

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MIGRATION AND SPACE
IN TURKISH CINEMA-
LUTFI AKAD'S FILM GELİN, DÜĞÜN VE DİYET**

**TÜRK SİNEMASINDA GÖÇ VE MEKAN İLİŞKİSİ-
LÜTFİ AKAD FİLİMLERİ GELİN, DÜĞÜN VE DİYET**

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Abstract:

Sometimes consciously and sometimes unwittingly, we transmit information on individual, social and cultural identity via spaces. This information transmission is a mutual communication process. Semantic relations need to be established in order for the communication to be realized and to be successful. Spaces, which are important indicators of social values, play an important role in establishing semantic relations. The spaces give information about the cultural structure of the society. It is possible to analyze the information that is conveyed by the spaces via semiological method, by revealing the characteristics of the indicators belonging to the places. In the study, the spaces are subjected to a thematic analysis in the context of the specific themes that are presented in the films. These films are Gelin, Düğün ve Diyet which are the favored Ömer Lütfi Akad films.

Keyword: Semiotics, representative space, cinema, communication, migration.

Özet:

Mekânlar ile bireysel kimlik, toplumsal kimlik, kültürel kimlik hakkında bazen bilinçli, bazen farkında olmadan bilgiler iletiriz. Bu bilgi iletme süreci karşılıklı bir iletişim sürecidir. İletişimin gerçekleşebilmesi ve başarılı olabilmesi için anlamsal ilişkilerin kurulması gerekir. Anlamsal ilişkilerin kurulmasında, toplumsal değerlerin önemli göstergelerinden biri olan mekânlar önemli rol oynar. Mekânlar toplumun kültürel yapısı hakkında bilgi verir. Mekânlara ait göstergelerin özelliklerini ortaya koyarak, ilettileri bilgileri göstergebilimsel yöntem ile çözümlenmek mümkündür. Göçün sinema ve mekân üretimindeki yansımaları bu çalışmanın konusunu oluşturmaktadır. Çalışmada, anlamların ortaya çıkarılabilmesi için mekânlar, filmlerde ortaya konan belirli temalar çerçevesinde ele alınarak tematik bir analize tabi tutulmaktadır. Bu filmler Ömer Lütfü Akad'ın, Gelin, Düğün ve Diyet filimleridir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Göstergibilim, temsili alanı, sinema, iletişim, göç.

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INTRODUCTION

As a visual communication field, "space" is an important concept that yields the relationship between architecture and cinema. Every space involves a statement, a message. The space itself and its contents determine the statements of the space. The architectural structure of the space reflects what it contains; so that the space itself and its contents come together to reveal the message of the space. This message may be strong, weak, positive or negative; however but its absence has never been a matter of discussion (Taşçıoğlu, 2013, p. 60). The places where we share every moment of our life are the indispensable basic elements of filmic narrations, because the spaces are just inside the life itself. For this reason, it is impossible to imagine a movie without the space. Movies have to be passing in a "place", and with the relationship established with this "place", and with the meaning attributed to this "place," all films set up a specific space (Uzunali, 2015, pp. 1-3). While Diken & Laustsen (2010) questioned that the cinema was merely a vague representation of the reality rather than being the reality itself; they have stated the fact that the cinema is life and life is the cinema, and both of them narrate the truth of each other (pp. 17-28). Bazin states that the things on the screen are seen as a replica of the outer world in the cinema, where the abstract thought is narrated by concrete representation (1996, p. 26). Audience has an emotional confidence in the validity of what is shown on the screen (Lotman, 1999, pp. 26-27). The relationship between cinema and the real life is strengthened by its bringing visual expression to the forefront. At this point, the space is used as an important tool for the cinema to construct a relationship with the real life.

