

ANALYZING THE CITY THROUGH CINEMA: SQUATTER AREAS OF IMMIGRANTS IN TURKISH CINEMA

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ABSTRACT

By the beginning of 1950s, a massive inner migration started from Eastern and South-eastern Anatolian settlements to metropolitan centres in Turkey. There were different reasons behind this immigration – pull effect of urban prosperity and push effect of rural poverty. The dream of having a prosperous life in the city was represented by a well-known phrase: *İstanbul, the city where the streets are paved with gold!*

Immigration during 1960s brought social and spatial problems alongside. The main social problem was the adaptation of immigrants to urban life. The spatial problem showed itself as a new form of housing provision: *Gecekondu*, squatter housing. The increase in urban population was so massive that provision of affordable housing was unable to hold the acceleration of population increase. Thus, immigrants have created their own spatial environment in the periphery of the city by the knowledge and daily routines they derived from their hometowns.

Those were the prosperity times of Turkish Cinema from 1950s to 1980s. Consequences of rapid industrialization and massive immigration from rural to urban during 1950s and 1960s became basic themes in Turkish Cinema. Films were intended to represent the contradiction of traditional and modern values by also stating the spatial differences between squatter areas and apartment blocks. This representation is carried not only through daily lives of characters, but also spatial environment they are living in. Squatter areas became display for most of the films during 1960s and 1970s.

The main concern of the study is to understand the urban environment of 1960s and 1970s under the influence of massive immigration, and social and cultural confusion through cinema. The study will base its discussion on analyzing specific films in order to understand how urban environment created by the immigrants and also from eyes of immigrants is reflected on films.

Keywords: City, Cinema, Immigration, Squatter Areas, Turkish Cinema

1. INTRODUCTION

“Photography is truth. The cinema is truth twenty-four times per second.”
Jean-Luc Godard, 1960 - *Le Petit Soldat*

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Cinema narrates stories. Yet, this narrative is not isolated from the reality. Cinema has the capacity to recreate and represent what has been happening - the reality itself. Cinema has always been the mirror of cultures and societies, and the city has always been the best natural stage for films. Thus, cinema could be considered as documents for describing and analyzing societies and their built environment, through which researchers from different disciplines could make interferences. (Yıldız, 2008; Şentürk 2016) *The nexus cinema-city* (Shiel, 2001) provides a rich discussion subject for the study of society, culture and the built environment.

Since the end of 19th century, cinema and the city have linked to each other in some senses - as indicated by Shiel (2001): Thematically, cinema has been fascinated with the representation of different spaces and lifestyles of the city. Formally, cinema has represented the spatial complexity, diversity and dynamism of the city. Industrially, cinema has always played an important role in economies of cities in production, distribution and exhibition of films - some cities have constructed their identity on film industry, such as Bombay or Los Angeles. Similarly Mennel (2008) argues that “[c]ities have been central to the development of cinema in its three central aspects: production, representation, and reception.”

Marie (2014) claims that cinema is an urban invention and most of the films are shaped in urban built environment. Shiel (2001) argues that the cinema is particularly the spatial form of culture as cinema operates and is best understood in terms of the organization of space. The city has always been particularly important in understanding how social change manifests itself (Mennel 2008). Urban studies address films as cultural visions of what cities represent because as Shiel and Fitzmaurice (2001) point out cinema is “a peculiarly spatial form of culture”, so that it is fundamentally spatial rather than being textual (Fitzmaurice 2001).

