies has been a topic of discussion in Turkey as in the world. It is seen that, the pirate market grown in 2014 and 2015 when the digitalization became dominant in the theaters (Zengin, 2018). Various online content provider has been partially or completely blocked off by the court decision until today. YouTube, for instance, is one of the most popular platforms as in the world and removal of videos because of the copyright is a very common situation. There is an ad-free version offering premium content, YouTube Premium, however it has not yet active in Turkey, therefore it is not included in the scope of this study. PuhuTv is another example of popular digital platforms in Turkey. It creates original content of TV series beside having a film library of 272 domestic productions which a major part is consisting of pre-2000 productions except for a few popular movie from recent years. It is also not included in the study because it is using an ad-based revenue model. Lastly, Amazon Prime Video, one of the major subscription-based video-on-demand services in global, is not included in the study, although it is accessible since 2016. This is because it still has shortcomings in terms of subtitle support or licensing agreements, hence it is not localized and does not have a significant volume of member yet.

The platforms and services using the system of monthly paid-membership are included in the scope of the study. Pay-per-view platforms are not included due to the payments required for per film almost equal to the average prices of cinema tickets.

At this point, for the motion picture theaters, they are not a big competitor as the digital platforms servicing with a monthly membership.

Academic thesis, articles, official data, published reports regarding the film industry of Turkey and digital platforms, are used as resources. By the nature of the subject and as a matter of its currentness, the reputable news was also used as sources.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 History of the Technological Revolution in Cinema

In *The Decay of The Cinema*, Sontag (1997) says that “the cinema, once heralded as the art of the 20th century, seems now, as the century closes numerically, to be a decadent art.”

Manovich (1996) declares that, in the 20th century, cinema has played two roles. The role of the cinema was to capture and to store visible reality as a media technology. It was difficult to modify images once they were recorded and this is what gave cinema its value as a document, guaranteeing its authenticity. Although it includes a variety of styles within itself, the same rigidity of the film image has defined the limits of cinema.

While digital media is redefining the cinema, what used to be cinema's defining features have become default options. With enough time and money, Manovich says, almost everything can be simulated in digital screens and filming physical reality is only a possibility.

In historical terms, film culture emerged in the 1920s and 1930s with institutions such as film clubs, archives, specialized magazines and first festivals. The changes in the last 20 years have not only fundamentally transformed the film production, but also brought about vigorous alterations in the name of individual and collective engagement with cinema. If it is examined structurally, this transformation can be seen as a de-construction of formerly stable and hierarchical systems. Notions of the center and periphery do not connote anything. In consequence, it is a move towards heterogeneity and diversity, a turn from one grand narrative to many micro-stories (Hagener, p. 182).

From Lumière Brothers until today, technological improvements have been progressively impacting the film production, from silent film to sound film, black&white to color, wide-screen, digital, huge-screen, and 3D films, even the revolutionary VR film (Hu, 2016).

Antoine Lumière told Méliès that the cinema does not have a 'future' in 1895. Since then, predictions on the future or the death of cinema have been continuing (Belton, 2014). While in one axis, the cinema threatened to destroy itself by technological

change, on another axis, it was the potential victim of other media, television and video was expected to destroy it (p. 460).

The cinema industry has made a long journey from silent movies to vocal and colored films; and then the age of digitalization emerged (Agarwal & Agarwal, p. 169). In the first three decades, the films were silent and the first use of voice in 1927, *The Jazz Singer*, surprised the audiences who were disappointed by the film's replaying of reality (Hu, 2016). In 1930, with the appearance of sound films, the number of audiences doubled. The sound technologies impacted the industry in every sense from equipment for filmmaking to the performance of players. About the coming of sound to cinema, Sontag (1997) states that the image making lost much of its brilliance and poetry while commercial standards tightening. The way of Hollywood to produce dominated filmmaking for nearly 25 years.

By many filmmakers, critics and theorists, the coming of sound was considered as the death of the cinema. That “André Bazin famously said put its faith the image” was in the time of silent cinema (Belton, 2014). René Clair complained that the sound is devastating, and said that “the screen has lost more than it has gained” (p. 460).

24 frames/second, still being used today, was set as the projection speed and a standard for the width of soundtrack was developed with many people from the industry coming together. Although they competed with the sound films in the

manner of both projection and distribution at the beginning, silent film could not maintain its continuity as a result of growing demand to sound films (Hu, 2016).

Since its birth, various methods in order to apply color treatment have been used on films. According to Maltby, about 80% of Hollywood films were manually colored in post-production in 1920s. But the process of coloring required every frame to be colored one by one and this was taking a very long time also the color faded in time (Hu, p. 11).

In 1920s, William Fox also saw the technologies of radio and television as a potential rival of cinema. Meanwhile, it was observed that Hollywood attempted to find ways of utilizing the radio and then television in order to advertise its productions and programming (Belton, p. 461).

After 1935 different processes such as Technicolor, Eastmancolor, Warnercolor and Metrocolor were introduced in order to colorize films. Although the film industry is not impressed by color technology to the extent that it is in the sound, it was a revolutionary innovation which encouraged further improvements within the industry (Hu, 2016).

Traditional motion picture camera used the 8mm and 16mm film format until the digital technology. The invention of digital camera ‘which is highly precise computerized equipment providing digital display modes for the convenience of the

shooting process' brought major alterations in the manner of post-production, storage and screening. The interval between the processes of shooting and editing has become shorter with the adoption of digital shooting (p. 14).

In "*If film is dead, what about the cinema?*" it is stated that, Rudolf Arnheim regarded the sound, color, 3D and widescreen as a threat in the name of the purity to the art of cinema (Belton, p. 461). For Godard and Vertov, in addition to that, narrative cinema is an ideological institution, which must meet its end, destroyed by alternative filmmaking practices (Belton, 2014).

On the other hand, Mulvey (2006) explained that,

“In 1990s, the story of mechanical, photographic, reproduction of reality came to an end and the conversion of recorded information into a numerical system broke the material connection between object and image that had defined the earlier history. No longer derived from the chemical reaction between light and photo-sensitive material, these images lost their ‘natural magic’ and the painterly character of the illusions of the magic lantern, the tradition of human ingenuity, returned to visual culture.”

Production of filmmaking is the processing the film where it is actually shot on film. Use of digital cameras, capturing images in digital format instead of films, has consistently increased all over the world because of both its cost-effectiveness and timesaving. The industry relies mostly on digital equipment for making movies today although there are few big-budget Hollywood movies of recent times shot with film cameras. More than 90% of Hollywood and Bollywood films are shot using digital cameras today (Agarwal & Agarwal, p. 5). The main reason for the transition to

digital cameras use is its reducing the cost of production and therefore, majority of filmmakers preferring digital over film cameras for making movies.

The process of editing or post-production, that filmmakers had to rely on manual techniques for creating visual effects, has significantly changed by advanced software products. With digital technology, the storage methods have also changed and transferring of film has become much more easier, compared the past. Films, now, can be sent as digital files instead of shipped in metal cans. Even if digital distribution has allowed more rapid access to the movies, for cinema owners, the requirement of equipping the theaters with compatible projectors and screens has arisen.

1997 was the year that the first time films on digital format were offered to the market (Mulvey, 2006). In the industrial scale, developing and printing photochemicals has started to disappear. The film lab of Technicolor has closed and Fuji-Film is no longer producing film for the motion pictures. Kodak, the last producer remaining, went bankrupt in 2012. And, in January 2012, the number of digital-cinema screens exceeds the number of the ones for 35mm throughout the world for the first time since 1999, when the technology conversion began, and then, *The Wolf of Wall Street* became the first major movie which is distributed to the theaters digitally, in 2013. In 2014, 90% of screens in USA were switched to digital from 35mm film (Alexander & Blakely).

Delgado (2013) says that, although there are scholars and amateur cinephiles arguing that the death of cinema will be a kind of transition and open up the doors for further explorations, these technological advances have adversely impacted independent movie theaters. Thousands of independent theaters, as it is well known, have closed because of they could not afford to shift their current mode of projection from film to digital.

2.2. Digital Technology and Platforms

As well as production process, Internet and digital technologies, enabling the higher technical quality as never before, have changed the distribution and consumption of audio-visual content. The internet is a major new medium for the transmission of the information and entertainment as a network of all networks, in addition to being an integral part of every modern business operation (Vogel, 2011).

Srnicek (2015) defines the platforms as digital infrastructures enabling two or more groups to interact, so, they are intermediaries which bring different users together: customers, advertisers, service providers, producers, suppliers, and even physical objects.

Saying digital technology has penetrated profoundly into every aspect of people's lives, leads to significant changes in film industry and the way cinema relates its audiences, Hu (2016) defines the digital technology as follows:

Digital technology embraces digital electronics, and utilizes certain equipment to transform picture, text, sound, image and other information into binary digits that can be recognized by electronic computer, which then computes, processes, stores, transmits, spreads and resume these information. It is named as digital technology because the computer is used to encode, compress and decode the information in computing and storage.

Based on the changes in digital technologies, in the 21st century, data have become determinant on the firms' relationship with their customers and other capital owners. Emerging as a new business model, platforms are capable of collecting and controlling huge amounts of data. This shift has let large monopolistic firms to rise (Srnicek, p. 15).

The myth of instant limitless access means that the underlying work is structurally covered. Access through WiFi, cable or satellite imply different infrastructures and economic arrangements, while the devices on which audiovisual material is available, might radically transform the experience of viewers. Likewise, the hardware and protocols used by companies or sharing platforms determine to a large extent the kind of traffic and material to be found there later. The complex functioning of the various programs makes it virtually impossible for the user to understand how his/her behavior is constantly monitored and evaluated. In this respect, commercial streaming platforms such as Netflix and Amazon Prime are in

the business of collecting information about the customer, as they are in giving access to films. Of course, cinephiles have often been at the mercy of idiosyncratic curators and archivists. However, curators and archivists can be approached, talked to, and held accountable for their decisions, whereas algorithms are usually guarded as trade secrets and remain inaccessible to the public (Hagener, p. 185).

According to Gubbins (2015), a major part of the film industry has embraced digital technologies in various forms, especially in the marketing field. Digital and on-demand models have attempted to artificially replicate the old analogue models and they are struggling since they are not in-tune with consumer demand.

