

Lights, camera, stream:

A Master's thesis on the contemporary consumption of film with digital natives.



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ABSTRACT

The landscape of film consumption is one that has been evolving constantly over the last few decades. Today however consumers are not only spoiled by the variety of content released in cinemas but also by the new players in the business, SVOD services. Digital natives have grown up with new technologies and have been easily adapting to whatever comes their way. The digital natives did not grow up with the same amount of technologies that we have today, and they can ironically enough remember the 'simpler' times. They also grew up during the peak of illegal streaming and downloading. This creates an interesting dynamic in film consumption which leads to the following research question: How do digital natives obtain and consume contemporary film?

The thesis analyses how these three consumption methods (SVOD, Cinema and Piracy) co-exist in these digital times and how one influences the other. In order to do so, the thesis applies the Uses and Gratifications through the use of in-depth interviews. A sample of 12 respondents between the ages of 17 and 25 was acquired where the participants were asked about their motivations and experiences towards each of the consumption methods. This thesis provides a fresh take on the subject due to its qualitative nature. Previous research provided the groundwork for the topic list, the eventual results and findings.

The findings suggest that cinema attendance has decreased and has become more blockbuster oriented. People have become more selective due to SVOD and perceive the cinema experience as more of an activity. SVOD satisfaction does not necessarily lie with the film content but with the medium itself and television series which may change with new competitors. While film consumption at home is still very much present, it has made way for a more frequent consumption of television series. The digital natives also admit that their illegal consumption has mostly been reduced to an emergency medium. The increasing technological developments hint at a volatile future in film consumption.

KEYWORDS: *SVOD, uses and gratifications, digitalization, piracy, cinema*

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1. Introduction

Over the last few decades, there has been an ongoing debate on whether the status quo of film consumption has been changed or will change. It is a conversation that has been evolving for the longest time. The most common topic that is raised in that discussion is whether cinema is on the brink of extinction or not. Not the artform itself but the movie theatre. Despite what the reader of this thesis may think, it is a concern that has been raised far before the emergence of streaming services. There was always this shadow looming that one day the cinematic experience might become obsolete. However, worldwide box office is increasing with an all-time record of \$41.7 billion which is a 2.7% increase from the year before due to blockbuster hits like Avengers: Infinity War, Black Panther, Incredibles 2 and Jurassic World 2 to name a few (McNary, 2019).

On the other hand, we are in the middle of an evolution in the film landscape. The increasing popularity of SVOD services have forced Hollywood studios to face the technological evolutions which will be explored later (Pardo, 2013). As of 2017, there are 180 million subscribers on Netflix and Amazon combined. With both the presence of film theatres on streaming services, audiences have been spoiled with an overabundance of content which is attributed to the long tail concept by Anderson (2004). The long tail concept is described as the ability for companies to provide a larger quantity and variety of products through digital channels than in physical stores. The paradise of choice and evolution of digitization have created a shift in the audience's film consuming behaviour. This shift has been predominantly present with millennials which has created a more participative and creative audience which is also characterized through the use of social media (Pardo, 2013). One of the effects is the increase in audiences' interest and consumption in television series.

Additionally, the vast catalogue by the streaming services provide more titles to choose from which has evolved as a possible alternative to the theatrical experience. Young people today have had the privilege of growing up with many technological advancements. It has led to a generation who is used to acquiring anything they want at any time they want it. The speed at which they can find and consume content has made it easier to satisfy their needs and increases

the instant gratification (Matrix, 2014).

Multiple cinematic institutions have grown weary of the increasing popularity of SVOD services and have therefore started investing in ways to make the theatrical experience more attractive and appealing than before. The theatres and films studios realise that in order to attract young people they have to highlight what a cinema can offer that is not available at home. Over the last few years there have been increasing investments by theatres to install facilities that support the popular IMAX, 4D, Dolby, etc. These techniques add to the overall cinematic experience which enhances the sound, picture quality so that audiences can experience the spectacle shown on screen. According to recent statistics for film attendance in the Netherlands, it is these modern technologies that are an increasing trend because audiences are looking for the more intense experience (www.filmonderzoek.nl). This recurring need for spectacle has not gone unnoticed. A recent study by NRC-Deadline revealed that some genres have had difficulties of attracting audiences to the multiplex. Genres that were generating large revenues in the 1990s like (romantic) comedies or dramas are nowadays preferably consumed at home (D'Alessandro, 2019). The article further explains that while dramas are struggling, they often have attributes that they can rely on that can increase ticket sales. Dramas are often based on famous books, released around awards season, made by famous filmmakers or based on a relevant subject (D'Alessandro, 2019).

The third element which is linked to SVOD services is the presence of illegal consumption at home. Since, the introduction of DVDs, it has facilitated audiences to find bootleg versions of films online. It is something that has plagued the film industry in the early and mid-2000s, and some studies proved that it hurt box office performance (De Vany & Walls, 2007). However, today in a post-SVOD world, it is worth inquiring what the position is of illegal streaming/downloading with young consumers. According to Spangler (2018), global piracy is increasing while film piracy is declining.

Therefore, I would like to investigate the following: **how do digital natives obtain and consume contemporary film?** This question will be examined through the three consumption methods that were explored: SVOD, Cinema and Piracy. The three perspectives are always evolving as is the film landscape itself as well. This thesis will apply a uses and gratifications

approach in order to investigate how and why the consumer chooses to consume the film content today?

Scientifically speaking, this thesis provides insights into modern audiences. As this thesis will show, audiences are evolving, and some might even say faster as ever before due to technological advancements. The thesis covers young people and content creators can look at these results and draw conclusions in how to attract future audiences. Additionally, the subject matter of this thesis is also interesting as it offers the opportunity to shed a light on two important **research gaps** in this field:

1.1 Scientific and Social Relevance

Firstly, many of the studies regarding film consumption and film attendance which will be highlighted in the upcoming chapters date back to the 1980s. While those studies are probably in large part still relevant, there should be room for improvement when it comes to updating to more modern audiences. This is exemplified in Austin (1981) where the writer mentions that the university students provide the biggest movie-going aggregate. As showcased in the introduction, the film landscape has been and still is heavily evolving under the digitization. The rise in popularity in SVOD services and increasing box office returns due to blockbusters have changed the norm when it comes to film consumption. A report from 2017 by the Dutch organization Filmfonds shows official attendance statistics and showcases how the Dutch cinema-going audience is getting older and the 65+ market share is growing the most. This particular evolution might be an indication that the overall demographic for cinema attendance could possibly change completely in the next few decades. There are multiple studies discussing the younger audiences' tendencies to use SVOD services for television series. However, there is a lack of research examining how they consume film through those services and how the motivations and gratifications have changed. The gap makes it unknown whether the notion made in Austin (1981) is still relevant for our contemporary film consumption landscape. This thesis will hopefully be a first step at bridging this gap.

The **second** gap I would like to point out is in the nature of how the research is conducted. As mentioned earlier, this thesis will adopt the Uses & Gratifications framework to

investigate the research question(s). Many other studies that have applied this paradigm conduct their research through a quantitative lens while not investigating with a qualitative approach (Young, 2000). The same goes for studies examining the discrepancy between the gratifications sought and obtained. By administering interviews which will foster and encourage probing opportunities, the thesis will hopefully provide another perspective with its qualitative nature. This particular gap is another justification for the scientific relevance of this thesis.

When it comes to social relevance, this thesis displays to audiences how the current media landscape has influenced the way they consume their content. Their responses might influence future recommendations (for better or worse). It is interesting to analyse how audiences want to consume their content as well as what type of content. With the research question for this thesis come a few sub-questions that are worth researching and will be covered during the interviews:

1.2 Research Questions

a) What are the motivations for digital natives to choose between SVOD, cinema and pirated content to consume films?

As established, we are in the midst of evolutionary change when it comes to how film is being obtained and consumed. With this in mind, this thesis will explore why the digital natives choose either the cinema, SVOD or illegal practices to consume film. Are the motivations related to the content itself or is it more situational? What drives them to use one method more than the other? What are the motivations for *not* engaging with a certain practice? How do they decide the preferent use of a channel? Additionally, it would be interesting to investigate if and how that relates to the motivations of choosing a specific film to watch.

b) What are the experiences the digital natives get out of SVOD, cinema and pirated content?

Once a person's motivation has been identified, the thesis will further explore what the consequences of those choices are. Here is where the uses and gratifications approach is further explored. After choosing a consumption method, how do they experience it? What is it that they

get out of it? The exploration will not only include positive experiences but also negative ones. What are the aspects that strike them the most after watching a film through one of the three channels? What is the reason for the frequency of use of that channel? What is it that makes them come back or abandon it altogether?

c) How does the discrepancy between the gratifications sought and gratifications obtained influence the digital native's consumption behaviour and satisfaction of film?

This final sub-question is inspired by previous research by Bae (2017). In that research, the writer investigates whether the discrepancy between the GS and GO with social media use influences the user's satisfaction. The goal with this sub-question is to address the gap between those two concepts but regarding the three perspectives this thesis will explore. The groundwork would already have been laid out by the previous two sub-questions. The relevance of this question should be highlighted because if given the right attention it could help predicting future satisfaction. Analysing a (possible) discrepancy between the two concepts with a digital native will make it clearer why he/she might choose a consumption method over another. One's choice of use of a medium could be dependent on the lack of certain factors with another medium. The discrepancy shall be analysed through the three consumption methods and how the sought and obtained gratification relate to each consumption method.

2. Theoretical Framework

As explored previously in the introduction, this thesis will be an examination into how young people consume films in this age of overabundance of content. The thesis will cover both the consumer's experience towards film and the motivation behind why they choose certain experiences. This framework will first explore the Uses and Gratifications theory and subsequent research on the paradigm including the discrepancy described in the third sub-question. Additionally, in order to understand the consumption method, one needs to explore why film is chosen as a form of media consumption and how the type of film is chosen. Finally, this framework will discuss each individual consumption method explained in relation with the U&G theory. This framework will lay the foundation for the topic list and consequently the interview.

2.1 Previous research in film consumption

The introduction to this thesis paints a picture of today's film landscape. It has shown that with the increase of new technologies, new types of film availabilities have been created. More and more film production and film distribution companies attempt to enter this volatile market and try to put their own stamp on it. The increase in those companies have led to a convergence between both the production and distribution houses and high increases in both horizontal and vertical integrations with large corporations. This growing competition sparked a new interest in audiences' film consumption and has therefore made researches look into what makes them choose a film (Hart, Kerrigan & vom Lehn, 2015). While the method that the article applies to investigate this question is not similar to the U&G framework that this thesis will implement, it is interesting to mention it and will be further elaborated on in the next few sections. Hart et al. (2015) is a qualitative study investigating the sense of one's film consumption. The decision-making process to watch a certain film is very complex, especially in this modern age. The research concluded that there are three dimensions which impact the decision-making process of a film consumer: 1) film characteristics, 2) viewing environment and 3) situational environment (Hart et al., 2015).

2.2 Uses & Gratifications

The analysis of motivations and experiences of a film consumer refers to the examination of audiences. There are multiple approaches to analyse audiences in any form of media. One of those is called the Uses and Gratifications (U&G) method. According to Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch (1973) it concerns the way consumers “use communications, among other resources in their environment, to satisfy their needs and to achieve their goals...” (p. 510). It assumes that audiences are not passive but rather actively looking for media to satisfy their needs (Pittman and Sheehan, 2015). The U&G paradigm also acknowledges that audiences and especially young people behave differently when it comes to choosing the type of media depending on their individual psychological and social circumstances (Soto-Sanfiel, Villegas-Simón & Angulo-Brunet, 2018).

However, the macro social and media structure revolving around media use are two elements in U&G that have been overlooked. In the last few decades however, a shift has been occurring where more attention is dedicated to this issue. This is what brings us a second approach also known as effects research. This approach ranges from everything to what agenda the media is trying to impose on the consumers to the impact of media itself on society. It is a topic that relates to how the media influences a consumer’s attitude and behaviour (Jensen and Rosengren, 1990).

Media effects and U&G can be regarded as two sides of the same coin. While the U&G technique will be the main focus of this thesis, one should not underestimate effects research. Its description manages to cover the failings of the U&G technique. Both methods have been growing towards each other. A number of researchers even consider this a combined method as the ‘uses and effects research’ (Jensen and Rosengren, 1990). The way we consume our content today does not only revolve around our specific film preferences. However, popular media products may also influence the cultural and social landscape we find ourselves in. Media may therefore influence how people rely and thus choose the type of medium they wish to use (Rubin, 2009). This relates back to the fact that the media compete with each other in order to satisfy the audience’s needs (Katz et al., 1973). In this day and age, the at home experience of watching a film has become a bigger competitor than ever before to the theatrical experience. The U&G

method and effects research could be labelled as a synergetic system with which you can analyse film audiences. In other words, it will explore the audience motivations to choose a certain way to watch a film but also analyse how the media landscape makes them choose that particular channel.

The article by Katz et al. (1973) constructed a list of 30 needs that individuals meet when using media. The writers eventually derived three major categories: 1) **cognitive** which relate to strengthening the need for information and knowledge not only about the world but also about oneself, 2) **affective** which relate to bolstering positive, emotional, aesthetic and pleasurable experiences, and 3) **integrative** which refer to strengthening stability and/or social relations with family and friends. The three needs are often interconnected with each other. The integrative need for example can be satisfied through escapism which is either achieved by experiencing affective gratifications or maybe even cognitive ones.

2.3 Process and Content

There are multiple ways to interpret and apply the U&G model. This thesis will be influenced by the approach taken in Stafford, Stafford & Schkade (2004). The study used the U&G paradigm to investigate consumer motivations and satisfactions with regards to the internet use. The writers identified two general types of U&G gratifications: content gratifications and process gratifications. There is a third gratification, social, but this is only partially relevant which will be explained later.

The former describes the gratifications that are sought and/or obtained related to the displayed or conveyed content in the media. Applied to this theoretical framework, content gratifications will relate as to why consumers watch films, what kind they watch and what gratifications and satisfactions they get out of them. Process gratifications, on the other hand refer to the actual use of the media form itself. It concerns how consumers deal with the consumption of media and why certain types of media are chosen. In other words, content refers to films and process refers to the use of the three consumption methods that will be investigated. The process & content perspective is interesting to implement because according to Young (2000), U&G research has often neglected media content. The article additionally states that if

the content is ignored then the process through which the media is consumed and served as a function in a person's life is disregarded as well.

The key factor here is how recent developments in technology and new media change the nature of uses and gratifications research (Sundar & Limperos, 2013). It is therefore mentioned that those new technologies influence and alter both the content and process gratifications due to new needs being created that did not necessarily exist before. Additionally, as previously mentioned, media effects are also at play here. Media effects may influence how and what consumers choose to watch (Jensen & Rosenberg, 1990). Content gratification may therefore be dependent on process gratification which may be influenced by the media effect. Media effects are a direct consequence of companies trying out and developing new technologies in order to stand out from competitors.

The content and progress interpretation of U&G by Stafford et al. (2004) could be better explained through the model mentioned earlier in Hart, Kerrigan & vom Lehn (2015). That particular model identifies how a consumer's decision-making practice and eventual experience related to film consumption are formed through three dimensions. The first dimension in the model is classified as the film characteristics. The subject of genre, type or style is here brought up. In other words, it relates to the content gratification explained in Stafford et al. (2004). The process gratification is also related to the model as the second dimension is described as the viewing environment such as at home or at the cinema. The third and social gratification by Stafford et al. (2004) however is only partly related to the third dimension by Hart et al. (2015). The last dimension is identified as situational environment which includes that third social gratification. The situation is not only dependent on the social aspect but also on time, season, mood, etc. Hart et al. (2015) also acknowledges that the three dimensions are separate, but they are interrelated hence adding to the decision-making and experience process.