Within the context of Turkish Cinema, the city has been constantly used as either passive or active theme of movies. According to Scognamillo (2004), the city in Turkish Cinema between 1960s and 1970s is represented in three forms: Squatter areas, old historic quarters and newly built apartment blocks. In fact, this does not refer only to a spatial division, but also to cultural, social and economic division within the society. Yet, this distinction is not very strict and impervious; there has always been an interaction and transition between these different social groups. (Scognamillo 2004)

By the beginning of 1960s, Turkish Cinema has started to focus on social, cultural and economic problems as consequences of rapid industrialization, immigration and uncontrolled urban growth. (Scognamillo 1998, Kasım and Atayeter 2012, Serarslan 2015) Most of the major Turkish cities such as Ankara, İzmir and Adana have experienced social, cultural and also spatial problems resulted from mass and rapid immigration, but İstanbul was the major city that attracts immigrants. As perceived by immigrants, İstanbul was *the city where roads are paved by gold*. İstanbul was capable to reflect major consequences of inevitable immigration, including rapid and uncontrolled urbanization, so that it is main case study for researches focusing on analysis of city – cinema relation (Abacı 2014).

The study argues that there is a strong relation between cinema and the city and the built environment could be analyzed and understood through films. The aim of the study is to read built environment, more specifically squatter areas of 1960s and 1970s in Turkey, more specifically in İstanbul through cinema. The study will analyse examples from Turkish Cinema in order to understand urban built environment of 1960s and 1970s Turkey under the influence of massive immigration and social transformation Other than the introduction and conclusion sections, the study has three major sections: the first section focuses on immigration phenomenon and squatter areas during the period of 1960s and 1970s, the second part gives brief information about Turkish Cinema between periods 1960s and 1970s, and the last part

analyzes how immigration, immigrant and squatter area images are represented in Turkish Cinema.

2. IMMIGRATION PHENOMENON AND SQUATTER AREAS IN TURKEY DURING 1960s AND 1970s

1950s was considered as the years of change in Turkey in all senses. The new political ruling party and economic and social policies introduced a new system. It was also the period inner migration has started from Eastern and South-eastern Anatolian cities and towns to metropolitan centres, mostly to İstanbul, Ankara, İzmir and Adana. There were explicit reasons behind the immigration on which most researchers agree (Keleş 1997, Tekeli 2009, Güner and Akyıldız 2014, Serarslan 2015, Uğur 2016): mechanization of agriculture by Marshall Aids, industrialization process in major cities, and capital accumulation that could make investment possible in cities. There were also political and economic changes that foster the immigration, which were introduced by the new political ruling party and new liberal economic policies. (Yıldız 2008, Serarslan 2015, Tekeli 2016)

Immigration has started by 1950s and accelerated between 1960s and 1970s. At first, migration has not been considered as a problem (Günay 2015); in fact, it was supported by the State (Terzi 2012) – the industrialising city was in need of workers. However, in the following years, negative consequences of immigration have been observed. Massive, rapid and uncontrolled immigration has deeply affected the social and spatial characteristics of major Turkish cities. Percentage of urban population in total population between years 1950 and 1985 was notably increasing – from 25% in 1950 to 53% in 1985, whereas the percentage of rural population has been decreasing.

The increase in urban population due to immigration was so massive that provision of legal, planned residential areas and housing units was unable to hold the acceleration of population increase (Tekeli 2009). Thus, immigrants have created their own spatial environment in the periphery of the city by the knowledge and daily routines they derived from rural (Günay 2015). These areas - i.e. *squatter areas*, were neither urban nor rural, but have specific characteristics on their own.

Table 1. Urban and rural populations and population rates in Turkey (TUIK 2017)

Years	Total Population	Urban Population	Rural Population	Percentage of Urban Population	Percentage of Rural Population
1950	20.947.188	5.244.337	15.702.851	25,0	75,0
1960	27.754.820	8.859.731	18.895.089	31,9	68,1
1970	35.605.176	13.691.101	21.914.075	38,5	61,5
1980	44.736.957	19.645.007	25.091.950	43,9	56,1
1985	50.664.458	26.865.757	23.798.701	53,0	47,0

The term *Gecekondu* was first used by the end of 1940s in order to identify squatter houses which were illegally self-constructed buildings in the periphery of major cities. *Gecekondu* was an unorganized and uncontrolled way of housing provision in order to meet emerging accommodation needs of immigrants. (Keleş 1997, Şenyapılı 1998) Number of squatter houses from 1955 to 1980 increased in a faster manner as the pace of immigration has accelerated. Total number of squatter houses in Turkey was approximately 80.000 during 1950s; and this number has increased to 240.000 by 1960s and to 600.000 by 1970s (Keleş 1997).