Architecture is in a close partnership with cinema, which is established through spaces. While architecture explores new forms of vision, the cinema acquires new forms of spaces, thanks to the partnership established between architecture and cinema through the spaces (Çalğıcı, 2013, pp.63-80). The function of the space in cinema narratives, the meaning it carries, the messages it conveys are determined and mounted inside economy, politics and culture, together with the mobility of the time. From these narratives, the reflection of "the phenomenon of migration" in cinema and space production constitutes the subject of this study. The immigration phenomenon, which has important indicators in the social structure, constitutes the basis for the establishment of semantic relations in the production of space. It is necessary to point out the effects of immigration on the social structure, before handling the issue of space in cinema within the framework of immigration.

The phenomenon of migration influenced the lives of the individuals and societies throughout the history in a multifaceted and complex way from economical, political, cultural, social and psychological points of views. Along with migration, people bring their value judgments, cultures and identities to their new environment. People mostly affect their environment in the house (residential and immediate surroundings), residential settlements and neighborhood scales. People, who migrate, enter into cultural interaction with their new environment, in time. Over time, a problem of belonging, which must be questioned, arises in individuals. Concepts of meaning, area of dominance and privacy directly influence the sense of belonging (İlgin and Hacıhasanoğlu, 2006, pp. 59-7). To have the understanding of the space and to dominate the space may be possible by creating a space of one's own; and privacy is very effective in creating the owned space. The residential area and the surrounding of the residential area are the places where belonging, creating their own space and privacy effects are mostly reflected. The search for identity in the living spaces created by the migrants in their new surroundings will be evaluated within the scope of cinema and production of spaces in this study.

Migration movements in Turkey, especially after 1950's, have started with industrialization. Together with the influence of the mechanization in agriculture, an immense migration from the rural areas to cities has been experienced in the years 1960-1970. Migration to the city, which started in general due to financial difficulties and unemployment, is in fact a labor migration from the village to the city. While the population of workers in Turkey was 3.0 million in 1965, this figure nearly doubled to 5.4 million in 1975 (Koç, 2003, p. 47). This labor migration has led to the formation of a worker class in the cities and the beginning of a class conflict. Thus, the problems that started with immigration and urbanization have also found their place in Turkish cinema; where, films about the problems that accompanied the migration in the Turkish cinema were produced during these periods. In the Turkish cinema, which had been mostly shaped on melodramas in the past, a social realistic understanding has begun to develop with the increase of problems brought by migration as well as other social problems.

Ömer Lütfi Akad's migration trilogy consisting of the films named *Gelin (Bride)* (1973), *Düğün (Wedding)* (1974) and *Diyet (Expiation)* (1975) occupies an important place in this field. These are also Akad's last films Akad explains the reason for his needing to produce a trilogy on migration as, "the content of last the trilogy did not seem to fit into a single movie." According to him, people who migrate from the countryside to the city are not from a single segment, they were people from different economic backgrounds and from different classes (Makal, 1994, p. 44).

The *Author* directors in cinema attach great importance to the spaces as well as the scenario and the actors in the pre-production stage of a movie, and they carefully lay emphasis on determining the spaces. These spaces, sometimes being found as the result of long pursuits, sometimes designed and constructed, can gain character just like an actor, and the spaces may also have stories. In fact, as in the study of Gülmez “spaces that produce story” phenomenon may come to the forefront (2016, pp. 56-60).

