



The Social and Spatial Foundations of Urbanization in Türkiye: A Historical-Sociological Analysis in the Context of Turkish Cinema

İlknur Beyaz Özbey, Artvin Çoruh University, ilknurbeyaz@artvin.edu.tr

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Abstract

This study examines the social and spatial representations of urbanization in Türkiye as represented in Turkish cinema. In Türkiye, the urbanization process that accelerated in the 1950s was primarily driven by internal migration, resulting in the formation of gecekondus (slum neighborhoods) in unplanned and unregulated urban areas lacking infrastructure. Gecekondu development, driven by poverty and unemployment, involves tensions between traditional and modern values. Within this framework, the study draws on a comparative historical sociological approach based on qualitative research methods. In addition, scene-based film analysis was employed to examine representations of urbanization processes in Turkish cinema. Selected Turkish films from the periods 1960–1980, 1980–2000, and 2000 to the present were examined to analyze social structure and space through the lens of Türkiye's urbanization experience. The analysis indicates that during the 1960–1980 period, urbanization accelerated and gecekondu neighborhoods emerged; apartment construction intensified during the period 1980–2000 despite the persistence of the gecekondu problem; and after 2000, cinematic themes included urban transformation, skyscrapers, gated communities, and luxury housing developments.

Keywords: Turkish cinema; urbanization in Türkiye; rural-to-urban migration; gecekondu; cinematic urban space; urban redevelopment; spatial representation



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Introduction

The city is a whole made up of both structure and life. In this sense, the city emerges as a structure in which both social forms and social relations are situated (Alver, 2017). Accordingly, as countries develop, urbanization rates increase. With technological advancements, countries that are economically dominated by industrial and service sectors, host the majority of their populations in cities, and contain a high number of urban centers are generally classified as developed nations (Henderson & Wang, 2007). Therefore, emphasis is put on the density and number of people living in cities as a result of urbanization. This emphasis progresses in tandem with economic and technological development. The surplus of capital and labor is a prerequisite for capitalism, which has created a strong bond between capitalism and urbanization.

Capitalist production relations have an impact on urban spaces. The capitalist production process requires both capital and labor power. Capitalism is based on the production of capital and labor surpluses. Therefore, it needs these surpluses to sustain its growth (Harvey, 1989). Thus, capitalist production and consumption relations have a transformative power over urban

spaces. On the one hand, they concentrate the goods and labor power necessary for production in urban spaces, while on the other hand, when consumption comes into play, the reproduction of space becomes increasingly important. In this sense, urban spaces become commodities over which capital owners compete, and this competition shapes the dynamics of change in urban spaces and social life. The sustainable continuation of this change depends on the strength of the country's economy.

As countries improve their economic conditions, the number of urban dwellers increases, and the population's access to basic services also increases. In addition, there are efforts to find innovative ways to deal with infrastructure problems that may arise with the concentration of population in urban areas (UN-Habitat, 2016). In this sense, Türkiye's urbanization process began to accelerate after the 1950s. Gecekondu neighborhoods were formed as a result of migration to large cities and the resulting overcrowding during these years. Gecekondus, which were built without zoning approval, permits, planning, or infrastructure, brought the issue of urban sprawl to the forefront in cities. Since the 1980s, gecekondu neighborhoods have become areas of opportunity for capital owners. In the 2000s, the transformation of urban spaces provided important sites of capital accumulation. These transformations in city centers have

also affected individuals' social lives. These transformations in social life were reflected in cinema of the period.

Cinema is a medium intertwined with social issues. It interprets, derives, and displaces social issues, while also offering different possibilities for social life. In this respect, cinema is an experiment carried out with changing social structures and forms (Diken & Laustsen, 2007). Films carry traces of the mentality and culture of the societies from which they originate. They reflect the mental universe of the society from which they emerge (Adanır, 2015). While reflecting the structure of the society from which they emerge, this structure is also reflected in the choices made regarding the subject, content, and identity of the characters, as well as the setting. The locations used, such as cities, towns, and villages, convey the characteristics of the period in which the story takes place (Torun, 2017). Therefore, a film provides data on the social, cultural, economic, and other structures of the period. In this context, the main focus of the study is to understand the social and spatial dimensions of urbanization in Türkiye through the lens of cinema. The study is guided by the following questions:

1. How has the process of urbanization in Türkiye taken shape from the 1960s to the present?
2. What dynamics have played a role in this process, and how have these dynamics led to transformations in individuals' social lives and urban spaces?
3. How have these changes and dynamics been reflected in Turkish cinema?
4. How have social and spatial representations been portrayed in Turkish cinema across different periods?

In response to these research questions, the study employs a qualitative research methodology grounded in a comparative historical-sociological approach. By analyzing selected films from Turkish cinema spanning the periods 1960–1980, 1980–2000, and from 2000 to the present, the study conducts a social structure and spatial analysis through the lens of Türkiye’s urbanization experience. In this regard, during the period between 1960 and 1980, Turkish cinema dealt with topics such as the acceleration of urbanization in Türkiye, the concentration of population in urban areas, and the formation of *gecekondu*s. Furthermore, the study finds that problems experienced in rural areas, migration, and problems experienced in *gecekondu* neighborhoods were among the main themes of cinema during this period. During the period from 1980 and 2000, while the *gecekondu* problem persisted, the intensification of the apartment construction process led to socioeconomic and cultural conflicts between urban residents and newcomers, which became one of the main themes of cinema during this period. From 2000 and the present, the study concludes that, in addition to the urban transformation process experienced in old, ruined, and poor neighborhoods, skyscrapers, gated communities, and luxury living spaces are among the locations featured in cinema of the period.

City, Urbanization, and Urban Acculturation

The concept of the city dates back to the earliest periods of human history. Due to its structure, it has been studied across many disciplines, from sociology to economics, from

different perspectives (Bumin, 2010). The concept of the city, which is understood and defined with emphasis on its various aspects, is a multidimensional concept with social, political, economic, and cultural dimensions. The city has a dimension that surrounds people living in urban spaces and affects them with the same dimensional qualities. When defined in general terms, the city exhibits a structure characterized by a nonagricultural production system, associations based on specific size and heterogeneity, and spatial proximity yet distant relationship networks. In this sense, defining the city solely based on its physical characteristics is insufficient. This is because urban spaces are also places where social and cultural factors shape individuals' behavioral patterns, creating a specific lifestyle, and where social change occurs at a very rapid pace. On this basis, urbanization constitutes an important dimension of the social change process.