The reason why the model by Hart et al. (2015) is cited is to help understand the process and content reasoning by Stafford et al. (2004) and justify its use for this thesis. It will not be used in further chapters. Instead of only focusing on the type of media, new studies include research in the type of content that is consumed. The three main gratification categories by Katz et al. (1973) mentioned earlier (cognitive, affective and integrative) are still relevant but

Tefertiller (2017) suggests that the medium and content are related and that in order to understand the three gratification categories one should understand the interaction between medium and content and how they influence each other. That interaction is evidenced in the model by Hart et al. (2015) and the U&G approach in Stafford et al. (2004).

Now, the next sections will further expand on the gratifications of content and process where the first two decision-making dimensions by Hart et al. (2015) also play a role. However, in Stafford et al. (2004), the third gratification, social, is added to comply with the communicating experiences when using the internet. The interviews will mainly focus on the first two gratifications with taking the social aspect into consideration when asking about those first two. Watching a film is an experience. What type of film you are watching or where and how you are watching might be dependent on that social gratification. Therefore, the following segments elaborating on the content and process gratification of film will include the social aspects to them.

Content

Why do we watch movies?

Critically speaking, the U&G method is not a recent one as evidenced by the referenced papers. Therefore, I would like to broaden the concept by incorporating a modern touch. In order to understand which modern channels digital natives choose to apply, one should maybe explore the exploration of why film is chosen as a form of media consumption in the first place. What type of needs do films manage to satisfy?

Research on media consumption, or in this case film consumption, often assumes that the consumer chooses to experience the content for intrinsic needs satisfaction. Generally speaking, most people assume then that it relates to satisfying a need for entertainment media that is pleasurable (Tamborini, Bowman, Eden, Grizzard & Organ, 2010). The U&G perspective revolves around people's enjoyment of the media they are consuming. However, one needs to apply a critical standpoint as the concept is not often well clarified, especially in U&G research where enjoyment is limited to a pleasure response (Tamborini et al., 2010).

Oliver and Raney (2011) attempts to nuance the term ‘enjoyment’ by adopting multiple forms. The article argues that the fulfilment of enjoyment does not always evoke feelings of pleasure. The writers therefore identify two motivators for selecting entertainment: hedonic and eudaimonic. The former refers to pleasure-seeking motivators while the latter refers to truth-seeking. The confusion lies with the hedonistic perspective. This viewpoint neglects that individuals seek forms of entertainment that do not necessarily provide escapist and fun content (Vorderer, Klimmt & Ritterfeld, 2004). Hedonic consumption relates to a positive experience.

Unlike hedonic, eudaimonic motivations on the other hand do not seek to maximize positive feelings. Eudaimonic motivations make consumers want to watch something meaningful, with (life) insights. This entices them to watch a sad film for instance which is something that is not in line with the hedonic perspective which refers to more fun and light-hearted content. Wirth, Hofer & Schramm (2012) identifies multiple dimensions that eudaimonic well-being consists of: meaning in life, autonomy, environmental mastery, self-acceptance, personal growth, relatedness and living according to central personal values.

Both types of motivations are not always mutually exclusive. Bartchs & Viehoff (2010) mentions that “experience of poetic justice in fictional entertainment may serve not only to induce positive affect but also to strengthen individuals’ belief in a just world” (p. 2251). In other words, pieces of entertainment that are made to usually satisfy hedonic purposes can explore serious themes and even social issues which complements the need to satisfy eudaimonic purposes. It is a testament to good filmmakers who manage to evoke both feelings as it adds an additional sense of sincerity and it shows that fictional entertainment in any shape or form can be taken more seriously.

There have been studies on the relation between age and the hedonic/eudaimonic motivations. In a study by Igartue & Barrios (2013), a sample was assembled and divided in three different age groups: 13-17 years old, 18-39 years old and 40-70 years old. The results showed that hedonistic motivations are ranked higher than eudaimonic ones with youngest age group. Additionally, the older groups showed exactly the opposite by having a higher score for eudaimonic purposes. The change in preferences at a certain age is not unusual because Oliver & Raney (2011) claims that as individuals grow older, their interest in more meaningful (media)

experiences increases.

The reasoning for applying this hedonic/eudaimonic perspective seems crucial to better link the film consumption with the U&G approach. This paradigm correlates with some of the key elements that the U&G framework is built on. According to research, the choice of media use is linked to meeting cognitive and intrinsic needs. The cognitive needs relate to eudaimonic and affective needs relate then to hedonic.

This subject of viewing motivations is interesting to investigate for multiple reasons. First, this refers to what type of content the interviewees are currently consuming. This theoretical perspective will further build on both the motivations and experiences that the first two sub-questions tackle. Second, it will be interesting to analyse which consumption method is chosen for which type of motivator to watch a film? For example, will the digital native therefore express his/her eudaimonic feelings by going to the cinema or is that still reserved to the entertainment pieces that satisfy hedonic feelings? Additionally, do the consumers obtain the gratifications they usually through those three consumption methods? Through the course of the interviews, the interviewee will be asked when a certain type content is chosen with a certain type of method. It should be noted that while the dimensions related to hedonic and eudaimonic explored in this section of the theoretical framework are important, they will not serve as the basis for the topic list. The thesis revolves around the three consumption methods and not on feelings towards film content in general. This theoretical perspective provides an additional framework that will assist with the interpreting of the motivations and experiences of the interviewees.

Process

The next segment explores the process gratifications. They are the three distribution channels that this thesis will focus on: cinema attendance, use of SVOD and use of illegal online channels. The interview will ask the respondents on why they would consume through one of those channels and what the eventual experiences they get out of them. Why would they choose one channel over the other? Do the gratifications that they obtain comply with the expectations?

In these technological times, it is interesting to investigate how audiences react to these media processes which is something that is lacking in U&G research (Young, 2000).

Cinema

As with any other form of media, cinema and how we consume it is affected by generational and technological changes in society. It is only a recent development that high-profile movies, and not just cheap direct-to-DVD films, would be released straight on VOD or any other form of streaming. In this era of at home streaming, the first perspective this thesis will analyse is the initial motivations for audiences to actually go to the movies. Austin (1986) investigated what are the motives for going to the cinema. Those include relaxation, social activity, enjoyable activity, pass time, learn about oneself, learn new information. This finding has a direct relation to the previous framework discussing the intrinsic needs. The last two satisfy cognitive needs hence referring to the eudaimonic dimension. The other however refer to the hedonic pleasures.

There is an interesting insight in one of the overlapping motivations that Ivory and Magee (2009) identifies. The study highlights the theatrical experience itself is most attractive because attending a movie provides a certain psychological arousal of having to experience something on the big screen which is tough to compare to a mobile device or a television at home. The theatres attract the audiences with the exceptional sound systems and dark rooms which increase the emotional affection (Tefertiller, 2017). While Austin (1986) highlighted the theatrical experience, a previous study by the same writer, Austin (1981) found that movie-going seemed to be considered unimportant and more of a leisure activity. Additionally, López-Sintas, García-Álvarez & Hernández-López (2016) further expands on the leisure notion by expressing that is a shared social experience. Sharing the enjoyment enhances the emotional link with the person you are attending the cinema with.

However, gratifications are evolving with innovations and 2009 might not seem that long ago and the study Ivory and Magee (2009) is not necessarily dated but it is a very different world when it comes to consuming content at home or on mobile devices. It is also worth investigating if the notion of unimportance is still applicable today as other forms of consumption have been

introduced since the 1980s. It is therefore worth investigating with this thesis whether younger audiences prefer the stay-at-home experience versus the social cinema going experience.

According to Tefertiller (2017), there is a greater influence for the need for affective gratifications rather than cognitive ones. In other words, there is currently a higher demand for escapist, effects-driven adventures rather than smaller more serious films. This finding makes it interesting to investigate how this will evolve in the future. It is now unsure if there will be a market in the future for the less event-driven films.

SVOD

This brings us to the second perspective which is the legal streaming of films through VOD and SVOD. The rise of platforms like Netflix have given audiences the opportunity to enjoy their (available) content for a cheap price and with the long-tail inventory they have provided them with personalization and mass-customization (Tyron, 2013). That personalization creates a sense of ease as the consumer is suggested content based on previous watching behaviour (Gomez-Uribe & Hunt, 2015; Matrix, 2014). In other words, while a U&G perspective makes sense as audiences use streaming services because they are cheap, easy and contain vast catalogues, effect research or the influence of those services on the consumers play therefore also a big role in current film consumption. The at-home convenience of experiencing a film provides the streaming services exactly what the consumer likes or even imposes to watch in the future. Unfortunately, there is a lack of studies regarding U&G and SVOD when it comes to films. The subject was more explored through studies based on SVOD and the consumption of television series.

One of the biggest consequences of the digitization of film lies with SVOD and not VOD. The result is a shift from ownership of content to content access. Over the last few years there has been a large decline in the DVD/Blu-ray sales. Just recently, Samsung has even announced that it will cease all production of new Blu-ray players (Archer, 2019). Most of the new laptops are also produced today without the internal player. Many households enjoy the fact that they are not only reliant on physical media. Firstly, a streaming service does not take any physical space up in the living room. Second, if a consumer is looking for a film, it could be done from the

comfort of their home and they do not have to run out to the nearest store (López-Sintas et al., 2016; Wroot & Willis, 2017). It is safe to say that most of the DVDs today are probably not sold to digital natives but rather people from older generations (Mcgauley, 2016). As this thesis revolves around those digital natives, their motivations and experience towards DVDs will not be explored except if the subject is brought up by the interviewee and if it plays a role in their consumption in their daily lives.

Additionally, the rise in SVOD popularity is also a result of expensive theatre experiences. With the latest projection technologies like 3D and IMAX pushed by studios, theatres have been charging higher admission prices. This motivates younger audiences to move to home consumption (Tyron, 2013). However, the reason theatres have applied these features is in order to make the cinema more attractive which in hindsight creates a vicious cycle. It is also mentioned that the social aspect of film consumption has moved from theatrical experiences to watching at home. The reason why is because of the ever-evolving use of social media. Through social media, young people now recommend each other what to watch or create a viral topic (Tyron, 2013). A recent example is the film *Bird Box* which became a social media sensation and drew many viewers to Netflix (Schneider, 2019).

Piracy

The last of the three perspectives that this thesis will explore is the use of illegal downloading and or streaming of films also referred as online piracy. As mentioned in the introduction, piracy is still a major topic of argument when it comes to film consumption. The thesis will not only attempt to investigate whether the use of piracy is present in young people's households, but it will also attempt to dig deeper on what motivates or entices them to still use that in this golden age of SVOD and immersive experiences that the movie theatres offer.

Piracy has been a phenomenon that has plagued the entertainment industry since the introduction of the internet. Digital natives as it says in the name grew up with the use of the internet and acquire their technological skills as of a young age. It is only logical that young adults have exploited the relatively easy access to content and are therefore the group who pirates the most. According to Hadopi (2018), 70% of younger individuals between the ages of 15 and 24 admit to having tendencies to visit illegal websites in order to access their preferred

content. Of those who use illegal access to media content, 76% openly admits by using them at least once a week. Studios and production companies attempt to provide as many of their films to SVOD platforms in order to hedge back piracy. According to Henkel, James and Croce (2015), consumers would mostly illegally pirate a film because it is not available through legal channels. The curious aspect to this is that there is barely a sense of wrongdoing. Most people who pirate know that they are doing something unethical, but it is very unlikely that they will be caught and charged a fine. The ease of use overshadows that fact (Henkel et al., 2015). An interesting counterpoint to this statement comes from Al-Rafee & Rouibah (2010). The study investigated whether certain angles have an influence on the use piracy. One of those was raising awareness through the use of brochures, studies, websites, reports and advertisements. According to the study, there is a high drop of intention to use piracy once the young consumer is exposed to the negative consequences that it may have.

These three consumption methods have been constantly evolving over the last decade. If one manages to take adopt an extensive U&G perspective then it is possible to investigate what, how and why a young person in 2019 would do to watch a film. Is the digital native only interested in consuming content at home or does he or she prefer the immersive experience of the theatre? What choices would the young audience make? The entire theoretical framework and the literature it refers to attempt to help us better understand how digital natives deal with the subject that the thesis brings up. The increase in new technologies, competition and change in consumption behaviour have all influenced how the U&G approach should be applied in this situation.

2.4 Gratifications Sought – Gratifications Obtained

As mentioned in the introduction, the third sub-question revolves around the discrepancy between the gratifications sought and gratifications obtained and how it influences the consumption choices and satisfaction. The U&G approach is one that has been under scrutiny due to the limitations it often presents. Firstly, Bae (2017) argued that one of the failings of the U&G approach lies with the fact that media use and the choice of using a particular media correlates with nothing more than pure habitual reasons. Second, Katz, Gurevitch & Haas (1973)

acknowledges that U&G research also fail to investigate the gratifications sought (GS) and the gratifications eventually obtained (GO). Additionally, Bae (2017) explains that the gratifications sought refers to gratifications that individuals expect to obtain from a medium before they have come into contact with it. It is also referred to as motives. By contrast, GO refers to gratifications that individuals actually experience through the use of a particular medium (2017, as cited in Katz et al., 1973, p. 139).

The former limitation mentioned however might be influenced by the latter. A dependency on a media form develops over time. A consumer developing habitual behaviour by sticking with one type of media that provides the content he needs could be as a result of obtaining the gratifications he sought as a consumer. Contrarily it is also likely that one chooses a media form because other competitors fail to satisfy the gratifications sought. Competitors might respond to certain phenomena in the media landscape or influence the social and cultural landscape as mentioned in the previous section thus referring to the media effects influence. The ever-developing landscape might turn some consumers off and make them choose an alternative consumption method. Palmgreen, Wenner & Rayburn (1980) therefore explains that in order to better explain media effects, one should incorporate a distinction of the gratifications sought and gratifications obtained.

In order to investigate the aforementioned discrepancy two questions should be explored according to Palmgreen et al. (1980). The first one should ask what the essence is of the relationship between each sought gratification and its reciprocal obtained gratification. The question assumes that the gratification sought is partly influenced by the expectation of the content or media form. However, the sought ones are also influenced by the actual characteristics of the form itself. The second question asks whether the dimensions of gratifications sought are the same as the dimensions of gratifications perceived to be obtained? The writers in the article describe a dimension to be a group of individual gratification factors.

Researchers who investigate the U&G model has shown that there is a strong correlation between the gratifications consumers seek and the ones they obtain. By interrogating the interviewees about the three consumption methods, this thesis will hopefully shed a light on that discrepancy between the two concepts and how it affects their use and satisfaction.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter lays the groundwork for how the digital native is motivated through the use of the Uses and Gratifications theory. The interviews will investigate the motivations and experiences that the respondents have with the three consumption methods. Two main frameworks related to the theory will be applied.

Firstly, the article by Katz et al. (1973) is applied with the integration of the three main categories that encompass the needs related to media consumption and thus can be applied to film: cognitive, integrative and affective. The second framework to complement the first is the one determined by Stafford et al. (2004) which identifies two types of gratification dimensions that could help explain the first framework: process and content gratifications. Process relates to the medium itself (SVOD, cinema and piracy) and how they use it while content refers to the actual films themselves shown on those three consumption methods. This chapter identified that a film can be enjoyed either through hedonistic needs which are more fun and positive or through eudaimonic needs which refer to more serious and meaningful content.