1. THE METHOD OF RESEARCH

In many environmental / spatial studies, the notion of meaning gains different meanings. In short, environmental / spatial meaning is used in non-verbal communication studies in anthropology, psychology and ethnology, especially in linguistic-based semantic, semantic models, symbol-based studies (Rapoport, 1990, p. 36). The meaning of space has an important place in empirical studies on environmental psychology such as place identity, place attachment, and sense of place (Gustafson, 2001, p. 7). In this study, the meanings of the identity of place and place have been examined through cinema films. The place, when taken as an indicator, has significant meaning in terms of representation in the cinema. Selected films in this study are subject to a thematic analysis, taking into account the meanings that give place to the identity of the place. The meanings of the identity of the space are categorized in terms of privacy, belonging and change-adaptation. The places where immigrant communities live in cities have been examined within the framework of *privacy, belonging and change-adaptation* in selected films. Spaces, when taken as an indicator, have significant meaning in terms of representation of immigration in the cinema. In order to reveal the meanings in this study, the spaces are subjected to a thematic analysis by addressing them within the framework of the specific themes presented in the films. For this purpose, made in the 1970s, Ömer Lütfi Akad's films known as migration trilogy have been selected. These films are *Gelin* (1973) *Düğün* (1974) and *Diyet* (1975). Onaran, who characterizes the *Diyet* film as the weakest one of the trilogy; identifies the movies of *Gelin* and *Düğün* as remarkable in Turkish cinema in terms of reality, aesthetically striking, having the characteristics of documentary films, and also highly successful in selecting spaces (pp. 106-110). *Gelin*, is seen among the outstanding films of the Republican era between the years of 1923 and 1973 (Özön, 1995, p. 248). Therefore *Gelin*, *Düğün* and *Diyet* stand out as important films in the Turkish cinema that that may reflect the spatial representation of the immigration problem.

2. SPATIAL INDICATORS OF MIGRATION IN CINEMA

Like spaces in other forms of art, the cinematographic spaces are also limited; they are limited by a specific framework, however, at the same time, they are in uniform with the world's unlimited spaces (Lotman, 1999, p.

131). The cinematic space, which has been fitted and limited to a particular frame, becomes the representative of the whole society by transcending the bounding frame, especially when it focuses on social problems. For this reason, the reflections of the immigration problem in cinematic space are not so different from real life. And in this case, space has a symbolic power that exceeds its cinematic value. This symbolic power gives it a social value; and gives cinema a documentary characteristic with regard to the evaluation of social facts. Hence, Onaran states that the immigration trilogy carries the value of a document (1999, p. 109). The symbolic power of cinema, social influence and value as a document, transcends the fictional space and transforms the cinema into a re-presentation of real life; and it provides a link to the real life. This connection is reinforced through spaces as well as stories and characters.

In the phenomenon of migration, the village is generally treated as a single social segment; however, it has different layers in itself. Akad, being aware of this, in the film *Gelin*, tells the life of a rather conservative family in the city, without the acceptance of the urban lifestyle and with the passion of existence and climbing the social ladder, without being involved in the city. *Düğün*, is the story of a family, who does not completely ignore the urban life, in which women can participate both in social life and working life, while there's still the rule of the traditions. In the final film of the trilogy, *Diyet*, Akad focuses on the problems of the worker class which was formed as the result of the labor migration from the village to the city together with the industrialization. Films, which addressed the families coming from socioeconomically different layers of the rural sector, and thus presented different influences of the problem of immigration on the people; followed a chronological sequence in terms of migration time and the length of time spent in the city – starting from the newest migrants to the old ones. In the direction of this chronological order, it is observed that spatial representations also change within the scope of privacy, belonging and adaptation.

2.1 Privacy and Space

Privacy is a factor for obtaining a protected space. If an environment/space is not safe for ourselves, the privacy feeling is not going to be obtained. Privacy is the control of visual or auditory relationships of persons or groups with other persons or groups (Ilgin and Hacıhasanoğlu, 2006, pp.59-70). Almost every society is considered to have privacy norms that are vital to individuals, families and groups. In these societies, the boundaries that the people form against each other, the avoidance of the general common activities of the family from foreigners, the confidentiality of important traditions and ceremonies, the rules of avoidance that are defined by the relativity relationships, and etc. are the indicators of the

privacy norms. The concept of privacy is shaped by each community's own way of life and cultural characteristics (Görgeçli, 2010, pp.59-63). The concept of privacy, which has a very wide place in the field of environmental psychology, becomes meaningful in the field of architecture with physical indications. The arrangement of spaces and equipments, the size, the position, the utilization of the doors and windows, the limiting elements such as walls and fences are the physical indicators used in providing the privacy.

