

A MIGRATION STUDY
THROUGH TURKISH-GERMAN MOVIE DIRECTORS

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TÜRK-ALMAN FİLM YÖNETMENLERİ ARACILIĞIYLA BİR GÖÇ ÇALIŞMASI

A dissertation submitted to the Social Sciences Institute of Istanbul Bilgi University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of International Relations Master's Programme

By

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1) Göç

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2) Göçmen Yönetmenler

2) Migrant Directors

3) Göçmen Sineması

3) Cinema of Migration

4) Almanya'daki Türkler

4) Turkish-Germans

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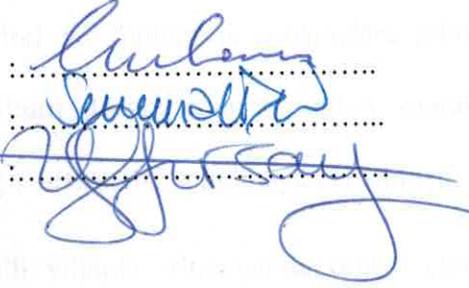
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Özet

Başlangıcından itibaren, Türkiye'den Avrupa'ya göçün incelenmesi yoğun olarak nicel verilerle ve uluslararası ilişkiler yaklaşımlarıyla değerlendirilmiştir. Almanya'da yaşayan Türkiye kökenli göçmenlerin kültürleri ise uzun süre göz ardı edilmiş, ya da incelenmeye alınmamıştır. Türk-Almanlar kültürel olarak incelendiğinde ise, ulus devlete dayalı yaklaşımlarla, dejenere ya da arada kalmış olarak değerlendirilmiştir. Oysa, yaklaşık kırk yıldır, Almanya'da yaşayan Türkiye kökenli göçmenler kültürel alanda önemli eserler ortaya koymaktadırlar. Özellikle bu çalışmanın konusu olan sinema alanında, ulusal sinema anlayışı ve göçmen sineması arasındaki gerilim göçmen yönetmenlerin konumu üzerinde de önemli bir rol oynamaktadır. Bu çalışmada, kültürel ve toplumsal gelişmeleri sabit ve değişmez olarak değerlendiren görüşle, özellikle kültürü devam eden bir süreç olarak değerlendiren görüş arasındaki gerilim ve bu gerilime bağlı tartışmalar sunulmaya çalışılmıştır.

Bu çalışmanın amacı, 1970'li yıllarda Almanya'da ortaya çıkan göçmen sinemasını incelemek ve filmlerin ayırt edici özelliklerini vurgulayarak, sinema anlayışını dönemlere ayırmaya çalışmaktır. Çalışmada, tüm dönemlerden seçilmiş filmler incelenmiş, genel bir tablo oluşturulmaya çalışılmıştır. Ayrıca, Türk-Alman yönetmenlerle röportaj yapılmıştır. Yönetmenlerle, kültürel kimlik, göçmen yönetmenlerin karşılaştığı genel sorunlar, dışlamacılık, kadın sorunu, sinema da klişeleştirilmiş "Türk" imajı hakkında konuşulmuştur.

Abstract

Ab initio, researches on migration from Turkey to Europe were mainly evaluated by quantitative data and approaches of international relations. For a long period of time, culture of Turkish migrants residing in Germany was neglected or wasn't taken into a serious consideration. When Turkish- German migrants were taken into analytical consideration in cultural context, researchers generally applied nation-state based theories to make evaluations. And in the outcomes of these evaluations migrants were regarded as degenerates or people who are "in between". Nonetheless, for approximately 40 years, Turkish- German migrants produced radical works of art that are highly significant in cultural manifestation. Especially in the medium of cinema, which is the main theme of this research, conflict between national cinema and migration cinema had a major role in defining the standpoint of migrant directors. This research is an attempt to present the conflict between the view that considers cultural and social developments as being stable and unchangeable and the view that considers cultural developments as an ongoing process that constantly change. Also, debates arising from this conflict are analyzed.

The main aim of this research is to view migrant cinema, which roots back to 1970s Germany, and to divide this concept of cinema into epochs by emphasizing the distinctive characteristics of the movies. To form a general perspective I tried to select movies from all epochs. Moreover, interviews with the Turkish-German directors were conducted. In the interviews, the notions of cultural identity, the problems that migrant directors are confronting, discrimination, the problem of Turkish woman figure, and the stereotypical image of the "Turk" were interrogated with the help of Turkish-German directors.

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Introduction

“Strange times back then, they were burning people’s houses down!”¹

On 22nd of August 1992, the Asylum residences called Sonnenblumenhaus in Rostock-Lichtenberg were under attack of hateful young people and right-wing extremists. This event was one of the most hateful xenophobic attacks² that occurred in the early 1990s. Lasting 3 days long, physical assaults and arson attacks on asylum residences in Rostock-Lichtenberg were indicators of xenophobia and the re-occurrence of neo-Nazi marginal groups in Post-Wall Germany.³

Six years after the xenophobic attack in Rostock, Hussi Kutlucan was to make his award winning and acclaimed movie *Ich Chef, Du Turnschuh*. Twelve years after making his movie, Hussi Kutlucan, in our interview, told me that, the Rostock-Lichtenberg attack was his main motivation for making this movie.

“The wall fell down, people first hugged each other, but unemployment turned out to be a big problem. They said: ‘First, we Germans get jobs, then the foreigners!’ After seeing that there were problems, they began hunting the most powerless down. In 1992, 2000 people attacked Sonnenblumenhaus. 3 days long they tried to burn people living inside the residence. Asylum seekers were stoned to death. I want to make movies about this weak and poor people. But I thought to my self, I have to do something very different, so they shall hit back! (...) I try to do something, I try to encourage people, and I want to win!”
(Personal Interview with Hussi Kutlucan)

¹ Personal Interview with Hussi Kutlucan. Still residing in Berlin, he is one of the important Turkish-German directors. One of his movies *Ich Chef, Du Turnschuh* is evaluated as a key movie among others directed in the second half of 1990s that signify the shift from the cinema of duty towards a cinema of hybridity.

² “Throughout the 1990s in now-famous sities such as Mölln and Solingen, Turkish and other minority populations became the targets and victims of extremist neo-Nazi youth groups calling for the elimination of ‘parasites’ who were feeding on the German welfare system” (Mandel, 2008: 53)

³ <http://www.n-tv.de/politik/dossier/Rostock-Lichtenhagen-article227835.html>

Mentioned by Kutlucan, the fall of the Berlin Wall triggered mass-migration and therefore the demographics of the Federal Republic changed dramatically. In the 1990s, immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers were perceived as “freeloaders” abusing the Federal Republic’s magnanimity (Göktürk, Gremling and Kaes, 2007a: 12).

According to many scholars, the second half of the 1990’s, when Kutlucan made his second movie, indicates a break-through of Turkish-German cinema. The nature of cinema of migration changed, when unprecedented stories and figures were filmed, different approaches started to dominate the scene. Turkish-German directors, labeled as migrant until then, tried to come out of their shell. In this context, four movies are very important: Fatih Akin’s *Kurz und Schmerzlos* (1999), Hussi Kutlucan’s *Ich Chef, Du Turnschuh* (1998), Yüksel Yavuz’s *Aprilkinder* (1998), Kutluğ Ataman’s *Lola+Bilidikid* (1999). These movies illustrated the way both Turkish-German and German cinemas were on. Maybe “the new German Cinema was Turkish?”⁴

The idea of conducting a migration study through analyzing the Turkish-German cinema emerged after examining many studies with many different focal points and different approaches. When we look at the studies where Turkish diaspora in Germany is considered, we encounter a periodic differentiation also mentioned by Ayhan Kaya. He points out that there are three different stages in the studies on Turkish migrants in Germany:

“In the early period of migration in the sixties, the syncretic nature of existing migrant cultures was not of interest to scholars analyzing the situation of Turkish *Gastarbeiter* (guest worker) in Germany. The studies carried out during this period were mainly concerned with the economics and statistics, ‘culture’ and dreams of return. (...) The reason behind this neglect is twofold. First, at the beginning of the migration process, Turkish workers were demographically highly homogenous, consisting of either males or females, and were not visible in the public space. Second, workers in this period were

⁴ “The New ‘German’ Cinema is ‘Turkish’?” is the name of the article written by Tuncay Kulaoglu (1999).

considered temporary, and they themselves regarded their situation as such.”
(Kaya, 2001: 13 – 14)

Kaya (2001) also differentiates a second and a third stage in the studies on migration. He argues that the second stage covers the period between the 1970s and 1990s. Studies of this period focus on the “reorganization of family, parent-child relationships, integration, assimilation and ‘acculturation’ of migrants to German culture (2001: 14).” Studies in the third stage focused on citizenship, discrimination and racism, socio-economic performance, diasporic networks and cultural production (Kaya, 2001: 14). This differentiation can be seen in many academic migration studies. Kaya points out in his own study -about Turkish hip-hop youth in Berlin- that Turkish immigrants in Germany are no longer just a population with inadequate education, living on unemployment pay or serving the German state at Gastarbeiter status. Furthermore, he argues that they are contributing to society culturally.

The first topic I chose to work on was the relationship between Turkish immigrants and football. I aimed to clarify the participation to social life through sport further on. The first reason why I chose this topic was the football player flow from Germany to Turkey. This flow is in accordance with a concept that is frequently seen in diaspora studies, namely the dreams of return to “homeland”. I was interested in football as an instrument leading to a functional relationship used by Turkish-German youth who perceive Turkey as a mainland to return to.

The second reason for me to choose this topic to work on is that because I consider the term resistance could be reconciled with the Turkish-German youth playing football in Berlin.⁵ Since I believed the troubles encountered in education were one of the main reasons why the Turkish-German⁶ youth tended to play football, in this context football turned into a resistance point for the youth. However as I started to consider football and interviewing the German-Turkish youth playing football, I found out that I was about to conduct a study focusing on the topics that have been already analysed by most of the previous academic studies on migration.

⁵ The term resistance will also be used in the next chapters when analyzing the German-Turkish movies and the definition of culture. I also refer to Gardenier, when I use this term. (Gardenier, 2000: 1 - 23)

⁶ The term “Turkish-German” will be analyzed in the next parts of the study.

The results of my study or the point of view could have pointed out that German-Turkish youth playing football has the same tendencies such as having the dream of return, that they are not integrated with the social life, that they are experiencing discrimination and that they are highly excluded from German society. I realized that my point of view and my premises were insufficient, wrong and repetitive, when considering the stages pointed out by Kaya. I was about to confirm the clichéd-stereotyped image of Turkish migrants.

At that point in my research I decided that there was a need to shift the study to a more cultural dimension. Taking into consideration how powerful migrant literature or the 'literature of affected' has been, especially influencing and providing an input to migrant cinema, I decided to make a study on migration through cinema. This is a fertile area worth studying since mainstream migrant cinema has kept flourishing in the past four decades.

My main aim is to present the cinema of migration in Germany that has been made since 1970s as a means to conduct an alternative migration study. As Kaya put it, since 1990s migration studies have been dealing with –among other issues- cultural productions (Kaya, 2001: 14). While Turkish-German movies in 1970s and 1980s were about the social and material reality of Turkish guestworkers, the movies made in 1990s indicated a similar shift when they are compared with the academic studies. Since 1990s, the Turkish-German movies do not mainly deal with the social and material reality, rather they question ethnicity, migrant identity and culture, everyday life, discrimination and criminality etc. I try to question whether the Turkish-German cinema underwent the similar changes that academic studies did.

In order to illustrate the changes and shifts in the Turkish-German movies, I selected twenty six movies from different decades. According to studies and also that I went through, these movies are among the most important ones in their decades they were produced. While many of these movies indicate a particular breakthrough in terms of themes, genres, characters that are depicted; only a few do not coincide with the changes that I suggested.

Selected movies are analyzed by focusing on the characters, genres, themes, important dialogues and scenes. I analyzed movies just like the way that Hamid Naficy, Deniz Göktürk or Oğuz Makal did. These scholars also focus on the main

themes, movie plots, protagonists, Turkish woman figure, important dialogues and scenes. Apart from these focal points, it is also important to focus on the director of the movie and on the differences, if there is any that the movie makes.

Furthermore, I conducted interviews with six important Turkish-German directors, one Turkish-German actor, and one Turkish-German sociologist in order to enrich my study. First of all, I explained my hypothesis and my study to the directors, and then I asked them whether they encountered some difficulties in the process of making a movie. Funding problems, the figure of Turkish woman depicted in the movies, space for creativity of migrant directors living in Berlin, criminality as a common theme in the movies, prejudices of German society towards directors, clichéd images of Turkish-Germans, the lack of humor in the movies were other topics that I have talked about with them. Another series of interviews were planned with a Turkish-German sociologist from Berlin, who specialized in the second generation Turkish migrants in order to interrogate the reality of the stories and figures presented and depicted in the movies.

The first chapter deals with the discussions on culture and with what culture means for immigrants in a broad sense. By the same token, it will be mentioned the importance of culture for this study, and how it is located and approached. Furthermore, a brief summary of the Turkish emigration to Germany will be given. This process of emigration, when Germany became a migration-receiving country, will be scrutinized through perceptions of German society towards Turkish workers, and through how Turkish guest workers were presented in the media. It will be argued that a clichéd image of Turkish guest workers were created through a xenophobic understanding and this stereotypical image were carried on by the literature and by even well-meaning film productions. Thirdly, the hyphenated term “Turkish-German” will be discussed. This term is used to cover the ethnically diversified community that originates from Turkey. First chapter is designated in order to delineate the atmosphere and social structure that Turkish migrants have been living in.

Second chapter is built upon three different aspects. First, the debates over the term “national cinema” are presented. It will be argued that this term was associated with a national identity and consciousness. On the other hand, the term tends to limit the cinema within the borders of a nation state. However, there have been many

developments in cinematic landscape that transgress the borders of nation state, and therefore the use of the term “national cinema” is no longer capable of defining the cinema of today. Second, the term “cinema of migration” will be determined, and it will be discussed the influence of cinema of migration on “national cinema.” Third, from the general concept the cinema of migration to specific, Turkish-German cinema will be scrutinized. In order to do so, the movies of the German directors of New German Cinema wave, who dealt with migration in their movies; the movies of Turkish directors who were born and raised in Turkey; and the movies of Turkish migrant directors living in Germany will be analyzed. Finally, the space for creativity of Turkish-German directors and how they have been reduced to a one limited understanding of cinema will be discussed.

Third chapter analyzes the movies of 1970s and 1980s. These movies mainly deal with the social and material reality of the migrants in Germany. It will be argued that these well-meaning movies confirm the clichéd images of Turkish migrant workers, even though they try to do exactly the opposite. Generally speaking, the movies of these two decades depict the migrant figure as a victim, and divide the society into two different communities, namely the oppressors and oppressed. Therefore, although the main concern of these movies is to defend the migrants in Germany, they rather create a label for them, which is the oppressed victim. In this chapter, there is also an important discussion about Turkish-German directors who have been reduced to a “cinema of duty” mainly through funding. It is argued that this limited space for creativity forced Turkish-German directors depict Turkish protagonist in the movies of this period as an oppressed and victimized person who needs to be tolerated.

Fourth chapter indicates a generational shift of Turkish-German directors and therefore a breakthrough in Turkish-German cinema in terms of themes and figures depicted in the movies. In 1990s, the new generation (the directors who were born to migrant families) of Turkish-German directors begin to make movies in their own style and they tell stories of life in Germany that have never been told before in German cinema.

Fifth chapter analyzes the movies of 2000s. This decade can be considered as a continuity of 1990s. Furthermore, there is also a new kind of film that can be

observed, namely the “Turkish-light.” There are Turkish-German comedy movies analyzed under this category. These movies have “light” themes, funny characters and interesting plots, and they are directed as if they were commercial films.

Finally, I conclude that by and large migrants have different positions than Germans in German society, even though they might have same fundamental rights and freedoms. Their positions are questioned and reconstructed constantly. Turkish-German directors are also afflicted with this problem, and they created a unique cinema as a resistance point.

1. Terms and Concepts

In this chapter, I will try to introduce cultural aspect, terms, and concepts used in this study, and try to give a brief summary of discussions on them. First, I will try to summarize two different notions of culture, the meaning of culture for migrants, and I will suggest how migrant culture can be perceived and understood. Second, I will outline the migratory process and try to summarize how Turkish guest workers have been perceived and presented throughout the history. Third, the hyphenated term used for the identity associated with the Turkish migrants living in Germany will be analyzed.

1.1. Cultural Aspect:

An important reason for me to analyze cultural dimension of migration is that culture has another meaning for Turkish-Germans living in Berlin. In their comprehensive study Castles and Miller address the question: “What does culture for the immigrants mean?” According to the authors, culture is a source for identity, and has a key role as a resistance point against discrimination and exclusion (Castles and Miller, 2008: 53).

Scholars studying migration have different approaches towards culture of immigrants, Kaya denotes. According to him, there are two essential notions of culture:

“The first one is *the holistic notion of culture*, and the second is the *syncretic notion of culture*. The former considers culture a highly integrated and grasped static ‘whole’. This is the dominant paradigm of the classical modernity, of which territoriality and totality were the main characteristics. The latter notion is the one, which is most obviously affected by increasing interconnectedness in space. This syncretic notion of culture has been proposed by the contemporary scholars to demonstrate the fact that cultures emerge in mixing

beyond the political and geographical territories. (...) The term culture came to the fore in Europe during the construction of cultural nationalist identities. As the main constituent of the age of nationalism was territoriality, culture was defined as the cumulative of ‘shared meanings and values’. This is the holistic notion of culture that has provided the basic for the emergence of the myth of distinct national cultures.” (Kaya, 2001: 33- 34)

The holistic notion of culture underlines that cultures can only exist as separate and integral entities struggling for independence or dominance as Benedict Anderson also showed in his argument on nationalism as “imagined communities”. This notion of culture is conservative in the sense that the scholars adopting this notion to their studies tend to perceive developments in culture as intruders subverting ‘unity and authenticity of culture’. The holistic approach revolves around the terms such as shared meanings and values, which trigger the themes such as identity crisis, in-betweenness, split identities and degeneration embraced in studies on immigrant culture. Kaya also argues that, the tendency to see the Turkish migrants as victims is also caused by this approach. Scholars tend to see them as victims who cannot cope with the new circumstances and obstacles in the diaspora.⁷ Thus, the tendency of linking ethnicity and culture allow politics using the term multiculturalism⁸, which is to see different cultures are unified, homogenous, structured and separated wholes belonging to ethnic groups.