The concepts of both content and medium are more interrelated than ever and could be dependent on one another to justify contemporary consumption behaviour. Through the process and content gratification theory that Stafford et al. (2004) presents, this thesis will try to examine how they are able to satisfy the three gratification categories (cognitive, integrative and affective) by Katz et al. (1973) and vice versa.

Additionally, the foundation made by the theory along with the interviews should show how the consumers deal with the gratifications that they seek and obtain with one of the three consumption methods and/or the films they consume with them.

3. Methods

3.1 Research Design

In order to answer the research question and sub-questions, it is best to proceed using a qualitative method, namely an interview-based approach. The use of surveys to examine the research questions was considered at first. Afterall, using surveys to approach U&G research is not uncommon (Jensen and Rosenberg, 1990). However, if one is to investigate an audience's gratifications and motivations, it seemed best to use interviews instead. According to Jensen and Rosenberg (1990), U&G requires a more naturalistic approach which can be found in in-depth interviews. One could argue that through the use of SPSS certain statistical tests might help to prove or disprove predictions or establish correlations in survey's regarding the choices. The goal however is to dig deeper into what goes into the selection process of a film consumer. Additionally, the subject of psychological motivations does not only revolve around the content but also consumption method. Unlike surveys, interviews do not showcase binary answers. They provide nuanced and in-depth responses about how, what and why they seek something and obtain it.

Qualitative interviews allow the interviewer to analyse those responses and interpret what the interviewees attempt to convey. One has to look beyond the literal answers and try to interpret the latent messages (Guest, Namey & Mitchell, 2017). Especially with a concept so vast as U&G, interpreting responses and linking them to previous answers given by the interviewees is imperative to be able to understand the contemporary consumer's motivations and experiences. Additionally, by conducting interviews it is an attempt to fill the research gap of having few qualitative U&G studies. The theoretical framework consists out of a wide range of studies that are both quantitative and qualitative. The topic list for the interviews applies those theories and concepts that were explored and serves as a guide that allows to probe on the respondents' answers. This chapter entails the entire process in how the research was set up according to appropriate measures.

3.2 Sampling

The thesis consists out of interviews with young people from the ages of 17 to 25. It is a generation that was not necessarily born with all the technological devices and services we have today. The age group is one that has grown up during the digital renaissance we find ourselves in and they are therefore able to describe how technology has evolved at such a pace in such a sort amount of time (Henkel et al., 2015).

In order to acquire the needed age group, snowball sampling, a form of non-probability sampling, has been applied. This involves the finding of respondents based on recommendations of previous interviewees (Sarstedt, Bengart, Shaltoni & Lehmann, 2017). In Austin (1981), the researcher states that university students form the largest going movie-going aggregate. This thesis however will focus on an age group rather than deliberately choosing university students. The reason for selecting an age group rather than university students specifically is because like many other film related studies, the relevance to some information may not be on point. Just as mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, there have not been many recent studies on cinema attendance which is one of the gaps that this thesis is trying to fill. Since the 1980s there has been an increase in university attendance and social and academic factors have thus evolved since then. Therefore, the sample will consist out of university students and other individuals who are not necessarily part of a higher education system. Additionally, according to Henkel et al. (2015), the level of education does not seem to affect the consumer's outlook on the rights and wrongs to consume films legally or illegally. However, interviewing people from that age range by using the snowball sampling procedure has resulted as expected in mostly university students and some others who are not. The goal was just to not exclude the possibility to interview digital natives that are either still in high school or working which also contributes to the diversity factor which will be touched upon later.

The main objective of this thesis is not to interview the biggest cinephiles or people with a background in film studies. While interviewing someone with more knowledge of the film world and the artform might be beneficial at first, it could provide some biased answers. The respondent is more knowledgeable and uses the three consumption methods maybe differently than others. His or her motivations may therefore be rooted differently than the average person.

The goal of this thesis is to interview the average consumers as they are the biggest market segment. I wanted to investigate how the average consumer is witnessing and experiencing how the film world is evolving. Additionally, writing a thesis about the digital native's film consumption stems from my own personal love for film. It is however one of the pitfalls I had to avoid in order to prevent a bias in the study. One of the biggest interview biases is identified in Chenail (2011) as the affinity bias. The article explains that investigating a person with same traits may lead in biased answers. The interviewer could therefore be looking for specific answers he or she is expecting rather than looking beyond and discovering new patterns. It could limit the curiosity by the interviewer (Chenail, 2011).

When it comes to qualitative interviews, researchers are often unsure about the number of interviews that should be conducted. This thesis will apply a non-probabilistic sampling method which will be further explained later. Multiple scientific articles claim that around 10 to 15 interviews should be conducted if this method is used. However, they add that 12 interviews are enough according in order to reach saturation with non-probabilistic samples. From that point on the articles argue that no new concepts are then introduced (Galvin, 2015; Guest, Arwen and Johnson, 2006).

The sample that was accumulated consists out of 6 male and 6 female respondents and was done so in order to avoid a gender bias and ensure balance (Ritchie, Lewis & El am, 2003). Without elaborating too much on the results it should be noted that no major gender differences were found except with the female tendencies to like the romance genre which cannot be found in any of the male interviews. The two youngest respondents were 18 and 19, one was 21, five were the age of 22, three were 23 and one was 24 years old. Aside from the diverse age range, the respondents came from different social backgrounds. Three of the respondents were French and four Belgian. The rest of the group comes from the Netherlands, China, Bulgaria, Ghana and Mexico. Two of the 12 respondents are not students and are working at the moment.

Academically, the respondents also had a diverse background. There were students doing a Master's in Finance, Strategic Management, Marketing Management and Business Information Management. Additionally, there were students who were still in the middle of their Communication studies and finally one student who is studying Physics at Oxford University

and is currently applying for PhDs.

The hope was to obtain a diverse sample both academically and socially so that other insights may be revealed that other people would not be able to. Additionally, obtaining a diverse sample was necessary in order to ensure generalizability which will be discussed later. However, if you make the sample too diverse then there might be a lower chance of extracting patterns. The diversity of the sample was able to provide the best of both worlds. They all managed to give their own reflection on film consumption as people who are currently residing in North Western Europe (UK included) while also include their own personal opinion as someone with a different background. An interesting example was the respondent from China who is currently on exchange in the Netherlands. Her take proved to be insightful because both the cinematic industry and SVOD consumption are quite different in that country. She discussed how the Chinese consumption and its local services compare to the European situation.

3.3 Operationalization

Elicitation

As mentioned previously, the subject of this thesis is quite vast and requires thoughtful responses. It was therefore decided to try to engage in some form of elicitation so that the interviewees can provide thoroughly motivated answers. The elicitation took form in a very short two question survey that was given at the start of each interview. All the interviewees were given a list of motivators of why they chose to watch a film through an SVOD service or at the cinema respectively. They were required to identify their top three for each. The surveys, which along with its results can be found in the appendix, contained a large list of diverse possibilities. The illegal consumption was not chosen to survey beforehand as it was predicted that the subject would probably have been mentioned during the interview. This type of elicitation is part of a projective technique that is used in qualitative research which is a system to help investigate the 'why' in a situation (Donoghue, 2000). A projective technique is according to Donoghue (2000) not a way to measure but to assist respondents in uncovering attitudes and motivations. The projective technique used in this case is called choice ordering which is an approach to assist respondents in explaining what is most important to them by categorising relevant factors.

This survey elicitation method gives the respondents the opportunity to assign what is the most important to them while also showcasing its importance. It gave this research a better insight at what specific elements were essential to the interviewees and it could also assist in the creating of patterns for the results section. After the respondents identified what motivators seemed most important to them, I further probed on those motivations. By asking 'why' questions it allows the elicitation of spontaneous albeit thought out answers (Kvale, 2007). This further assisted in having a naturalistic conversation as it was possible to further probe on the respondent's answers. It helped to find the root of those motivations.

The results of each survey were then discussed when the subject of that specific consumption method was the topic of conversation. The discussion about the results almost always intertwined with subsequent questions as the respondent often referred back to them in order to justify other answers. Sometimes the answer to another question was relevant to the motivators identified in the surveys.

Interviews

In-depth interviews are conducted in order to create purposeful conversations. One of the main characteristics of this method is a combination of structure and flexibility (Legard, Keegan & Ward, 2003). The interviewer is supposed to arrive to the conversation with a set of topics containing individual questions. However, the interview needs to have a naturalistic feel so the interviewer will response to the respondent's answer. Once an answer is given, the researcher's response depends on that interviewee's answer instead of just moving on to the next question or topic. In the case of this thesis, if a respondent answered with a motivation or choice, it should be further probed and examined. The purpose is to investigate the reasoning behind it (Hermanowicz, 2002; Legard et al., 2003).

One of the first steps in the operationalization is setting up the topic list. Firstly, the respondents presented themselves shortly with a quick statement on who they are, what they are studying, where they are studying, etc. Every answer given might be related to their social and/or academic background. After a short introduction, the interview with questions about their personal relation they have with the film artform. It is where the person's watching behaviour is

established. This refers to whether they prefer watching a film regardless of location something that is part of their free time or is it just something they do from time to time? The respondent is also asked on what factors he or she chooses a film and what they enjoy the most. The introduction is then concluded by asking about their most recent film experience, regardless of where and how.

After a series of general questions, the interview moves on to the official questions. The first official topic revolves around SVOD. Throughout this block of questions, the respondents were asked about their experiences with such services and how they are integrated in their lives. Just as mentioned in the theoretical framework, the questions also assessed what their opinions were on both the process and content aspect of the SVOD service they were mostly using. That means that it discussed both the service's design as an application and the (film) content it contains and how these two elements possibly influenced one another. This is where the effects research was as important as U&G because multiple questions revolved around how SVOD services influence the audience's watching behaviour. Additionally, after discussing what genre or type of film they watch on the service, I also investigated their expectations, satisfaction and how they would like to see the service improved in the future. When it comes to legal home consumption, the most common service used by almost every respondent is as expected Netflix. However, whenever another SVOD service was brought up, it was asked the exact same questions and how it compared to a streaming giant like Netflix.

Next, the interview focused on the topic of movie-going. Questions about their preferences when it comes to the cinema. They further discuss their experiences as in how many times they go, who they go with, what kind of films they watch at the cinema, etc. This set of questions is similar to the SVOD one. The study by Austin (1986) is quite old so its relevance and applicability was tested in today's modern consumption. The concept for motivations were inquired with the respondents and will thus be analysed if these are still present today. Subsequently, questions were asked about their expectations, satisfaction and what they would like to see improved in the future. This topic also dealt with the cinematic landscape at the moment. It revolved around what the cinemas have to offer today in terms of content.

The last section explores the illegal consumption through channels like torrents, video

streaming, etc. What motivates them to use these channels? How do they access illegal content? What are their experiences? This subject contains the most controversial questions that some might feel uncomfortable with at first. Therefore, this topic was dealt with as last so that the respondent was already put at ease during the conversation when talking about the previous subjects. The subject of piracy was often already mentioned before asked about it specifically, most notable in the questions regarding the subject of use of SVOD services. When asked about their illegal consumption, the questions focused on what role these play in their lives with such a big legal streaming presence. If by any chance the interviewee was not someone who used illegal platforms, then I would ask about people in their environment and why and how they deal with piracy. This gives the opportunity for an external look at the usage of those illegal services.

Finally, the interview ended with some questions on their preferred method of consumption which encapsulates the entire conversation. The last question was about their personal prediction on how the film landscape and its consumption will evolve both for them and for society.

Analysis

As mentioned in the theoretical framework, the data provided by the interviews involves behavioural information from the respondents in how they consume film and why. Every interview has been transcribed which in the end resulted with an abundant amount of data. In order to process the vast qualitative data, a thematic analysis will be executed. It involves analysing and extracting patterns and themes from written texts (Vaismoradi, Turunen and Bondas, 2013). This is done by dismantling and reaggregation of the data through open, axial and selective coding (Boeijle, 2010).

The first step is open coding. It is described by Strauss and Corbin as the “breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing and categorizing of data” (2007, as cited in Boeijle, 2010, p. 96). This involves labelling every relevant line that seems important to answer the research question with a code. The code defines the meaning of the fragment. Some lines may even be assigned the same code from previous moments in the interview which results in grouping them. This will provide a list of codes. The coding will consist out of relevant insights

to the answers of the (future) topic list. Some codes may be removed later if deemed irrelevant or unnecessary as the research goes on.

With the list of codes, the processing will move on to axial coding which involves taking the open codes and group them in different categories or axes. This creates connections between the codes. It is worth mentioning that Figure 6.5 in Boeijle (2010) shows that it is possible that a subgroup of an overarching category can be further subdivided in open codes from the initial process if necessary. Some open codes may also overlap in different axial codes. Axial coding results in a coding tree consisting out of open codes from the initial process or a combination of open codes (Boeijle, 2010).

Lastly, the axial codes pave the way for selective coding. This process revolves around taking the axial codes and finding emerging themes and connections between the categories from the data (Boeijle, 2010). This final part in the analysis aims to reveal certain common motivations, choices and feelings that the respondents have towards certain aspects of contemporary film consumption and thus answering the research question(s).

Another description of a thematic analysis in Braun & Clarke (2006) is quite similar to this. In that article however, the process is described as a 6-step process: familiarizing with data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes and writing up the report. Additionally, Braun & Clarke (2006) elaborates that a good thematic analysis lies with the interpretations of latent themes. Just as mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, one has to try to look beyond what the interviewees are saying on a semantic level and try to identify the underlying patterns and messages.

The final coding structure, which can also be found in the appendix, is set up the same way as the interview topics. There are three main categories: SVOD, Cinema and Piracy. Per category the codes are split up in motivations and experiences.

3.4 Limitations

The thesis does present an ethical conundrum. Just as Kvale (2011) explains, “ethical problems in interview research arise particularly because of the complexities of researching private lives and placing accounts in the public arena” (p.2). This research will encompass

questions about the use of illegal mediums online for film consumption. Some interviewees might have felt uncomfortable answering such questions as they dealt with controversial issues. As a researcher, it is my responsibility to ensure that the candidate will feel comfortable with the interview. Every interviewee was given a consent form to sign before the interview started. It is in the consent form where he or she grants the researcher permission to use the answers given for the thesis. Additionally, the form contained the question whether their real name or an alias shall be used as well as the assurance that the answers will be used in strict confidentiality. Every respondent was gracious enough to participate and only two requested that a pseudonym would be used in the transcriptions.

3.5 Reliability and Validity

Reliability is a concept that is referred as the degree of replicability of a research and its results (Leung, 2015). It is a concept which has been more easily used with quantitative research as it requires to test the replicability of an experiment and its measures on repeated trials which is tougher to evaluate in qualitative research (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003; Silverman, 2011). There are multiple methods to ensure reliability in a qualitative research as suggested by Silverman (2011).

The first way is by showcasing the transparency of the research process. This is done by providing a detailed account of the research strategy that was implemented which was done extensively in this chapter and the theoretical framework. Additionally, every interview was of course recorded (with the respondent's permission) and transcribed but that does not prevent a researcher to make expanded notes as soon as the interview ends. This could provide a range of improvements for future interviews. However, one can simply also avoid this issue if a trial interview is done in advance.