Although in the films of *Gelin*, *Düğün* and *Diyet*, the families that migrate reflect close term regarding the time-zone, they differ in terms of the family structures. While the *Gelin* film has a very closed-conservative family structure, this case is reduced in the *Düğün* movie, and in *Diyet* a family structure, which is open to establishing relationships with the community, is seen. As a result, the spatial privacy indicators change as the family structure switches to a more open form. Taking into account that privacy is provided by a wide variety of fields and different mechanisms, this work deals with it in the framework of environmental-physical indicators and abstraction. Abstraction can be thought of as separating oneself depending on visual, auditory and gender factors, and forming oneself's own personal space

In the films of *Gelin* and *Düğün*, the perimeter of the yard of the house is surrounded by a high wooden fence, which is higher than the human height. The yard of the house, where the migrated families live, is visually or even audibly abstracted. The life in the courtyard of the house is private (Figure 1). In a scene in the movie *Gelin*, the mother in law's words to bride clearly describes this abstraction: "You obviously did not fit in your room. What does it mean to glance at the husband in front of your father in law? Is this a new custom, or is it because we came to Istanbul? Istanbul is outside of this yard, other than that, you better still consider here as in the lands of Yozgat. "



Figure 1. Private provided with fence in courtyard of the house in the *Gelin*, *Düğün*, *Diyet*. Photos from *Gelin*, *Diyet*.

In the first movie *Gelin*, it is seen that the family has visually and vitally abstained itself from the environment and the issue of privacy has intensively been discussed in terms of gender. In this context, women cannot use public services such as urban spaces and hospitals alone. The bride goes to the hospital secretly, without the knowledge of the family members. Urban spaces are for men's use. In the second movie "*Düğün*", the family visually lives the privacy in their vital area; however, the woman is able to shop, work in the factory, thus, she is involved in social life. If the third film is "*Diyet*", the family that migrated has reduced the limits of privacy. There are no spatial and visual boundaries. The inner part of their yard is visible through the border element surrounding the yard (Figure 1). The family is intertwined with the urban life; women work, shop and use urban spaces. Even, the family socializes and has a picnic (Figure 2).



Figure 2. In the *Düğün* and *Diyet* Movies, women work, shop and use urban spaces. Photos from *Düğün* and *Diyet*.

In the last two films in the trilogy, in *Düğün* and *Diyet*, the life for women has gone out of the borders of the yard. Thus, the sense of privacy they possessed becomes reduced after the characters arriving in the city; and accordingly the process of harmonization with the city has begun. Therefore, compared to the film *Gelin*, in which the story passes almost in the household or in the yard, both the use of urban spaces and the presence of women in urban spaces are increased in the films of *Düğün* and *Diyet* (Figure 2).

2.2. Belonging and Space

The area of dominance is a very important factor in the formation of people's sense of belonging to a place. If a person is not able to build a territory of domination around him/her, he/she cannot feel him/herself safe there and he/she cannot feel that area is owned. There is a very close connection between privacy and domination. People, who cannot create an area of dominance, cannot create privacy areas, and cannot be comfortable in their surroundings (Ilgin and Hacıhasanoğlu, 2006, pp.59-70). The sense of belonging, devotion to space and place develops with the components such as place, space, time, experiences, memories, activities, social relations,



psycho-social needs, identity and symbol; and the perception that the individual has developed against his environment. The area of dominance plays an important role in the formation of privacy and sense of belonging. By owning a place, an area of domination is established in that environment. By this domination's being internalized and personalized; self-actualization takes place, and space, belonging and identity shape each other (Solak, 2017, pp.13-36).



Figure 3. The use of courtyard in the films photos from Gelin Düğün, Diyet.

Together with the migration, people bring their value judgments, cultures, and identity to their new surroundings. People who migrate from the village to the city use their residents and residential environments as they would feel they are belonged to that space. Rural activities often take place in the open air or in the yard of the house. This courtyard is sometimes used as a common courtyard used by multiple houses. In the yard there are units such as oven, woodshed and poultry; and many activities such as preparations for winter, eating and drinking, gathering take place in this space. In the films, this yard is an important place where the village life is reflected and experienced (Figure 3). The wall carpets used in the interior, the curtains with the flower figures, and the mattresses on the ground are the indicators that reflect the pastoral life (Figure 4).