Zafer Şenocak and Martin Greve criticize the notion of culture dominating the cultural landscape of Germany. They try to discuss the separation of German and Turkish culture from one another, and the fact that Turkish culture is invisible in the German public sphere. They argue that cultural encounter and exchange intimidate German society. According to them, in Germany, culture of a migrant is understood a key term to overcome the foreignness. Migrant artists’ artistic values are reduced to a concept that confirms the existing political messages. Therefore, it is argued that the artistic works of non-German artists become supporters of this situation of unbalanced

⁷ This point of view also coincides with the narrative strategies of seeing the migrants as victims which will be discussed in details when analyzing the New German Cinema of the 1970s and 1980s and works of literature on migrants.

⁸ Also, this term will be discussed in the part “Presentations of and Perceptions towards Turkish migrants.”

cultural encounter. Şenocak and Greve also denote that the promotion of migrant artist is a patronizing assistance, and this assistance has a social objective, namely social integration. This situation of non-German artists will be also discussed in the second chapter by focusing on Turkish-German directors' space for creativity. In their article first published as "Aufbruch ins Leben" in *Zitty* (March 30, 2000), they assert that:

"(...) It is necessary to depart from two perceptions: first there is the notion of liberal bilateral cultural exchange, whereby the cultures of different states- Germany and Turkey, for example- meet as though they were at an international match, carefully separated from one another, in order to gauge or marvel at each other from a distance. Both cultural teams have long since found themselves in a permanent internal dysfunction. Moreover, countless additional players who can no longer be attributed to a national team are running around on the playing field: the migrants and their descendants. How would one define 'German culture' today? The sill-prevalent right to define culture exclusively as an expression of national identity has been overhauled by reality. (...) In Germany there are not even any clichés about Turkish high culture. (...) Turkish cultural institutions are virtually absent in the German public sphere. (...) Second, the idealization of culture as a means for international understanding and integration of minorities is common. Since the 1970s, (...) any kind of German-Turkish cultural encounter was absorbed through social integration. *Culture*, stood as a key term for foreignness as well as for overcoming it. Cultural encounter and exchange became concepts fraught with unreasonable expectations; but artistic work, in contrast was downgraded to a triviality, and the artists themselves became the bearers of prescribed political messages. In the public sphere, one still finds the illusion of an unrealistic cultural homogeneity." (Şenocak and Greve: 461)

Kaya points out that the second one is *the syncretic notion of culture*. The focal point of this notion of culture is that culture's main characteristics should be viewed as a mixed bricolage. Kaya states that:

“In this approach, culture does not develop along ethnically absolute lines but in complex, dynamic patterns of syncretism [Gilroy, 1987:13]; and cultural identity is considered a matter of ‘becoming’ as well as ‘being’ [Hall, 1989, 1994]. It seems more appropriate for this perspective to treat migrant cultures as mixing their new set of tools, which they acquire in the migration experience, with their previous lives and cultural repertoires.” (Kaya, 2001: 35 – 36)

Focusing on Turkish immigrants residing in Germany, there are not many studies employing the second notion of culture. The ones adopting this notion avoid labeling immigrants as degenerate, problematic or defining them with concepts like in-betweenness, lost generation and split identities (Kaya, 2001: 37) Tuncay Kulaoglu, for instance, prefer describing the culture of migrant directors not by using the term ‘in-betweenness’, rather he interprets being without an identity as an advantage, or a value which can one gain by ‘sitting between the chairs’ (Kulaoglu, 2002c).⁹ Gündüz Vassaf’s argument paraphrased by Kaya focuses on that migrants’ “children have developed their own cultural space” (Kaya, 2001: 37).

Following Kaya, I also find very interesting what Feridun Zaimoğlu - as a key figure in literature -established in his literary works in order to aestheticize the language of the migrants. According to Tom Cheesman (2004), “Zaimoğlu’s strategy involves the invention of a pseudo-ethnicity, Kanak, with a stylized language, ‘Kanak Sprak’ which disrupts the state-sanctioned dialogue between ‘German’ and ‘Turks’” (Cheesman, 2004: 83). Cheesman points out that the immigrant artists, like Zaimoğlu, are often critical of political fictions of a homogeneous national Leitkultur.¹⁰ In this context, the language Zaimoğlu uses includes a fictive slang, which is embraced by the youngster, because it annoys their elders. Cheesman argues that “Turks’ Malcolm X” Zaimoğlu with his powerful hate speech, undermines Leitkultur (Cheesman: 84-

⁹ The phrase that Tuncay Kulaoglu used was: “...zwischen den Stühlen sitzen.” (Personal interview with Tuncay Kulaoglu)

¹⁰ “...Leitkultur refers to values of political culture associated with Enlightenment and constitutional democracy, calling for his ‘culture’ to be vigorously asserted, especially, against theocracy.” (Cheesman: 84) Cheesman points out that German Leitkultur is defined in ethnic or exclusionary cultural terms, and therefore does not correspond with European values. Cheesman also indicates that a chair of the CDU used Leitkultur to mean the putative essence of national culture to which immigrants must assimilate (Cheesman: 84).

85). Ruth Mandel also discusses Zaimoğlu's work focusing on the ways foreign subjects in Germany are represented:

“Semantic inscriptions of foreignness reveal how Turkish subjects are exposed, humiliated, and deposed through a consistent social logic that finds its symbolic referent in the lowest site of the social body and the social hierarchy. In turn, many Turkish social actors have internalized this negative symbolism of social inferiority, sometimes in ironic, playful ways as in Feridun Zaimoğlu's work, through the production and reproduction of the language of jokes and the idiom of work and leisure. The focus here is the way this negative symbolism enters into a cultural dialogue that often places only the German collective body, with its imagined homogeneity, at the apex of social hierarchies. The deployment of these divergent symbolisms has deep roots in everyday uses of language.” (Mandel: 51)

Zaimoğlu has become a key figure in the literature and culture, in terms of creating “his” own or migrants’ own cultural aspect. Moreover, in this study, a movie scripted by Feridun Zaimoğlu is one of the selected movies analyzed in this study.

This dichotomy between notions of culture shapes all definitions and concepts throughout one’s study, which notion of culture one chooses, accordingly. In a similar fashion, parallel to these contradicting notions of culture, discussions on cinema are going to be held in the following parts. The above mentioned dichotomy coincides with the discussions on national cinema and cinema of migration. One group of scholars, who argue that national identity is stable and fixed, define “cinema of nation” in the terms of Benedict Anderson. On the other hand, there are scholars who try to define national identity as an ongoing process, and underline the hybrid character of cinema, accordingly. The former, with a conservative sensitivity tries to support and defend cinema of nation against American hegemony; the latter tries to include all emerging features such as co-productions and migrant cinema, and to avoid to label and categorize movies.

Like Kutlucan put it, all directors that I conducted my interviews with tend to perceive the culture and cultural productions of immigrants as a resistance point. Seen

in many film productions, resistance changes from finding ways to survive everyday life (like in the movie *Polizei*) to criminal tendencies (like *Kurz und Schmerzlos*) depicted in the 1990s. But of course, the movies of Turkish-German directors cannot be reduced only to resistance; motivations, approaches, and the genres of the movies underwent significant changes, therefore the portfolio of Turkish-German directors is highly diverse, with themes ranging from social and material reality and political criticism to criminality, from patriarchy to sexual freedom. In this context, it is improper to categorize all the movies under one label. From the movie *40 m² Deutschland* by Tevfik Baser (1986) to *Soul Kitchen* (2009) by Fatih Akin, the feature films transgress the limits of stories of resistance and they are on the way to pleasures of hybridity.

Moreover, needless to say, these movies of Turkish-German directors help scholars to understand both the history of migration and the life of Turkish diaspora living in Germany, because of the fact that they have been providing, so to say, the hidden aspects of Turkish diaspora living in Germany. In this sense, the movies of Turkish-German directors can be evaluated as historical projects on anthropological and sociological level, on the other hand since the Turkish-German movies had eroded many terms such as national culture or national cinema and since they have been focal points of many researchers in terms of being transnational, they can be also interest of scholars of international relations.

1.2. Presentations of and Perceptions towards Turkish Migrants

“We called for labor, but people came instead.”¹¹

Max Frisch

In this part of the study, a brief summary of Turkish migration to Germany and current situation focusing on perceptions towards migration will be given, in order to conceptualize the following parts of the study in a more efficient way. As I mentioned

¹¹ “Man hat Arbeitskraefte gerufen, und es kommen Menschen.” is the original phrase of Max Frisch (Mandel: 51).

before, I tend to evaluate the Turkish-German cinema of migration as individual history projects or a general perception of the directors towards their lives they lived in Germany. In order not to miss the relevant points coincide with the themes of the movies; I assume that a brief history of migration process might be helpful in terms of allowing me to associate the movies with the history. Because, both selected movies and also the Turkish-German directors, I conducted my interviews with, are really sensitive to the situation of Turkish immigrants in Germany – even, there are some movies by German-Turkish directors dedicated to their parents or to migrants in Germany¹²- and they reflect their concerns in their movies.

According to Castles and Miller (2008: 29), process of migration cannot be analyzed through an individual-based approach; rather they argue that migration is a collective action caused by social changes and it changes both emigration and immigration countries. Furthermore, this process often results in development of ethnic minorities.

In respect of the beginning of the Turkish emigration to Germany, it can be argued that the theory of *Development in Dual Economy* that suits the Turkish emigration history is the one focusing on migration of labor in the process of economic development¹³. On the other hand, as Toksoz also put it, every theory focuses on different aspects and motives of migration, and considers the cultural and international changes. Accordingly, Migration Networks Theory, which focuses on the informal boundaries and interactions established between emigration and immigration countries in terms of perpetuating the migration process, can be also considered as a suitable approach to the Turkish emigration story (Toksöz: 16 – 24). Because, the migration history of Turkey is not in the same situation as when it has began, therefore it is entirely logical to employ different theories to different situations.

¹² *Mein Vater der Gastarbeiter* (Yüksel Yavuz, 1994), *Denk ich an Deutschland - Wir haben vergessen zurückzukehren* (Fatih Akin, 2001), *Ich Chef, Du Turnschuh* (Hussi Kutlucan, 1998) are important examples among others.

¹³ Gülay Toksöz, differentiates 8 different theories explaining migration, she argues that all theories go hand in hand and complete each other. Theories focusing on different motive in migration are as follows: Theory of Development in Dual Economy, Neo-Classic Theory, Theory of Independence, Dualist Labor Market Theory, World System Theory, Theory of Migration Systems, Theory of the New Economy of Professional Migrants, and Theory of Migration Networks (Toksöz: 16 – 24).

When we look at the **history**, one of the most important researchers, Unat (1995: 279) scrutinizes Turkish migration to Europe in six stages. These stages cover a period between the 1990s and the 2000s. She denotes that:

“Beginning in the late 1950s, Turkish migration to, and settlement in, European countries occurred in six major phases:

- recruitment through intermediaries (1956 – 61);
- migration on the basis of bilateral agreements (1961 – 72);
- recession and the employment of foreign workers and the legitimization of illegal (‘tourist’) migrants (1972 – 75)
- introduction of visa, the increase in asylum requests and growing xenophobia (1978 – 85)
- spread of ethnic business, the role of ethnic religious associations and the demand for political rights. (1986 – onwards)”

In 1961, when the newly constructed Berlin Wall cut off the flow of workers from East Germany, labor shortage became inextricable for West Germany. Therefore, West German Labor Ministry appealed to the temporary worker program. In 1961, the Federal Government of West Germany signed a labor recruitment contract with Turkey, which was one of its anticommunist allies in NATO. Between 1960 and 1970, 2.3 million West Germans left their jobs in order to become managers and clerks, while foreign workers took up the vacated positions. In 1964, the number of guest workers totaled 1 million, when Germany renewed its contract with Turkey. Until Germany passed a law in 1965, government had no new legislation on foreign workers. This law, the “*Auslaendergesetz*” had a destabilizing effect on migrant workers and families¹⁴. Furthermore, Germany wasn’t willing to grant citizenship to guest workers because Germany’s principle of citizenship was based on the Empire- and State Citizenship Law of 1913. According to this law, one could be born and work for years in Germany, without becoming a German citizen because what really

¹⁴ “Foreigners could reside in Germany as long as they had a valid visa and continued to serve ‘the needs of Federal Republic’”. (Göktürk, Gremling and Kaes, 2007a: 10)

mattered was ethnicity and descent. In 1973, there were more than 605.000 Turks in Germany, the biggest immigrant group in the country. In 1974, the government passed a law for family unification. This law increased the immigrant population dramatically. However, Germany's intention was to reduce the population of guest workers. One of the most significant attempts to reduce guest worker population was Helmut Kohl's, who was the chancellor of Germany from 1982 to 1998. In the 1970s and 1980, naturalization was restricted to immigrants who had lived in Germany at least 10 years and could prove his/her commitment to Germany. In the beginning of 2000, a law was passed that allows a child born to non-German parents with eight years of residency be granted German citizenship (Göktürk, Gramling and Kaes, 2007a: 3 - 12).

Throughout this history mentioned above, Germany did not accept that it was a country of immigration. Until recently, the policy towards immigrants had remained exclusionary. Even the law passed in 2000 did not entirely subvert the principle of citizenship based on ethnicity; rather it brought to immigrants not originating from Europe a limited and hyphenated citizenship with an emphasis laid on German identity (Kaya and Kentel, 2005: 21).

In 2005, in Germany, there were 6, 75 million immigrants (Münz, 2007: 90). According to numbers collected in 2003, there are 1, 87 million Turkish immigrants living in Germany (Kaya and Kentel, 2005: 17). Following, I will try to display and evaluate briefly the ways and approaches of representation of immigrants and migration, and xenophobia in Germany towards immigrants.

Xenophobia Towards and Representation of Immigrants

“If someone gets stabbed, a Turk is usually involved”.¹⁵

Today, in Germany there are almost two millions migrants originating from Turkey and after a period that covers over 5 decades, it is still a contradictory issue to

¹⁵ (First published as “*Die Türken kommen: Retten sich wer kann*” in *Der Spiegel* [30.07.1973]), translated by David Gramling (Gramling, 2007: 111)

define the position of a Turkish immigrant in the society. One can argue that, in terms of xenophobia, it is apparently possible for a migrant in Germany to face different and changing forms of xenophobia. In addition to that, racism and discrimination are not “entirely” dissolved. Furthermore, not only in Germany, but also in other countries of Europe, securisation -the term emerged to a large extent after 11 September, shapes the political landscape, because it is believed that Europe was threaten by transnational “flows”, which include organized crime, drug trafficking, environmental disasters. Migration was also located into this circle revolving around these “transnational threats” (Faist, 2007: 19 – 20).

Notwithstanding, migration has become in the last decade increasingly associated with transnational threats; it is not an entirely a new way to perceive and express the concerns about foreigners. In her study, Mandel interrogates the ways, foreign subjects in Germany are represented. Mandel refers to the German word *Überfremdung* (wich can be translated as over-foreignization or foreign infiltration), and points out that the reason for concern lies on the perception of Germans that foreigners do not belong to their social sphere. Mandel (2008) points out that the West-German government discovered that short-term recruited manpower tended to remain for long terms. Furthermore, these incomers, who were discovered as being also “people”, began claiming the same political and social rights enjoyed by German citizens. These people were called “Fremd”, the term used by the Nazis for the imported slave laborers in the Third Reich (Mandel: 51).

Albeit, it is claimed that there have been some changes of perception towards and representation of migration in the sense that the representation of migration is not uniformed in general (Yalçın-Heckmann: 310), there are also scholars arguing that there is an observable tendency to assess and label the Turkish immigrants, as if they were a homogeneous community.

Referring to Zizek, Bülent Dikmen tries to assess the tendency of Nazi Germany in terms of the use of the heterogeneous figure “Jew” to define the Jewish community¹⁶. This discursive strategy of the Nazis aimed to define Jews as disturbing and dirtying the unity of Nazi society, and also as an external factor giving an

¹⁶ After these two examples, I think it is necessary to mention that I do not tend to draw an analogy between current perceptions towards migrants and the Nazi Germany. I try to indicate the power of manipulative and homogenizing discourses.

antagonistic character to the society. In this context, the “pure Aryan” identity was constructed in a retrospective way claiming that the identity had existed before the “Jew”. The figure “Jew” carries all the negative features in a way that it is depicted the anti-thesis of the society. According to Zizek, an anti-Semite is a person who believes in Jews, who believes that Jews have a pure and homogenous identity. In this sense, there is only one way to subvert or eliminate anti-Semitism: we have to claim that Jews do not have features as indicated; we have to claim that the figure of Jew does not exist (Dikmen, 2007: 43 – 45).

In a similar fashion, this is exactly what I will argue in the following parts. There is not any features attributed to a Turkish-German, there would not be any. The Turkish-German society is not homogenous. Through subverting the features attributed to Turkish immigrants, it can be possible to prevent manipulative discourse strategies of anti-immigration. When this is achieved, the migration processes, imagined superiority of a German towards an immigrant, modern identity, Leitkultur and perception towards “Kanakas” could be reevaluated.

“The Turks are coming! Save yourself if you can!”¹⁷

A synopsis of the current situation regarding perceptions and representations of immigrants is given by Kaya (2007). He discusses how migration, immigrants, Muslims and Turkish-Germans are perceived in Germany arguing that, as Faist also put it, immigrants are considered in the light of the discursive strategy of securisation. Therefore, it is claimed that immigrants threaten the national security, social security and cultural unity. According to Kaya, the issue of migration and migration related topics are being evaluated on a neo-liberal dimension and therefore the main concerns such as equality, justice, share and access to resources are overlooked, because of the fact that governments are not able to find permanent, structural and long-term solutions to these problems. When facing social, political and financial problems, there is a tendency to create temporary solutions, instead of permanent and long-term ones. This tendency is associated with the term “governmentality” which allows politicians indicate immigrants as the main cause of existing problems. By doing so

¹⁷ (First published as “Die Türken kommen: Retten sich wer kann” in *Der Spiegel* [30.07.1973]), translated by David Gramling (Gramling, 2007: 110)

governments may create an “enemy among us” feeling in order to mobilize the masses in a political way (Kaya, 2007: 81 – 83).