Urbanization is defined as an increase in the number of people living in cities and in the number of cities. Closely related to population density as well as the economic and social structures of societies, urbanization cannot be considered independently of industrialization and economic growth. Urbanization is a phenomenon that involves division of labor and specialization alongside industrialization and economic growth (Başaran, 2008). The emergence of the concept of urbanization stems from the fact that urban spaces are increasingly preferred due to their advantages. The social, economic, cultural, and political advantages of

urban spaces, together with pressures in rural areas, attract individuals to cities. This process also leads to an increase in the number of people living in cities and the number of cities. The concept that expresses the cultural dimension of urbanization, which is otherwise a physical term and definition, is “urban acculturation.” While urbanization refers to a quantitative process, urban acculturation emphasizes its qualitative aspect. Urban acculturation is defined as the development of urban culture and the adoption of that culture by individuals living in the city (Ulusoy & Vural, 2001). Accordingly, the societal changes brought about by urbanization also initiate a new process of socialization in individuals’ lives. It is expected that individuals, within their networks of relationships and communication, adapt to urban culture, urban life, and the urban environment.

The relationship between cinema and the city occupies a significant place in film studies literature. Clarke (1997) and Shiel and Fitzmaurice (2001) demonstrate that the image of the city in cinema is not merely the setting in which the narrative unfolds, but also spatial images through which social and cultural meanings are produced. While Dimendberg (2004) examines how the modern urban experience is represented in cinematic narratives, AlSayyad (2006) notes that cities are reconstructed through cinema. Similarly, Demir (2015) emphasizes that cities and films form a whole, and that films play an important role in understanding cities. In this context,

urbanization and the transformation of urban space in Turkish cinema constitute one of the central themes not only in sociological research but also in film studies literature. Türkiye's urbanization process and the transformation of urban space provide a significant source of material for these discussions.

The Transformation of Urban Space in Türkiye

Space transcends its physical meaning in terms of its social aspect. The social aspect of space manifests itself in two separate dynamics. The first is the effect of spaces on individuals. The second is the social production of space. Socially produced space has a dimension that varies according to time, place, and society. Society reflects its identity in space. Every social identity finds its place in spaces, enabling the formation of tradition and consciousness. In this sense, space transforms into a social indicator. Changes in the social structure are reflected in space. Therefore, looking at space provides important data for understanding changes in the social structure (Alver, 2007). This reciprocal relationship between society and space changes in every space that is produced, and changing spaces are reproduced. It is possible to see these dynamics of change in urban spaces.

With modernization, radical transformations began to take place within societies. The driving force behind this was the process of industrialization. In the process of building an industrial or capitalist society, the transformation of urban space has played a more decisive

role when compared to rural space. In this context, cities can be described as the nerve centers of industrial society, and particularly of capitalism, during the modernization process. Urban spaces are the physical sites where the production process and production relations are concretely situated. When one considers the planning of production, the production process itself, and the distribution stages of goods, it becomes evident that migration to urban areas has led to a concentration of labor within these spaces (Bal, 2011). Therefore, this period reveals a process in which urban spaces have gained value, been reproduced, and undergone transformation. Türkiye has experienced the transformation brought about by the industrialization process through its own internal dynamics. The country began to enter a period of change after World War II, and industrialization gained momentum particularly after the 1950s. During this period, the majority of the population still lived in rural areas, and the economy was predominantly based on agricultural activities. In this context, industrialization, urbanization, and mechanization in agriculture have transformed rural areas and accelerated migration from rural to urban areas.

In Türkiye, the main source of migration during this period is internal migration. This source is mainly fed by the rural population, and with internal migration, the population has begun to concentrate in urban centers. This concentration, together with the urbanization

movement, has accelerated the process of social change. This situation can be seen mainly in large cities such as Istanbul and Ankara. Because Türkiye's economic and social infrastructure could not fully accommodate this migration, the urbanization process was referred to as "unhealthy urbanization" or "urban sprawl." Because new migrants could not settle in the city centers, they formed gecekondu neighborhoods outside the city centers. In these gecekondus, they began to encounter economic, health, education, and certain infrastructure problems (Es & Ateş, 2004). In addition to the infrastructure problems experienced, urbanization-related problems have become a fundamental problem for both city residents and newly migrated individuals.

After the 1970s, neoliberalism became prominent on the world stage. While many states partially embraced neoliberalism in accordance with their internal dynamics, some states provided greater flexibility to labor markets and moved toward privatizing public sectors (Harvey, 2005). Thus, the transition of capital from the first cycle to the second cycle has begun. In this context, the gecekondu neighborhoods that emerged in the 1950s for rural migrants and the urban poor became advantageous spaces for actors in the construction sector—particularly those engaged in speculative building—in the land and real estate markets. From the 1980s onward, these gecekondu neighborhoods, along with the transformation of the city's derelict zones, became new centers of focus for capital accumulation (Kurtuluş, 2017). Drawing on the

approach pioneered by Henri Lefebvre, Manuel Castells, and David Harvey, attention is drawn to a process in which class struggle and capital accumulation become increasingly concentrated in urban spaces. This process leads to the commodification of the city. In this sense, the city emerges as the space in which capitalist processes of capital accumulation, inequalities, and contradictions are embedded (Güllüpınar, 2012).

The most radical phase in Türkiye's urbanization experience is the urbanization model that was clearly observed in the 1990s and gained widespread acceptance in the 2000s. Neoliberal urban restructuring involves the direct intervention of capital in urban spaces. Legal regulations have been implemented and urban planning has been carried out to commodify urban spaces as a whole. The appearance of city centers began to be adorned with skyscrapers, multistory shopping centers, luxury hotels, and residential buildings (Kurtuluş, 2017). With the acceleration of the process through urban transformation projects, urban spaces entered a major transformation process, giving rise to new urban images.

This study views the urbanization process not merely as a historical and sociological phenomenon, but as a space reproduced through cinematic representation. Lefebvre's theory of space, Harvey's approach to capitalist accumulation and spatial solutions, and Edward Soja's postmodern spatial analyses form the theoretical foundation of this study. While the cinematic

representation of concrete space, where use value is decisive, was formed by gecekondu neighborhoods in the period between 1960 and 1980, the cinematic representation of abstract space, where exchange value is decisive, emerged in the post-2000 period with gated communities and skyscrapers. The analysis aims to establish a direct relationship between the representations of the urbanization process in Türkiye in Turkish cinema and the theoretical framework.