Figure 4. The use of interior in the movies. Photos from *Gelin*, *Düğün*, *Diyet*.

In the *Gelin*, *Düğün* and *Diyet* films, which deal with the problem of migration, spatial indicators of rural life seem to continue in the city with acceptable changes. Especially in the *Gelin* and *Düğün* films, the signs related to the rural life culture are seen intensely in the courtyard of the house. Oven, fountain and kitchenware used in the courtyard; and activities of eating and drinking, hospitality, and laundry are references to the rural life. The courtyard is the place where the area of domination is built in all three films, and the feeling of belonging is experienced in the strongest manner (Figure 3).

Along with the fact that the intense indications in the interior and exterior areas used in the first two films; the activity and usage of the yard and therefore the signs of belonging decrease, as the adaptation to the city increases in the *Diyet* film. *Diyet* tells the story of a family that has been in town for a longer time, compared to the others. For this reason, the adaptation has increased; however, belonging did not increase in the same way, where it only changed its shape. Now, there are characters, who no longer feel themselves belonging to the rural life, as they were not able to belong to the city. In the beginning, they were articulated on the edges and they join the city life in time, however, they still have not been able to be belonged by the city. Instead, the city gave them a new identity. In a dialogue in the film, this identity is defined by saying, "We are the expatriates." However, this new identity has damaged the sense of belonging to the rural, and has also prevented the sense of belonging to the city that should be, and has begun to develop a new type of belonging. As "expatriate", this identity has moved their sense of belonging from yards surrounded by high fences to urban workplaces, in the cinematic space. Therefore, the belonging to the rural life is yet preserved in *Gelin* and *Düğün* films, *Diyet* emphasizes this sense of belonging is gradually reduced; thus, the most used and most important space in the film appears as the factory. The use of urban indoors and outdoors as a demonstration of labor problems and class conflicts, and diminishing of the belonging senses of the migrants is used more intensely when compared to the other movies.

2.3. Change-Adaptation and Space

There is a relationship that changes and transforms each other between the human and the space. For this reason, space is an asset that is loaded with a soul and various meanings, and it can be changed in parallel with the change of society. While communities use spaces as important means of building their today and their future, spaces also reveal characteristics that affect the framework of the social life and the norms (Yıldız & Alaeddinoğlu, 2011). People, who migrate, have cultural interactions with

their new cultures in time. In this section, the interaction is considered as adaptation and the related indicators are evaluated. The efforts of immigrant families to adapt to the city have been addressed both in terms of spatial indicators and gender. In fact, adaptation represents a process, and this can be thought of as the developing boundaries of the privacy. When the films in question are handled alone, no approach to the process will be seen. However, when *Gelin*, *Düğün* and *Diyet* films are considered together, the experienced process of adaptation can be seen. The migrant families live in the shanty houses that resemble their village houses. In *Gelin*, the house has been constructed far away from the city; in *Düğün* it is rather close to the city. *Diyet* gives more space to factories and urban constructions and it has been a longer time since the family has migrated to the city. Thus, a process of adaptation with the city, which has been increasing since the beginning of migration, is seen.

While the adaptation in the film *Gelin* consists of the fittings in the room, it extends to the participation of women in social life in the films of *Düğün* and *Diyet*. Migrant women are involved in street, shopping, working life. When all three films are considered together, this change in woman's privacy is also a sign of adaptation to the city life (Image 5).



Figur 5. Woman's adaptation to urban spaces. Photos from *Düğün*, *Diyet*.

In films, adaptation indicators for housing indoors are usually realized with various equipment. In the film *Gelin*, a space that can be called as a "city corner" was created with the radio on the dresser, trinkets, a painting on the wall, and which was used as a common space where they gathered and dined, and important decisions were taken. The big table in the middle, which was used for dining in the same way and chatted around, attracts attention. In this film,, the status of the woman has not been changed. While men make important decisions around the table, women are rather waiting at the backwards, even standing. While the kitchen in the countryside is a living space where food is cooked, eaten, sat and chatted, it is seen that it has left the characteristic of being a common area in the film *Gelin*. This

situation emerges as a space organization that reflects the city houses (Figure 6).