According to Ritchie & Lewis (2003), validity is described as the "correctness or precision of a research finding" (p. 273). One of the key factors in the search for validity is generalizability (Silverman, 2011). Generalizability is one of the biggest limitations when applying snowball sampling as it often leads to people from the same background (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981). In order to achieve the highest level of generalizability, a large group of diverse people within the age range had to be interviewed. People with different academic and/or social

backgrounds were approached as to not be stuck in a certain demographic within the examined sample. Therefore, multiple people were contacted for the interview which set up multiple avenues.

4. Results

After an extensive research period in the field consisting of interviewing, transcribing and coding this penultimate chapter of this thesis will present the results and patterns. As explained in the previous chapter explaining the methodology behind the research, it was attempted to collect a sample that was just good enough to ensure its validity while also making sure that diversity level would provide new and alternate observations that other respondents might not provide. Fortunately, this proved to be the case as some interesting recurring insights were derived.

Every respondent was able to provide his or her own unique perspective on the subject matter. Each person has a different view on their way of consuming film. This goes from preferred genres, who they watch it with, they way they experience etc. Drawing from the background established in the theoretical framework it was intriguing to observe what and how motivates digital natives to choose certain experiences in these ever-changing technological times. As I mentioned previously, no clear results could have been drawn on the basis of gender. It seemed that most of the results could have been generalized across this dimension aside from the fact that quite a few of the female respondents tended to enjoy the romance genre while this was nowhere to be found with the male interviewees.

Just as mentioned in the introduction chapter of this thesis, the third sub-question has its foundations laid out in the first two. The decision has therefore been made to answer that question in the final chapter containing the discussion and conclusion. The following results will feature findings both on the process and content perspective that the theoretical framework introduced. The respondents' views on the three consumption methods were often subjected to those interrelated concepts. In other words, their opinion on the process of a consumption method could have been influenced by the content and vice versa.

The current state of cinemas and SVOD services have brought a wave of evolving motivations and experiences which has led to an evolution in the attitudes towards film consumption. This chapter shall present its findings per consumption method (SVOD, cinema and piracy). With every consumption method, main themes will be drawn which will be further

elaborated on and explained via sub-themes. The findings on those methods reflect the motivations and experiences of the interviewees.

4.1 SVOD

This might not seem as a surprise so this will be kept brief. The digital natives interviewed are mostly currently living in North Western Europe. Whenever the subject of SVOD services was brought up, the attention moved immediately to Netflix. Legal digital consumption is mostly associated with Netflix. The streaming market is not as crowded as in the United States. The only true current competitors are locally country bound services that are procured with an internet provider (e.g. the Belgian Telenet and Dutch Ziggo) and smaller niche services (e.g. Mubi). Their places in the respondents' lives will be elaborated on in further findings. This is the reason why the findings related to SVOD will mostly contain reflections about Netflix. This medium has resulted in three themes. The following four themes are then subdivided in additional segments to elaborate or justify the theme.

4.1.1 Comfort IS the experience

Just as mentioned in the methods chapter, at the end of each interview the respondents were asked what their favourite mode of consumption was. While there was no shortage on preferences for cinema, SVOD and in this case Netflix was a very popular answer. The most common pattern and first theme that emerged from the interviews is the fact that consumers like Netflix not necessarily because of what it can offer on the basis of content (more on that later) but because of what it represents. Services like Netflix provide a sense of ease that was either unavailable or not at its peak. They have taken the concept of non-theatrical film viewing and expanded and improved on it by observing what the consumer disliked or felt that was missing. Streaming services have made a legitimate claim at a leading position in home consumption which used to belong to DVDs and illegal sources. Watching a film through Netflix is a comforting experience. The sense of ease is one that can be interpreted in multiple ways and can be exemplified in the following segments. In some ways it could be interpreted that the comfort satisfaction that the services provide exceeds the content satisfaction, but this will be further

illustrated in subsequent findings. The evidence that SVOD is often chosen for its convenience will also be showcased in the results relating to cinema attendance and usage of illegal sources.

Watching at home

With every respondent, a short survey was filled in with their top three motivators to watch a film with an SVOD service. The most popular motivation was ‘from the comfort of my home, I don’t need to go outside’. Eight interviewees ticked that box. Netflix has managed to position itself as the main entertainment provider in many people’s households. Consumers can just sit on their couch, lie in bed or even watch their films on a treadmill. The appeal is the fact that he or she does not need to go outside to get decent content. The luxury of having a wide range of content at your disposal, as described in Anderson (2004) as the longtail concept, and to not go outside and stay in the comfort of your home in order to enjoy it is the factor that attracts so many people to services like Netflix.

“So from the comfort of my home like when I'm watching the film I can like lie on my bed. It's something you know..., it's comfortable. I don't have to like worry about stuff, like people looking at me and stuff like that. You're just comfortable because you're at home.” (Jane, 18 years old)

When conducting the interviews, it became clear that the answers regarding watching a film at home with an SVOD service do not steer in one clear direction. For example, the responses were varied when they were asked about who they watch the films with. To some, the enjoyment of being alone in one’s personal and private space provides a sense of relaxation after a long day. To others, spending time watching a film with their friends provided the same feeling. It all came down to the fact that the experience of watching a film at home is to relax and take a break after experiencing a long day studying or at work which was the second most answered option on the survey.

The respondents who would watch a film with their friends are usually not living at home or with their parents. So, people having roommates would lean towards having a more communal experience to watch films while people who live alone would not go out of their way to go to their friends’ house to watch a film. Another example of diverse answers lies with the type of

films that the respondents watch through an SVOD service. No clear genre could count as a theme because the preferences were quite varied. The range went from comedies to dramas to science-fiction films etc. The need to watch a film at home could consist therefore by both hedonic and eudaimonic gratifications. Hedonic are as mentioned in the theoretical framework mostly related to affective needs identified by Katz et al. (1973) because they evoke positive feelings which eudaimonic gratifications do not always provide. This indicates that the affective needs, are not of as big of importance as the integrative needs. The main goal of watching a film at home is to relax and escape which mostly relate to the integrative need of strengthening the stability in one's busy life (Katz et al. 1973). One wants to be entertained and the integrative need of stability is then further satisfied by watching it either alone or with friends regardless if it is a more light-hearted or heavier film.

Netflix as a service

The first identification of comfort was established by showcasing the ease of watching it at home. This section looks at how the process or technicality of Netflix motivates the comfort reasoning. In other words: through what technical aspects do platforms facilitate the comfort of home viewing experience? The comfort of Netflix is mostly related to the process perspective suggested by Stafford et al. (2004) as in how consumers deal with the consumption of the actual media platform.

One of the perks that the respondents seem to value very much is something that was actually already present before the emergence of popular SVOD services. The ability to pause a film whenever one wishes to is regarded as a big advantage. It is something that VHSs, DVDs and even modern digital television providers already offered. However, in this age where more content is consumed at home than ever before, it seems that a simple and obvious asset is regarded in high value. In López-Sintas, et al. (2016), the writers point out that the experience of watching a film at home is enhanced by the fact that individuals can take control of the circumstances. Consequently, the article claims this might lead to a decrease in attention by the viewer. However, this relates to the fact that consumers care more about taking the break than the actual film.

Streaming services offer many other options where consumers find value in. Most of the participants believe that what makes Netflix so accessible is the way it is designed. The consensus is that Netflix manages to not only provide a wide range of content but also assists in navigating through that large digital inventory. For instance, what the interviewees responded positively to is the trailer that plays automatically. So, when a consumer is browsing and scrolling through the possible choices and abruptly stops at one film (or television series for that matter) then Netflix will display a few fragments of the trailer to provide a certain idea of what it is about.

Speaking of browsing, streaming services bring another luxury that was not as present as it is today. Before SVOD, the most common way to temporarily obtain a film legally was through renting at the video store or renting a film separately through VOD (Tyron, 2013). Unlike with VOD, the monthly bill to SVOD has already been paid for so consumers will spend more time on deciding what film they eventually want to watch. This leads to a very long browsing time as described by the respondents.

Here is where the subject of SVOD popularity runs a bit into a paradox. Like established, consumers adore the wealth of choices. That is what attracts consumers, the comfort of a large long-tail inventory that allows for carefully selecting a specific film according to what that person wants to watch. The SVOD service as we know it today is the idealized version of what average consumers want it to be. Being able to browse and not being constrained by certain factors. That particular comfort has brought its fair share of criticism. The interviews showcased that browsing occurred in two different instances. A consumer turns to browsing if the specific film he or she has in mind is not available and does not want to access illegal sources or if the consumer is simply up for watching what is available. The problem with browsing is that it takes too long. Studies claim that the average Netflix user reviews over 10 to 20 titles over the span of 60 to 90 seconds after which he or she probably loses interest. In such cases, they might switch to watching a television show or look up an illegal alternative (Gomez-Uribe & Hunt, 2015).

However, when asked about what they would want to see improved with the platform, the answer was most often not related to the user interface and the way the content is presented.

Only two respondents felt that the design affected the way they find films. They blame it on the lack of pages, ordering, etc:

“Browsing can get quite annoying especially when you have... I mean, obviously it's nice to have a volume but I think if the service doesn't do a good job in ordering the films or... [...] I think most especially with Netflix, I think they don't really have a good way of browsing their films.”

(Alex, 22 years old)

The browsing problem is present when people watch a film alone or whether they spend half an hour discussing with their friends what they want to watch. Netflix has devised a system in order to improve on the browsing problem which is the final technical aspect that should be mentioned. It is the way SVOD services suggest certain films to their customers. As previously mentioned, consumers like to be assisted in finding the right piece of content. Netflix has devised a system of recommendations and customization based on the viewer's previous choices, predictive ratings, algorithms, etc (Gomez-Uribe & Hunt, 2015; Matrix, 2014). Unfortunately, this instrument that the respondents appreciate does not comply to the needs of those who use it. The interviewees feel that either the recommended films are either unrelated to their specific persona or that the film itself is unsatisfying:

“I think those (customized recommendations) are usually crap. Yeah. I think it's a bit random. I don't really like the recommendations that Netflix gives I think they're pretty bad.” (Alex, 22 years old)

This extensive finding on the comfort of SVOD services with Netflix in particular showcases a mixture of positive and negative sentiments. The interviews along with the results from the survey do display that the respondents rate the comfort and convenience that these services bring with them higher than other motivations. If they feel unsure about some of them then they would prefer to see them improved which they are adamant that it will happen in the future. Some other comfort and convenience advantages that were not covered here will be touched upon in the results regarding cinema and piracy. Process and therefore the medium is on the first place and content second which leads to the second theme

4.1.2 Film has become a substitute product at home

Before every interview, the respondent was first given a description of the topic of the interview and he or she was also notified about the subject when asked to participate in the first place. I deliberately used the terms film or movie at every occasion so that no confusion would arise. However, when the topic of conversation was the use of SVOD services, many of the interviewees would often ask for a specification between their consumption of films and series. During the interviews, many respondents referred to their series consumption following certain questions or remarks which were again targeted at the film consumption specifically. Also, respondents would talk about the way Netflix deals with television shows on the platform when the question was about films. The problem did not lie in the phrasing of the questions because those mentioned film specifically. After a string of interviews, it became quite clear that watching a film at home would often be seen as a second choice, a substitute if you will which is the second theme with this medium.

Now, it should be noted that watching a film, legally or otherwise, is still very much present in people's homes. However, when it comes to entertainment consumption most people admit that they spend more time watching television series than movies and they even prefer it. Additionally, the respondents who are currently living with friends would watch a film BECAUSE of that communal experience. They would prefer to watch an episode of a television series alone and watch the occasional film with their friends. The lines between film and television series are becoming increasingly more blurred. This thesis and its results revolve around film consumption so it might seem irrelevant to include findings regarding television consumption. However, the interviews explicitly showed that consumption of film at home has been influenced by the presence of television series and they hereby justify the inclusion.

The respondents were quite vocal about the reasoning behind the frequency and preference of television series over films. This segment will discuss the direct motivators to this tendency that were derived from the transcripts. The reasons are: 1) binge-watching; 2) shorter runtime; 3) character connection; There is one major indirect reason however which is related to the film library on the service. This will be discussed in a future finding.

Binge-watching

Since the rise of streaming services and its popularity, a new type of consuming behaviour has emerged: binge-watching. Just as explained in the theoretical framework, it refers to the ability to watch multiple episodes of a series in a row hereby bingeing seasons of a series (Matrix, 2014). Admittedly, binge-watching already existed before Netflix was around. However, it is a habit that has been adopted increasingly more over the past few years. Streaming services have taken binge-watching to the next level because it breaks the constraints that users were facing before which is accessibility. Before Netflix, consumers would buy expensive DVD boxes. In this day and age however, they can just point and click towards hundreds of different television series for a relative low price per month. Netflix is a company that applied the binge-watching narrative to its business structure and the two concepts have now become synonymous (Pittman & Sheehan, 2015). Binge-watching was not mentioned as often in the interviews compared to consumption of television series as a whole. Some have even claimed that they try to exert a better control over binge-watching as it took too much of their time:

“... I've become better at controlling the binge-watching. At the start of my Netflix subscription I would more binge-watch than I do now.” (Arthur, 23 years old)

Binge-watching is also motivated through the fact that SVOD services can launch television series (licenced or original) with an entire season. Netflix has caused a disruption in traditional release schedules of television series by eliminating the week-to-week broadcast of an episode and thus cultivating the binge-watching behaviour. The streaming service has even devised a strategy by releasing new shows and subsequent seasons on a Friday so that audiences could binge-watch those over the weekend (Jenner, 2018). According to Matrix (2014), binge-watching has been proven to eb a good remedy against stress and is a form of visual therapeutic activity. Additionally, it should be mentioned that people feel also more inclined to binge-watch because of fear of spoilers on social media (Steiner & Xu, 2018).

Shorter duration

Perhaps the most important catalyst for binge-watching and preferring television shows over films has to do with the runtime of an episode (Matrix, 2014). Just as previously explained, the respondents would watch a film when they found time to relax and escape. The interesting part is that they prefer to commit to something that takes up less of their time. Watching a film both at home and at the cinema is considered more of a commitment:

“I would say if it's a 20-minute TV show and you watch it and then... (gestures)it's done. And if you like to watch the next episode, okay, then it takes more time. But a movie would actually require you a longer time to spend, you know more focus for longer period of time at once. Where a TV show you can watch one episode go on to the next take a break and then go on to the next... so there's a difference in that. So that's why I'm more interested in TV shows by itself.”
(John, 22 years old)

The main takeaway here is that this occurrence with audiences is more based on a psychological motivation. Most of the respondents who claimed television series as their preferred entertainment product mentioned that it is partially due to the lack of time. However, at the end of a certain consumption period they might have binged an entire night which takes as long or sometimes longer than the average film. This refers back to the commitment aspect I mentioned because the interviewees prefer to finish a film in one sitting and not pause it to leave the end for the next day:

“I have the option to opt out every 40 minutes. It's very much related to time frame for me. Whereas for movies I feel like I actually have to commit to that 90 minutes even though it's the same as three episodes combined. Just the fact that I can just opt out at every end of episode just makes me feel better.” (Arthur, 23 years old)

Character connection

The final direct reason watching television shows lies in the fact that if a person likes a certain type of content, then they like to spend as much time as possible with the characters. It is

an appeal that is more present today compared to a few years ago. A television series allows the creative teams to build on the character development in a more extensive way just because they have more hours of content. Once a person is hooked to a series and starts to binge it, he builds a personal relationship with the characters. According to Pittman & Sheehan (2015), binge-watching allows the audience to be more engaged with the characters. The consumer then feels that his commitment over time might be worth more than just spend two hours on one movie at home:

“I always liked shows because I felt personally that a show was always about you building a relationship with the character you liked or dislike also you know. So that’s why I am more into shows.” (Joel, 23 years old)

4.1.3 Netflix has a film problem

The previous finding displayed the direct reasons for visiting a film less frequently than a series. This third theme to SVOD is technically speaking the fourth reason for turning film in a substitute product. However, this pattern observed in the interviews seems to stand on its own as a theme in SVOD film consumption. The concern that this segment will focus on became apparent when the respondents were asked about their satisfaction and gratification levels with Netflix. Most of the responses were middle of the road. On the one hand, they were praising the service for what it can provide both technically and content-wise. This is a response that should not be taken at face value. One should interpret the more latent messages because on the other hand when respondents were asked about Netflix as a film provider their reactions proved to lean more on the negative side. This leads to believe that the overall satisfaction around Netflix lies with the fact that it succeeds so well on the television aspect. However, when a respondent decides to watch a film either alone or with other people, Netflix will always be the first choice of access. This finding will elaborate what the respondents felt about the Netflix film library.