Cinema industry, that made a long journey from silent movies to colored films, has been largely shaped by the digitization throughout the last decade. And, today, the Internet has become a conventional source of entertainment for millions of the people (Agarwal & Agarwal, p. 168).

One of the major difference between traditional cinema and digital platforms is that the cinema is a public place where the viewers are watching a movie at the same time together with the rest of the people who were stuck in a definite amount of time (Vielen, 2018). Another difference is that, going to the cinema is an event requiring to leave home, pay for film and communicate with the other people during this process. As a result, leaving cinema before the movie is over harder to leave for the audience.

The leisure-time spending preferences of audience have been shifted from more lower-cost as a result of the economic stagnation or recession phases to home entertainment activities (Tryon, 2013). In addition, Thjim (2014), declares about the audiences' preference, that:

It is clear that viewers who lack interest in the growing cinema trends will look elsewhere for their diversion, and with the plethora of other options available. The theatre itself has changed as well: new technologies like 3D are more common along with theatre design. For some movie goers, the options are lackluster. Ticket prices climbed. Nevertheless, 3D remains popular in theaters and with the large variety of movies which use 3D to some extent; it looks as though theaters will continue to use the technology among new methods of improving video and audio quality in the cinemas, or by having larger screens or seats. In general, these changes appear to reflect a desire to encourage people to come and enjoy the movies by adopting the mantra "go big or go home," with large portions, big screens and booming speakers.

Mulvey (2006) argues, new digital technologies have altered the film viewing practices, as a consequence of that cinematic content consumption isolating from the physical relationship. By the end of the 20th century, ways of consuming cinema have multiplied and the regulation of its speed has been widely extended. The internal ways of narrative have been affected by the digitization of spectatorship that the sequences can be skipped or repeated at any time and the hierarchies of privileges are overturned. She also argues that the new ways of consuming old movies on electronic and digital technologies may bring about a 'reinvention' of textual analysis and a new wave of cinephilia (p. 160). The opportunity of seeing old films from new perspectives will lead digital technology to bring it a new life and new dimensions instead of killing the cinema.

Silver and McDonnell (2007) argue that the cinema industry has a monopolist competitive advantage because of its existence of a century ago. From radio or television to video-on-demand platforms, introduction of the new advantages have been considered as threats. Herrington (2015, p. 10) mentions that, in the digital technology, trailers can be shared through social media and be used as advertisements on web sites with high-traffic, act as the focal point of a film's website, and inhabit sites dedicated to video content, such as YouTube. Digital is also the only medium encouraging audience interaction and allowing the viral marketing, besides being composed of 5 to 20% of marketing budget.

2.3. Video-on-Demand (VoD)

The system named as "Video-on-Demand" allows users to choose an audio-visual content and watch TV series and movies. VoD services offer access a variety of online content from the comfort of their homes without any concern about timing or schedule.

Video-on-Demand is defined as premium over-the-top content which is distributed over the Internet. There are three fee-based business models: transactional-VoD or TVoD, which rentals as a single or pay-per-view, subscription-VoD or SVoD, which rentals as subscription-based services ,and electronic-sell-through or EST, digital purchases via download or permanent cloud-storage. Ad-supported content and

amateur video contents are not included in these platforms (Statista, 2018). In short, the market segment Video-on-Demand includes the three sub-segments: Pay-per-view, Video Streaming, Video Download.

Subscription-based Video-on-Demand services such as Netflix or Amazon Prime Instant Video, have offered unlimited access to their content libraries for a monthly subscription-fee. Movies and TV series can be streamed to various supported connected devices. The fact that the platforms serving with monthly membership do not contain advertising is an important feature that distinguishes them from the other online platforms.

As a result of the emerging digital technologies, independent film distribution has been affected by changing relationship with a new type of consumer. The opportunity to explore new business models that these technologies facilitate is influential in the same degree. The problem regarding the current situation of the industry is not technical, but economic. Creative businesses should develop new models and acquire new skills, and, cinemas, especially arthouse theaters, should find new ways to attract price-sensitive young audience, who do not necessarily see the cinema as the best place to see a film (Gubbins, 2015).

Consumer behavior associated with the consumption of audio-visual content has changed considerably within the younger demographic. This primary target customer segment of cinemas favors time spent on mobile devices and online as opposed to

viewing movies by traditional means. This has been attributed to the evolving digital distribution channels available and the rapid adoption of new technological devices (Savage, p. 12).

According to Culkin and Randle (2003, p. 1), the distribution and exhibition of motion pictures is at a crossroads. Since 1890s, invention of cinema, “the ‘picture’ has been brought to the spectator in the form of photochemical images stored on strips of celluloid film passed in intermittent motion through a projector.” Then, at the beginning of the 21st century, an entirely new method, which let physical film replaced by digitally stored data and does not require any support other than a computerized file, has appeared.

Gubbins (2012, p. 37) uses the term ‘Active Audience’ to refer to a new group of technology-savvy audience primarily consuming content throughout the Internet. This demographic demand personalized online content that leads to a greater freedom of choice, flexibility, and mobility in their media consumption (Pardo, 2014, p. 330). The independent film industry has a fragmented value chain, which makes it challenging for filmmakers to fund and distribute their films. Gubbins says it is highly likely that the new media forms, i.e. downloading and video-on-demand, will have a significant role in order to make independent cinema reach to a wider audience.

The feature of making suggestion is another significant point about content platforms. Amazon Prime Video was the first to use the software that creates personalized suggestions. The algorithm has been used by many VoD providers today. Tryon (2013) declares that personalization level in addition to the extensive content and mobility may lead a democratization. However, the possibility of using this algorithm in order to manipulate the audience should not be ignored. With strong recommendations, while minimizing the subscription cancellations, platforms can increase the amount of time that audience watch content. Netflix, for example, splits its audience into more than two thousands group and the recommendations are dictated by the group which the viewer in (Plummer, 2017). So, in order to predict or direct the preferences of a viewer, the behavior of the other users within the same groups are used. The recommendation engine of Netflix has the customers' data of viewing, search, scroll, and ratings as well as time, date, location and the used device in order to predict what they will be interested in watching. Moreover, it can track the audience behavior which varies depending on the day of the week or the time of day (as cited in Vanderbilt, 2013).

2.4. Independent vs. Blockbuster

Technological developments and innovations provided by the capital are rapidly circulating and this process is destroying the chance of competition for independent cinema (Agarwal & Agarwal, p. 170).

As Sontag (1997) mentioned, there has always been a conflict between the cinema as an industry and cinema as an art, so, cinema as a routine and cinema as an experiment. About the difference between mainstream and independent films, Akkaya (2016) identifies that “mainstream films tend to exploit the box-office as soon as possible while independent films seek awards in various domestic and international film festivals.” As a result, the perception of independent film is more related with the artistic satisfaction, while mainstreams are considered as an investment made in order to make money.

Art film, independent film, and commercial independent film are all different types and among the major distinctions between an independent film and a mainstream film, Delgado (2013) mentions distribution, in addition to the domestic box-office gross. This distinction becomes more ephemeral when classifying these types. It is not difficult to distinguish between an independent film and a commercially independent film, in the financial context. Films supported or produced by a major studio would be considered as commercially independent which generally has tropes of independent film but has a bigger budget and as a result, has more screens to be shown. Art film, on the other hand, is a totally different classification which is above anything else and seldom seen outside of the independent market.

Herrington (2015) describes the blockbuster as the film that achieved tremendous national and commercial success. Since 1950s, the term that entered into vocabulary with *Jaws* in 1975 has been used for the movies which generated impressive

revenues (p. 2). A film with a huge production budget and market campaign to achieve box-office revenue can be considered as a blockbuster. He mentions merchandise that further cemented its status as a cultural phenomenon and blockbuster powerhouse, with its immense potential for revenues (p. 26).

It is a well known fact that film industry usually targets the mainstream audiences just like television broadcasters since the consumers, most of the time, are satisfied with what is popular, rather than the niche products. Jenkins et al. state that the providers of mass-market fail to meet the desire of the audiences for a wider content in terms of genre (retrieved from Yağcı, 2014).

While most of the independent films are targeting just a few theaters for their opening weekend with the expectation of audience, the formula of a blockbuster and the formula for many major modern releases is to release a movie in as many theaters as possible (Herrington, p. 15).

Defining a genre of film is a difficult task. Art films, which are unique, crosses genres and they must be defined in terms of the audience, reception, the place out of the mainstream. Audiences are forced to make a choice between spending a few hours to see a realistic action-adventure or violent drama with enormous sights and sounds, or staying home and watch an art-house film on their devices' screen. The irony is that the choice may excite or astonish more than the blockbuster movie without the sensory experience of the theatre (Thjim, 2014). It is also stated that the

years with a big blockbuster are naturally more likely to produce high attendance at the movies and the marketing or advertisements surrounding this kind of movies encourage people for going to the cinema.

According to Shone and Elsaesser (as cited in Vielen, 2018), ‘blockbuster’ is about grand stories. While it is harder to define the genres, a crime or drama can be easily recognized. However the elements making a film crime or drama are arguable. They mentioned two other elements, ‘reception or financial success of a film’ and ‘marketing campaign and budget’. These requirements make blockbusters a type which is most influenced by new technologies, since they have the budget required for new technologies and they can easily compete with other media owing to its mass.

Over the past decade, the number of online film distribution platforms, has almost doubled and Netflix, iTunes, Hulu, and Amazon Prime can be accepted as the major players worldwide. Along with the fast growth of video-on-demand consumption, and decreasing cost of film production, one would expect the independent film industry to be predominantly profitable. However, this is not the case: independent filmmakers are still struggling to finance their films and distribute them later to reach an audience.

Delgado (2013) states that the world of independent and art film exhibition has experienced a rollercoaster ride since the early days of cinema. Vielen (2018) makes

the same analogy for blockbusters by saying, if the blockbusters are compared to roller-coasters, the cinema is the attraction that people go to for the ride. With the predominating digital in the exhibition, the advent of the multiplex, online streaming, and VOD, there have been a few cinemas that have held on to survive shifts in technology.