The spatial theories of Lefebvre, Harvey, and Soja provide an important theoretical framework for understanding the production, representation, and experience of urban space. These theoretical approaches are used not only to explain urbanization but also to analyze how space is constructed within the framework of cinematic narrative. Within this framework, the study examines the representation of urban space using a scene-based film analysis method through cinematic elements.

This study analyzes the visual representation of spatial practices in films centered on gecekondu through Lefebvre's distinction between concrete and abstract space, as well as how the new spatial order is represented in contemporary cinema through gated communities and skyscrapers. Within the framework of Harvey's approach to the effects of capitalist accumulation processes on spatial transformation, the study sought to understand how urban

space is transformed in the context of construction, redevelopment, and rent production. Within the framework of Soja's theory of space, the study examined the social production of urban space and its role as a field of struggle for various actors (Soja, 1989).

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research method. Qualitative research focuses on people and events within their natural settings and examines the everyday life practices of individuals, groups, societies, and organizations (Punch, 2014). It emphasizes social reality, social behavior, and how individuals make sense of the world around them (Snape & Spencer, 2003). Additionally, the study adopts a "comparative historical sociological approach" based on qualitative methodology. Through this approach, social and historical developments and transformations are analyzed. Neuman describes comparative historical-sociological research in three dimensions. The first dimension asks whether the researcher is comparing a single country, a few countries together, or many countries at once. The second dimension considers whether the researcher is focusing on a single point in time or year in the past, events that span several years, or both the recent past and the present. The third dimension questions whether the researcher primarily relies on quantitative data or qualitative data (Neuman, 2014, p. 605). Within this framework, the researcher seeks to understand human behavior, its causes, and underlying realities by examining social reality (Burrage & Corry, 1981). Based on this, the

current study draws on the second and third dimensions proposed by Neuman to interpret events and phenomena comparatively within a historical process. Accordingly, Turkish cinema has been analyzed in three historical periods—from 1960 to the present—through comparisons in terms of social, individual, and spatial dimensions. In determining the films for the study, the following factors were influential: that the productions represent the social and spatial transformations of their periods, are recognized within Turkish cinema, and are discussed in academic studies.

In addition to qualitative methods, scene-based film analysis was used to examine representations of urbanization processes in Turkish cinema. This method reveals the aspects of the film that generate meaning by focusing on a specific part of the film rather than the film as a whole. In this method, taking cinematographic elements into account, the relationship between cinema and urbanization was evaluated within an analytical framework.

Furthermore, the study employed a scene-based close reading method. Scenes capable of representing the urban space were identified for each historical period. In selecting these scenes, priority was given to scenes highlighting themes such as urbanization, housing, the transformation of space, and practices of daily life. These scenes were analyzed from a cinematographic perspective, focusing on framing, spatial composition, camera movement, and

sound design. These cinematographic elements were analyzed by relating them to Lefebvre's theory of the production of space, Harvey's approach to capitalist urbanization, and Soja's theory of space.

In this study, the following principles were taken into account in the scene-based cinematic analysis process: (1) the selected scene must represent the urban spatial characteristics of the period; (2) it must make visible urban transformation, housing, class relations, and practices of daily life; (3) it must be analyzable from a cinematographic perspective (framing, spatial composition, camera movement, scale, and soundscape). Each scene has been analyzed within the frameworks of Lefebvre's production of space, Harvey's processes of capitalist accumulation, and Soja's spatial theory. Through this method, the focus has been not only on the representation of urban space in the films but also on its production through cinematographic tools.

Urban Space in Türkiye Between 1960 and 1980: The Gecekondu Phenomenon

One of the main issues faced by cities in the 1960s was the wave of migration. This was especially prevalent in cities where the industrial and service sectors were more developed. People who migrated due to economic reasons entered cities as a source of low-cost labor. As a result, poverty-stricken areas emerged, particularly in certain districts where low-income individuals became concentrated (Kurtuluş, 2017). The gecekondu—a type of informal housing

built in violation of construction regulations—is a form of shelter for poor migrants, constructed on public or privately owned land without the support of the state or urban authorities (Keleş, 1998). In Türkiye, the term *gecekondu* refers to the population movement from rural to urban areas, particularly between 1950 and 1980, in response to major structural problems. This process, experienced both individually and collectively, was also reflected in the cinema of the time.

The social realist movement in Turkish cinema, which began in the 1960s, remained influential throughout the 1970s. When compared to the 1960s, the most significant difference in the 1970s lies in the representation of the city. Along with this representation, the emotional atmosphere it evokes becomes a key distinguishing factor (Zeycan, 2021). While the city had previously been a space that could be entered primarily through its visual depiction, in this period it transformed into a space filled with the lived realities of migrants (Pierron, 2014). Films of the 1960s dealt with issues such as problems experienced in rural areas, the reasons behind them, and the appealing imagery of urban areas in contrast. By the 1970s, however, films began to focus on migration from rural areas to cities, *gecekondu* formation, and the resulting problems in cities.

A film from this period, “*Susuz Yaz*” (Dry Summer), directed by Metin Erksan in 1963,

takes place in a rural setting. The film addresses key problems of rural spaces and explores the core dynamics behind rural-to-urban migration. In rural areas where agricultural production forms the economic backbone, water is a crucial factor. The film not only addresses the scarcity of water in rural areas but also reflects the class-based conflict between landowners and peasants. The struggle depicted in the film goes beyond an environmental problem and reveals a class struggle between the rural elite and laboring peasants. It portrays the conflict that arises when access to water is monopolized by a single landowner, who refuses to share the resource with others in the village. While the film primarily revolves around the struggles for water and survival in the countryside, it also highlights the driving forces of rural areas and the dynamics that drive migration to the city. Similarly, “*Gurbet Kuşları*” (Birds of Exile), directed by Halit Refiğ in 1964, is a film centered on internal migration, emphasizing the attractive aspects of urban life. The film addresses the issue of a family from Maraş who, after experiencing economic hardship, migrates to Istanbul in search of better opportunities. The film explores the ensuing clash between traditional values and modern urban life following their relocation. The family, seeking a more prosperous life, opens a shop to survive economically in the city. The character “Fatma”, who wants to adapt to the modern values of urban life, is opposed by her brothers, who strive to uphold traditional values. Akser (2018) shows that in *I Lost My Heart to a Turk* (1969), Refiğ highlights the role of women as key actors in Turkish modernization.