Lack of recent films

Out of the interviews emerged three issues that the respondents had with the film library. The first problem lies with the relevance of the films. When respondents turn to Netflix either to

browse or find something specific, they find themselves constantly going through the same catalogue when it comes to licenced content. They would often want to find a film that they missed in theatres but the search almost always ends in disappointment:

“The non-Netflix movies like movies that they don't own the rights of are often like the older movies and those I don't know if I (pauses)... Because I've often already watched them.” (Joel, 23 years old)

This creates a problem because nearly none of the respondents would be ready to close the streaming service and turn to a VOD service to find a specific film. Renting has become outdated in this age of SVOD. If a consumer already pays a certain amount per month for a large library, he would not be ready to pay half that price to just one movie. The consumer is then more likely to turn to an illegal alternative if the need to watch that film is higher. This will be more discussed in the results related to piracy. Some interviewees mentioned that their search for recent movies lies with local SVOD services that come with their TV/internet provider. The examples mentioned were the Dutch Ziggo and the Belgian Telenet. Both services promote new releases that are recently out on home media:

[about Netflix] *“It's not up to date. It's not really the new movies... because I use the other thing that I said before to watch like the newer movies. So I watch it on that [Telenet] instead of Netflix.”* (Erez, 22 years old)

Discrepancy in original content gratification

Another issue that troubled the respondents was the range of original produced content. Netflix launched their first in-house produced House of Cards which became for a while the calling card of the service and the perfect example that non-Hollywood entities could produce quality content (Burroughs, 2018). As we all know, multiple corporations are trying to compete with Netflix by starting their own streaming services. Disney is launching theirs in a few months, so is Apple and other film studios have entered the streaming service war as well. All these companies know that they cannot only rely on older content whose licences can be transferred to other competitors. Over the last few years Netflix has been increasing its budget new content to 8

billion and will dedicate 85% of that amount to original content (Sparrer, 2018).

This has not gone unnoticed with the respondents. My prediction was that they would be euphoric about Netflix Originals but once again this sentiment is mostly credited to television series. Most of the interviewees claim that Netflix puts more effort in providing quality television than quality films. This becomes even more apparent where multiple interviewees failed to name original films but could easily name original series. The feeling is that Netflix Original films are often generic, unappealing and uninspired:

“I usually go for the originals but to be fair I do think that they put more effort in their TV series because those are usually, not always, but they're quite new and refreshing and nice but for their movies it's just not really the case.” (Annemaryn, 22 years old)

These insights indicate that the average Netflix user is confused. Most films at home are consumed legally through Netflix, except when the urge to watch a specific film is higher than the urge to simply browse.

The state of the Netflix library along with the advertisement practices to convince audiences to watch their original content are an example of the ‘uses and effects research’ by Jensen & Rosenberg (1990). It is a state where both the audience’s motivations and experiences work interrelatedly with how the media influences that consumption. Large corporations like Netflix have changed the norm when it comes to film consumption and they may have influenced the way a consumer might think before he or she wants to immerse in a 2-hour flick. Media may therefore influence how people choose the type of channel they wish to use (Rubin, 2009). Forcing is maybe a strong word, but it might nudge and change the consumer’s watching behaviour:

“They (Netflix) make you want to watch what they want you to watch. But I'm not... I'm not such a fan of it. And I mean most of the times it's not even related to what I watch.” (Erez, 22 years old)

It was mentioned in the theoretical framework that there is a distinct lack of studies regarding audiences’ tendencies towards films on SVOD because most of them revolve around

television series. That gap might be a reflection of how SVOD services, especially the major ones, deal with films in general. Audiences are assured quality and quantity when it comes to television series, but the films currently satisfy the quantitative factor.

I would like to reiterate however once again that the respondents watch films through Netflix. Their browsing time may take long but eventually they do land on something they would like to watch. The pattern is that that choice is either not satisfying or it was just a compromise.

4.1.4 Overall Netflix satisfaction is high, but loyalty is not

As previously mentioned, people seem to be overall satisfied with Netflix as a product even though it is possible that that satisfaction is related to the provision of television content and not the film necessarily. At the moment, Netflix is able to satisfy the basic needs of its customers. The first finding already showed us that Netflix is mostly used for its comfort and the content that is available (licenced or original) is usually good enough to relax after a long day. We also know that Netflix has currently no major competitor in North Western Europe. The interviews showcased another sense of confusion coming from the respondents. Once again, they expressed their satisfaction with Netflix but that feeling is present due to having no other service that offers that same amount of content for that price. The respondents highlight that their dependency on Netflix is because of no other better alternative:

“I think unless another medium that is greater than Netflix comes out, I think I’m pretty much stuck with Netflix.” (Jane, 18 years old)

Additionally, multiple participants have taken notice of the price increases with Netflix. Most still believe that the price is relatively low for now, but they do admit that Netflix is abandoning one of its key strengths. The novelty of it being cheap is one of the reasons the service works in the first place (Tyron, 2013). One of the more sceptical interviewees has even slowly started considering abandoning his subscription in favour for other legal alternatives like the arthouse SVOD service Mubi. He is in the minority of course but he feels that the Netflix library has never been something for him when it comes to both film and television. This finding poses an interesting question in the world of home consumption. With the current state of Netflix’

inventory, what position will it have in the marketplace if another competitor from the US makes it way to North Western Europe?

4.2 Cinema

The second chapter in the results sections revolve around the interviewees' motivations and experiences with the cinema. The following two themes showcase how those digital natives perceive movie-going experience and how they will see it evolve both for them and others in the future. The relevance of the older studies regarding cinema attendance is tested along with the applicability. Unlike the SVOD results, the tendencies towards cinema will prove to be more of a mixture of the integrative and affective needs that Katz et al. (1973) described rather than mostly integrative. The interviews confirmed the theory by Austin (1986) that both integrative and affective gratifications play a part in cinema attendance and experience. It should be noted that overall satisfaction with the cinema both content and progress wise is high, and possibly higher than content with SVOD.

4.2.1 Cinema has become more of an activity

One of the major findings that the interviews provided on the basis of cinema attendance is how they like to experience it. The respondents were quite positive about attending the multiplex to enjoy a film. However, what used to be a frequently attended venue, the cinematic experience has now shifted in the more occasional activity that one engages in. The activity is compared to going for drinks or going to see a play by some respondents. The comfort and convenience of the streaming services have changed the way they consume films and thus have diminished the frequency in attendance when it comes to movie theatres. The question one has to ask is to what extent is this statement accurate. Additionally, what are the other factors that have made attending the cinema so special in everyone's day to day lives? The interviews proved that the respondents viewed the cinematic experience a special activity based on two principles: socially and technically.

Communal experience is crucial

When the participants were asked why they attend the movie theatre, the answer was almost unanimous: the social experience. It was also the second most popular motivation that was chosen on the survey. The decision to attend the cinema relies solely on the condition that someone can accompany them. While some participants hesitantly suggested that they went alone once or twice, overall it can be said that watching a film at cinema is more communal than watching something at home. Despite the fact that one has to remain quiet during the film, it has been proven that the cinema is a place one goes to to socialize (Henkel et al., 2015):

“Something I never do is go alone to the cinema because I just prefer to do it with someone else so you can share that experience and talk about the movie and for me, it's not really an individualistic activity. It's a thing that you do in a group and it's more to do it with someone else.” (Lara, 21 years old)

The joy of the theatrical experience is also often credited to the shared experiences one not only shares with friends but with strangers in the audience as well. According to López-Sintas et al. (2016), one should not disregard the importance that strangers in an audience have on the enhancement of the experience. The writers argue that key moments in a film may transform in shared complicity which may lead to shared laughter for instance.

“Also that you're with other people in a movie theater and you can always also have their reactions it always amplifies the effect. [...] Friends or just you know, random people in the movie theater. [...] Yeah the audience just, you know, people screaming at the screen or whatever.” (John, 22 years old)

Just like going out to dinner on a free night, going to the movies has garnered that same type of label. Less of an activity to just pass the time but more to being proactive and enhance one's social status. According to Katz et al. (1973), spending time with people from your social group increases the integrative gratification. However, the article does mention that they are independent of the integrative needs. The writers are stating that the affective needs are more associated with the value of entertainment that the content at the cinema provides. Therefore, the

affective needs and their importance in the subject of cinema will be more related to the next finding in this chapter.

The integrative needs play a role that is clearer with the cinematic experience as compared to the use of SVOD. It was mentioned that the company one finds himself in when watching a film through Netflix is dependent on the person. Some people preferred watching it alone while others conducted the activity with friends. However, both SVOD and cinema have the notion of relaxing and escapism as their factors to satisfy their integrative needs. In the case of cinema however, the need to achieve those two is by enhancing the social status which watching a film through SVOD does not guarantee.

Coordination is a problem

A problem that many respondents attribute to the decrease in cinema attendance is finding the right time to go. One participant even said that going to the cinemas is not like “*going out for coffee*” (Alexandra, 22 years old). Everybody has a different schedule and it is tough to find the right time when the person you want to go with is available which is why consumers just often turn to SVOD or illegal sources as alternative. That goes for both students and people who are currently working. When they arrive at home after a long, they often do not want go out again just to attend a film. It was already established in the previous finding that they would prefer to just stay at home in their comfort zone. However, when they do agree on a day and time, they are excited about the prospect of going. When the time presents itself, the participants like the excitement of getting prepared and actually going out of the house to watch a film. Attending the cinema is not only an activity then but even an event:

“Watching with friends I think it's as much as a movie as a social ritual. It's more like... it's going to the cinema it involves more... You know you get dressed go out maybe to dinner. [...] It's a social ritual. [...] It feels like going to the circus or you know... going to the theater. [...] It's an event.” (Andres, 24 years old)

Interestingly, López-Sintas et al. (2016) notes that this type of feeling or behaviour towards the cinema is not uncommon. The paper showcased that some people within the study

sample used the analogy of ‘being on vacation’ whenever they would go to the movie theatre. The next finding will highlight what makes the cinematic experience not only a social event but also an exceptional experience activity.

4.2.2 Blockbusters are the most popular

Just as the introduction to this thesis explained, overall ticket revenues are increasing but there is a growing concern for the future of the cinematic landscape. The participants were therefore asked about their consumption to the art form. Most of them are already in their early to mid 20s so it was interesting to ask where the preferences of these up and coming adults lie. This finding relates mostly to the content gratification presented in the theory by Stafford et al. (2004) but also how the process gratifications complement the former. When asked what type of film they like to see at the cinema, the answers were once again quite varied. When it comes to the motivations multiple respondents felt that they could see any type or genre. Once more however, the probing technique proved to provide some interesting insights. They claim that would like to attend a diverse range of films but in the end, they all mostly agree that the movies that they eventually go to are the blockbusters. The term blockbuster is of course quite broad so it encompasses high-budget productions with the ability to provide a certain visual spectacle that certain other films may not (Henkel et al., 2015). Blockbusters mostly revolve around science-fiction, fantasy, action, etc. Now, with the decrease in attendance this finding will further explore why those movies are the ones that are usually chosen. Each subgroup to this theme may be an individual theme in its own right but they also clarify why blockbusters are the most popular.

Hedonism is an important factor

The findings regarding SVOD illustrate that the average consumer does not exert a lot of meaning in the type of content that is consumed. Sure, as a consumer one does not want to be disappointed or bored by the chosen film. By a lack of meaning it is conveyed that in order to satisfy the integrative needs of simply taking a break the respondents might watch any genre of content. The tendency to watch a film that can be a spectacle is as high as that of a film that is maybe more dramatic or has less production value. Escaping at home does not necessarily have to evoke uplifting and positive feelings. It was already established that enjoyment and

entertainment are often related but not cannot be confined to the same thing (Oliver and Bartsch, 2011; Wirth et al. 2012). However, when it comes to experiencing a film at the theatre, the answer proved to be quite different. Every respondent who said that they attended mostly blockbusters hinted at hedonistic reasons for doing so. Pursuing hedonistic gratifications refer to finding types of content that are pleasurable and fun (Oliver and Raney, 2011). The genres related to blockbusters often cross the boundaries of what we represent as a relatable world which thus creates a fantasy world and then enhances the feeling of escapism. This is something that attracts those consumers. The escapism that the content provides was found to be the very important to the interviewees:

“I just want to see something that's not really realistic because it's more fun.” (Lara, 21 years old)

The hedonistic features in a film manage to satisfy the affective gratifications of a media consumer as their goal is to stimulate positive emotions. It draws the audience in the spectacle that is shown on screen. Those are amplified when sitting in the theatre, but this will be discussed later. The findings related to cinema are mostly satisfying affective and integrative needs. However, it does of course occur from time to time that the respondents would go see something that is not necessarily the next superhero film but something more serious with deeper themes that they could learn from:

“It has to be catching. That's what I like. Either that for example, it can be like a really big blockbuster like Hunger Games or something like action or science fiction. Or it can be like really... like The Butler for example, like straight to reality but very catching. That's what I like. [...] Because I thought that you're really you get affectionate to the characters and then you really want to know what happens and at the same time it's an eye opener.” (Alexandra, 22 years old)

Learning something from a film can also evoke positive feelings with an audience. However, most participants agreed that a trip to the cinema is mostly associated with entertainment. As a consumer who puts effort into the activity through coordination with friends,

accessibility to the theatre, price et cetera they would like to see that effort paid off by enjoying something that is larger than life which contains a nice imagery. On the other hand, the occasional attendance of a non-blockbuster proves the statement by Tefertilier (2014) that while cognitive gratifications are not as important, they do play a certain role and should not be disregarded when put in relation with the integrative and affective needs. The decrease in attendance showcases a shift in the consumption of certain types of films which was already illustrated by the fact that at home people would consume all kinds of movies. One of the subsequent themes will clarify this statement.