CHAPTER III

AN OVERVIEW OF TRADITIONAL FILM INDUSTRY IN TURKEY

Turkish cinema industry with its components will be explained in this chapter in a general perspective. Besides motion picture theaters, biggest film festivals of Turkey and *Başka Sinema*, an organization with the aim of bringing festival films to the audience at different locations of the country all year long will also be handled. In order to give an insight about the future, the current dynamics of cinematic environment should be examined. Within this scope, the motion picture theaters considerably represent mainstream cinema, independent theaters and film festivals approved as the most important venues for non-mainstream alternatives will be reviewed.

The cinema industry which is formed by the combination of production, distribution and exhibition mechanisms (Allen, 1985) is largely shaped by the distribution phase that is the process of films' delivery to national and international market and gaining importance in parallel with industrial growth. According to Roy Armes, the thing determining the structure of film industry is that the films can be bought and sold as property. And, in his book, *Entertainment Industry*, Harold L. Vogel (2011, p. 83) states that there is no difference between the film industry and the housing construction industry so that the vital initial ingredient is capital.

The film industry in Turkey is less regulated by law in comparison with European countries. The distribution and screening market has a high-density that sometimes show the highest level throughout Europe (2014). With the amendment, made in the Foreign Capital Law in 1987, to open the way of foreign distributors to operate directly in the local market, Warner Bros, United International Pictures (UIP) and Twentieth Century Fox were involved in Turkish market in a few years. The distribution network, which is in the hands of domestic producers until that date and not monopolized (even the movies with few audiences could take place in the theater) has become problematic for the national cinema by coming under the rule of foreign companies.

Until a few years ago, before the hegemony of Mars CGV on the industry, major American studios such as Warner Bros, UIP, Twentieth Century Fox were the dominant in the film distribution. These companies which were integrated at the

point of production and distribution, were preventing the distribution of the films which are independently produced and as a result, there was a domination of American movies in the theaters. This distribution relationship, which has become increasingly dominant in the cinema, leads to the fact that films produced outside the mainstream cinema, especially those defined as festival films or independent films, cannot meet the audience (Midilli, 2016).

Table 1: Shares of Distribution Companies According to Years

Company	2017	Company	2016	Company	2015	Company	2014
CGV Mars	% 36.16	CGV Mars	% 29.92	CGV Mars	% 30.23	UIP	% 31.16
UIP	% 26.48	UIP	% 28.91	UIP	% 28.42	WB	% 19.33
WB	% 17.02	WB	% 17.47	TME	% 11.30	Tiglon	% 17.36
TME	% 9.72	TME	% 14.99	Pinema	% 11.12	Pinema	% 7.13
Pinema	% 5.37	Pinema	% 2.68	WB	% 11.11	CG VMars	% 6.31
Chantier	% 2.19	Chantier	% 2.53	Chantier	% 2.63	TME	% 5.98
Bir Film	% 1.63	Bir Film	% 2.17	Bir Film	% 2.14	Chantier	% 4.80
Başka Sinema	% 0.46	M3 Film	% 0.49	Cinefilm	% 1.21	Medyavizyon	% 1.99
Total Audience	71,188,594		58,287,316		60,228,409		61,245,258

Source: <https://boxofficeturkiye.com>, 2018

Distributor companies determine the films to be shown at cinemas and the time and duration of their projection to the extent that they have the right to distribute movies that bring in large box-office revenue. Where there are a small number of distributors exist and they are integrated with the production companies, the existence of the producers apart from this structure is at the mercy of the distributors (Erus, 2004). In Turkey, more than 70% of the film industry is in the hands of three major film distributors ,which are CGV Mars, UIP and TME Films.

Mars Cinema Group was founded in 2001 and merged with AFM in 2011. This meant the merge of two biggest cinema operator of Turkey. In 2015, while it had 83 cinemas and 736 screens in 32 cities, 38% of Mars Group's shares sold to CJ CGV, the biggest cinema cineplex company of South Korea (Frater, 2016). As of August 2018, CGV Mars has a share of nearly 50% in the distribution market with around 20 thousand audience which was 25,740,404 in total in 2017 (Box Office Turkey). Now, CGV Mars has been operating in both production, and, exhibition and distribution fields of film industry.

The cinema industry in Turkey has been progressively growing. Box office revenues, the number of tickets sold, number of domestic productions released are primary demonstrations of this growth although there have been fluctuations in parallel with socio-political and socio-economic changes.

According to the data of Turkish Statistical Institute (2018), the number of movie theaters, which were 354 in 1990, increased to 606 in 2000 and the number of audience increased to 19,233,976 from 17,086,152. The change in the audience number was not directly proportional to the increase in movie theaters.

After the end of 1960s, the period considered as the golden age of Turkish cinema, or Yeşilçam, there have been radical changes in many issues across the country, especially in political and economic fields, and the cinema industry was deeply affected by these changes. With the introduction of television into the houses, the interest towards the cinema decreased.

After the 1980 military coup, the cinema came to almost a dead stop. The infertility caused by the current political conditions of the period has caused a significant decrease in both the number of films produced and the number of spectators. From the middle of the 1990s, movie theaters began to increase in number beside the transformation brought by digitalization and capitalization. With the global capital spreading in the country, street cinemas, which are an important component of urban culture, have closed down while the number of multiplexes taking place in the food courts of the shopping malls -or life centers in the name of recent years- increased. While most of the cinemas cannot adapting to digitalization due to the financial reasons, audiences tend towards the high-tech multiplexes. This situation, which made cinema more relevant to entertainment culture, was effective in increasing the number of audience. On one hand, the number of domestic films serving this culture

has appeared, on the other hand the concept of art cinema has emerged and the local films have begun to attract international attention (Gürata, 2010).

By 2000s a revival and growth has arisen in the cinema sector. Especially since 2007, the number of audience, the number of released domestic films -except 2016 when the military coup attempt took place- and the number of theaters have continued to increase year by year.

In 2017, total number of audience was 68,482,526 that is the highest figure of the last 20 years (TurkStat, 2018). Likewise, the number of domestic films released in 2017, 151, was also the highest of last 20 years. Despite this growth, this numbers are very far from the audience of 250 million in 1970s (Gürata, p.131), the bright periods of Yeşilçam.

In this respect, Özkaracalar (2016) declares that the successive record-breaking audience numbers in recent years are accepted as the records of all time based on the fact that there are no previous data from 1990s. However these records are valid for only the last three decades', not because there are no earlier figures, but because there are earlier and also higher figures available (p. 34).

Table 2: Top Movies of the Last Ten Years

Year	1 st Film	#Audience of the 1 st Movie	# New Movies	#New Domestic Movies	#Total Audience of the Year
2017	<i>Recep İvedik 5</i>	7,437,050	394	151	71,188,594
2016	<i>Dağ 2</i>	3,600,000	360	139	58,287,316
2015	<i>Düğün Dernek 2: Sünnet</i>	6,073,364	402	136	60,228,409
2014	<i>Recep İvedik 4</i>	7,369,098	359	112	61,245,258
2013	<i>Düğün Dernek</i>	6,980,070	326	88	50,295,757
2012	<i>Fetih 1453</i>	6,572,618	290	60	44,339,549
2011	<i>Eyvah Eyvah 2</i>	3,947,988	291	75	42,294,040
2010	<i>New York'ta Beş Minare</i>	3,474,495	247	66	41,534,146
2009	<i>Recep İvedik 2</i>	4,333,144	254	70	36,904,345
2008	<i>Recep İvedik</i>	4,301,693	266	51	38,414,342

Source: <https://boxofficeturkiye.com>, 2018

Although Turkey is an exceptional example in the manner of interest for the domestic films, it is seen that they are not different from Hollywood productions in terms of narrative and cinematic language when the highest-grossing domestic films are reviewed (p. 133). The box-office number-one films of the last ten years (2008-2017) are completely the domestic productions. While seven of these films are comedies, six out of this seven are composed of two different (slapstick) comedies and their sequels. When the audience records are compared to the film genres such as

action, comedy, sci-fi or love, it is seen that all films, except *Titanic (1998)*, are again domestic productions (Box Office Turkey).

3.1. Recent Cinematic Environment in Turkey

According to the film industry report of İstanbul Culture and Art Foundation (İKSV, 2016), Turkey's cinema industry began to experience both its most productive and its most successful years nationally and internationally. While Turkey is still behind the European countries considering the number of tickets sold compared to the population, it still has a small and therefore a growing cinema market. Although domestic productions have been predominating in number and there have been numerous productions that attracted millions to the theaters in recent years, films not competing in the commercial manner can reach a very limited audience.

The problems regarding the distribution network that displays an oligopolistic character have caused an injustice or unfairness in Turkish cinema especially in the point of exhibition. Since film distribution companies have been involved in film production in recent years, films belong to the producers who do not have distribution channels remain outside the distribution wheel (Midilli, 2016). Integration at the point of production and distribution processes makes producers with distribution networks extremely advantageous in movie theaters while producers' films that are not in contact with major distribution companies become

almost impossible to reach the audience. Again, the same reason hinders the visibility of independent productions competing in national and international film festivals. This situation leads to the uniformity of films at the same time, and negatively affects the expectation of the audience and even on the aesthetic perceptions in the long-run.

Festivals, on the other hand, pretend to be an alternative for the qualified audience in an environment which is extremely commercial and dominated by the distribution companies. While doing this however, most of the major film festivals are organized with the help of the support of the municipalities and the ministry. Although film festivals are seen as an alternative way for the productions that cannot be shown and distributed in mainstream channels, it can be said that these formations have become an industry among themselves. In last years, the producer's certificate requested by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism for the screenings became an instrument of the censorship and as a result of this, documentary and short films have difficulties in meeting with the audience as it is already not easy in the past. Although different forms like documentary, short, experimental can meet with the audiences only at the film festivals, in last three years this chance has also disappeared since the festivals canceling the competitions instead of making the screenings without certification (Başığit, 2016). Being an industrial event more than a film festival is another problem at this point. And, another point is whether film festivals really bring cinema closer to the audience or they serve an isolated audience in a profit-oriented way (Iardonova, 2015). The number of tickets sold in the festivals reveals the situation of the cinema audience in Turkey, in other respects.