Emphasizing on illegal migration and statistical data, the issue of migration is turned into an issue of fear by governments. Kaya argues that statistical data are used in order to construct new dimensions of fear and threat. On the other hand, in order to present the strength of ideological manipulation, Kaya argues that two different maps -the one is the current routes of migration and the other shows the directions of Second World War’s armies-might have the same influences on people: assault, invasion and take over what essentially belongs to “us”. Numerous prejudices towards them, Turkish immigrants, in contrast to suppositions, are not conservative enough, not ghetto-centric enough, not radical Islamist enough, not patriarchal enough and not chauvinistic enough to meet the needs of those who are willing to label them using the above mentioned tags. Even, Turkish immigrants do not coincide with the term of immigrant, argues Kaya, transmigrant is a more appropriate term for them, because of the fact that Turkish immigrants have constructed a transnational space, and because they are able to live in this transnational space located between two nation-states (Kaya, 2007: 84 – 89).

Limited by these xenophobic strategies, there are two discourses –freed from terms such as class, social status, equality- towards immigrants dominating the political landscape, especially in Berlin. The first one is tolerance, the second is multiculturalism.

Tolerance is a highly disputable term, when it is used in the context of migration. One example can be given from the history of migration in Germany; instead of structural and coherent solutions; in the 1960s and 1970s, guest workers on temporary visas were expected to go back, on the other hand asylum seekers and refugees were informally tolerated by the Federal German Government (Göktürk, Gremling and Kaes, 2007a: 4 - 5). Interrogated about the term “tolerance”, Zizek argues that:

“Why are today so many problems perceived as problems of intolerance, not as problems of inequality, exploitation, injustice? Why is the proposed remedy tolerance, not emancipation, political struggle, even armed struggle? The immediate answer is the liberal multiculturalist’s basic ideological operation: the “culturalization of politics” political differences, differences conditioned by

political inequality, economic exploitation, etc., are naturalized/neutralized into “cultural” differences, different “ways of life”, which are something given, something that cannot be overcome, but merely “tolerated.” To this, of course, one should answer in Benjaminian terms: *from culturalization of politics to politicization of culture*. The cause of this culturalization is the retreat, failure, of direct political solutions (Welfare State, socialist projects, etc.). Tolerance is their post-political *ersatz*.” (Zizek, 2008: 660)

One can argue that Germany has not been providing equality; it just promotes this strategy in order to avoid having comprehensive solutions. With tolerance, position of all others, like lesbians, gays, immigrants, persons with headscarf, individuals from other cultures are located socially below the German citizen. Because, groups need to be tolerated merely when they are perceived as not being worth having the same rights, although they legally enjoy the same rights as the majority does. In this context, majority becomes the “*Boss*”, and minorities become the “*sneaker*”.

Second strategy is **multiculturalism**. In a similar fashion, although Berlin is a “multicultural” city, the main weakness of multiculturalism dominating Berlin is the *separation of the cultures* from one another. Referring to Parekh, Kaya discusses the definition of multiculturalism:

“Parekh defines multiculturalism as numerical plurality of cultures that is creating, guaranteeing, encouraging spaces within which different communities are able to grow up at their own pace. (...) ...multiculturalism is possible, but only if communities feel confident enough to engage in a dialogue and where there is enough public space for them to interact with the dominant culture.” (Kaya, 2001: 105)

However, Kaya argues that the definition of Parekh signifies to an ideal situation, which is not the case, when Germany is considered: “... the dominant ideology of multiculturalism aims to imprison minority cultures in their distinct boundaries, even closing up the channels of dialogue between cultures.” (Kaya, 2001: 105)

Furthermore, Göktürk criticizes the assumptions claiming that there were homogenous cultural identities. Well-meaning projects supporting multiculturalism often result in the construction of binary opposition between “Turkish culture” and “German culture” which hinders the dialogue and cross-cultural exchanges instead of facilitating it. The separatist criteria of multiculturalism also dominate cultural space, where film productions are created (Göktürk, 2002b: 249). As a matter of fact, Angela Merkel was to say that in a press conference, when Radio Multi-Kulti – one of the key projects of multiculturalism- was about to be shut down in 2009:

“Multi-Kulti has been disused, we have to grow together... For this purpose, first of all one has to learn the language of the country he/she lives in.”¹⁸

Analyzing the New German Cinema in the following parts, I will indicate three categories of criticism. The first category is based on the figure of the seventh man. The muted character, who cannot communicate used in order to depict immigrants, which coincides with the perception of immigrants throughout the above mentioned history. The second one is the separation of communities from one another: oppressor and oppressed. Similar to multiculturalist projects, this category sustains the separation of different communities. The third one is the figure of the woman: This category embodies almost all the stereotyped clichés. In this context, in the study I will claim that there is not any seventh man to depict, there should not be any differentiation of oppressor and oppressed, and there is not a Turkish woman to be saved by man.

A conclusion to be drawn is that it can be seen that immigrants were labeled and categorized with different terms and tags throughout the history of migration. However, although there are significant changes in categorizing immigrants, the approaches to perceive them, did not undergo as much changes in accordance with these classificatory attempts. Migrants need to have equal rights and the proper opportunities enjoy them within the society; they do not need to be tolerated.

¹⁸ <http://www.welt.de/politik/article2473722/Angela-Merkel-haelt-Multikulti-fuer-Auslaufmodell.html>

“Multi-kulti hat ausgedient, wir muessen zusammenwachsen... Dazu muss man erstmal die Sprache lernen des Landes, in dem man lebt.”

1.3. Turkish-German or German-Turk:

In his novel, *The Snow*, Orhan Pamuk (2004) depicts a secret meeting at the Hotel Asia, and he makes the characters talk about the current political problems. A Kurdish youth comes up with a harangue interrupted with the questions of the others.

“‘What I would say is very simple’ said the passionate youth. ‘All I’d want them to print in that Frankfurt paper is this: “We are not stupid! We are just poor! And we have a right to insist on this distinction”’ (...) ‘Who do you mean, my son when you say “we”?’ asked another man. ‘Do you mean the Turks? The Kurds? The Circassians? The people of Kars? To whom exactly are you referring?’ (...) ‘Because mankind’s greatest error,’ continued the passionate youth, ignoring the question, ‘the biggest deception of the past thousand years is this: to confuse poverty with stupidity.’ (...) ‘Please listen to what I have to say’ said the passionate Kurdish youth. ‘I won’t speak long. People might feel sorry for a man who’s fallen on hard times, but when an entire nation is poor, the rest of the world assumes at once all the people of that nation must be brainless, lazy, dirty clumsy fools. Instead of pity, the people provoke laughter. It’s all joke – their culture, their customs, their practices. As time goes by, some of the rest of the world begins to feel ashamed for having thought this way, and when they look around and see immigrants from that poor country mopping their floors and doing all the other lowest-paying jobs, naturally they worry about what might happen if these workers one day rose up against them. So, to keep things sweet, they start taking an interest in the immigrants’ culture, and sometimes even pretend to think of them as equals.’ (...) ‘It’s about time he tells us what nation he’s talking about’ (...) ‘That’s why I want to tell this German paper that even if I get a chance to go to Germany one day, even if they give me a visa, I’m not going to go.’ (...) ‘But say they did and I went, and the first Western man I met in the street turned out to be a good person who didn’t despise me. I’d still mistrust him, just for being Westerner. I’d still worry that this man was looking down on me. Because, in Germany, they can spot people from Turkey just by the way they look. There’s no avoiding humiliation except by proving at the first opportunity that you

think exactly as they do. But this is impossible, and it can break a man's pride to try.'" (Pamuk, 2004: 282 – 284)

This chapter of the Pamuk's book coincides both with the representation of and perceptions towards Turkish-German migrants in Germany, and also with the ethnic diversity of the "Turkish" community living in Germany. There is no doubt that it is hard to explain, to talk about or to formulate hyphenated identities in a study. Especially in migration studies a special section is preserved for details of these hyphenated identities and what the researcher means by them. It is not easy to introduce Turkish-German or German-Turkish as an identity into a study. In this particular study, it is aimed to cover with the hyphenated word Turkish-German all migrants living in Germany who have Turkish origin. Kaya (2001) explains in his study why he chooses to use the term German-Turk.

"A separate note is also needed for the contextual use of the term 'German – Turk' in this work. The notion of German-Turk is neither a term used by the descendants of Turkish migrants to identify them, nor is it used in the political or academic debate in Germany. I use the term German Turk in the Anglo-Saxon academic tradition to categorise diasporic youths; the term attributes a hybrid form of cultural identity to those group of young people. There is no doubt that political regimes of incorporation applied to the immigrants in Germany are very different from those in the United States and England. Accordingly, unlike Italian-American or Chinese-British, Turks have never been defined as German-Turks or Turkish-German by the official discourse. They have rather been considered apart. That is why, practically it does not seem appropriate to call the Turkish diasporic communities in Germany 'German-Turks'. Yet, it is a helpful term for my purposes for two reasons: the term distances the researcher from essentialising the descendants of the transnational migrants as 'Turkish;' furthermore it underlines the transcultural character of these youths." (Kaya, 2001: 18)

Despite the variety of ethnicities originating from Turkey, I also prefer using the term Turkish-German in my study. Yalçın-Heckmann argues that migrants adopt this hyphenated identity and use it tactically to defend themselves. Moreover, this term gives strength to the migrants to embrace cultural traditions rooted in both from Turkish and German side, so that they refer to the fact that they belong to both sides (Yalçın-Heckmann: 315 – 316) or to none. In terms of Turkish-German directors, to use this hyphenated term becomes more difficult. Mennel indicates that Thomas Arslan questions the label Turkish-German that he is unwilling to be grouped with the other migrant directors, and that he does not want to be called as a Turkish-German (Mennel, 2002: 133). On the other hand, Gemünden (2004: 180) gives Fatih Akın's speech as an example and explains that he expresses himself as a director who makes German movies. However, it is also a tactical strategy employed by the migrants in order not to be reduced to the cinema of duty focusing only on the problems of social and material reality of migrants. In the next chapter, this tactical strategy will be discussed in details in the part where the correlation between displacement and creativity is examined.

2. Turkish-German Cinema

In this chapter of the study, I am going to try to mark the boundaries of the main concept, which I am willing to focus on. In order to depict the Turkish-German Cinema, which has to be categorized under the concept of ‘migrant cinema’, I will approach the concept step by step. Therefore, first of all, I will proceed with the discussions of national cinema. After pinpointing the main statements of the discussions, I am going to try to relocate my focus on an international level and try to present the term ‘migrant cinema’. As the third step and also as the main research topic of this study, the cinema of Turkish-German filmmaker’s will be the center of this part.

2.1. Paradigm of National Cinema and its Failure

There are many studies that discuss the linkage between nationalism and national cinema. They try to define national cinema by bringing the term “imagined communities”, introduced by Benedict Anderson, under particular scrutiny. Anderson’s argument was based on the assumption that nations were constructed by nationalism; that is, nation and nationalism were cultural products (Özkırmı, 2008: 181). According to Anderson, print media such as newspapers, novels, maps and the census had the key role in creating a sense of boundedness between people. Although these people have never been in personal contact, they are connected in one nation state or colonial empire (Göktürk, 2002a: 214). Despite the fact that Anderson did not directly mention the role of the cinema, cinema studies often employ Anderson’s theory to examine the role of cinema in creating national identity. Deniz Göktürk points out:

“This view of modernity is still a poignant argument in times of global audiovisual transmission and mass migration. However, communities in our mediated world often connect across national boundaries and proliferate into a multitude of disconnected networks.” (Göktürk, 2002a: 214)

Associating Anderson's theory of nationalism with national cinema, there are prominent aspects used by film studies in order to define the position of national cinema. Essentially, two aspects of the theory, namely geographical boundedness and calenderical time are used by researchers. These aspects, above all, allow them to locate their definitions of cinema into the Anderson's theory of "imagined communities".

Shohat and Stam (1994) dwell on Anderson's argument of "calenderical time" and argue that we can easily associate cinema with printed media that create the sense of boundedness or what Anderson calls it "imagined communities".

"The fiction film also inherited the social role of the nineteenth-century realist novel in relation to national imaginaries. Like novels, films proceed temporally, their durational scope reaching from a story time ranging from the few minutes depicted by the first Lumiere shorts to the many hours (and symbolic millennia) of films like *Intolerance* (1916) and *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968). Films communicate Anderson's 'calenderical time', a sense of time and its passage. Just as nationalist literary fictions inscribe on to a multitude of events the notion of a linear, comprehensible destiny, so films arrange events and actions in a temporal narrative that moves toward fulfillment, and thus shape thinking about historical time and national history. Narrative models in film are not simply reflective microcosms of historical processes, then, they are also experiential grids or template through which history can be written and national identity figured. Like novels, films can convey what Mikhail Bakhtin calls 'chronotopes' materializing time in space, mediating between the historical and the discursive, providing fictional environments where historically specific constellations of power are made visible. In both films and novel, 'time thickens, takes on flesh' while 'space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history'." (Shohat and Stam, 1994: 102)

In terms of geographical boundedness, Yaren (2008) claims that the theory of Anderson was employed by studies on cinema mostly in the 1990s (Yaren: 29). In accordance with Anderson's theory, scholars tried to define national cinema within the national borders. One of the key scholars, Andrew Higson tried to circumscribe the term national cinema in his early writing. According to Higson (2002 [his article was published first in 1989]), there are two methods of establishing or identifying the imaginary coherence, the specificity of a national cinema. The first method is to compare and contrast one cinema to another. By doing this, the "otherness" can be easily highlighted. The differences among other national cinemas might allow us to establish the identity of one national cinema. On the other hand, the second method is an inward looking process, which depicts the national cinema in relation to other "already-existing economies and cultures of that nation state" (Higson, 2002: 54). What Higson emphasized here is the differentiation of nations from one another. Furthermore, national identity is acknowledged as stable, borders of nation-states as unchanging.

In his article discussing the European Cinema, Bergfelder criticizes Higson's study in terms of limiting cinema within the nation-state borders. According to Bergfelder (2005), Higson's approach seems to foreclose the possibility of a European cinema beyond national boundaries. Europe is also a geographical space, where different nation-states do not have a common, stable and homogeneous identity. And European cinema, if there is one, reflecting the European identity cannot be based on pure national cultural identities, rather it has to be based on the common stylistic approaches of directors. In fact, even if the case is European cinema, "any study which centres on a national definition of cinema reflects to a large extent the critic's own investment in the formation and exclusion processes of national identities" (Bergfelder: 319).

Ten years later, after publishing "The Concept of National Cinema", Higson was to reconsider his conceptualizing of national cinema. He criticized himself for taking for granted terms such as nation, nationhood, national identity and geographical boundedness. First, he revisits the idea of modern nation.

“...it is now conventional to define the nation as the mapping of an imagined community with a secure and shared identity and sense of belonging, on to a carefully demarcated geo-political space. The nation, from this perspective, is first forged and then maintained as a bounded public sphere. That is to say, it is public debate that gives the nation the meaning, and media systems with a particular geographical reach that give it shape. Those who inhabit nations with a strong sense of self-identity are encouraged to imagine themselves as members of a coherent, organic community. Rooted in the geographical space, with well-established indigenous traditions. As David Morley and Kevin Robins put it, ‘the idea of “nation”... involve[s] people in a common sense of identity and ... work[s] as an inclusive symbol which provides ‘integration’ and ‘meaning’. (...) National identity is, in this sense, about the experience of belonging to such a community, being steeped in its traditions, its rituals and its characteristic modes of discourse. This sense of national identity is not of course dependent on actually living within the geo-political space of the nation, as the émigré experience confirms. Thus some diasporic communities, uprooted from the specific geo-political space of the nation or the homeland, still share a common sense of belonging, despite – or even because of – their transnational dispersal. On the one hand community, on the other, diaspora. On the one hand, modern nations exist primarily as imagined communities. On the other, those communities actually consist of highly fragmented and widely dispersed groups of people with as many differences as similarities and with little in the sense of real physical contact with each other. If this is the case, it follows that all nations are in some sense diasporic. They are thus forged in the tension between unity and disunity, between home and homelessness.” (Higson, 2000: 64 – 65)

Then, Higson addresses the question of what national is. Higson mentions three important media experiences¹⁹, and he claims that they are by no means trigger for anything related to national. First, he argues, there was not enough audience among “Britons”; therefore these experiences cannot create a national identity. Second, the audience of these events were not national at all, rather the audience was global that transgress the boundaries of nation-state. Third, since all the audiences

¹⁹ Funeral of Princess Diana, British based soap operas and typically British films such as *Four Weddings and a Funeral* (Higson, 2000: 65).

around the world have different cultural heritages, they will translate the mentioned experiences into their own cultural frames of reference. Fourth, the British national audience watches also non-indigenous films, especially films from Hollywood, which is a transnational experience, rather than national (Higson, 2000: 65-66).

According to Higson, attempts to describe “national cinema” focus on films that narrate the nation as limited space, inhabited by a unified community. Therefore, the theory of “imagined communities” associated with national cinema often lacks a comprehensive understanding that allows scholars to perceive diversity within and outside of borders of a nation-state. Consequently, it is required an understanding which is not limited within the borders of a nation-state, and focuses on pure national identity. Higson introduces the term “transnational cinema” arguing that cinema operates more on a transnational basis in two different ways: first, production processes (co-productions) and second distribution and reception of films (Higson, 2000: 66-67).