Additionally, while not a major pattern running through the interviews but albeit an interesting insight was that another respondent found that her personal consumption is often dependent on something from her past. The blockbuster culture is built on franchises and known IPs as evidenced by the last few years' box office returns. Her curiosity is often sparked because of a sense of nostalgia. This particular interviewee claimed that most of the movies she attends are Marvel and Disney, the latter of whom also partially out of nostalgia. Additionally, her latest cinematic experience was Pokémon Detective Pikachu which she went to see because:

“I think nostalgia that's one thing. It's that... because I watched Pokémon as a kid so I was kind of curious and I thought Pikachu was cute so yeah I was just very curious to see how they were going to do like the TV series from back in the day and the movie as well because I watched those when I was a kid. So then I saw the trailer and it was so different how I expected it to be so I was very curious and I liked it actually.” (Annemaryn, 22 years old)

According to Triantafillidou & Siomkos (2014), nostalgia is positively related to hedonistic pleasures. Past memories towards certain content can evoke positive feelings or “experiences that help them escape reality” (p. 535).

Immersive experience

The most popular motivation that was selected among the respondents on the survey for attending the cinema was the high sound and picture quality that the theatrical experience provides. Multiple participants expressed that when they attend the cinema they would like to be

fully immersed in the experience. Sitting in a dark room watching a film on a big screen with the best possible sound system lays on the foundation of why people go to the cinema in the first place (Tefertiller, 2017). To the respondents, the experience of the cinema cannot be replicated at home despite how good your television and sound system are. In the case of blockbusters of course, they are most preferably seen on the biggest screen possible. The section on hedonism already covered that audiences like to choose for the big screen because of the positive feelings that the imagery and spectacle can evoke. Audiences do not want to miss out on the opportunity to watch an often globally anticipated film on the biggest screen possible because it enhances the immersion in both the story and the special effects/action:

“Big budget films with cool effects I will watch it in cinema because... like Avengers you watch the most for the exciting true effects. So I will watch it on a big screen.” (Ruby, 19 years old)

The immersion in the film is also related to the communal aspect of sharing it with your friends and other people in the audience (López-Sintas et al., 2016).

Additionally, although consumers attend the cinema less than they used, when they do go, they prefer to enjoy the full experience. A cinematic experience is important so audiences will attempt to optimize their trip to the cinema through new technological innovations. Theatres today realize that event-driven films are the ones that are the most in demand (Tefertiller, 2017). Therefore, they invest in those technologies like IMAX, 3D and even 4D to attract mass audiences. This is an interesting finding because one of the reasons the interviewees have attended the cinema less over the last few years is because of the high prices which are often higher when seen in IMAX, 3D and 4D. However, when the opportunity presents itself, there is no sense of regret and they would gladly pay the extra fee to enjoy the full immersive experience:

“I really value like sound quality and an image and the whole experience. Like it doesn't bother me to pay extra for IMAX at the movie because if I go, I'd rather go for the full experience.” (Arthur, 23 years old)

Experience over quality

The title to this segment might be sound pejorative and doing a disservice to the makers of blockbusters but I would like to clarify. Just as explained in the theoretical framework, Bartchs & Viehoff (2010) claims that pieces of entertainment designed for hedonistic purposes can also contain meanings or themes that complement eudaimonic characteristics despite what many critics think. The goal of this thesis is not to advocate for the legitimacy of blockbusters or to discredit them. Film in any shape or form is a subjective artform. However, in the grand scheme of things, one has to admit that they are more accessible than others because of their hedonistic and escapist nature. In any case, the respondents admit that they are more focused and concentrated while watching a film at the theatre when compared to something they watch at home because they might be distracted because of their phones for example. Subsequently, to some participants the cinema does not always have to provide a ‘good’ film. To some, that immersion is not necessarily always related to the investment in the story and characters. By that I mean that some interviewees claimed that they do not really care if the film itself is not qualitatively satisfying as long as the spectacle and/or social aspect are provided which brings back the subject of cinema being an escapist activity. Multiple respondents explicitly stated that to them it is often experience over quality:

“...the fact that I'm going to the cinema, I don't expect the movie to be better. Like I expect my overall experience to be better.” (Alexandra, 22 years old)

This illustrates that when some consumers attend the cinema, they just want to have a good time whether it is due to their social entourage or positive imagery shown on screen. Enjoying an overall experience at the cinema is easier with a blockbuster because of its hedonistic features (Bartchs & Viehoff, 2010).

Netflix has led to cinema selectiveness

Despite what the results of this thesis claims on the quality of the film catalogue that Netflix provides, it has had an influence on the audience’s frequency in cinema attendance. The large presence of streaming services has influenced the thought process of the consumers when it

comes to attending the cinema. The interviews do show that SVOD services have legitimized themselves as a complementary consumption medium which often leads to them being a substitution. The reasons why have been extensively covered in the results regarding SVOD. However, because of the comfort that those services provide, consumers might think twice before going through the effort to attend the cinema. Therefore, they will take more factors into consideration. Especially compared to a few years ago when they claimed that their attendance was higher.

This was mentioned briefly earlier but price is still an aspect that is taken in consideration with consumers. Despite the joy of gratifying ones integrative and/or affective needs, price has become a reason for a decrease in cinema attendance. The interviews establish that the respondents are happy to pay the price because of the fact that it is an activity, the experience is appreciated and because they know they do it once in a while and not often. However, many respondents admitted that the expensive ticket price along with the expensive snacks impede them from going more. That is why when the occasional trip to the cinema occurs, they would like that investment to be worth it and thus often experience event blockbusters rather than smaller films. They are more wary of going to the cinema because the average SVOD subscription price is almost equal to one ticket (D'Alessandro, 2019):

“I mean if you go watch a movie... it’s probably like 10 to 11 euros for one movie now, that’s a whole month of Netflix. So... your choice (laughs).” (John, 22 years old)

Which brings to the second reason why Netflix has caused selectiveness. Despite it not happening often, services like Netflix sometimes release films that have ‘recently’ exited the movie theatres and have been available on physical media for a while. The possibility of this happening plays a role in the decision-making process of a consumer for a film at the cinema. The interviews showed that multiple respondents might not see certain films at the theatre because they would rather wait for it on Netflix or possibly on illegal channels. The respondents are more prone to watch a smaller film at home than at the cinema. So, when they would go through the current showtimes of their local theatre they might ignore some of them because they do not feel that they need to see them on the big screen. A more intimate drama, indie film or

even a comedy for example might have to make way for the more spectacle driven films which is not only confirmed by the interviews but also in D'Alessandro (2019). Streaming services have provided the consumers with more freedom in deciding where to watch a particular film which then again has led to the consumers carefully choosing a film whom they believe is worthwhile to experience on the big screen:

“I’ll probably want to go to the movies now cinema to watch near those blockbuster movies that just came out and the less, you know the non-blockbuster movies. I’ll probably wait for on Netflix and then watch it over there.” (John, 22 years old)

This trend might be an indication to where the film theatre industry might be heading. Audiences feel that cinemas and studios have to give them a reason for them to take the effort and pay the ticket price.

4.3 Piracy

The previous two mediums have been covered extensively and now the final two themes will concern the use of illegal platforms. In the early 2000s, two technological form of media made its way or increased their presence in most households: DVDs and the internet. The simultaneously growing technologies assisted in consumers by figuring out that they could serve complementary purposes. The content on DVDs was easily extracted and then shared through the internet (Smith & Telang, 2009). Because of the ease that digitization brings with it, studios and theatres witnessed an increase in illegal consumption which according to some studies had effects on not only the box office but especially on DVD/VOD sales (Danaher, Dhanasobhon, Smith & Telang, 2010; Smith & Telang, 2009). It should be noted that no differentiation was made during the interviews between illegal streaming or downloading. They were regarded as one entity as they relate to the subject of piracy. While few interviewees expressed that they barely use illegal channels, others managed to paint a clear picture of how it is present in their lives and especially compared to a time when streaming services were not around. The most common forms of illegal channels that were mentioned were through: torrents, Popcorntime,

Kodi and simply illicit streaming websites providing access to movies. The following two themes will explore how the interviewees currently handle illegal consumption and why.

4.3.1 Netflix has led to piracy decrease

The interviews showcased that as digital natives, the interviewees were more than capable to dig through the internet at a fairly young age to find films and television series to their liking. As time went on, Netflix became a household name in European households. Its credibility was already established due to the years that it had been active in the US. The respondents who use piracy have all agreed that Netflix' presence has led to an immense decrease in illegal consumption which is the first theme. This finding concurs with a global piracy study conducted by Poort, Quintais, van der Ende, Yagafarova & Hageraats (2018) which states that piracy in Europe has decreased immensely except for in Germany. However, it has not completely disappeared yet. The subgroups in this theme will elaborate on the subject.

Netflix' influence on illegal consumption

First of all, let's get the obvious out of the way. It was already established that the lives of the respondents have completely been changed by the emergence of Netflix and all the perks it offers. Multiple participants admit that the accessing of illegal platforms used to be the most common way for them to access films quickly and for free at home before Netflix. To many, Netflix has rendered the presence of illegal platforms to merely a substitute instead of a complementary consumption method:

"I have Netflix what since I think four-five years. Before that when I wanted to watch a movie I personally didn't rent a movie so I had to download it you know when I wanted to watch a movie at home and today the fact that Netflix kind of took that place a bit in the market. It's led to me having to download less and yeah, I... yeah it just more... it's just sometimes Netflix is more convenient." (Joel, 23 years old)

As mentioned previously, Netflix optimized the home viewing experience. It is the idealized version of a home service: paying a cheap price for a large library of content that is easily accessible. The respondents feel that they have less the need to access illicit sources

because there is a serious chance that the film they want to watch is on Netflix. Streaming services were not only gaining popularity due to what they can offer, but they were also regarded as an improvement over piracy. Most of the respondents expressed their unhappiness with illegal sources because the image quality would often be very low. Additionally, to some respondents SVOD services also provide the luxury of adding subtitles which is not always the case with illegal streaming sites. This all relates back to the comfort theme with the SVOD medium. The image of what SVOD services represent were proven to subside the footprint of illegal platforms:

“Its high sound and picture quality, that's important for me because when I'm streaming illegally, technically like usually the picture is very blurry. There's like some missing spots, you can see the pixels. So, this is a great benefit if you can actually see in good quality.” (Debbie, 23 years old)

The interviews confirm an observation by Godinho de Matos, Ferreira & Smith (2018). If consumers manage to obtain desired content conveniently through a qualitative service, then the frequency of abandoning illegal platforms in favour of SVOD is likely.

Filling the Netflix gap

While not to the same extent, piracy is still present in the participants' lives. The results related to SVOD illustrated that Netflix has a film problem because of the lack of recent films and a weak selection of original films. Where Netflix has replaced piracy as the most used medium for home consumption, piracy now serves another purpose. The use of illegal channels is now more often used to fill the gap that Netflix is leaving. The respondents biggest concern content-wise with Netflix is the failure of keeping the library relevant. Therefore, the most common use of illegal channels is to access films that are not available on Netflix, which as the SVOD results illustrated, are often the more recent ones. According to Henkel et al. (2015), the tendency to pirate films is linked to the impatience of the consumers. The respondents do not want to wait until the recent films are released on Netflix. They are not even sure IF they will eventually be available to stream. According to Pardo (2013), the industry is attempting to

narrow down the window of exclusivity between cinema and SVOD in order to reduce piracy effects:

“Thing is with piracy often as opposed to Netflix it will come out 3-4 months after it’s out at the cinema because it’s usually when it comes out and DVD. On Netflix it might take two years something until they’re they feel they have to buy the rights, or if they can buy the rightx. So, I’ll lean much quicker to downloading a movie than waiting for it to come out on Netflix.” (Joel, 23 years old)

Additionally, one of the biggest gripes with Netflix’ film library is the difference in choices per country. The respondents mostly agree that their illegal consumption would decrease if Netflix had one worldwide library. It would expand the library to more interesting films and not limit the users to turn to piracy.

The major thing that SVOD services and piracy have in common is in satisfying the needs identified by Katz et al. (1973). Just like with SVOD, they concern with the integrative need of watching a film at home alone or with friends and that is regardless on the genre of the content. Therefore, the respondents claimed that they did not differentiate by pirating either a fantasy movie or a romantic comedy for instance. They would pirate all types of films if necessary. However, being someone who pirates films does not mean that you do not have an affinity for the artform. As Aveyard (2016) explains, pirating films in the 21st century is something as common as watching a film on DVD or at the cinema. It keeps the process of the film consumer more fluid and therefore more complex. The cinema results proved that in this digital age respondents might wait out for a non-blockbuster to be streamed at home. Those smaller films are then often pirated for all the reasons mentioned in the cinema results and if it is not available on Netflix:

“I don’t know if it’s the type of movies. It’s just about it. Just I think movies usually that I can’t watch I can’t watch on Netflix or I missed it at the cinema. Let’s say and now it’s not on Netflix and it’s not at the cinema so I don’t know where to watch it. So, I’ll download it but it’s not like I only download comedies or only dramas. [...] Would I stream or download a movie that’s in the cinema? Yeah, I think so. Obviously, you know depends if it’s like this blockbuster movie where I

know I have to watch on the big screen then no. If it's just this movie where it's not that case, then I'm not necessarily down to pay now \$10 for a movie like that then I might just watch it at home to be honest.” (Joel, 23 years old)

Streaming services will always be accessed first, but if the search is unsuccessful consumers will turn to piracy if the urge to watch a specific content is high. Piracy is also the alternative if the random browsing process takes too long. All this indicates that piracy is mostly used in case of ‘an emergency’ when Netflix does not provide a satisfactory film. Additionally, despite the fact that piracy was often an option to skip the cinema, Netflix has so elevated the attractiveness of home consumption that consumers may just stream a smaller film (il)legally quicker than a blockbuster. This whole theme regarding the relationship between Netflix and piracy might be an indication that the future of piracy lies with how SVOD will evolve in the future. The consumers want as much content being made available to them, but they do not want to pay for too many services. According to Bode (2018), the rise of Netflix competitors has made consumers turn back to piracy as a response.

Safety

The respondents claimed that it is never easy for them to find the right illegal platform to find their films. Netflix has decreased the hassle one has to go through to find a film. By just pointing and clicking you can start watching a film in a qualitative way. The comfort of the SVOD medium has made the interviewees lazy when it comes to initiating an illegal search. They know that it would take a while to find the right qualitative website or file. Streaming services are just more convenient to use:

“I'm just too lazy to go through all those links to find the right one.” (Arthur, 23 years old)

The reason for laziness does not only lie in the finding of the best site but it is also attributed to finding the site with the least amount of risk. The participants highlighted the constant annoyance of going through pop-up ads that show up on illicit platforms. Additionally, those ads often contaminate the computer with a virus as do downloads of certain files. The users do not always know which site to access. Just like the interviews illustrate, the presence of

viruses on the internet may be a good deterrent against piracy (Wolfe, Higgins & Marcum, 2007). Once again, the comfort of legal services is an advantage over piracy:

“It's more like the quality and the easiness of use (of SVOD)... because for like an illegal streaming website, you have to like click 10 times on like a link and then there's like pop-ups all over the place.” (Debbie, 23 years old)

4.3.2 Low sense of guilt

The second theme that emerged from the interviews is the low feeling of guilt present with the respondents. The participants admit that there is no lack of guilt but that the small amount does not taint the viewing experience. The following theme will explore whether and how guilt is part of the pirating experience.