The documentary made by Kaan Müjdecı, *Kapalı Gişe: Türkiye’de Tekelleşen Film Dağıtımı* (2016), includes interviews with independent filmmakers, producers and film festival directors in the frame of the domination of the market by a monopolized environment. The main problems regarding the industry are mentioned in the documentary throughout the interviews as follows: When the producers finish their films, they cannot find a partner for distribution and they are excluded from the sector. This is both interference of the freedom of enterprise and contrary to market conditions, besides preventing producers and creators from expressing themselves.

3.1.1. Motion Picture Theaters

As a result of the industrial conditions, motion picture theaters have been invaded by popular or mainstream cinema, which is shaped by television and advertising in a large extent, especially when came to 2000s (Behlil, 2010).

Another significant point to be addressed is that the films of people who do not have any cinematic competence, such as acting, directing or screenwriting, but have popularity on irrelevant platforms like YouTube or Twitter, are becoming common in the last few years. Since it is guaranteed that the follower group of these social media celebrities is particularly made up of young audiences, at least one hall is reserved for these films, regardless of any cinematic element. One apparent example is, the sixth of highest-grossing films of 2018, *Enes Batur Hayal Mi Gerçek Mi?* which is

starred by Enes Batur, a YouTuber with more than 8 million followers. The theme of the film, which is seen by nearly 1.5 million people on 326 point by being released two times within the same year, features again the life of this YouTuber. Similarly, *Cumali Ceber 1* (2017), *Oha Diyorum* (2017), *Cumali Ceber 2* (2018), that are shown at locations 269, 214 and 333 respectively, are also films made by the owners of digital media accounts with too many followers who are ready to fill theaters. On the other hand, *Ahlat Ağacı* and *Kelebekler*, two important examples of Turkish independent cinema from the first half of 2018, had shown at 195 and 75 locations respectively even though they were appreciated at major film festivals, Sundance and Cannes.

Data comparing whole year box-office revenue is demonstrated that the last three years' top films were distributed by CGV Mars. The table of all movies released in 2018 shows that the four out of the first five movies are distributed by CGV Mars again. These four films are domestic comedies which are *Arif v 2016* (rank 1), *Ailecek Şaşkınız* (rank 2), *Deliha 2* (rank 3) and *Aile Arasında* (rank 5).

With the total audience of 20,237,318 and with the share of 45% from the total box-office revenue in general, CGV Mars has the biggest market share. UIP and TME Films are following CGV Mars with 9,946,487 and 6,031,481 of total audience, 25.88% and 14.28% of the box-office revenue respectively.

TME Films which was founded in 2014, is licensee and distributor of 20th Century Fox's in Turkey and there are Academy Award winning productions such as *La La Land*, *Birdman* and *The Revenant* in its catalogue, as well as blockbusters like *Logan*, *Deadpool*, *Ice Age* and *Hunger Games*. In parallel with its intense marketing and distributing activities in the industry, TME Films has also been making TV sales, DVD and iTunes distributions for independent titles. In the year it was founded, 2014, it ranked sixth in the distributors list and in the next year it taken the third place of the same list. After being fourth at 2016 and 2017, it come in the third place again in 2018. While TME Films does not have any film at top ten before 2018, it has two blockbuster in this year: *Enes Batur Hayal Mi Gerçek Mi?* is the 6th and *Avengers: Infinity War* is 7th of this list.

As a producer, BKM, has been a dominating figure on theaters with CGV. On Box-Office web page which is accessed in August 2018, there are 7 no-name future projects of BKM and these are seems to be co-productions of BKM-MARS and will be distributed by CGV Mars. Two family comedy projects, two drama and two comedy projects, some of which will be sequels or will be followed by sequels, will be released between October 2018 and August 2019 even if they do not have a name, scenario or plot. Just with the genre information, the theaters which will be screening them are reserved. In 2015, 2016 and 2017, respectively, 7, 8 and 11 films produced by BKM was released. This number is expected to be 27 for the year 2018, with the released productions and the coming ones.

3.1.2. Independent Cinema and the Film Festivals

Film festivals are the foundation of the corporate art world of cinema by being the organizations that promote cultures to spread internationally.

Film festivals held by the festival organizing committees and elective boards and they are supported by various financial resources. The content of the films presented to audiences is determined in a manner by festival organizers and the financiers. Festivals calling on the axis of a certain theme constitute one of the most prominent examples of this situation (Bikiç, 2018). Which forms (short, feature, documentary or experimental) will be comprised in which proportion varies in accordance with the identity and structure of festivals. For instance, in terms of short films and documentaries cannot be seen in theaters, festivals that often hold contests in these categories and support the filmmaking by awarding have significance.

There are several large-scale, international and national, film festivals reaching thousands or ten thousands of audience in Turkey. İstanbul International Film Festival, Ankara International Film Festival (29), !f International Independent Films Festival, Festival on Wheels, Antalya International Golden Orange Film Festival. These festivals have been taking place for a period between 15-55 years. Just before this study have finished, Antalya International Golden Orange Film Festival held for 55 years, announced that the competition at national category is canceled completely.

Another Cinema (Başka Cinema) which is founded in 2014 by M3 Film - an art-house distribution company - and the foundation of Kariyo & Ababay with the motto of “Everyday Festival” aims to meet the audience with independent or art-house productions which can only be viewed at film festivals or not included in the distribution chain. It has been making monthly programs including contemporary productions which are appreciated in national and international platforms. The organization has reserved rooms of fourteen different theaters in countrywide and for the projection rights of these rooms and has invested for the digitally upgrade a lot of rooms. This let the cinemas, which could not afford the digitized equipment, to be improved and to reach more audience within the process (Carney, 2014). Besides of monthly programs, *Another Cinema* has offers a special program including themed events, film premieres with directors’ talks, short film nights, cult film screenings and so on. Other than these, there are also no intermissions, which has being widely applied in Turkey while it is not uncommon application in Europe.

In a sense, *Another Cinema* has been competing with popular cinema with a cinemathèque mentality and it has created a hope for the followers of independent cinema that is scavenged from screens. In the first half of 2018, 16 domestic and 35 foreign films, in total 51 films have shown at the theaters reserved in the name of *Another Cinema*. In addition to the films with a wide-range of genres from different countries, there is a selection of 5 films belong to Ingmar Bergman. In addition, there are 2 documentaries, 3 biographic films, 1 animation, 3 comedy and 20 drama film released in the first six month of 2018.

Akkaya (2016) states the fact that a few companies are controlling most of the distribution and exhibition sector in Turkish film industry, and, creating an exclusionary mechanism against the films with low budget. While the chance of films' survivability is decreasing, new filmmakers mostly have to look for public funding for their projects. And, since they cannot be able to earn box-office revenue, they have to continue to search for funding in also their following projects. This is because of the lack of funding mechanisms in practice that exclude distribution and exhibition support for low-budget films. This vicious circle necessitates a reconsideration of the factors since it has a definitive effect on the economic definition of independent films in Turkey.

A few important points exist regarding the film festivals. One is that a film can receive multiple awards at different festivals in the same year. This situation can vary depending on whether the juries are made up of different or identical names. Of course, it can be said that the same members of the jury, who have taken those films in different festivals and feature those films, are as effective as their own qualities (Bikiç).

There is another point which should be mentioned in the manner of audience's increasing interest to the digital platforms moving away from the theaters: Censorship. This problem has attracted attention in recent years, especially with films which have been denied for screening during film festivals. In 2014, the documentary *Love Will Change the Earth* (*Yeryüzü Aşkın Yüzü Oluncaya Dek*)

removed from the program of Antalya Golden Orange Film Festival and subjected to censorship. Following year, another documentary, *Bakur* was similarly removed from the programs of different film festivals. For the canceled screenings during the festival due to their political content, operating certificates were used as an excuse. Operating certificate is obtained from the ministry for a certain fee and it is required for showing the film even if they are short or documentary, the forms which can only be exhibited at film festivals. This means a financial burden for filmmakers who cannot gain revenue and cannot find much funding in the current conditions of the country. As a result of that, in the following years, short and documentary film competitions of festivals were canceled.

Another example is that *Clair Obscur (Tereddüt)*, written and directed by Yeşim Ustaoglu, had to come out in 2016 by cutting off some scenes, since the film was funded by The Ministry of Culture and Sports at the post-production process. If the film is decided as +18, the ministry would have the right to reclaim the funded money.

While independent film means “the films that does not belong to big studios like Warner Bros, United International Pictures or Fox. If a film is produced other than these companies it is considered as independent” (Üzel and Tezel, 2015). This definition does not meet the concept of “independent film” in Turkey. This concept, in Turkish cinema, is closer to the art-house cinema and independent films are rather

perceived as festival film, non-mainstream or films with low-budget but artistic concern, by audiences.

Compared to the films produced in the European Union, Turkish films are more dependent on the box-office revenue in the local market. According to the report (2014) which examines the period between 2009 and 2013, the box-office gross of Turkey, to a large extent, is shared between a few commercial domestic and fewer American films. On the other hand, many local films are in an effort to find their place and meet with the audience in the cinema distribution system, which is usually interested in commercial box-office films. It can be easily seen that the same situation is still valid today. While the high market share for domestic films does not mean visibility for many Turkish films, any state support mechanism targeting the distribution and screening of domestic films and art films is not existing.

Behlil (2010) mentioned that many of the directors within the festival circles are working with their own production companies in order to make their films. To give several example, Semih Kaplanoğlu has a production company, Yeşim Ustaoğlu has Ustaoğlu Film founded in 2003, Derviş Zaim established Marathon Filmcilik in 1996 in order to produce their own films. Nuri Bilge Ceylan, in addition, was producing his films with NBC Film until he started to work with Zeyno Film, independently founded art-house production company, in 2006. Also, Reha Erdem owns Atlantik film that producing large-scale advertising films in order to fund his own film.

CHAPTER IV

SVOD PLATFORMS IN TURKEY

The expansion of online subscription streaming services in a global extent set grounds for a new media culture in Turkey. According to the data given by Statista, the number of SVoD users is expected to be around 7.4 million by 2022. User penetration of subscription-based video streaming, which is the largest segment of VoD market, is at 7.2% in 2018 while it was 5.9% in 2016.

While users or subscribers of SVoDs have been increasing, the film industry in Turkey is still growing in terms of the films released, tickets sold and the box-office revenue comparing to the world. There are several major platforms where the audience are able to watch films.