Table 2. Number of squatter houses in Turkey and population in squatter areas (Keleş 1997)

Years	Number of Squatter Houses	Total population living in squatter areas	Percentage in Urban Population
1955	50.000	250.000	4,7
1960	240.000	1.200.000	16,4
1965	430.000	2.150.000	22,9
1970	600.000	3.000.000	23,6
1980	1.150.000	5.750.000	26,1

Squatter areas were places containing not only instantly-occurred buildings for accommodation, but also the culture and daily life rituals carried by immigrants to urban life (Keleş 1997). They locate at the “city’s edge ... where the urban environment encounters its limits, a site where existing conceptions of the city are challenged and redefined” (Tweedie and Braester 2010). Immigrants were neither rural nor urban communities – actually in feeling of no bounds and belonging, but there was the synthesis of rural and urban: *Gecekondu* Culture. (Yıldız 2008)

Despite deficiencies of transportation system and technical infrastructure, immigrants have created their own built environment in squatter areas through self-help and mutual-help. Most of the squatter houses were homogeneous; single storey buildings, including one or two rooms inside without a proper organisation of space inside the house. They had gardens with trees and including even chicken coop and hanged laundries – elements of rural environment than being urban. Squatter areas have introduced spontaneous and communal spatial organisation and use of public and semi-public spaces; such as fountains, public ovens which are more rural than being urban. They have introduced new uses such as *Kahvehane* as the coffeehouse for public interaction between especially unemployed males and also *Dolmuş* as new public transportation system connecting squatter areas to city centre. (Çelik 2017)

3. TURKISH CINEMA DURING 1960s AND 1970s

The history of Turkish Cinema is dated back till the ends of 19th century, but the main progress is observed during 1950s (Scognamillo 1998). “Individual cities are important sites for film production, functioning thematically and providing settings for stories as well as sites for their distribution and consumption.” (Mennel 2008) and it was İstanbul for Turkish Cinema – as metonym: *Yeşilçam*. *Yeşilçam* experienced its glory days during 1960s. Practicing 200-250 movies annually, it was one of the most productive film industries of its time. (Scognamillo 1998)

Following the years of censorship and pressure of 1950s, 1960s has brought freedom and tolerance to Turkish Cinema by the introduction of 1961 Constitution (Scognamillo 1998, Kasım and Atayeter 2012, Serarslan 2015). Leaving naive modernist narratives behind, Turkish Cinema stepped into a new period: Filmmakers Period (Serarslan 2015) – which is also called as social realism (Kasım and Atayeter 2012) or societal filmmaker period of Turkish Cinema (Scognamillo 1998). Films of the period focused on deeper and more real agenda of the society, such as immigration, new cultural and social forms introduced by immigrants, unemployment, uneven distribution of wealth, social rights of workers, strikes, interaction and conflicts between different social groups, housing problems, and traditionalism.

Social problems also had a spatial correspondence: Squatter areas as the appropriate example to reflect societal problems of the period through films. During 1960s and 1970s, immigration especially to İstanbul and the new way of life in squatter areas - together with its social, cultural

and economic problems became the major theme of Turkish Cinema – as this was the reality of the period.

Number of films focusing on the interaction of squatter areas with urbanized, modern city increased in number. Cinema reflected the conflict and transition process between modernity of urban and traditionalism of rural. Directly or indirectly, Turkish Cinema has presented all the crises of unplanned development of the city, and squatter areas as the new urban form. Turkish films of the period turned into witnesses of squatter housing phenomenon and uncontrolled urbanisation (Öztürk 2004).