Co-productions mentioned here are not only films produced by two companies from same nation-state – although a company from a nation state is also a debatable issue- rather they are multinational cinematic experiences. They have a direct influence on the definition of national cinema, in terms of not creating and not awakening a national identity, or not presenting a pure homogenous culture. From spoken languages to directors, from scriptwriters to location sets they are multicultural (in a good sense this time) and multinational. Therefore, it is improper to label these movies as national in an over mentioned context. Because they don’t allow communities imagine themselves. Higson discusses this issue by giving some examples:

“When a German director like E.A. Dupont is based in England, and makes an Anglo-German co-production simultaneously in English and German (*Atlantic*, 1929), can it usefully be called a British film? When a British director like Alan Parker makes a Hollywood film about Argentinean legend (*Evita*, 1996), to which nation should the film be attributed? When a British director teams up with an American producer, a multinational cast and crew, and American capital, to adapt a novel about the contingency of identity by Sri Lankan-born Canadian resident (*The*

English Patient, 1996), can its identity be called anything other transnational?”
(Higson, 2000: 68)

On the other hand, co-productions within the European borders mark an indeterminacy of the term national cinema. Tim Bergfelder mentions that European co-productions trigger a cultural protectionism, which is basically meant against the American film industry's relatively unchallenged position as the market leader. Although this is an industrial imperative, there is a tendency to perpetuate the illusion of pure identity of national cinema:

“... the issue of co-production has featured in national film histories at best as a cursory footnote, or as a tolerable exception to the more desirable norm of indigenous and self-reliant national film production. At worst, co-productions have been denounced, somewhat hyperbolically, as threatening the very fabric of national identity. This strategy of demonization and exclusion, in my opinion, helps to perpetuate rather defensive narratives of national containment and homogeneity.” (Bergfelder: 323)

Trying to label a co-production with a national identity is quite difficult as well as meaningless. It is also a great challenge for those who tend to protect the “purity” of national cinema. New co-productions require new criteria, and a comprehensive classification with a national cinema emphasis needs countless criteria for cinema. Moreover, Göktürk mentions in her chapter of *German Cinema Book*:

“Given so much ‘foreign blood’, it is difficult to define the boundaries around ‘pure’ German cinema. The large number of traveling actors and directors suggests that international collaboration has been an integral element of film production all along, and calls for a rethinking of national canons constructed in film historiography. If we add aspects of international co-production, distribution and reception, the picture gets even more complicated.” (Göktürk, 2002a: 214)

According to these discussions, arguments, terms or classificatory attempts mentioned above, it can be argued that: first, the idea of national identity and definitions of nation underwent significant changes. They are no longer postulated as stable, rather they are considered as ongoing processes. Second, parallel to this shift, the understanding and defining of national cinema have changed. Although many film studies remain anchored in a rhetoric of cultural protectionism and lag behind other disciplines in accepting and analyzing the influence of cultural co-productions, hybridization and transnational transactions, these overlooked and denied features have always been the main substances of cinema.

This dichotomy between definitions of cinema coincides with the formerly mentioned dichotomy between two notions of culture. While scholars trying to define national cinema imprison the film production into one nation-state and one national culture, therefore they employ more stable and fixed terms; others acknowledge the dynamic characteristic of the culture, and therefore abstain from labeling cinema with a name of a nation.

In the next part of the study, I will try to define the cinema of migration, and to discuss its influence on the definition of national cinema, protectionist approaches towards Turkish-German directors, and limited space left for them to make movies.

2.2. Accented Cinema²⁰: Cinema of Migration

In this part, to begin, I will address the question: “What is the cinema of migration?” Then, discussions of its influence on the national cinema will be mentioned. As a second step, classification of migrant movie makers and also different approaches towards them will be analyzed. Third, the issue of creativity associated with migration and displacement will be discussed. Along with the above mentioned general questions and topics on migration cinema, the focus on the specific issue of this study will also put into question.

²⁰ “Accented Cinema” is the name of the book written by Hamid Naficy (2001).

2.2.1. Cinema of Migration and its Influence on ‘National Cinema’

The term “cinema of migration” or the “migrant cinema” often refers to the films made by “film-makers who themselves had experienced displacement and exile, either by choice or through forceful events” (Grassilli, 2008: 1239). Often cited scholar in cinema studies, Hamid Naficy (2001) analyzes this kind of filmmakers and this sort of film productions under the category of ‘accented cinema’. Naficy’s book begins with the chapter where he tries to analyze the accented filmmakers:

“The exilic and diasporic filmmakers discussed here are ‘situated but universal’ figures who work in the interstices of social formations and cinematic practices. A majority are from Third World and postcolonial countries (or from the global South) who since the 1960s have relocated to northern cosmopolitan centers where they exist in a state of tension and dissension with both their original and their current homes. By and large, they operate independently, outside the studio system or the mainstream film industries, using interstitial and collective modes of production that critique those entities. As a result, they are presumed to be more prone to the tensions of marginality and difference. While they share these characteristics, the very existence of the tensions and differences, they are not neatly resolved by familiar narrative and generic schemas-hence, their grouping under accented style. The variations among the films are driven by many factors, while their similarities stem principally from what the filmmakers have in common: liminal subjectivity and interstitial location in society and the film industry. What constitutes the accented style is the combination and intersection of these variations and similarities.” (Naficy: 10)

It can be argued that, in his important study, Naficy’s approach towards cinema of migration is based on three factors: First, placements or displacements of filmmakers originated from various parts of the world; second, the stylistic

similarities and third, a focus on how they produce their work. Stylistic similarities and production circumstances will be analyzed in the following parts.

In my study, needless to say, the focus will be basically on Turkish-German cinema of migration. Therefore, Germany will be analyzed as a territorial space because it is the migration receiving country, Turkey as the origin of the migration, and Turkish diaspora in Germany as the source of analyzed movies. In this context, my study will concentrate on three different sources of film productions. The first one is the New German Cinema, movies of German directors and the literature concerning Turkish immigrants in Germany. The second one is the cinematically productions originated from Turkey. The last but not the least, the third source of my study is Turkish-German cinema.

2.2.1.1. German Cinema and German Literature on Migration: Big Brother Defends You, Big Brother Labels You, Big Brother Humiliates You:

New German Cinema wave covers a period of time between 1962 and 1982 in Germany. Amongst others Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Werner Herzog, Wim Wenders were the key directors of New German Cinema. Especially, in Fassbinder's movies there is an apparent interest in immigrant problem. Directors of New German Cinema are considered by Rob Burns as "filmic **antecedent** of Turkish-German cinema" (Burns, 2007: 4).

As Burns points out, there are two dominant thematic concerns of New German Cinema in regard of migration problem: The social and material reality of *Gastarbeiter* experience and the problems of "living between two cultures". At the same time, this period also is a signifier for the emergence of the "guestworker literature" (Burns, 2007: 3 – 4).

The importance of this period lies on that both literature and movie productions were trying to put guest workers' problems into question; however, on the other hand and at the same time they were about to create and cement stereotyped

clichés by portraying migrants as victims in numerous ways, and this stereotype of victim cannot be easily reversed. Although the intentions of these well-meaning projects -both from filmic and literature side- were to bring the social and material reality of immigrants into the light, the result was the stereotype of “victim Turk” which can be considered another form of already existing perceptions mentioned before in this study. Even, ironically this approach to perceive the social and material reality of immigrants creating cliché of downtrodden, oppressed, muted “other” was to be carried on by Turkish-German directors until the end of the 1990s, when the second generation of Turkish-German directors emerged and broke the circle with their new concepts and stories.

Germans’ Literature on Immigrants

As it was mentioned before, there is a considerable amount of literature has been published on problems of immigrants. Written by Arlene Akiko Teraoka (1989) an important text analyzing three key works of German researchers will be mentioned here, in order to show, how singled out examples shape the cliché.

In her study, Teraoka (1989) argues that there are three crucial texts to mention. “*Leben im gelobten Land: Gastarbeiterportraits*” (Life in promised Land: Guest Worker Portraits) written by Max von der Gruen in 1975; Guenter Wallraff’s “*Ganz Unten* (Lowest of the Low) written in 1985; and Paul Geiersbach’s “*Bruder, Muss zusammen Zwiebel und Wasser essen!: Eine tuerkische Familie in Deutschland*” (Brother Must Together Eat Onion and Water!: A Turkish Family in Germany) written in 1982.

Teraoka’s argument is based on the assumption that Max von der Gruen’s text (1975) is simply biased in favor of creating stereotypes. Teraoka tries to clarify how this text presents a Turkish guest worker whose name is Osman Gürlük, as a signifier for all other guest workers coming from Turkey. The selected chapters of the text point out the beginning of the Turkish guest worker cliché which is the “typical Turk”. She begins with describing the cover of the book:

“Before we read even a word of text, our image of and relationship to the ‘Turk’ are subtly guided by title and book cover. Max von der Gruen’s *Leben im gelobten Land: Gastarbeiterportraits* [Life in Promised Land: Guest Worker Portraits] (1975) displays a photograph of a Turkish man sitting on a suitcase, holding a cigarette in his fingers and a jug in his hands. The man looks in his forties; he is dressed simply, in a white shirt and dark pants; he is thin, and his face is deeply lined; his thick curly hair, dark brows, deep-set eyes, and moustache offer the typical ‘portrait’ of a Turk.” (Teraoka: 104)

Teraoka denotes that the text, is based on the dichotomy of “rational Self and “emotional Other” von der Grün acting as a mediator. The text is designated to compose the Turk by using his own voice and the voice of the narrator-commentator, speaking in turn. In the text of Von Der Gruen, the “emotional Other” begins to tell us, how big his homesickness is, and that he sees it as an illness. He mentions his problematic experiences such as the work ethic, the treatment of Turks in his factory, in restaurants and in stores. He mentions also his desires such as women and cars. (Teraoka: 106 – 108) Moreover, the Turk presented in this text seems that “he cannot speak in ordered sentences; rather, he simply opens his mouth for a flow of words that comes eventually and arbitrarily to an end.” (Teraoka: 108) On the contrary, Teraoka points out that the German voice is distanced and dispassionate and presents concrete information so that readers can have a clear image of the Turk:

“When the German commentator speaks, we hear numbers, statistics and hard facts that allow us to measure Gürlük’s success in the FRG in contrast to his former life in Turkey. The Turk offers disjointed memories and observations; the German presents documentary evidence that helps us to structure what we have heard from the Turk. (...) Such stereotyping of the Turk, mirrored in the rhetoric with which he is presented (or presenting himself), is consistent with the general image we are given of his life in the FRG. For in many ways the specific case of Osman Gürlük reflects the widely held stereotypes of the underclass Turks: the narrator’s first speech tells us that Gürlük and his family live in a Turkish ghetto in Dortmund, a part of the city where German children

come only to play cops or cowboys to the Turkish children's robbers and Indians, in an apartment furnished with appliances and furniture from the garbage dump. Also noteworthy is the use of the present tense: 'Osman Gürlük is living today....' (L7); 'Osman Gürlük is thirty years old.... Gürlük has been living in the Federal Republic for five years [Gürlük is seit fünf Jahren in der Bundesrepublik]....' The effect is to set the Turk in a timeless realm untouched by historical and cultural change – in our minds Gürlük (who will stand for all Turks in Germany) is always thirty years old, with a three-year-old child and a wife, living in a tiny apartment with garbage dump decor." (Teraoka: 109 – 110)

On the other hand in the very same text, some details are presented in order to subvert the Osman Gürlük's Turkish image. Teraoka argues that the way he speaks German and his openmindedness amazes the author. Facts like her wife giving up her headscarf and "dressing German" or Gürlük reading the oppositional newspaper *Kurtuluş* are extraordinary. The Turk portrayed here is "on his way to becoming acceptably 'German'" by giving up all signs of Turkishness, which is, according to Teraoka, is the implicit subtext of *Leben im gelobten Land* as a whole. Furthermore, text includes some comparisons between Gürlük's homeland and Germany. Gürlük and other workers from other countries mention that Germany is a place with much better opportunities and life conditions, also where cultural and personal liberation come true (Teraoka: 110 – 112).

"After three thousand years, guest workers are experiencing for the first time what modern civilization and a supposedly enlightened society have to offer – so runs the metanarrative of von der Grün's text. Its title, *Leben im gelobten Land*, is meant completely without irony. Yet the themes of prosperity and increased liberality, the vision of social harmony and cultural progress that the guest worker portraits display and which their author clearly intends, are belied, undermined, subverted by the very narrative strategies employed in their transmission: the Turk can 'pass' for a German, but the magnitude of his achievement is measured only against the prevailing image of Turks living in ghetto apartments furnished from the garbage dump, of Turks who cannot

think or speak in an orderly fashion. Von der Grün's message of liberal humanism, it seems, is put in question by the very stereotypes it reinforces.” (Teraoka: 113)

Before continuing, it is necessary to dwell on a discrepancy related to the image of the Turkish-Germans. Both my personal experiences in Germany and the interviewees expose the fact that a differentiation between Turkish people is made in Germany, whether they measure up or they do not. Especially Remziye Uykun who is a sociologist working with the second generation migrants suggests that Turkish-Germans are discriminated through an awkward differentiation based on stereotyped image of “the Turk”. According to Uykun, there are two essential categories: “The good Turk” and “the typical Turk”. The figure of the typical Turk is someone who is associated with all the “bad” features attributed to stereotyped migrants. It is assumed that a typical Turk cannot speak German very well, does not have a proper job, or is a hateful migrant etc. This cliché figure is based on the prejudices dominating the discriminative point of view. On the other hand, features such as; speaking German or English properly, being graduated from a university, being not religious or nationalist, even not having scarf for the Turkish-German women, having a regular salary etc. establish the figure of the “atypical Turk” or the “good Turk”. Uykun maintains her argument: “They say, then, ‘you are a good Turk, you are not like them.’” (Personal interview with Remziye Uykun) This short phrase can be seen as a summary of the perceptions towards Turkish-German migrants.

In a similar way, still residing in Berlin, one of the most important Turkish-German directors, Neco Çelik argues:

“The state invites us to explain them the situation, because they don't understand the Turks living here. They ask me: ‘There is 30% unemployment rate among Turks, what about that?’ I respond: ‘Let me tell you something, why do you ignore the other 70%?’ They have a stable image in their minds, you can't change it. (...) The image is so dominant, even the people from the same class push the Turks around. Here, unemployed German sees the Turk as a problem. They say: ‘I am not... You are the problem!’ A German commits an illegal act, or kills his wife, has a fit of jealousy, in addition he kills himself. If a Turk did the same thing, they would say honour killing. A German's crime is

smaller than a Turk's crime, because the nature of the crime a Turk commits is less civilized than a German's." (Personal interview with Neco Çelik)

Günter Wallraff's "Ganz Unten" (Lowest of the Low) is another important text to mention here. Moreover, Ganz Unten functions both on the literature side and also on the filmic side. Ganz Unten was written in 1985 and released in 1986 as a documentary directed by Joerg Gfroerer. The documentary was a companion to Wallraff's literary reportage of the same title. Compared to the previous one, this text seems to be a "well-meaning" attempt. This fly-on-the wall documentary was initiated by Gfroerer in order to depict the "Turkish migrant" (Burns, 2007: 4).

"Disguising himself as a Turkish worker, Wallraff assumed the identity of a real immigrant in order to penetrate Germany's illegal labour market. Equipped with a hidden video camera and microphone, he then for some two years recorded his experiences in a variety of dangerous, insanitary and badly paid jobs. Lowest of the Low is but one of many non-fiction films made in the 1970s and 1980s that issue from a 'social worker' mentality with regard to 'the problem of foreigners' in the Federal Republic. Unlike these documentaries, however, Wallraff's became the centre of fierce controversy. For despite the everyday manifestations of fascistic behavior he unmasked, Wallraff was himself not spared criticism from those who felt that Lowest of the Low presents a patronizing and clichéd portrait of the Turk as uneducated, unskilled, intrinsically subaltern and oppressed, and hence ultimately pitiful (Özakın 6-9)." (Burns: 5 – 6)

Although, it can be argued that his intention was in favour of revealing the social and material reality of the Guestworkers, the portrait of the Turk presented in the work confirms the clichéd-stereotyped image of Turkish guesworker in Federal Germany. Teraoka cited the criticism of Paul Peters. Peters argues that Ali, which is the Turkish name used by Wallfrac throughout work, is not a real Turk; on the contrary Ali is a Turkish immigrant in the eyes of his German environment (quoted in the footnote, Teraoka: 113) Teraoka comments that this "truth" which is presented in

the text is manipulated by Wallraff in order to depict the Turk in a fashion with full of clichés; Ali is “out of way”, Ali is “at the bottom”, Ali is a “piece of trash.” The Turkish figure is not a real or even a fictive person, it can only exist in very limited, well-defined situations, Ali stands not for the Turk, rather Ali stands for all the victims of capitalism (Teraoka: 113-114-126). Wallraff seemed to have constructed his own Turkish identity with his prejudices towards it, he find a social life with this very identity, and lived and work through it, which is also a special case that cannot be generalized to all Turkish workers in Germany. However it was generalized throughout in this work.

Only the text of sociologist Paul Geiersbach is very carefully designated in order not to be manipulative, and create a stereotyped Turk; (rather Geiersbach tried to focus on the heterogeneity of the migrant community) on the contrary Geiersbach tries to avoid stereotyping. In his study, where he interviews ‘a Turkish family’, he acts as a mediator and does not take an active role at all. Stereotyping is replaced by the approach based on individuality and heterogeneity among the Turkish population. “The Turkish and especially the foreign worker family does not exist.” (Teraoka: 119 – 121)

German Movies

Focusing on the ‘German’ movies, it was already mentioned that directors of the New German Cinema were more focused on the problems of migrants and that they were the antecedents of Turkish-German directors. Gerd Gemünden denotes discrepancy between the aims and results of these productions:

“...representation of so-called guest workers and other minorities in films such as *Katzelmacher* (Fassbinder, 1969); *Angst essen Seele auf* (Ali: Fear Eats the Soul) (Fassbinder, 1973); *Shirins Hochzeit* (Shirin’s Wedding) (Helma Sanders, 1975); and *Yasemin* (Hark Bohm, 1988) emphasized the status of the victim, the oppressed, the silenced, and the abject. Made by German leftist filmmakers, these films aim to raise the consciousness of viewers about social

and gender injustice and racial prejudice... Yet by insisting on the fundamentally different experiences of Germans and non-Germans, they invariably cement the popular narrative of ‘lost between two cultures’”. (Gemünden: 183)

These movies will be analyzed in the following parts in details; they are categorized according to the decades they were produced in. Although the intentions of these directors were good, constructed landscape of immigrants are criticized by many scholars studying cinema of migration in depth. Generally speaking, these criticisms can be classified into three categories and these objects of criticisms cement the prejudices, as Gemünden put it.