4.1. Netflix Turkey

Today's most important mass entertainment company with its more than 120 million subscribers around the world, Netflix Inc., an American-based company, had been operating in production and distribution fields between 1997 and 2007. While it was a DVD distributor, in 2007, Netflix expanded its scope of business by becoming a network offering the opportunity to watch films and TV series through the Internet, in other words it became a video-on-demand (VoD) platform. In 2016, which is the year its number of subscribers reached 75 million, Netflix started to service in Turkey with the support of Turkish dubbing and subtitle.

Netflix is partnering with content providers to get publishing rights licenses for different series and movies. At the same time, it is undertaking the production of various content or purchasing exclusive broadcasting rights. While the form of these productions, which are called Netflix Original Content, are documentary or TV series in general, the platform also became effective in terms of film production. It has also begun producing original programming which has cost them hundreds of millions of dollars to date (Wu, 2013). At the same time, Netflix aims at delivering the content to the right users through the algorithm working in accordance with user behavior and preferences.

That Netflix as an online, video-on-demand company is streaming its own audio-visual stories leads the company has tense relations with traditional film producers,

as evidenced by the booing incident at the 2017 Cannes Film Festival. During the event, Netflix screened its own produced film *Okja* in Cannes Film Festival 2017, and it was booed.

Netflix offers subscribers two main options as ‘TV Shows’ and ‘Movies’ and with these, it includes ‘Recently Added’ and ‘My List’ tabs at the top of its main page, the users see after logging in (see Figure 1 in Appendix). Netflix Originals which includes documentary series with several episodes constitutes of a considerable part of TV Shows. When 'Films' page is opened, a few films from each different lists are shown. Among these lists, there are the ones titled according to the genres (e.g., Comedies, Horror Films, Sci-Fi and Fantastic Films, Child and Family Films) and also the ones different from main genres such as 'Trending Now', 'Top Picks For... (the name of the user)', 'New Releases', 'Movies for ages 5 to 7'.

When all movies are listed, the interface allows the user to see them according to a few different criteria. The first one is genres. There are 18 different options available on the 'Genres' headline in film library, and other than the main genres such as comedy, action drama, family, some categories like ‘Independent’, ‘Documentary’, ‘Award-Winning’, ‘Turkish Movies’ are also available within this 18 options.

The category of 'Independent Films' has not included any domestic production or an example of Turkish independent cinema. While different countries’ productions can be seen under this category, descriptions are not showing the details about the

country of origin. Although it is named as ‘independent’, most of film within this list are also blockbusters or well-known films with high box-office ratings or the ones listed in IMDB Top movies. Domestic film category, on the other hand, also does not include any independent production and at a glance, it is seen that all of the films included in this category are the films made for box-office earning (see Figure 2 in Appendix).

For all films or for all genres selected, there is another criteria group let the users to list film according to four options. The first one is suggestions for the current user. This suggestions list is based on the previous behaviors of the viewer and it is showing the matching films in a descending order. The second one is release year of the film while the others are alphabetical order as A-Z and Z-A.

Firstly, there are around 1500 movies in total within the Netflix and the domestic productions constitute a very little part of the film library. When the category of ‘Domestic Movies’ is examined considering the points such as the year of release, category, producer company and distributor company, a few remarkable points will be seen. There are 60 movies under this category and except one - a feature documentary, Gallipoli (2005), which is seen by nearly 700,000 viewers, a rare figure for the documentaries - all are feature fictions. Again it can be said that almost all of these movies are the blockbusters or mainstream. There are just two examples which can be counted as non-mainstream: *İstanbul Kırmızısı* (2017) and *Çekmeceler* (2016). Based on genre, 46 out of 60 movies are comedies. Another important point

is that BKM productions constitute a considerable portion of the list. While more than three out of four movies are comedies, 34 of these comedies are BKM production.

When the films are ordered according to the years of production; it is seen that the oldest production belongs to 2001 and the newest production belongs 2017. While the films released between 2016 and 2013 constitute the majority of the list, there is just one movie released in 2017 and there are no movies from 2018 (Table 3). Between the period of 2015-2017, 20 movies are available: 10 of them distributed by CGV Mars and 12 of them are produced by BKM. Additionally, belonging the annual box-office top 10, there are 4 movies from 2016, 5 movies from 2015 and again 4 films from 2014. This means that more than half of the movies included from this time interval are from the Box Office-10 of related year. In total, there are 34 movies from the Annual Box-Office Top 10 lists and this is again more than half of the all list.

Table 3: Domestic Films of Netflix According to Genres and Years of Production

	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2006	2005	2004	2001	Total
C o m e d y	-	6	10	6	6	3	2	4	2	1	2	1	2	1	46
D r a m a	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	11
A c t i o n	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
D o c .	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
T o t a l	1	7	12	8	7	4	4	5	3	1	3	2	2	1	60

Source: <https://www.netflix.com> (August, 2018)

The short time interval of movies' production years, themes and the popularity of the movies, the dominance of comedy genre and the existence of current ruler production and distribution companies have shown that the Netflix Turkey is a small representation of the theaters or movie industry of Turkey. This is valid especially in the manner of independent and national cinema. While it includes in a great number of foreign films, it cannot be mentioned to diversity and alternative content. On the other hand, there are no new films produced in 2018, and there is only one film released in 2017. In this context, the platform also does not give a chance to follow current productions. In light of this information, in Turkey market, it is concluded

that Netflix has been serving the audience of Turkey's conventional or mainstream cinema by using the dynamics of the industry and making its film selection based on the audience considering cinema as entertainment.

4.2. BluTv

BluTV is a VoD platform founded on January, 2016. It is owned by Doğan Media, one of the biggest mainstream media corporation and the platform is using the infrastructure of another broadcasting organ incorporated by Doğan Media Group. The number of BluTV members reached 750.000 in April 2017. As the biggest rival of Netflix in Turkey market, BluTV, has also been broadcasting live 22 Turkish TV channels differently from Netflix. Early problems like license agreements limiting the catalog access, lack of Turkish dubbing and the subtitles on Netflix became an advantage of BluTV as a local platform at the beginning with its premium content close to 10 thousand hours (Kara, 2016).

The film section of BluTV consists of eight categories: Family, Action-Adventure, Animation, Documentary, Biography, Drama, World Cinema, Fantastic-Science Fiction, Festival, Mystery, Classics, Comedy, Horror-Thriller, Detective-Crime, Romantic, War and History (see Figure 3 in Appendix). It can be said that the categorization is made basically according to the main film genres. However there is documentary as a form which stands as a main type with the feature films. Also there

is ‘classics’ as another type of categorization which includes cult films from the world cinema, not including any domestic production. Actually there are nine films in this category while this study is conducted: Silence of the Lambs, Rain Man, West Side Story, Pink Panther, and a few. There were 82 films at the category of World Cinema at that time and there is one domestic production, *Körfez* (2017) in that list consisting from the productions of different countries. ‘Festival’ category has 90 films on the other hand, and 22 of 90 films are domestic productions. Films belong the directors who have importance in terms of the Turkish cinema like Yılmaz Güney, Zeki Demirkubuz was also included in this category.

BluTV offers domestic/foreign option for the audience for almost all categories and other than this, the platform makes audience able to sort the films according to four different variables. These are IMDB Score, BluTv Ranking, The Year of Production and The Date Film was Added.

In the page of ‘All Films’, audience can see three main category as ‘Domestic’ (51), ‘Foreign’ (247) and ‘Oscar award-winning’ (see Figure 4 in Appendix). There are 68 domestic films and 247 foreign films, besides the selection of 42 films from previous years’ Oscar-winning productions available under this categories. Within the “Documentary” category, there are 75 film including shorts and features, and also documentary series.

Table 4: Domestic Films of BluTV According to the Production Years and Genres

	2017 - 2015	2014 - 2011	2010 - 2008	2007 - 2005	2004 - 2001	2000 - 1990	1990 - 1980	1990 - 1970	1970 - 1968	Total
Comedy	8	6	4	4	3	3	-	-	-	28
Drama	2	5	1	2	3	6	3	6	3	31
Action	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	3
Horror/ Thriller	2	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	3
Documentary	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Total	13	12	5	6	7	9	3	8	3	66

Source: <https://www.blutv.com.tr> (August, 2018)

The films within the ‘Domestic Films’ library of BluTV belong to the interval 2017-1968 which is a wider interval comparing to the Netflix's domestic film library, while it does not include any production from 2018, similar to Netflix. There are 28 comedy films in the comedy genre, and 31 films in the drama genre. Comparing to both theaters and Netflix Turkey, it is seen that the comedy and drama are balanced in number. When the films are listed according to the years of production; it is seen that the oldest production belongs to 1968, and, the newest production belongs 2017. 25 of total 66 films are the productions from 2010 and beyond. There are both examples of mainstream and independent or art cinema within the list. 8 films of Yılmaz Güney, 6 films of Ali Özgentürk, 3 films of Şerif Gören, 2 films of Zeki

Demirkubuz and one films of Bilge Olgaç and Işıl Özgentürk, besides the popular comedies.

Even if the number of mainstream cinema examples is not small, the dominance of comedies produced by BKM as in Netflix Turkey's library is not seen at BluTV. Again, just 4 of 14 films that are from 2015, 2016 and 2017 are distributed by CGV and these are the ones that are far behind in box-office lists. Films on the top of the Box-Office lists are also rare compared to Netflix. On the other hand, films awarded by national and international festivals in last years such as *Körfez* (2017), *Annemin Şarkısı* (2014), *Babamın Sesi* (2012) are also included although they are in a small number.

While subscribers of BluTV can create their watch-lists, the platform also offer them a recommendation list like Netflix. Additionally, there are offered by the system such as 'Most watched domestic films', 'Most watched foreign films', 'Films not to be missed' besides the Recommendations created for each user by using the statistics of their movements in the platform. In the main page again the lists for Oscar-winning movies or for the action movies exist..

In the light of these, it can be said that the curation is made upon the mainstream trends for the BluTV. Films placed within the universal list such as *IMDB Top 250* frequently can be seen both in temporary and permanent selections. That there is a

ranking option of IMDB score is another thing regarding the point of the films' popularity and visibility has influence on audience behavior.