Figure 6. The over fitting housewares in the interior in the *Gelin* moive. Photos from *Gelin*.

While the daily life of migrant families is maintained around their spatial habits and spatial and regional distinctions, in the film *Diyet*, social categories (such as workers, employers) that are evident by the differences between classes, groups and regions come to the forefront. In all three films, the main factor underlying the immigration from the village to the city is economic. Families have come to the city to work and earn more money. For this reason, adaptation to the economic life in the city has come to the forefront. The places



Figure 7. Economic adaptation. Photos from *Gelin*, *Diyet*.

related to working life are used extensively. In the film *Gelin*, the switch from the small store to the markets is observed. In the film *Düğün*, the public outdoor spaces of the two cities (Urfa and Istanbul), which are the open outdoor spaces where the peddlers are allowed, are given in a crossed type of fiction. While this spatial comparison does not present significant differences other than the crowd and width; it is an indicator of the fact that immigration does not make much of a difference in the living standards, on the contrary to the expectations.

3. RESULT

In the films analyzed in the scope of the study, the space was evaluated with the concepts of privacy, belonging and adaptation, which stand out in the social structure together with migration. Thus, relations between space and socio-traditional values are established. It was necessary to relate the films, which were developed around the families who migrated from the village, to the rural culture, for spatial analysis; and the indicators of the spaces are presented with the indicators of the rural and urban lives. In all three films, cultural identity of the space is important in terms of reflection. Because of the fact that the film can be observed on both the narrative and the visual structure, the space has been used in an emphasizing manner and in accordance with the messages to be given. This study presents methodological and theoretical content in terms of how spaces are utilized in the film narratives, to analyze the change in social structure.

The social and cultural interaction that occurs with migration creates an inevitable change on migrants. When the spatial indicators of these changes are examined, it seems that the adaptation with urban life has increased over time. Initially, families living along the edges of the city began to move closer to the city and participate in urban life. However, the proportions and processes of adaptation vary according to the family structure. While adaptation for the newly migrated and more conservative family in the city seems to be less, it is more visible in less conservative families. On the contrary, spatial indications related to privacy gradually decreases, when compared to the beginning. Along with the increase in the adaptation, there is a decrease in privacy. Privacy is related to the gender and directly proportional to conservatism in all three films. Privacy indications are rather used for women, and it rises as the conservatism of the family increases. At the same time, with the increase of the adaptation to the city, privacy indicators decrease; and the participation of women in social life and business life increase accordingly.

Unlike the process of increasing the adaptation to the urban life and decreasing of privacy after migration, there has been a change in the sense of belonging. For this reason, a different change has been observed in the spatial indications related to the belonging sense provided by the cultural identity. While the culture and identity that migrants carry to the city initially provided a sense of belonging for the characters, this belonging began to weaken over time; however, an identity and a sense of belonging to the city have not been developed sufficiently. Although the characters have included themselves in the city life and have adapted themselves, they do not feel themselves as urban people and still carry the identity of the rural culture that they came from; nevertheless, this rural identity does not look as

complete as its old times. This problem of identity and belonging has led to the creation of a new identity and belonging, who is neither rural nor urban: the expatriate. The expatriates are no longer totally rural or owned by the urban life. The characters have evolved from being un-adopted in the direction of being adapted; participating in urban life by leaving the habitats restricted by interior space and the yard; from feeling of belonging to their homeland to the situation of a distressed feeling of belonging. The process revealed by the trilogy is completed by the formation of a working class, as the result of the distress in the feeling of belonging to the rural.

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Zehra Eminağaoğlu- Mihriye Meral Yurderi
Relationship Between Migration and Space In Turkish Cinema- Lutfi Akad's Film Gelin, Düğün ve Diyet
Türk Sinemasında Göç ve Mekan İlişkisi-Lütfi Akad Filimleri Gelin, Düğün ve Diyet