The first category to mention coincides with the mythic figure of the **Seventh Man**. In his award winning movie, *Katzelmacher*, Fassbinder plays himself a Greek from Greece. Again, as mentioned, the protagonist of this movie does not speak at all. Similarly like the figure of John Berger, that portrays a migrant, this man is unable to communicate and integrate (Göktürk, 2002b: 248), and furthermore cannot speak back.

The second category is on a constructed separation between two communities namely Germans and non-Germans, oppressors and oppressed²¹. Migrants were depicted in movies as objects of sympathy who need to be tolerated, however they were neither equal nor on the same level as Germans. In her article Angelica Fenner (2000) denotes that:

“Rather, the abject figures in such a diverse historical cross section of contemporary West German films as Rainer Werner Fassbinder’s *Angst Essen Seelen Auf* [Ali: Fear eats the soul] (1974), Helma Sanders-Brahms’s *Shirins Hochzeit* (1976), Jan Schütte’s *Drachenfutter* [Dragon’s food] (1987), and Hark Bohm’s *Yasmin* (1987), to name just a few, address a hegemonic viewership by evoking the viewer’s pity and sympathy, emotions which essentially affirm and perpetuate the static Manichaeian configuration of oppressor and oppressed. In assessing the popular appeal of Günter Walraff’s

²¹ This dichotomy between oppressors and oppressed will be evaluated when analyzing the movie of Hussi Kutlucan, “*Ich Chef, Du Turnschuch*”.

reportage, Ganz Unten (1985), Anna Kuhn has similarly argued that eliciting Mitleid (empathy) merely enables German audiences 'to placate their consciences and to feel superior at the same time.'" (Fenner: 116 - 117)

This dichotomy is not able to solve the claimed problems of immigrants, unless a conscience is created dwelling on that both sides are equal.

The third category of criticism discusses the figure of the Turkish woman depicted in German movies. Also seen in Turkish-German movies, the figure of the Turkish woman did not much change throughout the history. Movies depict Turkish women with a double-identity which is reminiscent of exhibition called "Germany by day time, Turkey by night." With this name, it refers to the discrepancy of life of Turkish women in Germany in the 1980s. While women are "free" in the day time in the public, they have to behave like traditional Turkish women at home (Göktürk, 2002b: 251). On the other hand, home is a key trope in this context, because it refers to a prison or a claustrophobic, stygian haven for women.²² By depicting the Turkish woman figure, directors can cope with many concepts such as patriarchy, repression, honour killing, dependence of women, religion etc. In the following parts of the study, when analyzing the movies categorized according to the decades they were produced in, it will be seen that although the Turkish woman figure underwent some changes, it has not been entirely changed. Turkish woman still needs to be emancipated by man!

Essentially, these three categories can be associated with immigrants being oppressed and victim. On the other hand, especially the first two categories coincide with the strategies Tolerance and Multi-culturalism. The first category, criticizing the movies in terms of presenting the figure of the migrant as not equal to a German, as one who needs to be empathized with, can be associated with the strategy of Tolerance. The second, criticism centers on the binary opposition that the movies constructed while depicting immigrants as oppressed and Germans as oppressors. In a similar context, as it was mentioned before, multi-culturalism today creates a binary opposition that hinders dialogue and interactions between cultures.

However, one should not forget that these movies of victimization were not the

²² This figure of the imprisoned woman will be also reconsidered in details when analyzing acclaimed movie of Tevfik Başer *40 m2 Deutschland* and other movies respectively.

products of only the German directors; they were/are replicated also by Turkish directors living in Germany²³.

2.2.1.2. Turkish Cinema in Germany

The analysis of the film productions by Turkish directors living in Turkey composes a little yet important part of this study. Tuncay Kulaoglu, in our interview mentions that he does not classify these movies under Turkish–German cinema; nevertheless he highlighted the importance of these movies, especially of *Almanya Acı Vatan* which he sees as a masterpiece of its time (Personal interview with Tuncay Kulaoglu). Although these movies are not perceived as Turkish-German movies, because of the fact that they were directed by Turkish directors living in Turkey, they give some clues about how these directors understood and presented the living conditions of Turkish immigrants in Germany.

When reconsidering the theory claiming that nations are “imagined communities”, the Turkish-German community (or guest-workers, the historical period accordingly) can be reckoned as a part of a “broader Turkish ‘imagined community’ that exceeds the nation’s geographical borders” (Fenner: 103). Martin Greve, for instance, calls the Turkish diaspora in Germany as “imagined Turkey” (Greve, 2006). In this context, the main motivation of these projects can be assessed as to present and defend “our citizens living in Germany”.²⁴

The movies directed by Turkish directors living in Berlin also underwent considerable changes throughout time. Like many movies made in the 1970s and 1980s trying to depict immigrants’ problems, these common tropes of these movies can correspond with the German word “*Betroffenheit*”.²⁵ Kulaoglu, defines the first movies of both Turkish-German directors and also movies dealing with “first encounters” with this term. Protagonists of these movies come to Germany; however

²³ The reason, I chose the present simple is that there are still some Turkish-German movies depicting the woman as victim, oppressed, on the other hand, there are still movies focusing on the reality of Turkish migrants. *Die Fremde* (2010) by Feo Aladağ, or *Kleine Freiheit* (2003) by Yüksel Yavuz can be examples.

²⁴ “Our citizens living in Germany” is a governmental term used for Turkish-Germans living in Germany.

See also: berlin.be.mfa.gov.tr (The internet site of Turkish ambassadorship in Berlin)

²⁵ *Betroffenheit* can be translated to English as “consternation”, “dismay” or “astonishment”.

the place where they find themselves in is quite different than where they come from. The movies dealing with migration from the rural areas to urban spaces also thematize the same problems with almost the same tropes (Makal, 1987: 28-52). The cultural shock phenomenon, the attempts to find a job and build a life, the “metamorphosis” of turning into robots because of the German factories, living in Turkish enclaves, the tendency to focus only on money, or needless to say, the Turkish woman figure are generally the main elements of these movies.

In accordance with the shift of generation of migrant and the changes of themes, the protagonists of the movies change. Directors began to depict protagonists of the movies differently. The second generation of Turkish migrants were depicted as not only as guest workers but as proprietors, who could build up an existence, who could speak back, who could find resistance points against society. In this context, the movies of Şerif Gören are significant in terms of analyzing the shift. In his movie *Almanya Acı Vatan* (1979), Gören depicted the migrants as confused and paralyzed guestworkers experiencing cultural shock when facing Berlin; 14 years later in his movie *Amerikalı* (1993) (in spite of the fact that this movie is not about Turkish-Germans), the protagonist is a Turkish rich and assimilated businessman living in the US, who comes to Turkey to find his girlfriend. Once in İstanbul, he is amazed at how changed everything is and experiences a cultural shock the other way around. Moreover, while the genre of the first movie is a drama which does not involve almost any humor at all, the latter is an absurd comedy set in İstanbul.

The time for Turkish directors living in Turkey and depicting migrants unilaterally seems to be over now. Current situation is different. For instance, one of the most important documentaries on music in İstanbul was made by Fatih Akın (*Crossing the Bridge*, 2004); also Neco Çelik came to Istanbul and directed a movie which does not have anything to do with immigrants (*Kısık Ateşte 15 Dakika*, 2006). Now it is the time for Turkish-German directors who learnt “Turkish culture” by watching VHSs (Personal interview with Neco Çelik) to understand and depict Turkey and the time for mutual interactions.

2.2.1.3. Turkish–German Cinema

Turkish-German cinema is a term used by many scholars when scrutinizing the movies of directors who were born to immigrant parents living in Germany. Although Tevfik Başer, Yüksel Yavuz, Kutluğ Ataman were not born to guest-worker families in Germany, they are also considered as Turkish-German in this study.

Turkish-German cinema can be scrutinized under three stages. The first stage covers two decades the 1970s and 1980s. The second stage covers the 1990s. Third stage focuses on the 2000s. Turkish German cinema underwent similar changes like musical productions of Turkish-German immigrants did. When we look at the table of Martin Greve, it is clear that obvious changes occurred in the 1990s. Because, while in three decades covering the period of between the 1960s and late 1980s, the music that migrants were interested in is essentially based on Turkish elements, however the 1990s indicates a shift from Turkish styles to Western.

Table 1 – Correlation between Periods of Migration and Styles of Music

	Migration Period	Style of Music
Untill 1961	Pre-migration	“European” classical music
1961-1973	Migration phase	Anatolian folk music, “guestworker” songs
1973 onwards	Family Reunions	Popular music, especially arabesk
1980s	Political refugees / Settlement phase	Songs with political content / Turkish classical music
1990s	Third generation	Pop music, hip-hop

In the first stage, the narrative logics of the movies center on strategies of victimization. Mürtüz Yolcu, in our interview, defines the cinema of this period as “*a reflection of the culture brought in the suitcases*”. From *Angst Essen die Seele auf* to

Abschied vom falschen Paradies, movies –both by Turkish and also German directors- focus on the first encounters, victimized immigrants, and imprisoned women. This first phase of the immigrant cinema of social realism is characterized by the term “cinema of the affected” or “cinema of duty” (Burns, 2007: 3. Göktürk, 1999: 1). The figure of “Turkish migrant” was displayed with clichéd stereotyped factors almost invariably. The constructed image of Turkish immigrants was replicated by German and Turkish filmmakers. Burns points out that especially the first two movies of Tevfik Başer made in the 1980s can be seen as continuing the tradition of the ‘guest-worker cinema’ of the New German Cinema (Burns, 2006: 133).

On the other hand, the situation in the 1970s and in 1980s for Turkish-German directors was more complicated than as it is analyzed only from the cinematic perspective. Because of the fact that making a movie requires a lot of money, funding and subsidy have to be taken into consideration. Almost every director that I have conducted my interviews with, mentions that funding is a more problematical issue for a person with a migration background. In this context, funding and subsidy are counterproductive and limiting, because Turkish directors “have been expected to make films about the problems of their people” (Göktürk, 1999: 6). In the following part, where it is discussed the linkage between displacement and creativity, the ways how Turkish-German directors and actors are reduced to an immigrant-focused cinema will be analyzed in details.

In the second stage, starting in the 1990s, a shift has taken place from “the cinema of duty” to “pleasures of hybridity”. The cinema of “young Turks” tried to destroy the limits of Turkish Germa-Cinema which Sinan Çetin (*Berlin in Berlin*) and Tevfik Başer (*Farewell Stranger*) tried to stretch as forerunners. Especially the movies made in the second half of 1990s signify a common motivation of Turkish-German directors to break and reverse the constructed dominant image of Turkish immigrants (Burns, 2007: 11). The emergence of the new generation of Turkish-German directors –at the time of making their first or second feature movies -has essentially two important influences on cinema: First, they subverted the clichéd images of Turkish immigrants, and also the movies made by these Turks have told the stories that have never been told before in German Cinema. Movies made by the new generation following one after another starting such as *Kurz und Schmerzlos*,

Lola+Bididikid, Ich Chef, Du Turnschuh and *Dealer* narrate entirely different stories of Turkish immigrants. Therefore, Kulaoğlu claims that these Turks rejuvenate the film landscape in Germany and maybe even the new German cinema is Turkish (Kulaoğlu, 1999: 8).

The third stage indicates the attempts of directors to cement what they have tried to establish in the 1990s. In this context, the 2000s can be evaluated as a continuity of the second half 1990s. Furthermore, in the 2000s there is a new genre that Yeşilada (2008) called “Turkish light”. The movies of this genre narrate the funny stories of Turkish-German community in a playful way that would appeal to a variety of viewer positions. This playful style of this genre allow the audience to see the Turkish-German community in their “natural” habitat, thereby let them position themselves in an empathetic relationship with the characters of the movie. However, on the other hand, in order to acquire a funny tone in a comedy movie, the long-running clichéd image of the Turkish-German is used. Even though the protagonist is not a criminal, drug dealer, patriarch or angry character, side characters of the movies are always attached to the Turkishness. Thereby, the audience from multi national identities gets also familiar with the Turkishness of the characters represented with the clichéd images of Turks being criminal, drug, dealer, religious conservative or having a “mustache”.

Consequently, I will address the question of “*What did the new generation of Turkish-German directors change in terms of themes and figures narrated in the movies?*” Although there are a clear distinctions between the cinema of the 80s and that of 1990s furtheron, there are also common tropes that can be categorized under stylistic similarities as Naficy put it “accented style” (Naficy: 22). Tropes of ‘coming from the rural area’ to the city turn into ‘living in the city and being an alternative’. In the movies of 1990s, there are also common tropes like, prison, criminality, and family.

First, the **protagonists** of the movies became the main objects of significant changes. Until the 1990s, the immigrants were depicted almost uniformly and invariably as “guest-worker”. We were shown the guest-workers life, how he/she came to Germany, how he/she survived the difficulties of the everyday life etc. On the other hand, the young Turkish directors’ protagonists are displayed in diversity. In

Almanya Acı Vatan, or *40 m2 Deutschland*, the protagonists are nearly homogenous: They are guest-workers coming to Berlin for money, they are Muslims, they tend to be patriarchal, they cannot speak German very well, and they live on the imagination of Turkey as a homeland to return to. The movies of 90s and 2000s, in contrast, depict the identity of immigrants in a multi-layered approach. The protagonists of the movies are no longer guest-workers who came to Germany to work and then go to Turkey to die (*Almanya Acı Vatan*), rather; they find alternative ways to survive in Germany: they are depicted sometimes as punks - *Penner* is the German word used in the movie- (*Gegen die Wand*), as transvestites (*Lola+Bilidikid*), as drug dealers (*Dealer*), or as a university professors (*Auf der Anderen Seite*).

A differentiation of new generation of Turkish immigrants, both from the first generation and within itself, can be exemplified through a scene of *Gegen die Wand* depicting a confrontation between Cahit and the Turkish friends of his so called wife. Cahit is alienated among those Turks which he calls “Kanaks”. These Turkish people are very different than Cahit; they are patriarchal, they are cheating on their wives, playing Turkish games, and listening to Turkish music to have fun. This is more like the “arabesk” lifestyle depicted in the early Turkish films on migration (Makal: 24 – 25). The identity of migrants depicted in the movies is not homogenous or pure anymore. According to Yeşilada (2008), with the emergence of the second-generation of Turkish-German filmmakers, characters in the movies of the 1990s and the 2000s, become transcultural (Yeşilada: 75). Yeşilada argues that:

“Depicting Turks and Germans not strictly apart from one another, but in intermeshed relationships, also lessens the burden of ‘purity’ that seemed to dominate earlier film productions. (...) Petra Fachinger (2007: 244) identifies a ‘new energy that manifests itself in a new Turkish-German self-definition’ which no longer carries the burden of representing the ‘other’. This difference in perspective on Turkishness in Germany seems to come with the generational shift. The burden of defining oneself as the other in the sens of being *a Turk* versus *the German* seems to belong to the filmmaking of the first generation.” (Yeşilada: 74)

They are more than “our citizens living abroad”, they are “beyond belonging” to a nationality.²⁶ They are not Turkish, they are not German, and they do not have a pure national and cultural identity, which is, according to Kulaoğlu, an advantage and a gain (Kulaoğlu, 2002c)

Second, the spoken **language** in the films has changed. In contrast of the movies of the 1980s, German became the dominant spoken language in the movies of the young generation of directors. In the movies of the 1980s or even in some movies of the 1990s the dominant language was Turkish, German was used only to show that the migrant characters lived in Berlin. For instance, in *Berlin in Berlin*, characters do not speak German at all; they speak only a few words of daily language. On the other hand, in *Almanya Acı Vatan*, directors of the movie did not make the characters speak German; however when a German character uses his/her language, it is to portray Germans as disciplined and bad people. The stereotyping strategy functions the other way around in these movies. Turkish filmmakers obviously try to label Germans – the opponents to defeat- as disciplined and bad people; in some movies it is even claimed that they still tend to be Nazis, in order to defend “our citizens living abroad” in a strange way (*Gurbetçi Şaban, 1985*).

The young Turkish-German directors who were born to guest-worker parents began to make the Turks speak German, yet with an **accent**. Before going on, I would like to mention what does accent for Hamid Naficy (2001) mean, who is one of the most cited and influential scholars, when the topic is on migration cinema. According to Naficy, accent of a speaker identifies where this person is from, and accent allows us to judge a person’s social status, region, personality or identity.²⁷ He argues that

²⁶ Brocheurre of the film and theater festival “*Almanca*” organized by one of the most important Turkish-German cultural institution of Berlin, Ballhaus Naunystasse which is located in Kreuzberg.