4.3. MUBI

MUBI, an online streaming service founded in 2007 in Silicon Valley by a Turkish entrepreneur and cinephile, has a unique business model that offers only a curated content of movie consisting of largely art-house, independent and festival titles. “Mubi” means mispronunciation of the word “movie” in South Asia, as “v” cannot be correctly rendered in many languages (Hagener, 2016).

Everyday just one movie is added to the platform and each film can be seen for only 30 days before being removed. In comparison with Netflix and BluTV, the platforms with long term content, MUBI is offering a differentiated menu and a more specific service. It is also reducing the content acquisition costs with its business model, providing a limited content (Frater, 2016). The number of MUBI subscribers was around 100,000 in 2012.

The foremost point of MUBI, co-funded by European Union, is that the selection comprises of films which are not easily accessible in the theaters and even at festivals. When its well-curated library and the monthly membership fee is taken into consideration, MUBI can be defined as a niche service.

In practice, MUBI is imitating typical film series of cinemathèques and film museums by presenting multiple works of directors and actors (Hagener, p.188). MUBI also includes producer retrospectives, feature films attracted attention at major film festivals and long-term content within the 30 movies available everyday with one added and one removed each day.

Home page of MUBI shows four headlines: 'Now Showing', 'Rentals', 'Feed' and 'Notebook'. 'Now Showing' is the page that shows the 30 films of the day and their details with the information of duration, production year and the country of films in addition to films' plots and remained time to watch each one (see Figure 5 in Appendix). The 'More Info' option includes the genre, subtitle options, the awards film won, shows the cast and crew with their names and photographs, regarding articles from 'Notebook', the comments made for the film, the lists involving the film, and lastly related films.

'Notebook' on the other hand, is a daily international film publication missioned to guide film lovers' searching in an overwhelming sea of content, according to the explanation of MUBI (see Figure 6 in Appendix). And 'Feed' is the page where MUBI's posts on social media and the followers posts regarding it is shared.

The platform also gives the opportunity to browse the released films until today, according to the year, country and genre (see Figure 7 in Appendix). When this browsing made for Turkish movies for all genres and for all years, it is seen that just

four Turkish movie released by MUBI until today. It is a fact that there are only four of them in the hundreds of film is a significant shortcoming for the platform.

MUBI has shown 38 documentaries until today. As only one which gives a place to the short films among these SVoD platforms, it has also shown 12 short film by now. Although these numbers are very small compared to other categories, MUBI can compete with a medium-scale film festival in terms of diversity in film genres.

4.4 Findings

When the 'cinema' is mentioned, feature film firstly comes to mind of almost all viewers. Since short films and documentaries cannot compete with the feature films in terms of audience number and revenue generation, they are excluded from the movie circulation. Therefore, these forms cannot find a place to reach the audience except film festivals. However, digital platforms may create a backdrop at the point of reaching the audience, especially for non-feature films, and supporting non-generic production formats.

Except the criteria taken into consideration by the distributors when determining the film program; expensive ticket prices, long advertisements that viewers must watch before the film starts, film breaks, and advertisements also shown at these breaks are among the main problems of the cinema audience in Turkey.

Although the average ticket price, which is 12,42₺ for 2018, does not seem too expensive, this average price given by Box Office Turkey does not reflect the reality (Table 5). It is common knowledge that the price varies in a wide range, depends on which cinema or which chain, which city, even which shopping center. In a Cinemaximum hall, for example, the price of a ticket may change between 8-27₺. The researches showed that the number of people going to the movie theaters to see a film will increase if the ticket prices are affordable (Baran, 2010).

Table 5: Monthly Membership Fee of VoD services and Average Ticket Prices
Between 2016-2018¹

	Netflix Turkey			BluTV	MUBI	Average Ticket Prices (Box Office TR)
	Standart	HD	Ultra HD			
2016	26.99 ₺	33.99 ₺	39.99 ₺	6.99 ₺	10.99 ₺	11.87 ₺
2017	15.99 ₺	27.99 ₺	39.99 ₺	9.99 ₺	11.99 ₺	12.23 ₺
2018	15.99 ₺	27.99 ₺	39.99 ₺	14.99 ₺	19.99 ₺	12,42 ₺

¹ : The table was created with the help of the data belonging the web sites
<https://www.netflix.com/tr/> , <https://www.blutv.com.tr> , <https://mubi.com/tr> ,
<https://www.log.com.tr> , <https://webrazzi.com>

According to the report of European Audiovisual Observatory (2014); documentary is the only form that has a wider place on VoD services than in theaters when the largest share belong to fiction films. National films, in general, has a wider distribution in cinemas than on VoD services and there is a relation between number of theatrical release markets and number of VoD release markets especially for European films. For all film forms and genres, a link between the number of theatrical release markets and the number of VoD release markets appears to exist. Animation is the film genre with the widest circulation in cinemas and on VoD services, especially for US animation.

All three platforms, have offered a trial period to the audience while allow monitoring on multiple screens - MUBI and BluTV offers one week, and Netflix Turkey offers four weeks. Moreover, each one is giving the opportunity to quit from membership whenever it is wanted. Netflix and BluTV can be positioned as the representative of motion picture theaters or industrial cinema in Turkey, while MUBI has been appealing to a small group of niche audience.

Netflix, in the first four months of 2018, released exactly as many movies as the six major film studios combined (Shephard, 2018). In the first 16 week of 2018, again, 25 films were released by Netflix. On the other hand, company, or the platform, began aggressively picking up or premiering scads of films at famous film festivals like Sundance or Cannes (Fennensey, 2018).

The platform, which is largely serving on the axis of mainstream cinema, at this point, may become a source of hope for independent filmmakers who have not realized their desire and for their problems regarding to meet the audience. However, another point to remember, Netflix and similar platforms are developing and expanding their content by processing data related to audience movements, and differentiating the content in each region according to this data. Under the circumstances, there is no reason for the domination of popular or mainstream movie domination in traditional cinema does not exist in these platforms either.

Data-driven approach applied for content analysis allows the platforms to identify fan favorites quickly and as a result, the biggest return on investment can be delivered. These comprehensions can be used to guide the future direction of content productions and acquisitions, and to be informed about decisions regarding the re-commissioning of shows for additional seasons.

The CFO of BluTV stated that the ability of monitoring data of subscription gives them a near real-time window into other customers' mindset and behavior, this means they can react quickly to changes in audience's behavior and adapt content and marketing efforts accordingly.

Even if MUBI, makes the audience feel like in the supermarket, among the three platforms it stands in a different point in terms of its approach to the cinema with its specially curated content. The first point about MUBI is that the complete

localization is not existing because the Turkish subtitles are available for just a part of the films. The second, average audience filling the theaters would probably prefer a service that requires less payment for more content. In that case, BluTV or Netflix is more suitable for such an audience who approach the films as an entertainment tool or leisure activity. However, for an independent filmmaker, it is the most suitable platform in Turkish industry conditions to present their films to the audiences after an adventure of film festivals. On the other hand, despite its cinephilic approach which gives importance to the alternative forms and art of cinema, MUBI does not include too much alternative in its content and in a sense, maintains the precedence of feature fictions which rules on the motion picture theaters.

The data of Statista (2018) shows that the number of the VoD users in Turkey is nearly 7 million by the third quarter of 2018. The number of SVoD users within this total is 5.8, while it was 4.7 million in 2016. According to the same data, for the year 2022, the number of SVoD users is estimated to be around 7 million, and the total number of VoD users is expected to reach 15 million.

The number of Netflix subscribers in Turkey was 117.500 in 2017. According to the estimation of Statista, again, the number of active streaming subscribers will be approximately 397,400 in 2019.

Looking at the number of the audience at cinema for the last three years when Netflix and BluTV also started to stream in Turkey, it can be seen that the numbers are increasing in spite of the platforms threat. The total number of cinema audience, which was 61,245,258 in 2014, increased to 71,188,594 in 2017. While this number was 31,151,309 in 2007, it can be seen that the number of viewers exceeded twice this figure in the last 10 years.

A significant problem regarding both traditional cinema and content platforms is censorship which becomes a serious matter as of August 2018. With a new regulation, Radio and Cinema Supreme Council started to control the online content and to apply censorship similar the ones that have been applied to television content. Domestic or international platforms which have been broadcasting movies, series and documentaries on Internet such as Netflix, BluTV, PuhuTV will now be supervised by the RTÜK, and additionally by Information and Communication Technologies Authority of Turkey (Bianet, 2018).

On the other hand, the original content of Netflix that differentiates its content depending on the region it serves, cannot be accessed from the region of Turkey. It also does not respond to the VPN solutions for the users experiencing this kind of regional content limitation problems. This situation leaves the audience looking for online content instead of going to the cinema in a serious dilemma. Restriction or censorship of the content will, in the long term, cause members to review their payments for these platforms.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Technological developments and possibilities of digitalization have been considered as a threat to the present conditions and practices of various art forms. This situation has been going on maybe for hundreds of years. At this point, without being so pessimistic, the examples of photography and printed books that digitalization is thought to bring to an end may be remembered. A significant number of people have been still using photographic film and dark rooms besides the revival of Polaroid, and, Kindle or the technology of e-book has not reduced sales of printed books. The widespread use of digital innovations may not always result in the complete disappearance of old practices, although the cinema is a much bigger industry than these and much more important medium to influence the masses.

It is true that, presently, the age of bits and bytes is being experienced. Between 50 and 70% of commercial motion pictures, was estimated to be still shot on film and many directors including Steven Spielberg, Christopher Nolan and Clint Eastwood would rather shoot on 35mm film rather than the digital (Belton, p. 464). Moreover, six out of the nine Best Picture nominees at the Oscars in 2014 were completely shot on film instead of digital cameras (Alexander and Blakely, 2014).

Sontag (1997) mentions the desire to losing in other people's lives, regarding the cinema. This is a form of movie experience, more broader and inclusive, the desire of to be kidnapped by the movie. So the experience of "seeing a movie" is just a part of cinema and seeing a great film from another screen at home does not mean to see in real terms.