Squatter area became either an effective and impressive display or directly the subject of films. The first *Gecekondu* movie is considered as *Suçlu* (1960) and the first movie focusing on the social and cultural problems of immigrants is considered as *Gurbet Kuşları* (1964) (Öztürk 2004, Yılmaz 2008, Bulunmaz and Osmanoğlu 2016) and *Gecekondu* term is first used in the title of a movie by *Gecekondu Peşinde* (1967) (Öztürk, 2004). Different researches mention and analyse films directly about immigration phenomenon, squatter areas, and social and cultural problems of immigrants:

- *Suçlu* (1960), *Keşanlı Ali Destanı* (1964), *Sultan* (1978), *Düştürü Dünya* (1988), *Canım Kardeşim* (1973), *Gelin* (1973), *Gurbet Kuşları* (1964) mentioned and examined by Öztürk (2004);
- *Otobüs Yolcuları* (1961), *Bitmeyen Yol* (1967), *Umut* (1970), *Sultan* (1978), *Gelin* (1973), *Düğün* (1974), *Diyet* (1975), *Canım Kardeşim* (1973) examined by Yıldız (2008);
- *Gurbet Kuşları* (1964), *Bitmeyen Yol* (1965), *At* (1983), *Gelin* (1973), *Düğün* (1974), *Diyet* (1975), *Ah Güzel İstanbul* (1965), *Fatma Bacı* (1972), *Sultan* (1978), *Altın Şehir* (1978) mentioned and examined by Pişkin (2010);
- *Gurbet Kuşları* (1964), *Bitmeyen Yol* (1965), *Murtaza* (1965), *Gecekondu Peşinde* (1967), *Canım Kardeşim* (1973), *Gelin* (1973), *Düğün* (1974), *Diyet* (1975), *Derdim Dünyadan Büyük* (1978), *Yusuf ile Kenan* (1979) listed by and *Devlet Kuşu* (1980), *Durdurun Dünyayı* (1980), *Sultan* (1978) examined by Hürkuş (2012);
- *Gurbet Kuşları* (1964), *Bitmeyen Yol* (1967), *Ah Güzel İstanbul* (1966), *Gelin* (1973), *Düğün* (1974), *Diyet* (1975), *Sultan* (1978), *Yusuf ile Kenan* (1979) listed and examined by Serarslan (2015);
- *Bitmeyen Yol* (1967), *Gelin* (1973), *Düğün* (1974), *Diyet* (1975) listed by and *Gurbet Kuşları* (1964) analyzed by Uğur (2016);
- *Umut* (1970), *Canım Kardeşim* (1973), *Umudumuz Şaban* (1979), *Sultan* (1978), *Gelin* (1973), *Devlet Kuşu* (1980) listed and examined by Çelik (2017).

Other than these films focusing on immigration phenomenon and squatter areas directly, there are also a huge number of films using squatter areas either as background image or a sub-thematic issue within the film (Öztürk 2004).

“*Gecekondu* Cinema” term has been used to indicate specific films in which squatter areas have been shaping the narration and the form of the film (Öztürk, 2004, Yıldız 2008, Aydın 2012). Studies on *Gecekondu* Cinema specify items to be used by films in order to represent *Gecekondu* and also problems occurred alongside or within the squatter areas. Other than social and cultural images such as family ties and family relations, health problems or traditions, there are specific spatial items indicating the squatter areas in the films; such as form of buildings, organisation and use of public spaces, transportation, and technical infrastructure including water, electricity and sewerage.

4. REPRESENTATION OF IMMIGRATION AND SQUATTER AREAS IN TURKISH CINEMA

Cinema reflects the reality of the period. As the result of rapid industrialization and massive immigration during 1950s and 1960s, migration from rural to urban became a basic theme in Turkish Cinema. Films were indented to represent also the contradiction of traditional and modern values also by stating the spatial differences between urban people and immigrants (Pişkin 2010). This representation is carried not only through daily lives of characters, but also through spatial environment they are living in (Hürtaş 2012).