²⁷ “In linguistics, accent refers only to pronunciation, while dialect refers to grammar and vocabulary as well. More specifically, accent has two chief definitions: ‘The cumulative auditory effect of those features of pronunciation which identify where a person is from, regionally and socially’ and ‘The emphasis which makes a particular word or a syllable stand out in a stream of speech’ (Crystal 1991, 2). While accents may be standardized (for example, as British, Scottish, Indian, Canadian, Australian, or American accents of English), it is impossible to speak without an accent. There are various reasons for differences in accent. In English, the majority of accents are regional. Speakers of English as a second language, too, have accents that stem from their regional and first-language characteristics. Differences in accent often correlate with other factors as well: social and class origin, religious affiliation, educational level, and political grouping (Asher 1994, 9). Even though from a linguistic point of view all accents are equally important, all accents are not of equal value socially and politically. People make

accent is a key factor that helps our understanding of cinema of migration, besides he names the cinema of migrant directors as “accented cinema”:

“Applied to cinema, the standard, neutral, value-free accent maps onto the dominant cinema produced by the society’s reigning mode of production. This typifies the classical and the new Hollywood cinemas, whose films are realistic and intended for entertainment only, and thus free from overt ideology or accent. By that definition, all alternative cinemas are accented, but each is accented in certain specific ways that distinguish it. The cinema discussed here derives its accent from its artisanal and collective production modes and from the filmmakers’ and audiences’ deterritorialized locations. Consequently, not all accented films are exilic and diasporic, but all exilic and diasporic films are accented. (...) In the classical Hollywood cinema, the characters’s accents were not a reliable indicator of the actor’s ethnicity. In accented cinema however, the characters accents are often ethnically coded, for in this cinema, more often than not, the actor’s ethnicity, the characters’s ethnicity, and the ethnicity of the star’s persona coincide.” (Naficy: 23 – 24)

The inarticulate protagonist of the movies in the 1980s turned into a migrant who speaks German – in some cases his/her own language “Kanakisch” (Cheesman, 2004)- better than he/she speaks Turkish. The Turkish-German directors of second generation used the language as a filmic means and it became a signifier of ethnicity and resistance; by this token it is reminiscent of the language of Zaimoğlu who writes with an accent.²⁸ Language or speaking a language with an accent is therefore a strategy, a style or an emphasis. A character speaking with an accent facilitates the

use of accents to judge not only the social standing of the speakers but also their personality. Depending on their accents, some speakers may be considered regional, local yokel, vulgar, ugly, or comic, whereas others may be thought of as educated, upper-class, sophisticated, beautiful and proper. As a result, accent is one of the most intimate and powerful markers of group identity and solidarity, as well as of individual difference and personality. The flagship newscasts of mainstream national television and radio Networks have traditionally been delivered in the preferred ‘official’ accent, that is, the accent that is considered to be Standard, neutral, and value-free.” (Naficy: 22 – 23)

²⁸ Naficy also consider the language of immigrant writers as accented. He suggested the term “writing with an accent”. (Naficy: 23)

determination of his/her positioning within the society; his/her social status, identity, personality, or education. In this context, using the language became a key marker to depict the migrant character.

Third change corresponds to the shift of **genres; from drama to humor**. In the 1970s and 1980, while the movies were about traumatic experiences and claustrophobia; the movies in the 1990s began containing some humorous elements. In her article, Göktürk (2004) discusses the potentials of role-play and humor in fighting racism, hostility and aggression by analyzing the movies of the Marx Brothers and Turkish-German cinema. Both Göktürk (2004: 102) and also Hamid Naficy (2001: 27) mention that movies narrating diaspora and exile tend to reflect the trauma, unsettlement and tragedy by using claustrophobia, coercion, exclusion or oppression as main themes. However, referring to the British Asian comedy series *Goodness Gracious Me*, Göktürk quotes from Gillespie (2001) mentioning that this series “has done more to celebrate multilingualism and cultural diversity in the mainstream of British TV than thousand earnest documentaries.” (Göktürk, 2002: 102) Therefore, humor, ethnic joking and role play are more powerful filmic instruments than the instruments of drama, when it is wanted the characters of a movie to speak back or to transgress the separatist thinking that provides a construction of binary oppositions between foreign and indigenous, other and self, oppressor and oppressed (Göktürk, 2002: 102 – 103). Humor, interethnic joking, border crossing scenes in the movies can subvert the understanding of pure and separated ethnic identities and provide a way out of identity politics (Göktürk, 2002: 106).

According to Göktürk, humor, interethnic joking, role-play and anarchic approaches in film comedies liberate the audiences from ethnicity, at least temporarily (Göktürk, 2002: 109). Moreover Slavoj Žižek suggests that interethnic joking is also a key form of peace where “brotherhood” and “solidarity” exist (Žižek, 2006: 15). In *Kurz und Schmerzlos*, there are two scenes that correspond exactly with the overmentioned interethnic joking where the audience is liberated from the limitations of ethnic identity. Burns (2007) describes the scene, where he believes that a reversal of stereotyping occurs:

“Here the film’s three protagonists are each introduced in a sequence that establishes their criminal persona and, in a fusion of freeze-frame and subtitle, their nationality as, respectively, ‘Costa, Greek’, ‘Bobby, Serb’ and ‘Gabriel, Turk’. While Mark Terkessidis this sledgehammer emphasis on ethnicity as an ironic and subversive reaction to criminalization of immigrant youth in Germany” (Burns, 2007: 12)

Second scene includes insulting interethnic jokes; however these jokes are not racist at all, according to Zizek’s assumption, because there is a complete peace and solidarity among them. “Bobby, Serb” and “Gabriel, Turk” insult Costa’s Greekness: “*Bobby: Die Griechen, die riechen! (Greeks smell)*” and Gabriel maintains the joke by saying that “*Die Griecehen, die kriechen! (Greeks crawl)*”. Costa, then shows his middle finger to them. Here a stereotyped cliché about Greeks smelling used by the Serbian character, confirmed and redefined by the Turkish protagonist. In this context, the stereotypes about ethnicities are used by different characters to joke around and shoot the bull, however not to insult their friend racistly. Inter ethnic joking and using the insulting words also coincide with another element of the movies. Despite the fact that the continuous use of swearwords in the movies among friend transgresses the limits of aggression and threat, Yaren (2008) argues that migrant characters in the movies use swearwords in order to have a resistance point against police, Leitkultur or drawbacks of everyday life (Yaren:169).

Border crossing – although it is not seen only in movies that contain humorous elements- is another key element in the Turkish-German movies. In the 1970s and 1980s, migrant characters were crossing the nation-state borders in order to go to Germany to change their lives, or in order to return to home-land. However, on the one hand, crossing borders turns into a joyful journey, on the other hand into a tragic experience that changes the characters’ personality and erode the ethnic identity. Hamid Naficy suggests that: “Their deterritorializing and reterritorializing journeys take a number of forms, and they cross many borders – not only physical and geographic but also psychological, metaphorical, social and cultural borders” (Naficy: 222) In this fashion, they are on the way to become somebody else. For instance, Fatih Akin’s *Im July* is a joyful and amusing roadtrip from Hamburg across the

Balkans to İstanbul, which is, according to Göktürk, a transformative journey for the characters of the movie (Göktürk, 2002b: 254 – 255).

“Mobility and migration have moved to the focal point of world-wide discussions and are understood as a challenge to territorially and puristically defined national cultures. In cinema too, migrants are gradually liberating themselves from the prison of sub-national paternalism, forging transnational alliances and evading ethnic attribution and identification through ironic role-play. *Im Juli* reminds us of the liberating pleasures of cinema, of its potential in projecting fantasies of travel, transgressing the boundaries of realist representation and performing national identities with self-conscious irony.” (Göktürk, 2002b: 255)

Tevfik Başer associates this lack of humor in the movies of the 1970s and 1980s with the difficulty of making a comedy, because, according to him, “if you cannot pull it off making a good comedy, it turns to be a drama anyway!” (Personal interview with Tevfik Başer). On the other hand, Neco Çelik, who is about to make a new gangster comedy movie, says that:

“We absolutely need humor in the movies. We ‘shit on our mouth’ with drama. Look at *Soul Kitchen!* One million people watched this movie. We are too late. We should have done comedy movies a long time ago. It is because arabesk flows in our veins.” (Personal interview with Neco Çelik)

Parallel to the changes that the Turkish-German cinema undergoes, and the tensions about the location where the Turkish-German directors position themselves loosen up the contents and the genres of the movies change accordingly. According to Mürtüz Yolcu, humorous elements in the Turkish-German movies are peculiar to the Turkish humor tradition. Yolcu denotes that, humor was a reflection of the culture brought from Turkey, just like the cinema of the 1980s; yet this time a heritage from the first generation becomes a “positive” filmic medium used to reverse the

stereotypes. Humor's power also derives from its functionality. According to Kutlucan, also as Gillespie puts it, humorous elements of the movies or film comedies are more powerful than dramas, hard facts or documentaries depicting social and material reality of migrants. Kutlucan denotes:

“You can attract everybody's attention with humor. It is so interesting and powerful. It 'jumps over' the national boundaries and keeps going. Just then, you can catch the hearts of the people. But it shouldn't be made foolishly. It has to be serious and funny. How can you make such a movie about asylum seekers? I could have presented them as oppressed and frightened. I know these people also differently. They don't cry everyday.” (Personal interview with Kutlucan)

Emphasizing the role of the *The Cosby Show* (1984 – 1992) in breaking the clichés about African-American people in US in the 1980s and 1990s, Sinan Akkuş considers the importance of humor by saying that:

“What Bill Cosby did in US is very important. The show was about a very normal, fine family. If we made something like this to show the problems... But not problems like turban, normal problems. Then we can reverse the clichés and show every aspect of migrant life.” (Personal interview with Sinan Akkuş)

Nowadays, when considering what it is said, there is a consistent portrait containing artistic diversities. According to this portrait, many of the new generation of Turkish-German directors try to reverse the fact of migrant directors being reduced to dramas. There are different role models from different sides of TV and cinema spectrum ranging from Bill Cosby to Charlie Chaplin who Turkish-German directors look up to. Whatever the direction is, it is generally accepted that drama is not a proper genre to depict the problems of the migrants in Germany. In this case, humor succor as a proper filmic means to use, unless the Turkish-German directors are

reduced to drama films that are expected to win an award directed to confirm the stereotyped clichés by the funding restrictions and financial sources, which will be discussed in the part of the study analyzing the linkage between displacement and creativity.

After these **three essential changes** that the movies of Turkish-German directors underwent, it is important to discuss the figure and ideological structure of **Turkish-German woman**. In the 1970s and 1980s, the woman figure is represented as a victim repressed by patriarchal fathers, brothers and husbands both in the movies of German directors, and also in the movies of Turkish-German directors. In many movies such as *Shrins Hochzeit* (Helma Sanders, 1975), *40 m2 Deutschland* (Tevfik Başer, 1986), *Yasemin* (Hark Bohm, 1988), *Gegen die Wand* (Fatih Akin, 2004) or *Die Fremde* (Feo Aladağ, 2010) the female protagonist lives under coercion, is excluded from society or imprisoned by the male character and who needs to be rescued. It seems that this misery of women depicted in the movies has not changed entirely. Göktürk states that:

“Unlike the increasingly diverse repertoire of representations of young Turkish men in Germany, however, rhetoric on Turkish women often remains trapped in binary models that imagine migrants as victims ‘between the cultures’. *Yara* (*The Scar*, 1998) by Yılmaz Arslan, a German-Turkish-Swiss co-production with promotion by Eurimages, could very well be a sequel to *Yasemin*. The fragile young Hülya (Yelda Renaud) is taken against her will to relatives in Turkey, runs away, and ends up in a psychiatric institution. Her mother (played by Özay Fecht, the imprisoned housewife from *40 Quadratmeter Deutschland*) had left the family, married again in Turkey, and wants nothing to do with her daughter. At the end, the distraught Hülya finds herself back in Germany, with no idea any more where she belongs. The attempt to stage her subjective visions brings forth dubious images more reminiscent of posed glamour photos than the daydreams of a confused teenager.” (Göktürk, 2002b: 254)

Remziye Uykun suggests that the reality of Turkish-German women represented in the movies coincides with the facts that she faced in her work as a

project manager. Moreover, she adds that especially domestic violence is one of the main conflicts of working class and that not only Turkish men tend to be violent on women, also German men beat up their wives (Personal interview with Remziye Uykun). Neco Çelik told me in our interview as a response to my question about *die Fremde* which can be associated to the representation problematic of Turkish-German women in cinema: “*In the last 10 years there were maximum 10 honour killing, however the children (Turkish-German directors) of the first generation maintain and confirm the clichés constructed by the German cinema.*” (Personal interview with Neco Çelik). On the other hand, Sinan Akkuş articulated that he was disturbed when he saw the movie of Feo Aladağ *die Fremde*:

“In 2005, Hatun Sürücü was murdered. They made a documentary about her. You cannot win an award with a comedy. You can win an award with a drama. And somebody has to die in your movie. I am really angry, I am really furious, about Feo Aladağ’s movie. Sponsors financially support this kind of movies. They think that, they can earn a lot of money with this film. Therefore, they tend to present Turkish people having many problems. My movie has been watched by many Germans. However, they said: ‘But the Turks are not like the way you filmed them.’ The image of the Turks is a problematic person. A father has to beat his daughter up. (...) Eight years after graduating, I was able to make my first movie. If I wanted to make a cliché movie, I could have made it next year after being graduated. But I did not.” (Personal interview with Sinan Akkuş)

What Akkuş mentions coincides with the space for creativity that Turkish-German directors are reduced to. There are also other factors such as financial support engaged in production processes. Therefore, this discussion will be maintained in the following part where creativity opportunities of migrant directors will be analyzed. Finally, in order to analyze a movie there has to be alternative considerations. Just like multiculturalism and tolerance -the projects that seem to be well-meaning- result in binary opposition of cultures or in creation of imaginary community borders, the movies can be analyzed by taking all other factors into consideration. Just as the migrants do not cry everyday, as Kutlucan put it, not every Turkish-German woman

in Germany is oppressed. On the internet site of Berkeley University, there is a project called “Multicultural Germany Project”. The comment on the movie *die Fremde* briefly summarizes many aspects:

“... I can't help feeling uneasy that the portrayal of German Turks is going backwards since Fatih Akin's *Head-On*. The film focuses on Kekilli's character Umay, a woman who flees her abusive husband in Turkey and returns to Germany, her country of citizenship. There, she finds her family only to find out that they side with her husband. It appears that Turkish men (whether German or not) are patriarchal and adhere strongly to a traditional sense of honor. This stereotype is contrasted to the German boyfriend of Umay later dates, where the two lovers share a 'truly natural and loving, one [relationship] based on mutual respect.' While this film raises the problem of the misogynistic and problematic of honor killings, it ignores the fact that domestic abuse happens not only in Turkish households but in German ones as well (where such abuse will not have such a strong label). This film falls back onto the notion that Turkish women can only be liberated by German men, an old theme dating back to Hark Bohm's *Yasemin* (1988).”²⁹

The fifth and the last essential difference between the movies of the 1970s-80s and those of the 1990s, is the change of the **definition of the city** from the migrant point of view. As Rob Burns put it, in the 1980s, there was a notion of paradise associated with the Germany (Burns, 2007: 5). First comers imagined the land as a place where they can work, earn money, get rich; however not as a place to live permanently, they wanted to go back eventually. Therefore, almost every movie in the 1970s and 1980s depicted the confrontation of migrants – coming to Germany from rural areas- with German cities as a frightening experience both for migrants and also for Germans.

However, with the emergence of the new generation of film-makers, representations of the cities of Germany have been changed. The new cinema of young Turkish-German directors corresponds to ghetto-centric manifestations.

²⁹ <http://mgp.berkeley.edu/?p=3864>, 01.06.2010

Second generation Turkish-Germans who were born to the guest-worker families acknowledged the city as a living space. Therefore, the eldritch figure of the city turned into a symbol of home whose secrets and hidden spots reveal themselves to the characters of the movies. Even in some movies – like *Ich Chef, Du Turnschuh*- the protagonists are seen rebuilding the city as a construction worker, hereby we witness also the transformation of the city in the hands of the migrant workers. (Mennel, 2004: 42)

Almost all of the Turkish-German directors' films are situated in urban places, in other words in two important diasporic centers, namely Berlin's Kreuzberg and Hamburg's Altona. These two urban locales are associated with Turkish migrant population. Even both neighbourhoods have different names given by migrants living there: Kreuzberg - *Küçük İstanbul* and Altona - *Altınova*. Mennel (2002), in her article *Bruce Lee in Kreuzberg and Scarface in Altona*, argues that the films made in the second half 1990s are ghetto-centric (Mennel, 2002: 134). On the other hand, films of young Turkish-German directors in the 2000s are situated in more than one country and gradually begin to tell stories in a transcultural setting (Yeşilada, 2008: 75). Therefore, we can mention two different shifts associated with the urban place: the first shift signifies that urban places turned into living place for migrants, and emerge of ghetto-centric movies. The second shift indicates the mobility of the protagonists between Turkey and Germany, and in some cases they move across Europe.

“The shift in the representation of migrants corresponds with recent trends in theory. We have to come to appreciate the migrants as the ‘modern metropolitan figure’ not dwelling worlds apart from modernity, but moving right at its centre. Cities today, more than ever, suggest an ‘implosive disorder, sometimes liberating, often bewildering’, a ‘multiform, heterotopic, diasporic’ reality. This seems particularly true of Berlin, a city which has been remodeled on a major scale over the past ten years. Paradoxically, the removal of the visible border running through the city has in many ways reinforced differences which emerge in daily life encounters.” (Göktürk, 2000: 65)

When analyzing the movies in the third, fourth and fifth chapters, over mentioned essential changes and also common filmic elements of the Turkish-German movies – such as wedding scenes, prison, racism etc.- will be scrutinized in details. Almost with every turn of the decade, new features of the Turkish-German cinema have become observable. However, there are not absolute clear cuts between decades; classification only facilitates the process of analyzing.

2.2.2. Discussions on the Correlation between Displacement and Creativity

“At the press screening of his second feature, *Im Juli* (In July) (2000), at the 2001 Berlin Film Festival, director Fatih Akin introduced the film with the following words (in English): ‘*Im Juli*’ is a German film. It was made in Germany. [Pause] It was shown here in German theaters’. Vaguely familiar with the film through some reviews, I found Akin’s words puzzling. Why this emphasis on Germany as the film’s country of origin and exhibition? Couldn’t this be assumed since the film was showing in the so-called Neue deutsche Reihe, a sampling of German films from the last year for international journalists who have limited opportunities to see them? And why such an emphatic self-positioning within the national German cinema? To assert a position within a German national cinema encompasses, rather than marginalizes, Turkish-German directors? Or, more simply, to defect expectations that *Im Juli* be a follow-up to the portrayal of minority culture of his first feature, *Kurz und Schmerzlos* (A short sharp shock), and to assert, instead, the right to make different kinds of films, with different target audiences, in different genres, and with different social concerns?” (Gemünden: 180)

In my opinion, this part is the most difficult and the most important part of the study. It is extremely crucial to note that the correlation between displacement and the space for creativity of directors who are also migrants paves a way for us to make a robust evaluation of the Turkish-German cinema. First of all, an emphasis is laid by many scholars on the lack of harmony between the potential of a migrant

director and his/her works. Main reason of this inconsistency derives from the fact that migrant directors cannot find the financial support and the space for creativity that well accepted “national” directors enjoy. In this context, according to Göktürk, finance and subsidy are counterproductive and limiting; migrant filmmakers have been reduced to minor culture, to problems of migrants, in other words to “cinema of duty” (Göktürk, 1999: 6). However, the fact that the migrant filmmakers are reduced to a cinema of duty is not only peculiar to Germany. It is a worldwide challenge that migrant filmmakers have to confront with. Hamid Naficy portrays the situation migrant directors are in.