In the face of socioeconomic challenges, the key to living in the city is the ability to adapt to the principles of urban life. In the film, these principles are represented by the need to remain resourceful and alert. “*Bitmeyen Yol*” (The Endless Road), directed by Duygu Sağıroğlu in 1965, takes place in a gecekondu neighborhood. It tells the story of a group of friends who migrate from the countryside to the city in search of work, focusing on their experiences as cheap labor in the urban economy. Similarly, the film conveys the struggle for survival in cities, which appear attractive due to economic opportunities and the promise of employment.

Another film that portrays the struggle for survival in the city following internal migration is “*Fatma Bacı*” (Sister Fatma), directed by Halit Refiğ in 1972. The film tells the story of Fatma and her daughters, who migrate to Istanbul after her husband is killed in a blood feud. In order to provide for her family, Fatma works as a building caretaker. The film reflects the shame her daughters feel about their mother’s job, the basement apartment they live in, and the traditional values they were raised with, along with their desire to conform to the urban lifestyle and its norms.

Another example is “*Sürü*” (The Herd), directed by Zeki Ökten and Yılmaz Güney in 1978, which focuses on feudal structures in rural settings. The film portrays the struggles of individuals oppressed within villages dominated by tribal systems and blood feuds. It explores

the fractures and transformations that occur as these traditional structures begin to shift during the transition to urban spaces. Life in urban areas—imbued with modern values—and the transformation of the economic structure are presented as key forces driving the dissolution of these feudal systems.

Ömer Lütfi Akad’s migration trilogy—“*Gelin*” (The Bride, 1973), “*Düğün*” (The Wedding, 1974), and “*Diyet*” (The Blood Money, 1975)—focuses on rural-to-urban migration, the struggle for survival in gecekondu neighborhoods, and the difficulties of adapting to urban life. In *Gelin*, the story centers on an extended family trying to maintain their traditional values in an urban gecekondu neighborhood after migrating from a rural region. While there is an effort to preserve cultural traditions, the film also emphasizes the belief that economic integration into the capitalist structure of the city is essential for survival. On the one hand, traditional cultural values are being preserved; on the other hand, emphasis is placed on the belief that they will fully adapt to the capitalist economic structure of the city and thus be able to remain within it. As for the film *Düğün*, it focuses on six siblings who migrate to the city and struggle to survive in a gecekondu neighborhood. The final film in the trilogy, *Diyet*, also deals with migration and the struggle for survival in a gecekondu neighborhood, accompanied by economic hardship. Another common feature of the trilogy is the theme of working in a factory.

Yüksel (2020) examines Diyet as a product of urbanization and trade union struggles in Türkiye.

While the economic struggle in the city is depicted, working in a factory, or in other words, the city's distinctive economic structure, is also addressed in the film.

“*Sultan*,” directed by Kartal Tibet in 1978, addresses the *gecekondu* problem within a *gecekondu* neighborhood setting. The film focuses on the struggles of poor individuals living in these neighborhoods and depicts the demolition of illegally and informally constructed *gecekondu* houses. It follows the story of families whose homes are torn down and their efforts to build new living spaces elsewhere on their own. Considered a transitional piece, *Sultan* presents *gecekondus* as a significant urban issue, and showcases the destruction of unauthorized buildings as a solution aimed at resolving this issue to the audience. The film presents the *gecekondu* neighborhood in a wide, horizontal shot. Narrow streets, adjacent buildings, and neighborhood residents emphasize the place's use value. This visual structure aligns with Henri Lefebvre's concept of concrete space. Lefebvre defines concrete space as a place where use value is the determining factor (Lefebvre, 1991). In the film, the neighborly relationships and shared production and usage areas in the *gecekondu* neighborhood form the cinematic reflection of this space. At the same time, the sounds arising during the demolition process—the shouts of neighborhood residents and the noise of construction machinery—convey the scene's auditory atmosphere. These cinematic elements symbolize the urban space's position at the

intersection of the state, capital, and everyday practices. In this sense, the film symbolizes gecekondu spaces in Türkiye during the 1960s-1980s not only as a backdrop but also as an area where social relationships are established. This perspective permits a closer analysis of the film from a cinematographic perspective through a scene representative of the era. From the perspective of framing—one of the cinematic forms—the demolition of the gecekondu in the film is depicted from a wider angle, emphasizing that the space dominates over the people. When focusing on the film’s spatial composition, the space appears horizontal, with houses built close together and narrow streets. In terms of camera movement, the film features a moving camera alongside the demolition of the gecekondu, presenting a fragmented view. In terms of scale, the film frames both people and space together, establishing a balanced and intertwined relationship between human and environment. From the perspective of the soundscape, the film presents an intense convergence of numerous sounds, ranging from the noise of construction machinery to people’s shouts and the sounds of demolition. Based on this film example, space is a field of social relations produced through cinematic elements. This cinematic analysis aligns with Lefebvre’s concept of concrete space.

In “*Taşı Toprağı Altın*” (Streets Paved with Gold), directed by Orhan Aksoy in 1978, themes of migration, gecekondu living, and urban adaptation are explored alongside an

emphasis on the mechanization of agriculture. The film tells the story of a family who migrates to the city with dreams of buying a tractor, only to fall apart while living in a *gecekondu* neighborhood. Trapped between traditional cultural values and modern urban life, the characters—working as cheap labor—become entangled in crime. The film portrays the drama of a family who arrived in the city full of hope but ultimately disintegrates amid urban life.

An examination of films from the period, it is evident that the pressures associated with rural settings are emphasized. The prevalence of agricultural production and issues related to it are at the forefront. The scarcity of irrigation and water resources emerges as a primary problem in obtaining crops and providing for families. Secondly, the presence of traditional values within traditional social structures also motivates people to migrate from the village to the city culturally. People facing economic problems, on the other hand, are forced to live within the inequalities of blood feuds and the feudal system, which leads them to migrate from the village to the city. Those who migrate to the city, however, encounter different problems within a different spatial structure. Most people who migrate to cities in search of work for economic reasons end up living in poor *gecekondus* with fundamental infrastructure problems. While trying to preserve their traditional values, they also strive to adapt to the values of city life. The dramatic struggle for survival of people caught between these two values is reflected in period films. Additionally, the transition to a capitalist economic structure in the city is also highlighted

as a key theme. In this context, period films address issues such as problems in rural areas, migration, gecekondü issues, and the socioeconomic conditions of individuals striving to become urban dwellers while navigating the tension between traditional and modern values.