Immigration from rural to urban areas was an important historical event for Turkish society. Films about migration have the capacity to provide valuable information about the built environment created by the immigrants. Therefore there are different researches focusing on cinema, migration and *gecekondu* relations (Öztürk 2004, Yıldız 2008, Pişkin 2010, Hürkuş 2012, Serarslan 2015, Uğur 2016, Çelik 2017). Three films about immigration and squatter areas that were commonly mentioned by these researchers are selected for the analysis: *Gurbet Kuşları*, *Sultan* and *Devlet Kuşu*. The motive behind the selection is also for being unique examples of analysing immigration phenomenon, squatter house construction and transformation of squatter areas. The analysis is limited for the period between years 1960 and 1980, as the form and motivation behind migration after 1980s and the relation of immigrants with built environment have changed.

The film *Gurbet Kuşları* (1964) starts by the arrival of the Family to İstanbul. The Family has migrated from the city of Maraş due to financial problems. Father and sons have plans on their mind – to have a repairing shop, a garage and gain money. The smallest son is different than others, representing the modern face of Turkey – he has the aim of going to University. The only daughter of the Family is forced to stay at home under the influence of traditional values. At the end of the film, the Family disperse under the influence of modern values of the city, and they decide to go back to their hometown; suicide of the daughter symbolises the dispersion. The film presents the conflict between modern and traditional values through different female characters that are representing different value sets.

The film *Sultan* (1978) narrates the life of a young widow with four kids, who are living outside the city within a squatter area. Even the film is about daily life in a squatter area and man-woman relations; the secondary, even stronger theme is about construction and demolition of squatter areas. The film focuses on the relations and close ties between people living within the squatter area – they are like a family. The film shows spectators in order to reflect the class difference within immigrants – the headman of the neighbourhoods as the middleman who gains money by selling the public land first to immigrants and then to constructors. Land speculation within squatter areas during 1970s is dramatically reflected within the film.

The film *Devlet Kuşu* (1980) tells us about the daily life of an ordinary young man trying to find a job and gain some money to get married. Sub theme of the film is unemployment and economic problems of people living in squatter areas and the transformation process of squatter houses into apartment blocks. The possibility of transferring squatter house to a contractor and get apartment flats in return is labelled as *devlet kuşu*, i. e. *bonanza*. In the film, the squatter area is more urbanized then the film *Sultan*; representing a later period of squatter area, roads are paved and there are apartment blocks erected in random plots next to squatter houses.

4.1. Immigration and Immigrants

Migration was an inevitable phenomenon of the period, and İstanbul was an important destination for immigrants. In Turkish Cinema, the migration was mostly conceptualized by the image of Haydarpaşa - as the last stop of a long journey to İstanbul from hometown. Haydarpaşa Train Station has been one of the important gates of the city. The spatial relation of Haydarpaşa with the entire city and the sea was impressive for underlying the entrance into a new life. Not only for entrance, but Haydarpaşa was also used for reflecting the unsuccessful and desperate end of migration process – return back to hometown.



Figure 1. Haydarpaşa as the gate of İstanbul, *Gurbet Kuşları*

Most of the films of the period begin with a point-of-view shot about the city from immigrants' eyes: The city is revealed, often at a distance, mostly from a ferry or stairs of Haydarpaşa. For immigrants, İstanbul was conceptualized as the city where all dreams would come true. It was a charming, surprising and enhanced city full of hopes and opportunities for new-comers.