Lack of accountability

Despite Netflix's flaws pushing people back to piracy, there is another culprit as well. The biggest reason why the participants do not reflect on the moral perspective is quite simply because of the lack of oversight. They know that everybody is doing it and they rarely hear stories of people getting caught. This finding complements Henkel et. al (2015) which states that this is one of the major reasons why people pirate in the first place:

“I think it would cost like the police and everything so much time and money that they don't have that I think they just kind of hope that the... so they can just create a fear that people would not do it.” (Annemaryn, 22 years old)

Interestingly, the study by Poort et al. (2018) stated that piracy has decreased in all of Europe except for in Germany. This contradicts multiple statements by the interviewees who said that they knew about German friends who got caught and fined. The laws proved to be stricter over there and more heavily enforced than in the Netherlands for example. However, the respondents illustrated that they do not currently feel that law has a big impact on piracy. They know the laws and penalties but because of lack of enforcement in the countries besides Germany they feel that the influence of the judicial system is very minimal (Al-Rafee &

Rouibah, 2009). They admitted however that that would change if the penalties would become more common in the regions that they find themselves in.

No guilt with blockbusters

The biggest feeling of guilt lies with the pirating of non-studio or non-blockbuster films. The respondents admit that the thought crosses their minds quicker with indies than big budget films. Blockbusters are considered more as corporate companies whereas smaller films are seen as the local store. They admit that pirating is stealing and that some productions might use the money. However, the increased feeling of guilt does not stop them from doing it:

“I just think I had my mind like, you know actors don't need the money. They're already millionaires and all those directors. So what is one movie what one person who watches the movie illegally for them? [...]

(about indies) I mean before I watch it, I'm like, oh, yeah, this is an indie movie. They're probably need the money, but that doesn't stop me from watching.” (Lara, 21 years old)

Additionally, an increase in awareness has also helped decrease piracy due to the subsequent lack of guilt. According to Al-Rafee & Rouibah (2009), raising awareness is a better remedy against piracy when compared to legal action. One respondent explained that her academic background has made her more reluctant of accessing illegal channels:

(At university) “We talked about movies and licensing and what it does to independent movie makers and everything so I kind of tend to think about that a bit more because of education I would say.” (Annemaryn, 22 years old)

5. Conclusion

5.1 Research Questions

Through the results of this thesis, this conclusion will provide an answer to the main research question: *How do digital natives obtain and consume contemporary film?* The first two sub-questions asked about the motivations of wanting to choose between SVOD, cinema and piracy and the experiences they get out of them respectively. The third sub-question about the discrepancy between the gratifications sought and obtained will be discussed for the first time in this chapter.

Motivations

First of all, the reasons why consumers use SVOD and piracy are similar. They are both regarded as the most common way to watch films at home. The main three gratification categories by Katz et al. (1973), cognitive, integrative and affective proved to assist in understanding why they want to watch films at home in the first place. The participants put more meaning in the after-work activity motivation than the actual type of content that they may provide. Yes, the interviewees look for satisfying content and will not feel gratified if the film chosen is disappointing. However, watching a film at home is more related to the integrative need of enhancing one's stability by taking a break at home, regardless of type of content and regardless of the company they are in. The cognitive and affective needs need not to be ignored as well because the consumer's choice on content will depend on mood and availability of the film which as Soto-Sanfiel et al. (2018) highlighted that according to U&G research, choice of media is often associated with psychological factors.

Watching a film at home is also motivated by the comfort that the medium can provide which is not necessarily linked to the content it offers. The framework by Stafford et al. (2004) showcased how process and content can influence the U&G of media. Streaming services like Netflix are very appreciated for what the medium and technology represent and therefore the process which correlates with the finding by Stafford et al. (2004) about the use of internet. Consumers have access to a large library at a low cost accessible anywhere and at any time as

described by Anderson (2004). Legal streaming is motivated by the convenience of watching it at home and the large library that it offers (López-Sintas et al., 2016). Interestingly, the motivations to choose illegal sources in these technological times are due to the experiences the consumers have with SVOD. This shows how motivations and experiences are highly linked with each other. The participants showed that they prefer to use SVOD over illegal platforms because it is more convenient. Piracy is therefore more motivated by the sense of emergency when other alternatives fail to provide what they need unlike a few years ago when SVDO has not yet established its presence. Piracy used to be the most common medium used to watch films at home with the respondents.

Cinematic motivations are mostly related to a mix of affective and integrative needs. A consumer wants to attend a film with mostly hedonistic and therefore affective features which could enhance the integrative gratification. This is where SVOD and piracy also come into play because those would then be used if the consumer does not feel the need to exert the effort to watch a particular film at the cinema. Once again, this shows that the consumers would mostly choose any film at home rather than at the cinema where they would prefer to pay the money to see something hedonistically satisfying. A smaller film is not always deemed worth it. More meaning is therefore put in the type of cinematic films even though the motivation for attending the movie theatre is the cinematic experience and not the film itself necessarily. It is a complex finding but it does highlight that the cinematic industry may be heading towards an even more blockbuster heavy climate. The choice to attend the cinema is therefore often experience over quality. Experiencing blockbusters is more related to affective than cognitive needs which proves the assumption by Austin (1986) that going to the movies is less considered for more meaningful experiences. The thesis however strengthens that statement because of the blockbuster heavy climate that the cinematic industry currently finds itself and will do more so in the future if the box office is any indication. This finding is more relevant today than as it was in the 1980s because cognitive experiences at the big screen are now taken less into consideration.

The integrative motivation is also important because a cinema will not be attended alone. This confirms earlier findings by López-Sintas et al. (2016). The interviewees highlighted

that they want to attend the cinema because it would be a social activity with their friends which also could enhance one's stability in a busy life

Experiences

When it comes to the experiences, the interviewees mostly concurred on that fact that the cinema provides the most satisfying experience. The results showed that they are invested in the immersive experience with the help of the large screens, high quality sounds and additional technologies like IMAX (Austin, 1986; Tefertiler, 2017). This leads to a better experience of blockbusters which according to Tefertiler (2017) is more in demand at the moment. The problem is that they admit that they do not experience this as often as they would want. The comfort of SVOD and the elevated ticket prices prompt them to think twice before choosing a film. The lower frequency in attendance has therefore also enhanced the social aspect because now it is regarded as an activity to do with friends. The article by Austin (1981) highlighted that cinema is given less importance and regarded more of a leisure activity. While the latter part of that sentence is correct, I would say that because it is now more of a leisure activity than before and due to the high prices, people do express importance in the cinematic experience. The respondents love to experience the cinema with friends and to be immersed and invested together as López-Sintas et al. (2016) illustrated. In the case of cinema, the respondents agree that the integrative and affective needs are mostly satisfied.

As mentioned previously, the motivations to use piracy are closely linked to the actual SVOD experiences. In the case of Netflix, the respondents are mostly satisfied with the integrative need of watching a film. However, that feeling could be elevated if the content proved to more qualitative. Due to a generic library, lack of recent films and higher quality in original television series, the consumers feel that their experiences are not always gratified when it comes to film on Netflix. They mostly spend a long time browsing and are often unhappy with their choice. This has led to film being a substitute product at home and piracy as the alternative for specific (often recent) films. Netflix is more experienced as a television than as a film provider.

This thesis manages to go beyond the theory because most studies regarding SVOD like Steiner & Xu (2018) and Matrix (2014) for example are related to the experiences and usage of the medium for television series. However, the theory was effective because the results proved that the film and tv lines are blurred when it comes to home consumption. The existing theory provided interesting insights into why consumers then prefer television over film at home. Furthermore, the articles that do discuss film consumption with SVOD like Tefertiller (2017) and Henkel et al. (2015) have some limitations. None of the articles take into consideration the increasing popularity of television series and how they may affect film consumption as a whole. The article by Tefertiller (2017) examines the SVOD and cinema relationship while Henkel et al. (2015) examines the reason to consume legally vs illegally. By analysing film consumption, this thesis showcases an interrelation between film content and television content and how they influence motivations and experiences through the three consumption medium. In a time where television content can provide the same or better gratifications, one should take it in consideration when examining cinema attendance, SVOD and/or piracy use.

Piracy is not only relegated to an emergency channel due to the convenience of Netflix but also because of the bad experiences that the participants had with it. They dislike the use of piracy because it is often tough to find the right source with good image and sound quality. They experience a higher feeling of fear with viruses that it may bring rather than the possible judicial repercussions. This is interestingly due to the lack of oversight which is confirmed by the interviews and Al-Rafee & Rouibah (2009).

Gratifications sought - gratifications obtained

As mentioned in the theoretical framework, U&G research is often criticized for ignoring that the use of a media might be related to habitual reasons and because they fail to investigate the gratifications sought (GS) and obtained (GO) (Bae, 2017; Katz et al., 1973).

The themes related to SVOD prove that as a medium and a technology, Netflix manages to satisfy most of the process gratifications. The convenience and comfort that the platform bring are enough to make people watch more movies at home than at the cinema for example. The GO exceed the GS in the process gratification which is positive. However, it was already mentioned

that consumers feel that Netflix fails a film provider hence creating a negative GS-GO discrepancy with the film content. A discrepancy, either positive or negative, influences the satisfaction levels of the medium which could affect the frequency of use with that medium (Quan-Haase & Young, 2010). A negative discrepancy might make consumers seek out an alternative (Palmgreen & Rayburn, 1979). The interesting aspect is that the OVERALL satisfaction with Netflix is high which means that the process gratifications and the qualitative television shows are enough to make people go back to the service. This solidifies that the medium importance is currently ranked higher than the content it provides. The negative GS-GO discrepancy in content has not become an issue yet but it might, as stipulated by the respondents, if another competitor is introduced on the North-Western European market. The question should then be asked if habitual reasons will be important or will consumers switch to a better alternative?

The results related to cinematic attendance proved that despite the low attendance, respondents were most enthusiastic about what it offers. Consumers seek an escapist environment with friends and experience a fun spectacle on the biggest screen possible which is mostly what they all get. Those gratifications are mostly obtained through blockbusters and in that regard the box office results in the last few years could substantiate that these are mostly gratified. Nevertheless, the issue is that it is an expensive activity which digital natives, who are often students, seek to satisfy cinematic gratifications in an affordable way. This is one of the main reasons why consumers do not go back to the cinema so easily. Cinema attendance would probably increase if that additional price gratification is satisfied which could lead in more attendance of non-blockbusters.

Lastly, the GS seem to outweigh the GO with piracy. The consumers use piracy to seek unavailable films on SVOD or films the preferred not to attend at the cinema. The lack in quality and convenience gratifications makes people wearier of the medium. It used to be the habitual medium but illegal consumption has decreased due to the low quality, risks for viruses, struggle to find a source and increasing convenience of SVOD. It shows how habitual reasons, as described by Bae (2017), may be dropped if a better alternative is presented (Palmgreen & Rayburn, 1979).

5.2 Discussion and future implications

This thesis provided a vast and complex representation of the current consumption of film with digital natives. Interestingly, by applying a U&G paradigm, it provides a look at the current film landscape and industry as a result. The thesis showcases that the integrative need identified by Katz et al. (1973) seem to be the overarching motivation. When it comes to home consumption, there is an obvious greater satisfaction with television series than films. People are more inclined to start a new television show than watch a film. The streaming services have positioned themselves as leader in content consumption through television series (Burroughs, 2018; Jenner, 2018). The interviews showcased that film is thus given less attention, hence decreasing the home film consumption.

The results showed that the interviewees are more excited by watching a film at the theatre than watching one at home. Blockbusters have always existed so blaming its increasing popularity on the rise of SVOD would be false. However, the film industry has noticed the shift in consumption and has therefore realized that it needs to convince audiences to attend the cinema and has thus started to focus more on the event-driven films. The interviews proved that the affective needs at the cinema identified by Austin (1986) proved to be more important in today's context compared to when it was written. Audiences have now so much content to choose from (both film and tv) that they have partially abandoned the notion to watch a smaller (often eudaimonic) film on the big screen. Recently, the directors of Avengers: Endgame, Joe & Anthony Russo, had this to say:

“You’ve got so many options for viewing content that there has to be a need for you to leave your home. What is going to drive you to do that? [...] There were 350 more movies released theatrically in the United States last year than there were when “Avatar” came out in 2009. The same thing’s happening on television. There just used to be fewer of everything — fewer movie stars, too — and when the numbers start to get up this high, you start to lose the trees for the forest” (Buchanan, 2019).

There is a certain irony to it that the directors of one of the biggest films of all time publicly state that the content competition has gotten out of hand on all mediums. Their movie stuck out from

those trees. Consumers went out to see it and by looking at the numbers, multiple times as well (www.boxofficemojo.com). The interviewees agreed that the cinematic experience will not disappear because of its appeal but it will be more about the technologies and the innovations. The future may therefore not be too bright for artistic filmmakers who wish that their films be released on the big screen. The overall comfort of SVOD has surpassed the higher satisfaction with cinema. Additionally, there is a big uncertainty with the future of SVOD. A streaming war has been slowly taken into effect in the US and it is only a matter of time for it to arrive in Europe. This will probably have an effect on the uses and gratifications of the consumers as the landscape will evolve once again. Only time will tell where this will go.

5.3 Reflection

Research

As this thesis shows, it is an extensive research that encompasses multiple perspectives with applying multiple theories. It seemed to be the only way if one wants to examine film consumption as a whole and not focus on the respondents' motivations and experiences with one specific consumption method. One of the biggest fears was that the collected sample might be either too diverse or unilateral. However, every respondent with his or her different background proved to be still relevant to provide interesting patterns which strengthens the validity of this thesis.

In order to ensure validity, Silverman (2011) states that one needs to exert generalizability. This study sample consisted out of people experiencing film outside the US. In retrospect, this thesis is more about the digital natives in (North-Western) Europe which is not a negative thing. The limitation here is that in Europe, SVOD services are mostly constrained to Netflix. American digital natives have more options to choose from like Hulu, CBS and an expanded Amazon Prime, etc. Additionally, new platforms are usually launched first in the US before here in Europe. The generalizability of this thesis may have been further validated if global film consumption was more generalized. Additionally, the thesis might have variations in the themes if only Americans were interviewed because they might have a different perspective. A diverse sample with a common understanding of contemporary film consumption would have

enhanced the validity.

The diversity and number of participants were not an issue because I do believe that an expanded number of interviewees within the same sample type would have resulted in mostly the same themes. A certain form of saturation was reached as I witnessed multiple themes overlapping with the respondents. Reliability was ensured by the detailed methodology and was also supported by the notes I made after an interview.

The topic list, grounded in literature and phrased to focus on film, was not enough to often differentiate film from television. That led to interesting findings and was definitely not a flaw as it helped to substantiate the motivations and experiences towards film in this digital age. It was a good choice to go with a qualitative approach rather than quantitative. The patterns were obtained due to a detailed conversation with each respective interviewee. A straight answer by a participant proved to be not as simple as it seemed. Behind every statement lay a grounded motivation and an interview makes you dig deep enough to find out what it is and not take everything at face value which was possible to do with the U&G framework (Jensen & Rosenberg, 1990). The requirement of probing, as identified by Hermanowicz (2002), proved to be effective with the addition of the survey elicitation method suggested by Donoghue (2000). The methodology chapter also highlighted that the ‘why’ had to be asked which I believe succeeded.

I think that this thesis might be a good steppingstone for future researchers who wish to investigate the ever-evolving film consumer in this digital age because one of the goals of this thesis was to provide an updated look at the young film consumer’s motivations and experiences.