When films from the 1960–1980 period are evaluated as a whole, it is evident that Turkish cinema played an important role in symbolizing the spatial reflections of Türkiye’s rapid urbanization. While rural areas are depicted as a place of economic problems and traditional relationships, urban spaces are seen as places that offer economic opportunities as well as inequality and exclusion. The films reveal that gecekondus are one of the most concrete social and spatial consequences of migration. In this context, Turkish cinema of this period depicts gecekondü as a symbolic space within the framework of migration, city, and space relations, where rural relations become capitalized within the urban space.

Urban Organization in Türkiye Between 1980 and 2000: Apartment Buildings

The 1980s can be regarded as the beginning of the period in which structural urban transformation accelerated in Türkiye. With the shift to neoliberal policies, the profit motive increasingly moved to the center. The phenomenon of consumption began to spread more widely. In contrast to the politicized atmosphere of the 1970s, this era entered a process of depoliticization, and as a result of unregulated liberalization, individualism, opportunism, a turncoat mentality, economic and political cunning, and increased illicit wealth accumulation

can be observed (Kuyucak Esen, 2016). Moreover, in the gecekondu neighborhoods that arose from heavy migration to urban areas, a second stage began to unfold. There are key dynamics that distinguish second-generation gecekondus from those of the first generation. The plots on which second-generation gecekondus are built are not occupied by squatting but are parceled and sold by the original landowners. In addition, a distinctive style of construction developed, and its own particular market relations emerged in both land and housing production.

With the rise of tenancy in gecekondu areas, the zoning amnesties enacted in 1980, 1983, 1984, and 1986 facilitated the conversion of these informal houses into apartment blocks. Moreover, the construction of multistory buildings without any formal zoning plans led to haphazard urban sprawl. Consequently, during this period, we see, on one hand, rapid apartment-style development driven by the pressure of urban land rents, and on the other, the persistence of gecekondu neighborhoods that lacked the potential for such transformation (Bal, 2011). In the older gecekondu districts, newly arrived migrants or incoming tenants began to take up residence. Despite attempts to regulate and control these areas through legal reforms, the gecekondu settlements could not be brought fully under control. It became clear that authorities could neither abandon these informal settlements—which supply essential urban labor—nor completely transform them (Çelik & Tezcan, 2017). Thus, while gecekondus continue to endure in some quarters, apartment blocks—seen as the new face of informal

housing—are themselves generating a fresh wave of urban sprawl.

Culturally, transformations also began to take place in *gecekondu*s that have undergone physical change. In certain areas, the term “*varoş*” (urban periphery) started to be used in place of “*gecekondu*.” This word carries a threatening connotation toward the city. It is employed to describe people who pose a danger and might attack the city center and its inhabitants (Erman, 2004). Another cultural element of this transformation is the “*arabesk*” (arabesque) culture. *Arabesk* is used to label migrants who do not embrace the urban way of life. “*Varoş*,” meanwhile, entered everyday speech as a descriptor of this process (Çelik & Tezcan, 2017). This period embodies the two faces of urban housing: apartments and *gecekondu*s. It encompasses opposing attitudes, values, and patterns of relationships. The attitudes and values associated with *gecekondu*s versus apartments form contrasts such as rural versus modern, rural versus urban, and lower class versus middle class. While *gecekondu*s denote illegal, unplanned structures lacking infrastructure, apartments denote licensed, zoning-compliant, planned buildings whose infrastructure issues were resolved during construction (Pınarcıoğlu & Işık, 2001). The physical and social transformations of this era are also reflected in Turkish cinema.

Directed by Memduh Ün, the 1980 film “*Devlet Kuşu*” (The State Bird) is set in a *gecekondu* neighborhood. The film, which touches on the transformation of the *gecekondu*s

and the process of apartment construction, tells the story of Mustafa, a young man who loafs around with two friends in the gecekondu neighborhood and is in love with his neighbor Aynur. A wealthy businessman who comes to the neighborhood wants to build an apartment complex named after his daughter, Hülya. Mustafa's father becomes a guard at the construction site. Hülya falls in love with Mustafa upon seeing him. Mustafa leaves Aynur, his friends, and his neighborhood to save his family from poverty. But when he realizes that money does not bring happiness, he returns to his neighborhood and Aynur. Although the apartment building is depicted in the film as a place symbolizing wealth, money, and happiness, this promise is later revealed to be illusory, and the film returns to the gecekondu, which is portrayed as a place of genuine and sincere relationships.

Directed by Ali Özgentürk, the 1981 film “*At*” (Horse) focuses on migration from rural areas to cities, housing problems, and class inequality. Hüseyin, who is poor, migrates to the city to educate his son Ferhat. He leaves his wife behind in the village so that she will not remain ignorant, poor, and oppressed like him. He wants to send Ferhat to a boarding school, but the condition is that his father must die. The film reflects the tragedy of a poor, marginalized, oppressed father who is willing to risk everything to educate his son. Similarly, the 1984 film “*Fidan*,” directed by Erdoğan Tokatlı, focuses on a family struggling to survive in a gecekondu. Köfteci Ramazan migrated from the village to the city to provide a better life for his daughter

and son. Fidan, who takes a job to support her family, both fails to adapt to city life and begins to experience various mental breakdowns. Her sole passion is dance. Fidan, who centers her life around dance and drugs, finds herself in a dead-end situation. Faced with the harsh reality of the city, Fidan is no longer the person she once was. The film reflects the struggle to adapt to city life after migration.

Directed by Sinan Çetin, the 1982 film “*Çiçek Abbas*” (Flower Abbas) tells the love story of two young people in a shanty town. Şakir, a minibas driver, is a fraudster and con artist. In contrast, Çiçek Abbas, who is honest, innocent, pure, and well-intentioned, works as Şakir's assistant. Çiçek Abbas, who wants to marry the girl he loves and become a minibas driver, borrows money from a loan shark. When he starts to pay off his debt, Şakir learns that the girl he loves and Abbas are in love with each other, so he hides the parts of Abbas' minibas. Abbas cannot pay back the loan shark. Since Şakir is in a better financial situation, he wants to marry the girl he loves, but Çiçek Abbas elopes with her. The film highlights the relationship between the rich and the poor, the powerful and the powerless in the gecekondu, as well as feelings of belonging to, and exclusion from, the city.