Figure 2. Looking at the city by surprised and fascinated eyes, *Gurbet Kuşları*

The contradiction between rural and urban is mostly reflected through social and cultural objects in Turkish Cinema. The major spatial item to show the contradiction was *density*. Urban was the place of massive crowds who have been running from one place to another all the time. Not only crowdedness, but also the geographical area was different. It is not anymore a walking distance town or village, where everyone knows each other and has face-to-face contact. The city is the place of unknown. Compared with the hometown, the city is big and scary for immigrants. In the film *Gurbet Kuşları*, once the train stopped in Haydarpaşa, the Father warns family members as counting them one by one:

"Be careful and do not get lost. This is no joke in İstanbul!"

The image of the city as the place of crowdedness, traffic congestion, on-going constructions and masses of apartment blocks represents the clash of hopes of immigrants and the reality. The film *Gurbet Kuşları* shows this clash and how cruel the city could be against immigrants by matching the dispersion of the Family members with the suicide of sister – as in the background we see apartment blocks.



Figure 3. Dispersion of the Family members by the suicide of daughter - matched with the view of apartment blocks in the background, *Gurbet Kuşları*

The image of the city in the film *Sultan* provides also a background. There is a distance between the city and squatter area, which also represents the gap between social classes – the city is located far away not only from squatter area, but also from the lives of immigrants. Yet, the city and squatter area are not isolated from each other. Instead, they were bounded each other; first and foremost, there is a commuting relation. As the city is no more walking city, new modes of public transportation is required. *Dolmuş*, as privately operated public transportation system filled the gap of public transportation system. *Dolmuş*, as for symbolizing the relation between squatter areas and the city was commonly used in Turkish Cinema.



Figure 4. The image of the city in the film *Sultan* (left) and *Dolmuş*, as public transportation that connects the squatter area to the city, *Sultan* (right)

The image of the city in the film *Devlet Kuşu* is matched with hopes and dreams of unemployed young men. İstanbul silhouette and the Bosphorus accompany employment plans of three friends – here, the city represents the hope.



Figure 5. The image of the city in the film *Devlet Kuşu* as accompanying the dreams and plans of three friends

4.2. Daily Life in Squatter Areas

The city was expensive and it was not easy to rent a house in an apartment block. Provision of affordable housing was limited, even not present. The lack or deficiency of legal organisations

in provision of affordable housing has resulted in illegal and uncontrolled was of building squatter houses. At the periphery of major cities, there observed squatter areas with their own socio-cultural forms and morphological elements.

The film *Sultan* represents spatial and social characteristics of squatter areas of the period. At the opening sequences of the film, the main character Sultan is seen; washing laundries within the garden, in which her children play and there are chickens from cook running from one corner to another. The squatter area is far away from the city, partly reflects rural characteristics.



Figure 6. General spatial organisation of squatter area with greenery and rural characteristics, *Sultan*

Daily activities of a squatter area are also thoroughly represented within the film: During days, women spend hours in a crowded row around the fountain to get their daily needs and men going work by *Dolmuş* to the city centre; during evenings women and children all together go to cinema to watch lives of others – but not very different than theirs, where men spend time on *kahvehane*.



Figure 7. Women waiting around the fountain, *Sultan* (left), squatter centre with basic trade units and *Dolmuş*, *Sultan* (right)

4.3. Transformation of Squatter Areas

On the early phases of immigration, squatter housing provision system was based on self-construction and cooperatively-construction together with kinship members. As time passed, there occurred middlemen for the provision of squatter houses or land for construction. These middlemen – mostly the headmen of the quarters, were also immigrants, but luckily or trickier than others, they had the opportunity of creating a rent and grasped economic benefits from this process.

The film *Sultan* narrates this construction and transformation process dramatically. The headman of the squatter area was making deals with constructors by given the promise of selling all plots and squatter houses to them. Talking to owners personally, he convinces them to sell their squatter houses to him. One by one families living within the squatter area start to move to other areas – most probably to other squatter areas or to some other places to construct squatter houses again.