Over the last decade, the film industry has significantly transformed with the recent advances of digital technologies which reshaped the way audiences consume media as well as the film distribution and projection. Online habits are evolving as individuals spend more time accessing the Internet and consuming content online, and, VoD services have become a fundamental aspect of expansion of entertainment delivery.

The fact that digital distribution makes it possible to launch a movie simultaneously on tens of thousands of screens throughout the world may one of the advantages brought by the platforms as a way of democratizing. The penetration of the Internet,

and the platforms in the same direction, has made various film libraries available in where access to the theaters is not, or no longer available such as rural areas or small settlements. Thus, it is an undeniable fact that the digital platforms brought democratization, with regard to that non-mainstream alternatives be able to reach their targeted audiences and that the audiences be able to reach the content they seeking for. As Sontag (1997) says “If cinema can be resurrected, it will only be through the birth of a new kind of cine-love.”.

In any case, places, screen sizes, sound and image technologies may change. But the art, artistic manifestation will live, even in a small number, so do the cinephiles who love cinema and attach value on it beyond the entertainment. In other words, there always will be people, who prefer seating in the dark, in order “to be kidnapped” (Sontag, 1997).

There may not great platforms in Turkey for cinephiles, both physically and online. Even if it is inevitable in the long-run, by looking at the increasing figures that keep up, it is hard to say that the theaters' will lose their validities in the near future. However, the existing lack of alternatives or genres is an important matter, and the abundance of domestic comedies which is targeting the mainstream audience also is not promising.

The domination of mainstream which is existing in theaters as a result of industrial conditions is also present in the platforms. While Netflix and BluTV have libraries

constituting from the drama and comedies which appeal to the general taste and be seen in theaters throughout the year, they are interspersed with a few art-house films. In that point, the weakness of Netflix can be clearly seen.

In order to Video-on-Demand platforms override the cinematic experience in Turkey, new and differentiated business models should be offered targeting a specific audience. Although the current digital platforms in Turkey seem more reasonable from the perspective of price-performance, for a real substitution, current platforms are not enough and competitive.

The possibility of “democratization”, which is insisted by Gubbins and Vogel, and those mentioned are some favorable aspects of VoDs on behalf of the producers and audiences. Besides the benefits on behalf of non-mainstream producers and consumers in the screening and projection, Smirneck's point about platforms, on the other hand, is a substantial issue which should not be ignored.

Such formations or platforms tend to be monopolize by their nature, since they can gain optimal profit only if they become monopolized. In order to succeed at that point, they have been aggressively collecting data. The platforms have become an increasingly dominant way of organizing businesses, so as to collect and analyze the data, and use them to make more profit (Smirneck, p. 171). They will continue to expand across the global economy, and, the competition will drive them to enclose themselves being more aggressive.

For the Turkish industry, in any case, the new regulations on censorship constitute a serious problem in the name of traditional cinema and the platforms. Considering all these conditions, with the intervention of the state in online content, in Turkey, the situation is becoming more challenging in terms of audience.