Personal

As the author of this thesis, I conducted the research with a lot of passion because of my interest in the subject matter. I do not consider myself to be the average consumer because of how much film is part of my life. It is why I set out to investigate what the average consumers motivates and experiences, since they are the largest market segment. The most important thing was to remain objective during the interviews and the extracting of the results which is key in research (Legard et al., 2003). I tried to probe the interviewees and read between the lines

especially when a certain given answer did not complement my own personal view which Legard et al. (2003) also stresses. I tried to inject my own personal knowledge only when I thought the conversation could use an extra insight or topic that could help the probing of the participant's answers. That was a certain advantage as it helped not only the research on the subject matter, but it helped the interviewees be more at ease. However, I believe that most of them were overall comfortable during the conversation. Many of them were very enthusiastic about participating because of the light but interesting subject matter. Additionally, I made sure to try and not interrupt when a respondent was talking. Also, the subject of piracy was treaded lightly as the respondents were ensured multiple times that the conversation would remain confidential.

It was clear that writing about this material would be an extensive and complex subject matter. However, with the groundwork laid out by the theoretical framework and the interviews, I believe that I succeeded in illustrating a contemporary picture of how digital natives consume and obtain film in this digital era.

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7. Appendix

1) Topic List

Interviewee will first fill out the short survey questions.

1) Opening questions:

- 1) Based on what factors do you choose what film you want to watch? Genre? Actor?
- 2) When do you usually watch a film?
- 3) What type of films do you enjoy the most?
- 4) Do you remember the last movie you watched? Where?

2) Streaming:

- 1) Do you have access to a streaming service? Which one?
- 2) Do you usually watch a film alone or with someone?
- 3) What movie did you last watch on the service?
- 4) What is it you like about the streaming service? What don't you like? Reflection on survey
- 5) Through which device do you use it the most?
- 6) What genre or type of film do you watch on the service? What is it you seek in those films?
- 7) How many times a month do you watch a movie on the service?
- 8) Could you describe the process you go through when using the service?
- 9) What is it you seek with the service? What is it you expect with the service? What does Netflix have to provide you?
- 10) What is it you seek and what do you expect from the films on the service? What is your opinion on the Netflix catalogue?
- 11) Are those expectations met? Do you feel that what you seek is what you obtain?
- 12) Based on your experiences, is there something you would like to see improved?
- 13) Does your satisfaction or dissatisfaction influence how you consume your films in the future?

- 14) Do you think the price you're paying for is fair for what you get?
- 15) Are you willing to pay to rent one individual film through a VOD service?

3) Cinema

- 1) How often do you attend the cinema? Why?
- 2) What movie did you last watch?
- 3) What is it you like about the cinema? What don't you like? Reflection on survey
- 4) What genre or type of film do you watch in the cinema? What is it you seek in those films?
- 5) Could you describe the process you go through for choosing the film?
- 6) Is your decision to attend the cinema usually planned or more spontaneous?
- 7) What is it you seek and what is it you expect with the cinematic experience?
- 8) What is it you seek and what is it you expect from the films shown in the cinema? What is your opinion on the films shown in cinemas today?
- 9) Are those expectations met? Do you feel that what you seek is what you obtain?
- 10) How do you experience watching a film in the cinema? Do you feel that what you seek is what you obtain?
- 11) Based on your experiences, is there something you would like to see improved?
- 12) Does your satisfaction or dissatisfaction influence how you consume your films in the future?
- 13) Would you attend the cinema more if it had a similar subscription service to Netflix?

4) Free online streaming/downloading

- 1) Do you watch or download films online?
- 2) What type of film do you watch with these services?
- 3) Do you use those kinds of services more or less than you used to?
- 4) What are the most important reasons for you to choose those services?
- 5) What makes you want to choose this consumption method over SVOD?
- 6) How often do you use them?

- 7) Are you scared when you use them?
- 8) Do you ever think about the illegal aspect to it? Does that disturb your watching experience?
- 9) Are the expectations met?
- 10) Does your satisfaction or dissatisfaction influence how you consume your films in the future?
- 11) What could the film industry do to decrease piracy?

5) End questions:

- 1) What is your preferred method of consuming film?
- 2) How do you see film consumption evolving in the future for both yourself and others?
Big or small

2) Survey questions + Results

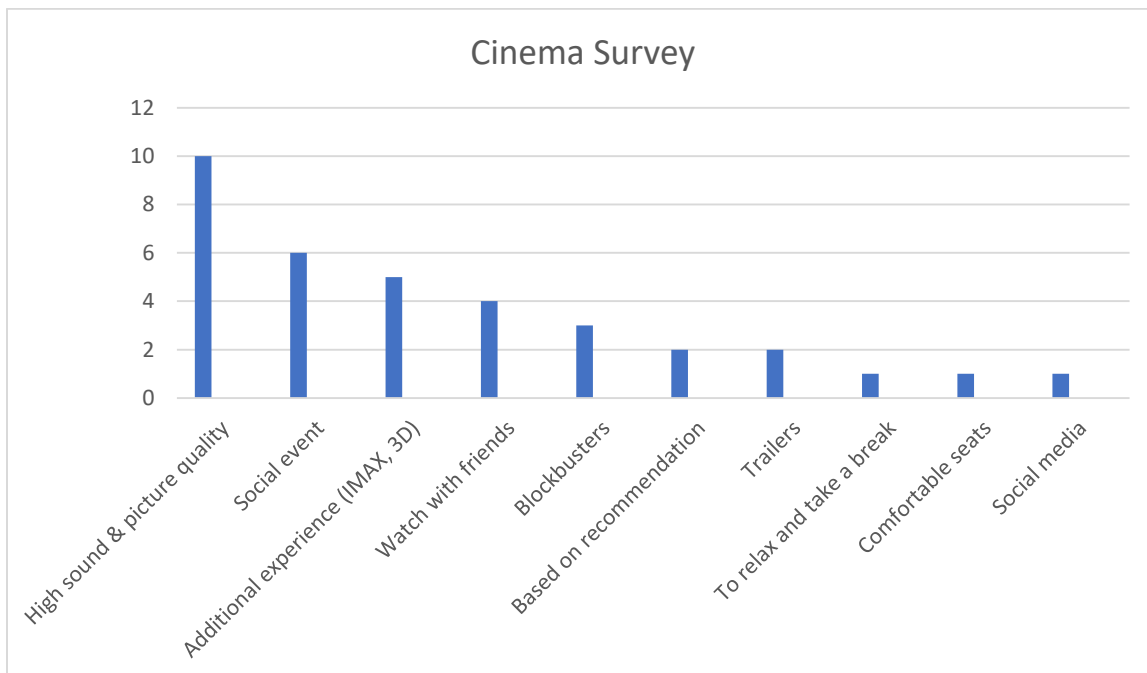
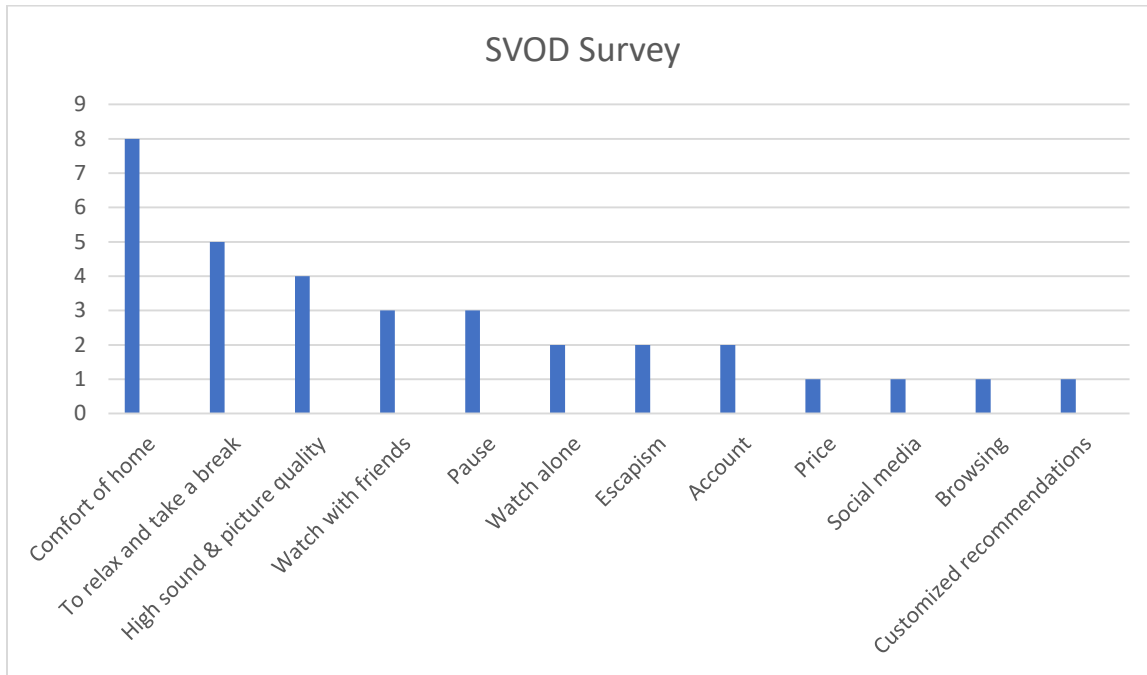
1. What are your top three reasons for watching a film with a SVOD service?

- I can watch it alone
- I can watch it with friends
- Price
- High sound and picture quality
- I watch a film based on someone's recommendation
- Social media
- I like browsing
- I can pause it whenever I want
- It's from the comfort of my home, I don't need to go outside
- I like the customized recommendations
- I have an account, I might as well use it
- I can watch multiple films in a row
- Escapism
- To relax and take a break
- Blockbusters
- Smaller and more intimate films
- Other: _____

2. What are your top three reasons for watching a film in the cinema?

- I can watch it alone
- I can watch it with friends
- Price
- High sound and picture quality
- I watch a film based on someone's recommendation
- Social media
- Escapism
- To relax and take a break
- It's a social event
- Snacks
- Comfortable seats
- The theatre is close to where I live
- The additional experience (IMAX, 3D,...)
- I like the trailers shown in advance
- Blockbusters
- Smaller and more intimate films
- Other: _____

Survey results:



3) Consent form

CONSENT REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATING IN INTERVIEW

DESCRIPTION

Thank you for participating in our focus group. I am Michael Berneman and I am currently doing a Master Media and Creative Industries at the Erasmus University Rotterdam. For my master's thesis, I have to conduct an interview with someone between the age of 17 and 25. The interview will encompass questions about your film consumption. Those include your motivations and experiences.

This conversation will be recorded on one recording device. It will not be given to third parties; it is just for me so I can conduct my research properly.

I will handle this conversation with the strictest confidentiality and anonymity. I would also like to let you know that this is an open and supportive space where you can talk freely, there are no wrong or right answers. I only want to understand your perceptions and interpretations.

However, if you do feel uncomfortable sharing something, please say so. If you have any questions or remarks about this research, you may contact us on.

I will use the material from the interviews and my observations exclusively for academic work.

For this interview, I will have to enquire about your activity using illegitimate online channels to consume films. Once again I would like to state that every answer will be used with the strictest confidentiality and will only be used for academic purposes.

Your participation in this study will take 45-60 minutes. You may interrupt your participation at any time.

If you have decided to accept to participate in this project, please understand your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time. You have the right to refuse to answer particular questions. If you prefer, your identity will be made known in all written data resulting from the study. Otherwise, your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

CONTACTS AND QUESTIONS

If you have questions about your rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may email me at 409692mb@student.eur.nl

Name

Signature

Date

4) Codetree

SVOD

❖ Motivations

- Characteristics
 - ◆ Technical
 - Sound and picture
 - Speed
 - Subtitles
 - ◆ Price
 - ◆ Library
 - ◆ Convenience
 - ◆ Legality
- Choice of film
 - ◆ Familiarity
 - Actor/actress
 - Director
 - Franchise
 - ◆ Genre
 - ◆ Recommendations
 - Friends
 - SVOD
 - Social media
 - Online ratings/reviews
 - ◆ Missed in theatres
- Need
 - ◆ Entertainment
 - ◆ Learning
 - ◆ Relaxing
 - ◆ Escapism
- Comfort
 - ◆ Home
 - Pausing
 - Availability
 - Alone
 - Friends
 - ◆ Integration
 - Tv
 - Laptop
 - PlayStation
 - ◆ Easy/convenient to use
 - ◆ Taking a break
 - ◆ Having an account
 - ◆ Price

❖ Experiences

- Choice of film
 - ◆ Familiarity
 - Actor/actress
 - Director
 - Franchise
 - ◆ Library
 - Availability
 - Range
 - Genre
 - Classification
 - Licenced
 - Original
 - ◆ Recommendations
 - Friends
 - Customization
 - Social media
 - Online ratings/reviews
 - ◆ Missed in theatres
- Behaviour
 - ◆ Specific film
 - ◆ Regularity
 - ◆ Browsing
 - ◆ Watching trailer
 - ◆ Switching
 - Other film
 - Television series
 - Piracy
- Company
 - ◆ Alone
 - ◆ Friends
 - ◆ Girlfriend/boyfriend
 - ◆ Family

Cinema

❖ Motivations

- Characteristics
 - ◆ Technical
 - Sound and picture
 - IMAX
 - 3D
 - ◆ Snacks
 - ◆ Accessibility
 - ◆ Dark room
 - ◆ Seats
 - ◆ Novelty
 - ◆ Showtimes
 - ◆ Price
- Event
 - ◆ Social
 - Friends
 - Activity
 - ◆ Theatrical
 - ◆ Emotional
- Choice of film
 - ◆ Familiarity
 - Actor/actress
 - Director
 - Franchise
 - ◆ Genre
 - ◆ Trailer
 - ◆ Recommendations
 - Friends
 - Cinema website
 - Social media
 - Online ratings/reviews
- Need
 - ◆ Entertainment
 - ◆ Social contact
 - ◆ Learning
 - ◆ Relaxing
 - ◆ Escapism

❖ Experiences

- Attendance
- Choice of film
 - ◆ Familiarity
 - Actor/actress
 - Director
 - Franchise
 - ◆ Genre
 - ◆ Trailer
 - ◆ Recommendations
 - Friends
 - Cinema
 - Social media
 - Online ratings/reviews
- Investment
 - ◆ Social
 - Friends
 - Activity
 - Audience
 - ◆ Immersion
 - Theatrical
 - Sound and picture
 - Special effects
 - IMAX
 - 3D
 - Emotional
 - Story
 - Characters
- Company
 - ◆ Alone
 - ◆ Friends
 - ◆ Girlfriend/boyfriend
 - ◆ Family

Piracy

❖ Motivations

- Characteristics
 - ◆ Price
 - ◆ Range of choice
 - ◆ Convenience
- Choice of film
 - ◆ Familiarity
 - Actor/actress
 - Director
 - Franchise
 - ◆ Genre
 - ◆ Recommendations
 - Friends
 - Social media
 - Online ratings/reviews
 - ◆ Missed in theatres
 - ◆ SVOD availability
- Need
 - ◆ Entertainment
 - ◆ Learning
 - ◆ Relaxing
 - ◆ Escapism
- Comfort
 - ◆ Home
 - Pausing
 - Availability
 - Alone
 - Friends
 - ◆ Integration
 - Tv
 - Laptop
 - ◆ Taking a break
 - ◆ Price

❖ Experiences

- Technical
 - Sound and picture
 - Subtitles
 - Speed
 - Virus
- Behaviour
 - ◆ Emergency use
 - ◆ Laziness
 - ◆ First choice
 - ◆ Regularity
 - ◆ Browsing
 - Film
 - Looking for right source
- Company
 - ◆ Alone
 - ◆ Friends
 - ◆ Girlfriend/boyfriend
- Illegal aspect
 - ◆ Guilt
 - ◆ Fear
 - Fines
 - Virus
 - ◆ Shut down sources