Another film, directed by Nesli Çölgeçen in 1985, “*Züğürt Ağa*” (The Impoverished Agha) emphasizes rural-to-urban migration and highlights the necessity of being cunning and

street-smart to survive economically in the city. The village's agha (landowner) fails to yield sufficient crops due to drought. A newcomer to the village organizes the villagers and steals the entire harvest. In response, the agha migrates to the city with his family and attempts to settle in a gecekondü neighborhood with the help of a fellow villager. However, he cannot manage to adapt to urban life with the same practices and mindsets he used in the village. The film portrays the agha's gradual loss of his wealth and family while trying to hold on in the city. Beneath this narrative lies a deeper commentary on the collapse of feudal structures and the emergence of capitalist modes of production, along with the behavioral codes required to survive in urban spaces. In the film, the characters are situated in the gecekondü neighborhoods of Istanbul, amidst narrow streets, irregular structures, and intense human activity. The scenes in the film present the transformation from feudal relations in rural areas to the urban labor market from a spatial perspective. These scenes align with David Harvey's concept of spatial transformation in the process of capitalist urbanization. According to Harvey, capitalist accumulation processes reproduce urban space, which in turn transforms the position of different classes. The change in the position of the character Ağa in the urban space is the clearest example of this in the film. In this sense, space represents an area where social and economic transformation becomes visible. This perspective allows a closer examination of the film from a cinematographic perspective through a scene representative of the era. In terms of framing, the character Ağa is

isolated within the crowd, appearing small and powerless. The spatial composition is chaotic; the streets are narrow, cramped, and complex. Camera movement is generally in the form of tracking; as the character moves forward, the camera follows, but this tracking indicates that the individual occupies an insecure and uncertain position within the urban space. In terms of scale, Ağa gradually shrinks within the frame, which illustrates his social decline. In terms of the soundscape, the noise of the urban environment dominates the film. This noise renders individuals in the urban space more passive. In this context, the film presents an urban space where cinematic elements make these processes visible. This cinematic scene is directly related to Harvey's approach to the spatial reproduction of capitalist accumulation processes.

The film “*Muhsin Bey*” (Mr. Muhsin), directed by Yavuz Turgul in 1987, explores the tension between an established urban culture and the Arabesk culture brought by newcomers who have recently migrated to the city but have not yet internalized its way of life. Muhsin Bey is a native Istanbulite, an urban resident who appreciates classical Turkish music. Ali Nazik, a folk singer who comes to the city hoping to release a music cassette, crosses paths with Muhsin Bey. Although they come from entirely different worlds, Muhsin Bey tries to help Ali Nazik rise to fame. In the process, however, he is deceived and ends up in prison. The film portrays the conflict between urban attitudes and the Arabesk culture that has migrated to the city,

struggling to hold on and forcibly expanding its own territory.

“*Gülen Adam*” (The Laughing Man), directed by Kartal Tibet in 1989, emphasizes the transformation story of gecekondus. Yusuf is a man who was born laughing and responds with laughter even to the most tragic events in life. He marries the woman he loves and begins living in a gecekondu neighborhood. Due to the demolition of his unlicensed and unregistered gecekondu, he designs a house that he can carry with him wherever he goes and starts living in it. The only moment he sheds tears is when his child is born. The film, which focuses on the demolition of illegally and informally built gecekondus, reflects the transformation of gecekondu housing during that period.

Directed by Erol Özkök, the 1990 film “*Boynu Bükük Küheylan*” (The Crestfallen Küheylan) tells the story of Küheylan—a name suggesting a powerful, virile, traditionally masculine man—is a traditionalist who has migrated to the city. Küheylan, who works as an apartment doorman and has two wives, has a family life that is different from that of the city. He does not allow his second wife to work because he is jealous of her while his first wife goes to work as a cleaner. After a while, his second wife also starts working, and both wives give their husband the money they earn. Dreaming of becoming wealthy, Küheylan is ultimately abandoned by his wives—who, having adopted urban values and city culture, no longer accept

the crude, patriarchal roles imposed by their traditional husband. The film reflects the dualities experienced by migrants trying to adapt to city life, especially within the context of apartment culture.

“Düttürü Dünya” (Toot-Toot World), directed by Zeki Ökten in 1988, tells the story of Mehmet, who supports his family by playing the clarinet in a nightclub. Living in a *gecekondu* in Ankara, Mehmet is forced to vacate his home after it is sold to a contractor. He begins taking on side jobs and places great trust in the arabesk-style songs he composes. While he prioritizes his art, he fails in the day jobs he takes, and in the end, their house is demolished. The film presents the demolition and transformation of *gecekondu* neighborhoods and highlights the presence of arabesk culture. Similarly, *“Üçüncü Sayfa”* (The Third Page), directed by Zeki Demirkubuz in 1999, focuses on stories of physical and psychological violence that one might encounter in the third page of the tabloid crime news. İsa, a movie extra, is mistakenly accused of theft and pursued by the mafia. He is forced to repay a sum of money within a limited time. While attempting suicide, he becomes involved in another criminal entanglement. His next-door neighbor, Meryem, lives in Istanbul with her husband and child after migrating to the city. Her husband’s boss becomes infatuated with her and sends her husband out of town. İsa and Meryem end up murdering the boss, leading the story down an even darker path. The film

presents events that we might read about in the third pages of tabloid newspapers, within the context of Arabesk culture.

In films produced between the 1980s and 1990s, gecekondu neighborhoods and internal migration emerge as dominant themes. While the issue of migration continues to hold its significance, these films particularly focus on the transformation and demolition of gecekondu areas, and the struggles of their residents to hold on to life. A key dynamic in these struggles is the effort of migrants to adapt to and internalize the urban lifestyle. Alongside the identity crises and challenges faced by those who cannot fully become urban residents, the films also reflect an era marked by the demolition of unlicensed, informal, and unplanned gecekondu housing—which is replaced by apartment buildings, symbolizing a significant shift in the urban landscape.

The 1990s saw a shift away from the traditional romantic image toward a modern metropolitan image. During this period, the city moved away from the problems of the previous era. Migration from rural areas to cities lost its former momentum. Thus, this was a period in which those who had migrated to the city gradually adapted to urban culture and the problems of rural dwellers were forgotten (Zeycan, 2021). What is important here is not the reasons and conditions for migration from the village to the city, but the qualities of those who came with the migration to make themselves accepted, to make their voices heard, and, on the other hand,

the qualities of the city dwellers to repel the newcomers. The arabesk culture, which was created for those who migrated to the city to hold on to the city and make their voices heard, has settled in the city. The use of arabesk music in the films of the period has intensified. Furthermore, certain elements of Arabesk culture were reflected in films (Çelik & Tezcan, 2017). During this period, the struggle to become an urban resident found its place in arabesk culture, and the conflict between urban residents and their opposites was one of the themes reflected in Turkish cinema at the time.