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APPENDIX

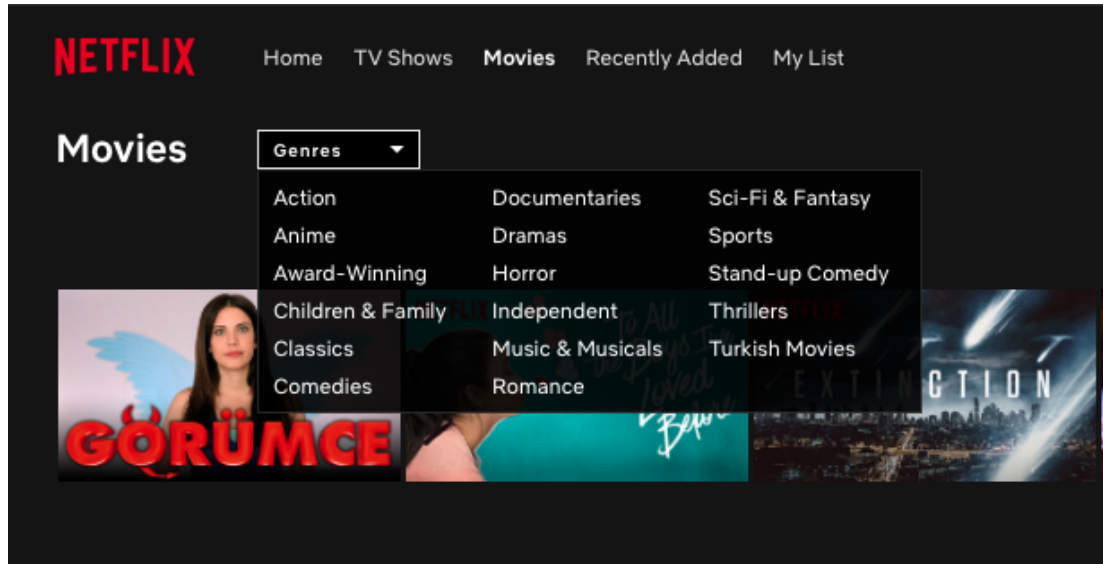


Figure 1: User Interface of Netflix

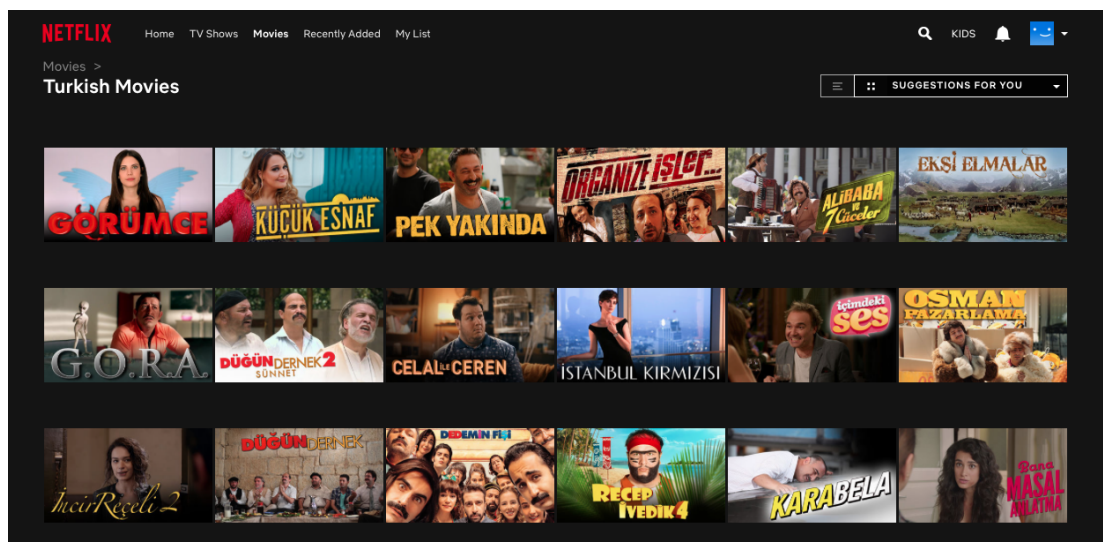


Figure 2: User Interface of Netflix

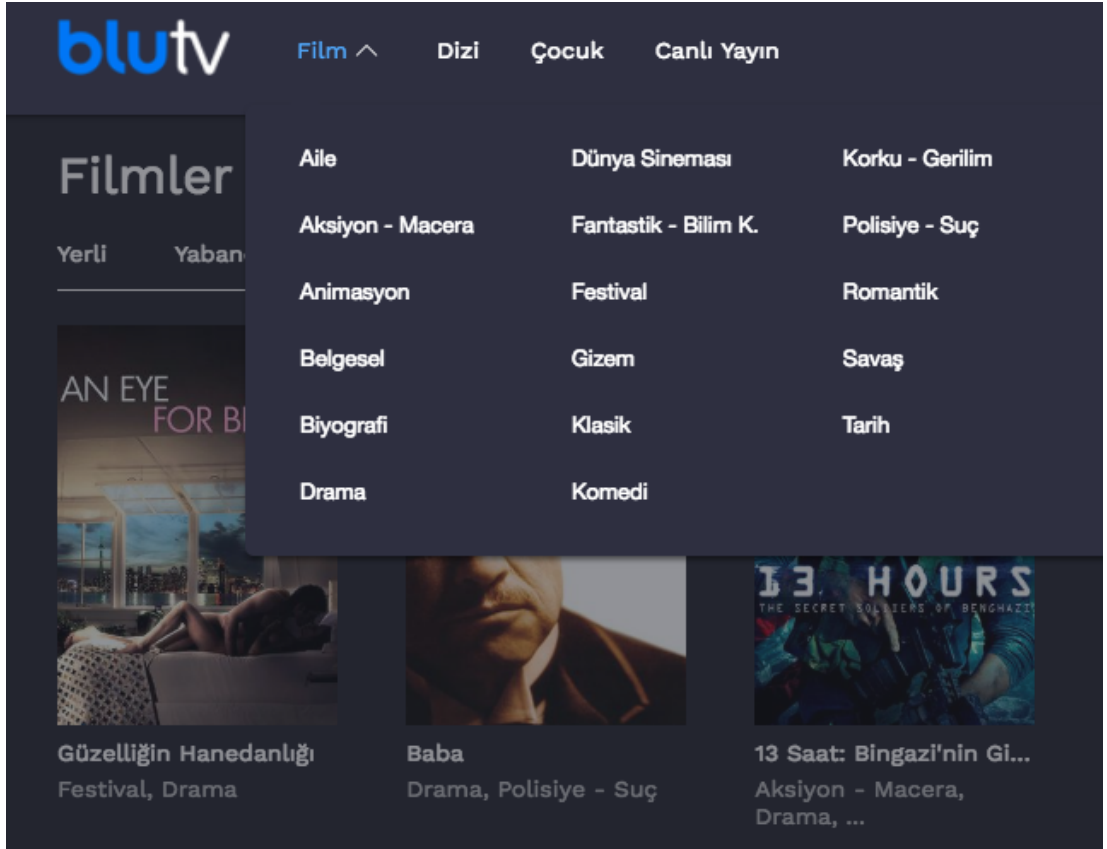


Figure 3: User Interface of BluTV

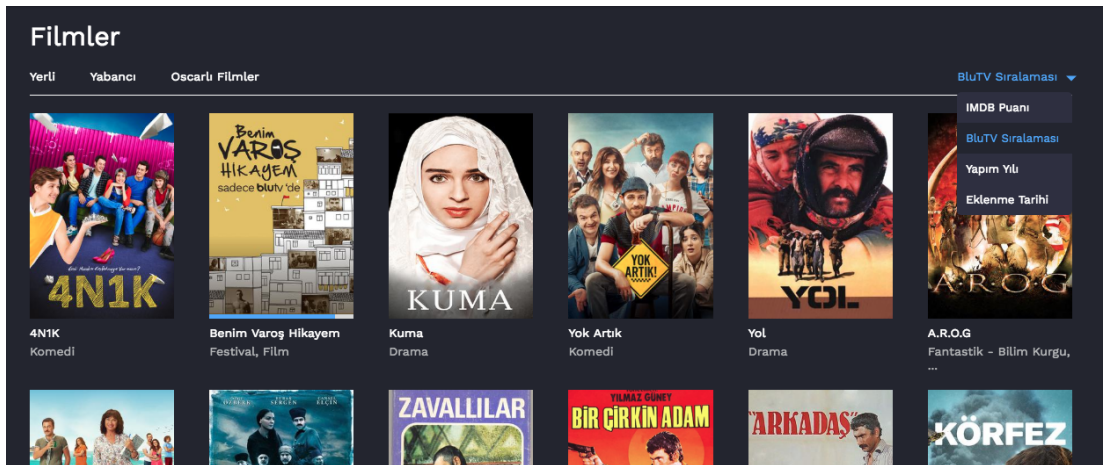


Figure 4: User Interface of BluTV

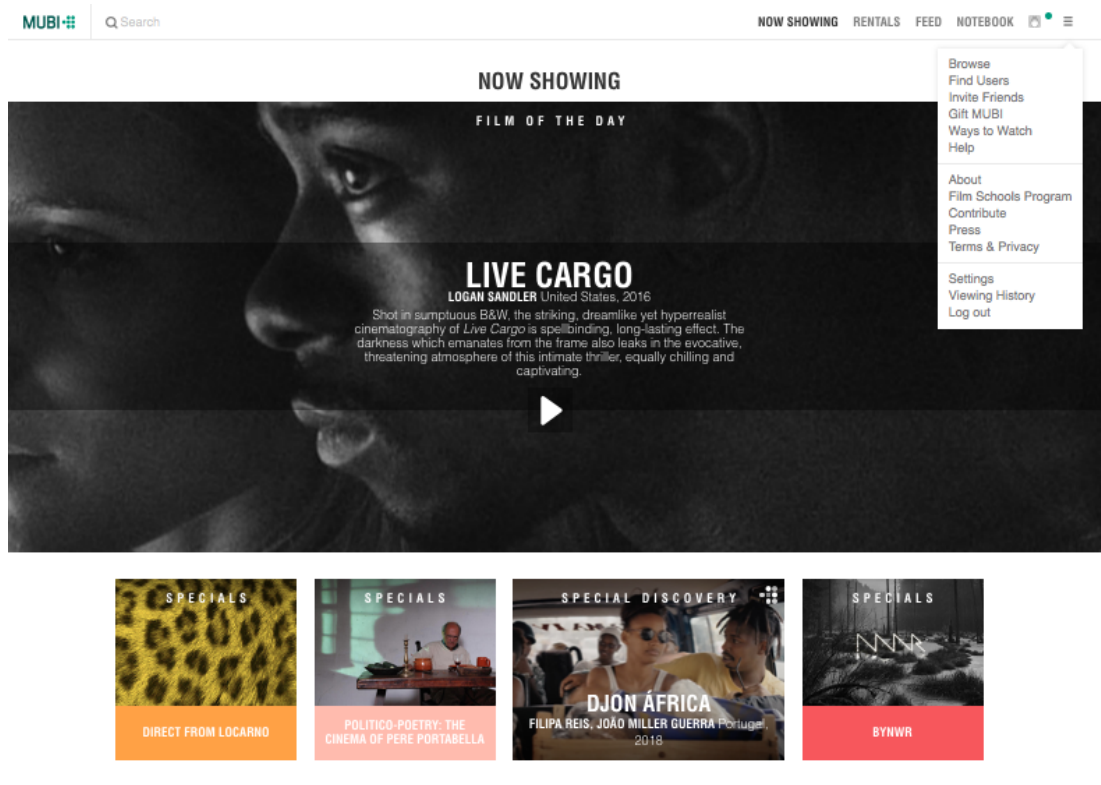
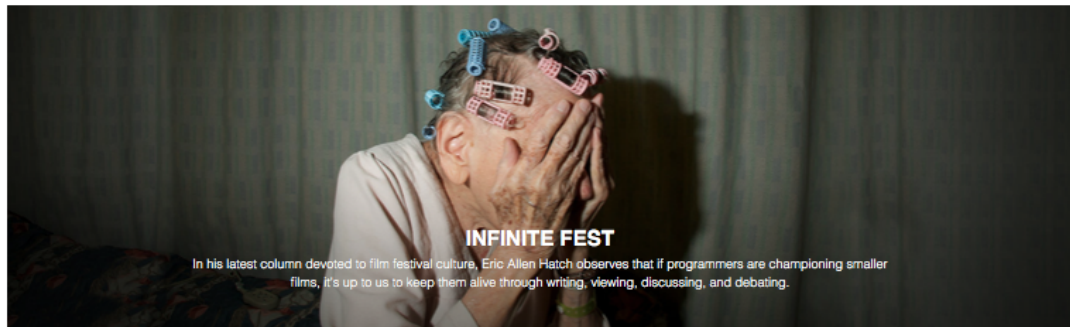


Figure 5: User Interface of MUBI

Notebook

Our Daily International Film Publication

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INFINITE FEST

In his latest column devoted to film festival culture, Eric Allen Hatch observes that if programmers are championing smaller films, it's up to us to keep them alive through writing, viewing, discussing, and debating.



Column

Stephen Nomura Schible Introduces His Film "Ryuichi Sakamoto: Coda"

"Ryuichi believes all sound is musical... This philosophy inspired his latest compositions, and our own editing style."

Stephen Nomura Schible • 07 SEP 2018



Review

Review: A Provocative Allegory of Womanhood—Rungang Nyoni's "I Am Not a Witch"

The debut film by Rungang Nyoni is a surreal and tragic social satire on womanhood and voyeurism, set in contemporary Zambia.

Naomi Keenan O'Shea • 07 SEP 2018



Festival

Venice: The Coen Brothers' Off-Kilter Tales of the West in "The Ballad of Buster Scruggs"

Joel and Ethan Coen have made an anthology of witty, off-kilter stories of the old west that thrive on ambience, dialogues, and imagination.

Yaron Dahan • 07 SEP 2018



Festival

Toronto: Correspondences #1 — Festival Prelude

Our critics' correspondence from the Toronto International Film Festival begins with recommendations and new hopes.

Daniel Kasman • 06 SEP 2018

Figure 6: User Interface of MUBI

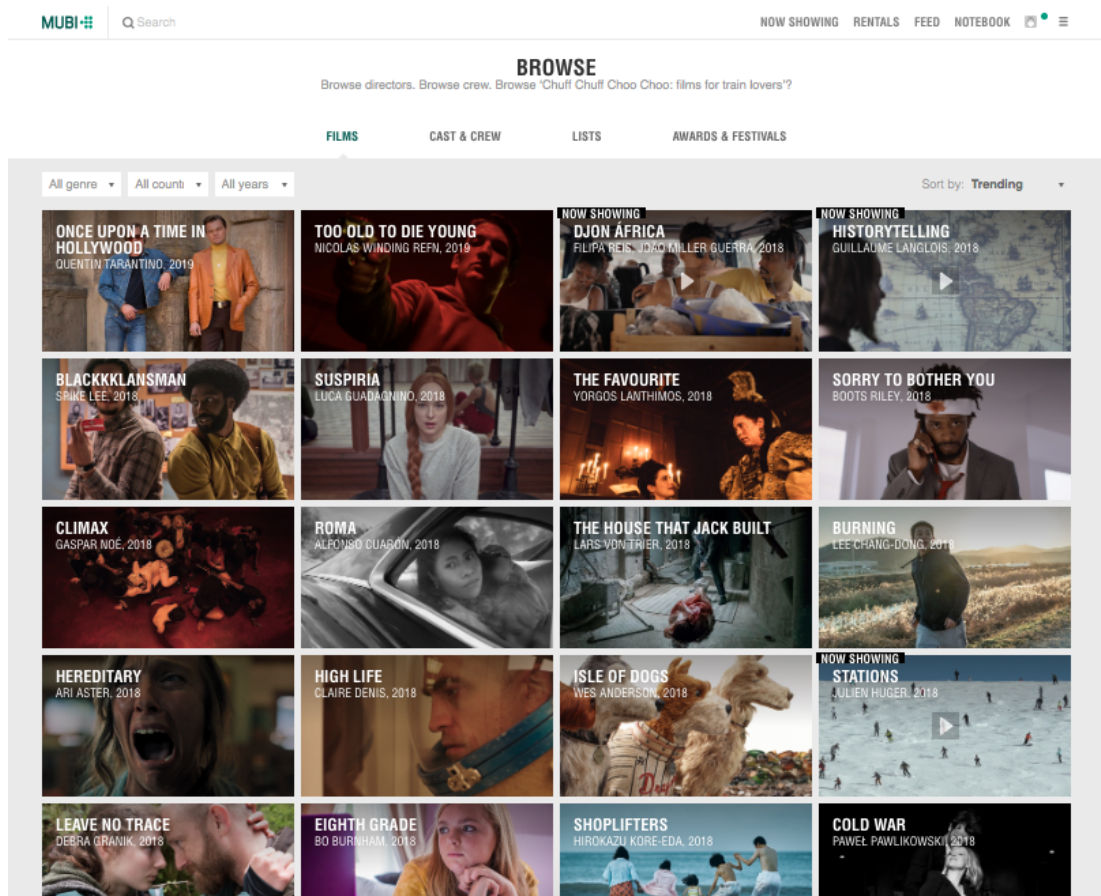


Figure 7: User Interface of MUBI