“... many independent film makers who make films about exile and their homelans’ cultures and politics (...) or those minority filmmakers who make films about their ethnic communities (...) are often marginalized as merely nationals, Third World, Third Cinema, identity cinema, or ethnic filmmakers, who are unable to fully speak to mainstream audiences. Through funding, festival programming, and marketing strategy, these filmmakers are often encouraged to engage in ‘salvage filmmaking,’ that is, making films that serve to preserve and recover cultural heritage. Other exilic filmmakers, such as (...) are placed within the avant-garde category, while some such as (...) are considered unclassifiable. (...) Although these classificatory approaches are important for framing films to better understand them or better market them, they also serve to overdetermine and limit the films’ potential meanings. Their undesirable consequences are particularly grave for the accented films because classification approaches are not neutral structures. They are ‘ideological constructs’ masquerading as neutral categories (Altman 1998, 5). By forcing accented films into one of the established categories, the very cultural and political foundations that constitute them are bracketed, misread, or effaced altogether. Such traditional schemas also tend to lock the filmmakers into discursive ghettos that fail to reflect or account for their personal evolution and stylistic transformations over time. Once labeled ‘ethnic,’ ‘ethnographic,’ or ‘hyphenated,’ accented filmmakers remain discursively so even long after they have moved on.” (Naficy: 19-20)

Cultural protectionism - as Bergfelder put it (Bergfelder: 323)- analyzed under the national cinema discussions can be held responsible to a large extent for migrant directors being labeled and reduced to a cinema of duty. Because migrant directors subvert the idea of pure national culture, and therefore the arguments of the scholars advocating an idea of national cinema are greatly distressed. Deniz Göktürk discusses the influence of cinema of migration on the concept of national cinema:

“Over the past years, there has been a growing worldwide interest in films which visualize the experiences of people crossing boundaries, of migration, displacement and exile. These films have been described as a new genre of ‘postcolonial hybrid films’ or as an ‘independent transnational cinema’. Following Homi Bhabba and other post-colonial critics in decribing immigrant communities as ‘the other within’ which contests the notion of a pure national identity, and suggests to narrate the nation from the margins, ‘migrant’ cinemas could be interpreted as posing a similar challenge to established concepts of ‘national cinema’. The experience of migration serves as a productive provocation and creates a transnational ‘third space’ of travel and translation where our traditional patterns of classifying culture are put into question, and we are made aware of shortcomings of defining culture on grounds of nationality or ethnicity. While celebrating this ‘third space, however, we ought to be cautious not to forget about local specificities and differences as we create a third box for ‘mixed pickles’ and group all the hybrids together in a space of ‘in betweenness’”. (Göktürk, 1999: 3-4)

There is a significant tendency to exclude cinema of migration in theoretical terms. However, this exclusion has also practical effects on the adventures of the films on their way to meet the audience. Especially, film festivals exemplify this exclusion and biased evaluation of the films. Grassilli (2008), in his article, where he discusses migrant cinema in Italy, points out a hypocritical assessment of a migrant directors’ movie by giving a telling example from the British migrant cinema in order to illuminate the situation:

“Films such as *East is East*, scripted by British Asian Ayub Kahn-Din, or *Beautiful People*, by Bosnian refugee film-maker Jasmin Dizdar, have all then to be considered as British films, and not anymore as foreign or migrant films. The recognition of ‘accented films’ as British has also provoked some curious situations, as in the case of *The Warrior* by British-born film-maker Asif Kapadia, who is of Indian origin: the film was refused entry as a British Foreign Film at the Academy Awards because it was not recognized by the Academy Committee as British, even though it was presented by the British Committee as such, and later became winner of the Best British Film at the British Academy Awards.” (Grassilli: 1241)

This conservative and protectionist perception towards migrant cinema coincides with the over described tension between holistic notion of culture and syncretic notion of culture. This dichotomy is essentially between two basic approaches: The conservative approach perceives things – such as nationalism, culture, cinema- as if they were stable and fixed concepts and therefore defines them with terms confirming the consistency and immobility; in this context this approach tends to conceive migrants using terms such as “inbetweenness”, degenerated culture while neglecting migrant culture and of course evaluating the cinema of migration in a biased way. On the other hand, the second approach tries to embrace sociological changes occurring in the context of culture and identity.

These conservatory tendencies reflect to the funding system of the nation-states. Migrant directors who are not supported financially cannot realize their cinematic projects and they are reduced to a migrant rhetoric. Deniz Göktürk prefers using the term of “paternalism” for this reductive perception towards migrant directors (Göktürk, 2002b: 249 - 256). What Göktürk summarizes in her article refers to a set of invisible rules may determine the themes and characters of the movies. The stereotypical role of Turkish directors has predetermined outlines that would be seen as almost a job description. Like an ingenieur or an architect doing an everyday job, the migrant directors shall make similar films with similar contents. Despite the fact that the films made by Turkish-German directors in the second half of the 1990s indicates a breakthrough, the dominant idea of migrant directors and actors in

Germany shows that reductive perception of German Leitkultur still prevails in the filmic landscape in Germany.

Grassilli also discusses the influence of the funding and subsidy on the diversity of contents: “I argue that the ways in which access to resources is facilitated creates different opportunities for film productions, which in turn are linked to the different content and reception of such films.” (Grassilli: 1238) According to Grassilli, the support of Italian film industry can change the position of a migrant filmmaker; however it might result in another elegant dichotomous situation for filmmakers:

“The lack in Italy of a policy for cultural diversity and of any structure to support minority film-makers creates a deeply paradoxical situation. If a film-maker is embraced by the Italian cinema industry (public funding and broadcasting support), he or she risks losing their essence by becoming *Italian* in order to respect the criteria and requirements of *nationality*. If instead a film-maker is determined to keep his/her ‘accent’, he/she will probably not receive support and therefore risks not having film-making life.” (Grassilli: 1251 – 1252)

According to Göktürk (2002b), minority cinema is “in the prison of subsidy” when considering Tevfik Başer’s three movies (*40 m² Deutschland* [1986], *Abschied vom falschen Paradies* [1989] and *Lebewohl Fremde* [1991]), and the situation of migrant directors being reduced to a limited space for creativity, as Göktürk put it “paternalism”, becomes clear. Göktürk argues that *The New German Cinema* wave had a combination of social mission and public subsidy. This combination allowed the directors of The New German Cinema to depict experiences of migrants, primarily those of women, in the feature films. Göktürk also indicates that film subsidy and opportunities for co-production with public television make possible the production of movies of migrant directors. This opportunity, according to Göktürk can create a new rhetoric of ethnic differences and minority culture. The example of *Das kleine Fernsehspiel* is particularly important. This is an institution of German TV channel ZDF, and it promotes experimental filmmaking and support young auteur directors.

On the other hand, Göktürk claims that *Das kleine Fernsehspiel* often select movies that focus on the problems of integration, and therefore the cinema of young German and non-German directors become “a cinema of duty”. These movies begin to reproduce the cliché images of migrants. Same funding criteria also restrained Turkish-German directors for a long time. Therefore, the movies of Turkish-German directors have also presented the clichéd images of Turkish community living in Germany. The stories of the movies of Turkish-German directors depicted repression of backward, rural people were supported financially.

“Until well into the 1980s, then, minority films in Germany often follow Sanders’ model in telling stories of Turkish women repressed by patriarchal fathers, brothers and husbands, of their exclusion from public spaces. Tevfik Başer’s *Vierzig Quadratmeter Deutschland (40 Square Meters of Germany, 1986)* is on such film, a ‘chamber play’ in the truest sense of the word, about a woman imprisoned by her husband in a Hamburg apartment. (...) *40 Square Meters of Germany* was nominated for the Federal Prize in 1987 and received awards for Özyay Fecht’s performance... (...) ...in Başer’s second film, *Abschied vom falschen Paradies (Farewell to a False Paradise, 1988)*, the director continued his exploration of the captivity of women in closed spaces albeit under reversed conditions. (...) His films have been acclaimed by feminist criticism for surveying ‘the cultural no man’s land in which Turkish women in German exile live – exploited and disregarded both by their own compatriots and by Germans’. (...) Thus Başer’s third film, *Lebewohl, Fremde (Farewell, Stranger, 1993)*, a German-Turkish love story with individualised characters set on the North Sea island of Langeness, met with scant success. It appears that Başer’s name has become so closely associated with the representation of migrant misery that no space remains for him to explore other subjects.” (Göktürk, 2002b: 249- 251)

Tevfik Başer’s third and last movie depicts a love story between a Turkish writer seeking asylum and a German woman. It was considered as an attempt to go beyond these predetermined criteria for Turkish-German directors in Germany. After this movie, Başer was not acclaimed as expected and he was not financially supported

for the further projects. In contrast to what Göktürk described, Tevfik Başer told me in our interview, that he did not feel being restricted or financially controlled, as Göktürk describes:

“I went to Germany in order to study cinema. I was following German movies. There were many problems back then, yet there were not proper movies about them. There was only Fassbinder. I wanted to make a documentary about Turkish women in Germany. They were trapped and prisoned, however it was impossible to present their situation in a documentary. So, I made 40 m² Deutschland. (...) There is not anything like ‘us’ and ‘them’. The jury of the TV is not a chamber of secret agents. It does not support clichés in the movies. My first movie cost three million marks; I took 1, 2 million marks from the TV. Of course, a director who has done his/her first movie for a three hundred thousand marks cannot find three million marks for his/her second movie. Everything is coincidence. They accepted also Fatih Akin into *Panaroma*, then to the film festival, and he succeeded. Such things happen. If I had the desire to shoot a film then I definitely would.” (Personal interview with Tevfik Başer)

Başer disavows what Göktürk mentions about his movies, and he also criticizes scholars for reducing the debate to a mere binary opposition between “us” and “them” while analyzing the works of Turkish-German directors. Başer had his own production company “Tevfik Başer Filmproduktion” located in Hamburg, and he was among the co-producers in the process. It might be the reason why he was not financially restricted. On the other hand, he was not able to alter the debate of binary oppositions within his movies’ content. Therefore, his point of view regarding the opposition between “us” and “them” is not fulfilled in his works.

“As a director in Germany you have a limited space for creativity. This does not contradict what I mentioned before. You cannot work on migration 20 years long. I was obliged to do that. I remained limited to outsider topic. It is a hard thing to do. I was fed up with telling same stories again and again. I enjoy my freedom here. I have no freedom there, in Germany. Therefore, I am done

with Germany. Because of the freedom...” (Personal interview with Tevfik Başer)

When Turkish-German movies are analyzed in the light of what Göktürk and Başer mentioned, over quoted Fatih Akin’s remarks become clear. Fatih Akin is one of the few Turkish-German directors who can escape being restricted and reduced to a cinema of migration. Moreover, other Turkish-German directors have their share of this reductive perception of German cinema sector. Almost every director and actor who I conducted my interviews with either was forced to make movies with predetermined themes and complained about the lack of financial support; or they were typecast in the German movies for the stereotype Turk. In addition, Mürtüz Yolcu - a famous Turkish-German actor in Germany- told me his story, how his theater project was rejected by the German authorities and then he presented his interpretation about the general landscape:

“In 1980s we wanted to stage Peter Weiss’ play *Gesang von lusitanischen Popanz*. We asked for financial support. They did not give any subsidy for this play. They asked us: ‘*Was haben die Türken mit Peter Weiss zu tun?*’³⁰ *This play is about an international topic. It does not suit you!*’ This is exactly what racism is. Do we have to tell always the problems of the foreigners? (...) Media’s racist discourses are undeniable. They say: ‘*Turks are also people!*’ They have already done this to our fathers; we are offended when they do to us. (...) There are two types of directors: the ones who make movies just to please the German taste and the ones who make movies for their own. *Die Fremde*, for instance... When Germans watch this movie, they say: “*This is exactly what you are!*” But, this does not take us anywhere. This does not show us something. There are different stories of migrants that you can tell. (...) Filmmakers of third or fourth generation will be laughing at this kind of movies. (...) I was broke; even so I did not work. Because they wanted me to play the Turk; yet they do not know what a Turk is. They want me to play the Turkish figure in their mind. I have not played this kind of roles for years. I ve recently began however, yet things are still the same. There are only a few

³⁰ “What do the Turks have to do with Peter Weiss?”

changes. Mehmet Kurtuluş for instance, he plays in *Tatort*. But Germans are stubborn; they do not want to change a bit. They do not want to change the image of Turkish figure in their minds. Also Fatih is an exception. He protested... He changed something. He was able to tell his story, because he was supported by the Germans who do not like Germans. Therefore he succeeded. Furthermore, Feo Aladağ defends another line of thought that pleases Germans' understanding. Therefore, it is easier for her to find financial support. She sells her story. To sum up: In Germany, it does not matter what you do as a Turk. Germans see you as *Sozialfall* and they want you to be a *Sozialarbeiter*. You are not a normal artist in their eyes. It is the problem of dominant culture serving the *Leitkultur*." (Personal interview with Mürtüz Yolcu)

Rob Burns (2007: 11) gives the example of Fatih Akın. According to Burns, Fatih Akın was the most successful one amongst second generation Turkish-German filmmakers. Burns mentions that Fatih Akın "began his career not as a director but as an actor and the main reason why he started to make his own films was because he was no longer willing to play the 'stereotype Turk' in film productions where 'migrants could only appear in one guise: as a problem.'"

In our interview, Mürtüz Yolcu also mentioned that, he was obliged to play always the 'stupid Turk' in early times of his career, and if he cannot find any good role in films, he might play this cliché again, because he has to "earn money in some way." According to Yolcu there is only one actor who can escape being labeled as a German-Turkish, Mehmet Kurtuluş. Kurtuluş has been acting in Germany's legendary TV series *Tatort* since 2008.³¹ According to Appelius, Kurtuluş's character Cenk Batu is not primarily defined by his Turkish origin (Appelius, 2009: 19).

Being typecast and being left without any subsidy are crucial challenges Turkish-German artists have been confronting with in Germany. In a similar fashion,

³¹ "Director of Programs Herres himself said in an interview: 'We are pleased to be able to present the first "Tatort"-detective of Turkish descent Mehmet Kurtulus – to be honest this has long been overdue'. Mehmet Kurtulus was born and grew up in Germany and became well-known by the gangster movie 'Kurz und Schmerzlos' by Fatih Akın. In Doris Dörrie's movie 'Nackt' he – as the first person of Turkish descent in a German movie – played the leading role without reference to his family background" (Appelius, 2009: 19)

Sinan Akkuş told me in our interview, that it is almost impossible to make a movie without having the financial support of Television:

“To produce a film is a really hard thing to do in Germany. A film costs at least between 1 and 1,5 million Euro. I don’t want to make cliché movies. But now I have a family, and I have to earn money. If a cliché scenario comes tomorrow, and if I have nothing to do, I would do it. Hussi also would do it. But he would do it, when he doesn’t have his own film to make.” (Personal interview Sinan Akkuş)

In general terms, Tuncay Kulaoglu confirms over mentioned statements. He suggests that especially films like *die Fremde* and dramas are financially supported and rewarded. Like the other directors that I have conducted my interviews with, Kulaoglu also point out Fatih Akin’s dramatically increased popularity. It is commonly accepted that Fatih Akin accomplished the impossible and unthinkable. He also clarifies the situation of Fatih Akin, and how he became so successful in Germany. However, he adds a little detail that shows that even Akin can have hard time in doing his films:

“Fatih’s success compared to other Turkish-German directors is very important. He transgressed the limits. While he was doing his movies, there was always the German producer, Ralph Schwingel, being at his back. He believed in him, he supported him financially. Until *Gegen die Wand*. *Gegen die Wand* was a really hard movie. Schwingel advised him not to do this one. Fatih didn’t step back; he established his own company and made the movie.” (Personal interview with Tuncay Kulaoglu)

The Turkish-Germans have been making movies for four decades. The majority of the films made by them focus on similar stories and have similar thematic concerns. Even some of them replicate the discursive strategies of the New German Cinema. There is an undeniable influence of subsidy and funding on the young Turkish-German auteur directors, who want to make movies with different thrusts.

Even though a director making his/her first movie is financially supported by the institutions like *das kleine Fernsehspiel*, they remain to a large extent under financial control, and time to time financial problems oblige them to make movies that they do not want to. The second generation Turkish-German directors do not want to be labeled as migrant, Turkish, Turkish-German, authentic, in-between or as outsider. They want to be called by their name, like Neco Çelik suggests: “I have a name. I am not a migrant director.” (Personal interview with Neco Çelik)

A conclusion to be drawn is that there are several possible factors that can influence the space for creativity of Turkish-German directors. Many directors that I have conducted my interviews with suggested a strong relationship between funding and artistic productivity of a migrant director. Funding will be also the main factor that I would focus on while analyzing the changes that Turkish-German movies underwent. However, funding is not the only factor that influences movies’ journey of transformation. As it is mentioned before, Kaya (2001) rightfully claims that Turkish-Germans are no longer mere guestworkers in the society, they constructed their unique culture, and they are agents who contribute to society. These developments began to change German society gradually yet very slowly. Even though, there are still socio-economical and racial prejudices towards Turkish-German community living in Germany, a very important indicator of this over mentioned “positive” social change in German society is the existence of organizations such as *das kleine Fernsehspiel*, an organization that supports migrant directors financially when they produce their first movies.³²

Furthermore, there is also a global change. As it put forward before, there was also a shift in the understanding of national cinema. Movies made by Turkish-German directors reacted to position to represent the German cinema in international film festivals. Even though the understanding of national cinema did not collapse

³² <http://daskleinefernsehspiel.zdf.de/ZDFde/inhalt/13/0,1872,2001037,00.html>

altogether, Turkish-German directors seem to stretch and erode conservativeness of German national cinema.