Figure 8. Leaving the squatter area, moving towards an unknown, *Sultan*

At the end of the film *Sultan*, the middleman also sells the squatter of the widow. She was hopeless and angry when she faces with policemen forcing her children to leave the house. As a group of men arrive for demolition, the widow gets the pickaxe and tells:

“I constructed this house with my own hands, and the only one who can demolish is me!”

The film ends with the views of re-building another squatter area in another part of the city.



Figure 9. Leaving the house by police force, *Sultan* (left) Re-building squatter houses as the city in the background, *Sultan* (right)

At the end of the film *Gurbet Kuşları*, we meet such a middleman. The Family comes across Haybeci – the man migrated to İstanbul at the same time with the Family. He was there on train station, within a good suit, smoking his cigarette in an arrogant mode. Two distinct ends of migration story could be observed on the sequence: the one economically benefited from the city and those who have lost their hopes and had to get their way back to hometown. The interesting point of this final sequence is about the way Haybeci has become rich; as he declares:

“I already have a huge squatter neighbourhood. I am going to Kayseri for some time. I will open an agency for those who would like to migrate to İstanbul. Once I return back to İstanbul, I will start construction business.”

As years pass and the city expanded, apartments came closer to squatter areas, as it is observed in the film *Devlet Kuşu*. As the city gets closer to the squatter area, technical infrastructure also becomes better – now, the roads are paved with stone, clean water is available inside the houses. Yet, there are still rural images among common spaces as washing and hanging laundry along the street or children playing football in empty plots. Transformation of squatter areas into urban land is observed clearly in the film *Devlet Kuşu*. There are apartment blocks next to squatter houses and apartment constructions continue within squatter area.



Figure 10. Apartment blocks next to squatter houses, *Devlet Kuşu* (left) and apartment construction within the neighbourhood, *Devlet Kuşu* (right)

5. CONCLUSION

Cinema has the power to reflect social breakups and urban crises on screen; thus, it is one of the main documents to examine historically the development and change in built environment. The study focused on examples from Turkish Cinema in order to analyse immigration and squatter housing problems of 1960s and 1970s in Turkey.

The analysis of three films in the study revealed that the *gecekondu* phenomenon was clearly represented with its unique spatial elements through films. The first film *Gurbet Kuşu* narrates the immigration phenomenon and the problems of modernisation of traditionalist families; whereas the second film *Sultan* focuses the difficulties of living within a squatter area. Both films represent the problems of immigration and squatter areas through female characters. The last film *Devlet Kuşu* narrates the story of an unemployed young man whose only dream is to have a restaurant together with his friends, and to build a 3-floor apartment. The film displays the transformation of squatter area into urban area plot by plot by contractors.

Immigration phenomenon was an important fact of 1960s and 1970s Turkey. As it has affected many other social, cultural and spatial forms within Turkish Cities, it has also affected Turkish Cinema. Films during 1960s and 1970s have focused on themes related with immigration and immigrants. Immigration from rural to urban and problems of immigrants became a fundamental element in *Yeşilçam* productions – which was a well-known issue by viewers that they could emotionally and effectively incorporate themselves into the narration. Squatter areas, as the residential areas of immigrants could not be excluded from narratives; so that films of the period have revealed the squatter reality either as main or secondary theme.

The city could not provide affordable houses for immigrants, and self-constructed illegally built squatter houses surrounded cities. *Gecekondu* became an important phenomenon in urbanisation processes of Turkey. Turkish Cinema between 1960s and 1970s reflected squatter areas as the symbol of immigration from rural to urban with its own social, cultural and spatial organisation.

During this period, Turkish Cinema considered the city as a given, an environment that houses people from different social groups whose stories should be told; so the city emerged as a dynamic environment subjected to changes and interventions by immigrants and by the interaction between local people and immigrants. Films analysed in this study also revealed the change in spatial environment in squatter areas from 1960s to 1970s – how squatter areas transformed into urban land plot by plot via constructors, and they have the virtue of directing our attention to spaces that it is no longer easy to analyse and understand.

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