The Dual Urban Spatial Structure in Turkish Cinema: A Conceptual Synthesis

Based on analyses of these films, the conceptualization of the “dual urban space” makes a significant contribution to understanding the structure of urban space in Turkish cinema. Films demonstrate that urban space in Türkiye is represented within a dual structure. On one hand, there are gecekondu neighborhoods associated with marginalization, othering, and lack of security. These spaces are typically located on the peripheries of urban areas, characterized by their horizontal, intertwined, and mixed-use features. On the other hand, there are gated communities, luxury residences, and skyscrapers that represent a privileged, secure, and consumption-driven culture. This dual structure in urban space does not merely signify a differentiation in architecture; it also demonstrates how social inequalities are reproduced through space. This dual structure is typically depicted in cinematic narratives through visual

composition. The dual opposition between horizontal, crowded spaces and vertical, isolated spaces reveals neoliberal urban segregation. From this perspective, Turkish cinema symbolizes the transformation of urban space through this dual urban structure.

Urban Redevelopment in Türkiye since 2000: Gated Communities, Skyscrapers, and Studio Apartments

The 2000s were a period of rapid urban transformation in Türkiye, with urban spaces being rebuilt. The complementary dynamic of the urban growth and development process encompasses the continuous restructuring of urban spaces. It also brings to the fore specific patterns of production, reproduction, consumption, and circulation within a given built environment (Smith, 1986). Intervening in urban space to restructure or produce it is a solution to the structural crisis of capitalism (Aslan, 2022). Capitalism resorts to spatial solutions to overcome its internal contradictions. It also incorporates different regions and social formations into the capitalist world market in an unequal manner (Harvey, 2000). Urban areas are restructured for the spatial division of consumption, while also providing an important dynamic for strengthening their competitive positions. Urbanization prioritizes the formation of communities that reflect a lifestyle heavily adorned with prestige, status, and symbols of power (Harvey, 1989). For this reason, the term gentrification began to be used more frequently in the 2000s, when cities in Türkiye were being restructured. The term gentrification is key in the

reproduction of urban spaces. This entails the redevelopment of old, impoverished centers, gecekondu, historically significant sites, and areas that are not resistant to earthquakes and other disasters. To this end, while unhealthy conditions and environments are being eliminated, new living spaces featuring high-rise buildings and gated communities are being created in place of the old ones (Güzey, 2012). In urban spaces of the 2000s, skyscrapers and gated communities are prominent.

Gated communities have rapidly increased in urban areas as a result of the reflection of neoliberal economic policies on housing production and the constantly increasing and uncertain perception of risk. While providing security conditions for residents, gated communities also constitute a part of consumption with their green areas, sports facilities, and shopping centers. Gated communities also represent a position at the top of the social hierarchy (Tekeli & Keş, 2024). When creating a living space that is closed off to the outside world for the middle and upper-income groups, they also highlight the boundaries of social segregation (Özgür, 2006, p. 82). In addition, skyscrapers emerge as an important tool for rent income in capitalist production relations. The vertical use of land rather than horizontal use increases income shares. In this sense, skyscrapers can be seen as the cathedrals of capitalism (Çoban, 2016). Within the framework of urban transformation, as urban spaces are restructured, social relations are also

shaped. Forms of life in which individuality, different identities, and boundaries in hierarchical planes are defined are also presented. The aforementioned physical and social conditions are also reflected in the films of the period.

“Başka Sementin Çocukları” (Children of a Different Neighborhood), directed by Aydın Bulut in 2009, centers on the struggles of youth living in Gazi Neighborhood in Istanbul—a marginalized neighborhood—trying to escape life in the suburban neighborhood, othering, and the restrictions imposed upon them. The protagonists long for a life different from the one they are trapped in, but in order to reach that dream, they must pay a price. A corpse is found in a garbage dump in Gazi. The body belongs to the brother of a young man who has just completed his military service in southeastern Türkiye. The older brother sets out both to find his brother’s murderer and to build a new life for himself. The film addresses the sense of despair felt by people who are condemned to live in suburban neighborhoods, the other face of Istanbul—where the marginalized and the poor reside. While suburban neighborhoods make up one side of the coin, the other side is composed of gated communities, skyscrapers, and luxury residential spaces. The film questions the deep chasm between these two urban spaces.

The 2009 film *“11’e 10 Kala”* (10 to 11), directed by Pelin Esmer, focuses on urban transformation. Mithat Bey (Mr. Mithat), a man passionate about collecting, lives in the

Emniyet Apartment in Istanbul. Due to fears of earthquakes and concerns about the structural integrity of the building, the other residents want to demolish and rebuild the apartment with a safer structure. Mithat Bey, worried that his collections will be damaged or lost, opposes this decision and argues with the building manager. He seeks alternative ways to overturn the decision. The film emphasizes one of the key dynamics behind urban transformation: the need to construct resilient buildings in response to natural disasters.

The 2012 film “*Zerre*” (The Particle), directed by Erdem Tepegöz, takes place in Istanbul’s Tarlabaşı neighborhood, one of the focal points of urban transformation. Zeynep is a woman trying to stand on her own feet in a metropolitan city, living with her daughter and mother. As her debt to the landlord accumulates, she is forced to accept a job in another city. In an environment where everyone is cunning and opportunistic, she struggles to live by her own principles. At the heart of Zeynep’s story is a run-down neighborhood inhabited by laborers, situated in the midst of a sprawling metropolis. Similarly, the 2014 film “*Annemin Şarkısı*” (Song of My Mother), directed by Erol Mintaş, tells the story of a mother and son who have migrated to Istanbul. Ali and his mother live in Tarlabaşı, having relocated there after their village in the East was evacuated. Now, due to urban transformation, they are once again forced to leave their home. While the mother, Nigar, wishes to return to their village, they are instead

displaced to the outskirts of the city, now dominated by skyscrapers.

The 2017 film “*Son Çıkış*” (The Last Exit), directed by Ramin Matin, presents everyday life practices within gated communities and large plazas constructed as a result of urban transformation. Tahsin, an architect, is forced to work at his father-in-law’s company after marrying his girlfriend. Overwhelmed by the glamorous lifestyle and luxurious spaces, he decides to move to the Aegean coast. However, he is unable to carry out this decision. Through the character of Tahsin—exhausted by long working hours and the pressures of urban life in spectacular settings—the film addresses the individual struggles experienced by many people living in urban spaces. Similarly, the 2019 film “*Küçük Şeyler*” (Little Things), directed by Kıvanç Sezer, focuses on the changing life story of a couple, highlighting the lifestyle of the middle and upper classes. Onur and Bahar are a well-educated, high-income couple living in Istanbul, surrounded by skyscrapers and gated residential complexes. Wanting to escape the city’s crowded and intense pace, they buy a house in a quiet area outside the city. However, after the purchase, Onur loses his job. With his unemployment, tensions begin to emerge in their marriage. Centering on the story of this couple, the film reflects the daily life practices of people living in upscale urban settings in large cities.

Directed by Kıvanç Sezer, the 2016 film “*Babamın Kanatları*” (My Father's Wings) tells

the story of İbrahim, who has cancer, and his nephew Yusuf. İbrahim and Yusuf work as laborers at a company constructing a luxury building in Istanbul. One of the workers, who is working in unsafe conditions, falls from the building and dies. The company offers the family blood money, and since the family is earthquake victims, they are entitled to a new home. However, they have been forced to pay off their mortgage for many years. The film, which focuses on the harsh living and working conditions of workers who build luxurious structures for a luxurious lifestyle, centers on the lives of workers in spaces transformed within the framework of capitalist production relations. In the film, the camera uses a wide angle to emphasize the skyscraper in scenes where workers are working on the construction site. The workers appear quite small in this frame against the architectural structures. The camera's up-and-down movement symbolizes the verticality of the architectural structure and the spatial structure of capitalist cities. However, due to the noisy sounds of construction, the construction site visually and spatially dominates the workers. This makes urbanization and labor processes visible through cinematographic tools. This perspective permits a closer analysis of the film from a cinematographic perspective through a scene that represents the era. In terms of framing, the film emphasizes the skyscraper's massive structure with a shot that moves from bottom to top. The spatial composition is vertical; as the space extends upward, the workers appear as small figures. The camera moves up and down, reinforcing the vertical appearance of the space.

In terms of scale, the film depicts structures as colossal while shrinking the workers within the frame. This makes the conflict between capital and labor visible. In terms of the soundscape, construction noise dominates, and conversations are drowned out by it. This renders labor invisible and suppressed. The scenes selected from these periods demonstrate that in Turkish cinema, the urban space is not merely represented but is also reproduced through cinematic tools such as framing, spatial composition, camera movement, scale, and soundscape. This practice of reproduction is directly related to Lefebvre's concept of the production of space, Harvey's theories of capitalist accumulation processes, and Soja's approach to spatial pluralism.

The 2000s marked a new phase both for Turkish cinema and for the broader social structure. In Turkish cinema, naturalistic and realistic acting and scenes became increasingly prominent (Künüçen, 2015). Drawing from real-life stories, the films of this era often explored social, economic, and cultural events and phenomena, particularly emphasizing differences in socioeconomic status. Among these topics, spatial transformation, a major issue in the 2000s, holds a significant place. As part of neoliberal policies, the transformation of spaces also brought about a shift in consumption patterns, particularly visible in urban areas through gated communities, skyscrapers, luxury shopping centers, and lifestyle complexes. These forms of consumption not only produced physical segregation through high walls and tight security

measures, but also intensified class divisions. Thus, the changing dynamics of social life, the transformed spaces, and newly constructed environments have introduced new forms of class-based segregation. These shifting social landscapes have found their reflection in cinema of the period. Since the 2000s, urban transformation and newly constructed spaces have become increasingly present in the visual language of Turkish cinema. The duality of urban space is frequently portrayed: on one side, areas targeted for urban transformation along with their associated daily life practices; on the other side, luxury living environments like gated communities and high-rise buildings, and the lifestyles of those who inhabit them.

Conclusion

This study aims to understand the social and spatial dynamics of urbanization in Türkiye from a historical and social perspective through Turkish cinema. The findings presented by Turkish cinema demonstrate that it is possible to examine Türkiye's urbanization experience in light of different periods.

The period between 1960 and 1980 in Türkiye saw rural-to-urban migration and the emergence of gecekondu, which influenced the dominant representations of space in Turkish cinema. In the films of this period, urban space is seen as a place of economic opportunity, but it is also depicted as a place of poverty, inequality, and exclusion. The findings indicate that those who migrated from rural to urban areas in Turkish cinema were caught between traditional

and modern values, which also shows that urbanization in Türkiye created tensions over social values.

The period between 1980 and 2000 symbolizes the urban development of Turkish cinema through the spatial transformation from *gecekondus* to apartment buildings. This period saw conflict between migrants to the city and the urban middle class, while also highlighting practices of adaptation to city life. During this process, in which urbanization was seen as a great window of opportunity, the example of Arabesk culture showed the conflict between migrants and urban culture and identity. During this period, Turkish cinema, on the one hand, revealed urban culture through the rapid increase in the number of apartments and, on the other hand, revealed the conflict between traditional and rural values and urban culture through *gecekondu* spaces.

In the 2000s, Turkish cinema focused more on spatial transformations such as urban renewal, gentrification, gated communities, and skyscrapers. Türkiye's new spatial structures symbolize how neoliberal policies have transformed cities and the inequalities in urban space. Films from this period reveal the social and spatial divisions between those living in luxury residences and the city's new poor, reflecting the transformation of the urban space.

Overall, Turkish cinema depicts rural-to-urban migration in Türkiye not only as a process

of change but also as a means of highlighting social inequalities, class divisions, and spatial segregation. While the early stages of urbanization in Türkiye focused on social and spatial transformations such as rural-to-urban migration and the growth of gecekondu, today the focus is on the economic and political consequences of urban transformation processes. In this respect, Turkish cinema has made significant contributions to analyzing the social and spatial transformation experienced by Türkiye through different historical periods and different social dynamics. The scene-based analyses included in this study demonstrate that urban space in Turkish cinema is not merely represented but is also reproduced through cinematographic tools. In this context, the study opens up a discussion on the relationship between cinema and space, moving beyond the level of representation to focus on production practices.

This study presents a conceptual perspective that urban space in Turkish cinema is represented as a dual structure. This dual structure highlights, on the one hand, horizontal and intertwined gecekondu spaces where use value is the determining factor, and on the other hand, vertical and isolated urban spaces where exchange value is the determining factor. This binary distinction is not merely a physical one but also represents class, cultural, and ideological divisions. Turkish cinema renders this binary distinction visible through cinematic tools. In this regard, the study offers a theoretical contribution to the field of film studies by examining space through cinematic production.

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