Another important factor is the origin or the generation of the director. As it was mentioned before, Turkish-German directors of second generation who were born to migrant families, raised in Germany and nourished by Turkish-German culture began to make their own movies to depict their own society and life in Germany. The movies of these young Turkish-Germans –like Fatih Akin or Hussi Kutlucan- tell different stories with different cinematic styles than the movies of directors who were not born to migrant families – such as Tefvik Bařer or řerif G6ren- do. All these factors result in the shift from a “cinema of duty” to a cinema of “transnationality in a playful way”. In the next chapters, when analyzing the movies, the differences between periods will become clearer with explanatory examples from movies.

3. 1970s – 80s: 80s Strategies of Victimization: A Cinema of Affected

“*Was macht Niyazi in der Naunystasse?*”³³

This period covers the movies made both by the directors of the New German Cinema and by Turkish directors such as Tevfik Başer or Şerif Gören. The characters of the movies are mainly lonely and oppressed migrants who cannot speak properly recalling the symbol “seventh man” suggested by John Berger (Göktürk: 2002b, 248). The movies of that period can be categorized under the term “cinema of duty” introduced by first Sarita Malik analyzing the Afro-British filmmakers. Referring to Malik, Mennel discusses the term:

“The ‘cinema of duty remains for Malik ‘social issue in content, documentary-realist in style, firmly responsible in intention’. It ‘positions its subjects in relation to social crisis, and attempts to articulate “problems” and “solutions to problems” within a framework of centre and margin, white and non-white communities.’” (Mennel, 2002: 136 – 137)

As mentioned before, the social and material reality is the main concerns of these movies. The discourse of pity is used as a narrative strategy in the movies ranging from *Angst essen Seele auf* to *40 m² Deutschland*.³⁴ Almost every one of these movies narrates stories of victimized, passive, suffering migrants. Thereby the stories provide binary oppositions between the German community as oppressor and the migrant community is depicted as oppressed characters. Even the Turkish directors

³³ “*What does Niyazi do in Naunystasse?*” This sentence is the name of the poem written by Aras Ören in 1972. It is commonly accepted as a benchmark for the Gastarbeiterliteratur.

³⁴ Made by German directors, the other important movies of the period that are not analyzed in this study are: *Katzelmacher* (Rainer Werner Fassbinder, 1969), *Nordsee ist Mordsee* (Hark Bohm, 1975), *Ganz Unten* (Günther Wallfrapp, 1985).

such as Tefvik Başer and Şerif Gören replicate this strategy, and represent migrants in a one dimensional way.

3.1. Selected German movies of the period: *Angst essen Seele auf* (Rainer Werner Fassbinder, 1974)³⁵

“*Deutsche Herr, Arabisch Hund... Nix viel denken: gut. Viel denken, viel weinen...*”³⁶

In this part two categories of German films will be discussed. Under the first category, there are films that depict the migrants’ own life and existence in Germany and try to defend them in a peculiar way. On the other hand, the second category covers the films about the migrants’ internal conflicts which are especially based on patriarchal tendencies of Turkish men of the first generation. These films revolve around oppressed Turkish women characters. These movies present and confirm stereotyped clichés established by German literature, they neatly blame Turkish community for being patriarchal, instead of introducing a proper solution.

Fassbinder’s *Angst essen Seele auf* will be analyzed under the first category. The movie narrates a story of an oppressed Arabic migrant Ali, the perception of German society towards him and the discrimination he experiences in every aspect within the society. Along with his first film focusing on migrants *Katzelmacher*, this movie is very influential in cinema studies. Scripted and directed by Fassbinder, *Angst Essen Seele auf*³⁷ is one of the most significant movies of this period. This film’s working title was: “All Turks are named Ali” (Göktürk, 2002b: 249). However, there is not any Turkish character in the movie. The movie revolves around a love story between an alone, widowed, old German cleaning lady and a young Arab who came to Germany in order to work. Even though, the title of the movie *Fear Eats the Soul* advises the audience to be courageous, and not to obey the constructed

³⁵ “*Fear eats the Soul*”.

³⁶ “German master, Arab dog... Better not think too much! Think much, cry much...”

³⁷ According to the protagonist “Ali”, this is a Arabic saying that mentions fear eats the soul. It is written in broken, or in other words ‘accented’ German of Ali.

perception towards migrants associated with fear, the film indicates that it is really difficult to act in such a manner and the result may be ending up as an outcast.

The movie begins with the scene in a bar, where migrant workers spend their time. As an old woman enters to the bar everyone turns to look at this outsider figure, by the unwelcoming gazes she feels as a stranger, a mere outcast. The movie builds upon the conflict of the sharp spatial binary opposition between the Germans and the migrants embodied by this figure of German woman. The atmosphere created by this dichotomic scene asserts the idea that the Germans and the migrants cannot exist in a harmony; furthermore it is highlighted by the other Germans' perceptions towards migrants. When Ali comes to the house of the German woman (Emmi), the neighbours who see him in the corridor start a dialogue between them:

Neighbour 1: Frau Kurowski hat einen Auslaender dabei.

Neighbour 2: Was?

Neighbour 1: Einen Schwarzen...

Neighbour 2: Nigger?

Neighbour 1: Nicht ganz Schwarz, ziemlich Schwarz ist er doch.

Neighbour 2: Sie ist doch selbst nicht ganz deutsche.³⁸

Fassbinder also tries to exhibit how Germans perceive migrants with the dialogues in the workplace of Emmi. A German colleague says: "*Whole families crammed into one room. All they're interested in is the money; stingy, unwashed pigs!*" According to this long dialogue in this sequence, Germans think that migrants are uneducated, that they stink because they do not shower at all and that a real

³⁸ - Mrs. Kurowski's got a foreigner up there.

- What?

- A black man...

- A nigger?

- Not quite black, but pretty much.

- She's not quite German herself.

German cannot live with one of them. It would be a shameful thing to do, according to the character.



Figure 1 – Ali and Emmi, after they get married

Fassbinder tries to subvert the clichés by showing Ali's daily life which is not visible for the Germans. For instance, Ali is depicted a couple of times under the shower in order to show that he is not an unwashed pig, and also Emmi tells her friends that Ali takes shower everyday like a normal person does. There are also scenes that show that Ali is not stingy at all, like when, Ali gives all his money to Emmi, because they live together and he wants to contribute financially. At the end of the movie, it turns out that Ali has a perforated stomach ulcer – like all other migrant workers have - caused by stress at the workplace, and he has only a short period of time to live.

On the one hand, Fassbinder defends and supports the love between a German and an Arab; on the other hand he constructs a separation between two communities (oppressor and oppressed) and condemns these two communities to live separately unless they do not want to be outcast. He ends this love with the terminal illness of Ali that does not change anything in the society.

Second category covers two films *Shirins Hochzeit* (1976) by Helma Sanders-Brahms and *Yasemin* (1987) by Hark Bohm. In *Shirins Hochzeit*, Helma Sanders

presents the story of Shirin, who leaves her poor village in Anatolia and she comes to Cologne in order to find her fiancé. She slowly gets used to live in Cologne and learns German. She has a hard job at the factory. However, she does not have a resident authorization, she loses her job, and becomes a prostitute. Although she finds her fiancé, the young Turkish woman cannot manage to build a life and she ends up with getting killed on the street by a pimp. In *Yasemin*, Böhm focuses on the problems of the Turkish-Germans in Hamburg. This is the portrayal of the stereotyped life of Turkish-German women in Germany symbolized by the exhibition called *Morgens Deutschland – Abends Türkei* (Yalçın-Heckmann: 315). Deniz Göktürk argues that these are the movies that can be associated with the term cinema of duty in the British context, in which “foreigners were condescendingly shown their cultural place, and film-makers saw themselves as tied to sorrowful stories about being lost ‘between two cultures’ (Göktürk, 2002b: 250). In *Yasemin*, this discursive structure become clear, Göktürk indicates:

“Her double identity is reflected in the linguistic mix of family talk, as well as in scenes from her life at home. When she comes home to her father’s greengrocery, she lets down her shortened skirt, pulls a sweater over a sleeveless summer dress, and becomes a conscientious Turkish daughter who helps in the store and must be accompanied on the street by her cousin Dursun. The situation seems about to change when, with the help of her mother (...), the father is finally convinced of Yasemin’s plans for university. However, the benevolent atmosphere changes radically when Yasemin’s sister cannot produce a bloodstained sheet after her wedding night to prove her pre-marital virginity. His honour impugned, the loving father is suddenly transformed into a brutal patriarch who disowns his oldest daughter and locks up Yasemin, only to tear her out of bed in the middle of the night and ship her off to Turkey.” (Göktürk, 2002b: 251)

These movies depict woman on the one hand as a victim, and as a person who needs to be liberated from the situation they live in, a situation in which even going to university is a challenge for the women. On the other hand, they confirm and cement the clichés and dichotomies mentioned before related to the tragic figures of Turkish

woman needing to be liberated from patriarchy and being oppressed migrant victims who cannot live freely and enjoy the same rights as Germans do. Moreover, these clichés will be reconfirmed and replicated by the Turkish-German directors. Germans will be presented as enlightened and civilized (Göktürk, 2002b: 251) as long as there are directors who tend to see Turkish-Germans from the German point of view, and willing to present the clichés unchanged to please German cinematic taste (Personal interview with Mürtüz Yolcu).

3.2. **Almanya Acı Vatan (Şerif Gören and Zeki Ökten, 1979)**

“Is not all this disgrace for the money?”

Directed in 1979 and set in Berlin, *Almanya Acı Vatan* is a documentary-like movie trying to present an overall situation assessment. The opening scene of the movie – which became a classic afterwards - portrays a guest worker who came to his village from Germany during his holidays. The guest worker shows a porn magazine to his fellow townsmen, and he flatters himself by saying that all the women on the magazine were his lovers. It is shown that the guest worker wears a tie and he has a car outside of the coffeeshop, so that others are convinced that he does well in Germany and he is rich. This opening sequence is about the guest worker who tempts and encourages their fellow townsmen to come to Germany. Germany is perceived by Mahmut (played by Rahmi Saltuk) in the same classical way as İstanbul was perceived in the 1950s as a golden city: *“its stones and lands are of Gold”*.³⁹ Germany emerges as an opportunity or as a bridge of hope for Mahmut. But there is an obstacle on the way to Germany: Mahmut’s townsman tells him that Germany is not taking guest workers anymore. Yet, he knows a solution, if Mahmut could organize a “marriage of convenience” with Güldane (played by Hülya Koçyiğit) he may get his right of abode, he might find a job and start a life. Mahmut offers

³⁹ *Taşı Toprağı Altın Şehir* is the name of the movie directed by Orhan Aksoy in 1978 narrating the tragic story of a family coming to the big city.

Güldane money and goods. Güldane accepts his offer because she sees this process as a trade.

This film deals with several important topics on Turkish migrants living in Germany. However, Oğuz Makal argues that most of the topics are not profoundly analyzed in the movie, only touched upon. First topic is the importance of money for the migrants. As Şerif Gören put it, the Turkish migrants's main aim is to "save mark" (Makal: 76). Until the end of the money, "dollar signs" in Güldane's eyes can be seen by every action she does. She works for money, she talks about money, she dreams of money and she marries Mahmut for money.



Figure 2 – Güldane and Mahmut

Another topic is the changed attitudes under different circumstances. The movie's assumption is that living in Germany transformed the Turkish community into something else. Some of them became robot-like workers, some were interested only in money, and some of them were amazed by the beauty of German women. Set in Berlin, while *Almanya Acı Vatan* narrates the Turkish migrants' life in Germany and it also indicates the influence of this different culture on migrants. Especially the city creates consternation for a new comer like Mahmut. Mahmut's shock is sharp and

strong when Güldane leaves him all alone in the central station in Berlin, at the moment they arrived. Mahmut has nowhere to go, he cannot speak a word in German, and he is astonished by everything he sees. This spatial differentiation between his village and Berlin is depicted with turbulence-like scenes.



Figure 3

Then, Mahmut ends up sleeping on the street. The circumstances in Germany change also Mahmut's patriarchal character. Because of the fact that, he has nowhere to stay, he wants to live with Güldane. After they decide to live together, Güldane becomes the main provider of the house, since she is the only one who works. Although Mahmut wants to behave like the macho man he is, Güldane makes him wash the dishes and do the chores.

The film's female character, Güldane, serves as an important and unusual figure. Güldane comes to Germany on her own, starts a life, and she liberates a man from poverty in a way, when she accepts his proposal. Gören touches upon many topics by using the woman figure. Girls are imprisoned by their fathers who want to defend their girls' honour. Imprisonment and coercion performed on Turkish women became a main theme in Turkish-German movies throughout four decades, from *40 m² Deutschland* to *Gegen die Wand*. Güldane is harassed by a strange Turkish man

everyday on her way to work, which means that danger of male dominancy can also derive from outside of the house. Although Güldane is depicted as a free woman, but after her marriage of convention turns into an awkward love story, Mahmut gradually becomes the dominant figure when the honeymoon is over. Moreover, Güldane's female flat mates dream of being liberated by men.

The ultimate aim in Germany is work. A Turkish street cleaner with eight kids in his village wins an award because of his hard work. When his manager asks him what he wants to do when he gets back to Turkey, his touching answer freezes the audience's blood. He responds: "*What will I do? I will die.*"



Figure 4⁴⁰

In her book, where she analyzes the internal migration in Turkish cinema, Gülseren Güçhan (1992) evaluates this kind of lines articulated by the characters as "dialogues that reflect the values, beliefs and expectations" (Güçhan, 1992: 186 –

⁴⁰ Gören explicitly claims that "our citizens living abroad" can only be street sweeper or second citizen in Germany. In the middle of the movie, there are several interviews conducted with the guest workers. Their dramatic statements are based on the simple fact that they are excluded from society, and they have no hope to be a part of it.

188). In this context, this scene also influentially shows that migrant workers' will to live will cease eventually, because of the heavy circumstances and the stress of everyday life (Makal: 79)

This movie presents a realistic portrait of the life of the first generation, in other words the parents of the Turkish-German directors. The whole movie is dominated with the feelings of depression and melancholy, moreover the main theme which is social and material reality is depicted with tragic scenes. With the use of music and with the way the scenes were directed, this movie foreshadows following movies such as *40 m² Deutschland* or *Abschied vom falschen Paradies*. On the other hand, some topics that this movie only touches upon will be analyzed in further details in the following movies of Turkish-German cinema, and even some movies revolve around topics of this movie.

3.3. Gurbetçi Şaban (Kartal Tibet, 1985)

Directed by Kartal Tibet, *Gurbetçi Şaban* is an awkward comedy movie. Şaban (played by Kemal Sunal) comes to Germany to find a work and start a new life; however, in order to find a proper job he needs a work permit, and he does not have one. So Şaban lives in a state of constant fear because he has to run away from the police officers on the spot where he sees them as he keeps looking for illegal jobs. In order to hide himself within the society, Şaban decides to buy a fedora to disguise; the hat, which is identified with the migrant workers coming from Germany. Therefore, he can be a tiny bit more relaxed among other people. While he is walking around to find a job, a German crook approaches him and promises him a well-paid job in a factory. He mentions that the boss of the factory loves especially Turkish workers. The boss of the factory keeps Şaban's passport and tells him in case he goes to police, he will be arrested and deported because he is an undesirable alien. So he is forced to work for this badly paid job. Yet he is willing to save himself and the other Turkish workers trapped working like slaves. He keeps looking for alternative ways to escape the state's power or legal processes and, in the same time, to overcome his German boss.

Directed with a narrow perspective, protectionist and nationalist feelings, *Gurbetçi Şaban* is a movie devoted to stereotype Germans and to praise the Turks' wounded national pride. War-mongering and slogan-like lines are used to confirm "the Turk's power" which is sufficient to overcome the Germans. Almost every German is depicted as oppressor and racist, on the other hand Turkish workers are portrayed as slaves. In one of the most important scenes of the movie Şaban, after taking over the factory he used to work in, organizes a surprise for his ex boss saluting a hidden poster of Hitler everyday. Şaban replaced this poster with a poster of Atatürk, and he orders the Germans to salut him instead (see figure 5).



Figure 5

The movie is based wholly on the dichotomy between oppressors and oppressed. At the moment Şaban takes the power from Germans, he becomes oppressor, and he makes them work like slaves. In this context, *Gurbetçi Şaban* is a caricatured migration story and a revenge movie about the social and material reality of the Turkish migrant workers trying to survive in Germany. This movie introduced a reversed racism and discrimination while depicting the story of a man trying to find alternative and fugitive ways to survive.

3.4. **Polizei (Şerif Gören, 1988)**

Şerif Gören's second movie analyzed in this study is *Polizei*. The movie revolves around the Turkish street sweeper Ali Ekber (played by Kemal Sunal). *Polizei*, like *Almanya Acı Vatan* stages Turkish-German encounters. However, while *Almanya Acı Vatan* filmed nine years before is a tragic drama showing the desperateness and the life of migrants in a hopeless atmosphere, *Polizei* is a film comedy including dramatic elements.

Street sweeper Ali Ekber works hard during the day, and he spends his free time in a theater community, because he wants to become an actor. Ali Ekber is depicted as a character that is not respected by anyone, because he is oppressed both by his Turkish countrymen and by the German police. In order to get respect from the others, he decides to wear a police uniform that he is given by the theater community and to complete his disguise he shaves his moustache, strong signifier of his Turkishness. As he notices the power of the authority through this uniform, he continues to wear it; so that his friends pay respect to him, and he starts collecting small amounts of bribes from them.



Figure 6 – Ali Ekber tries to behave like a German police officer

There are two main female figures in this movie. The first one is a notorious Turkish girl, who leaves her family in order to live as a free person because she gets beaten up all the time. This girl's situation stuns the entire Turkish community in Kottbusser Tor, everyone -including Ali Ekber- starts talking about her. They criticize her, since they think that the honour of the Turkish girls is impunged. When the Turkish community hears that she has also a German boyfriend, they exclude her from the community. For them, she now symbolizes the great sin that should never be committed. Even Ali Ekber, the naïve character of the movie, when he empowered through his uniform, tries to beat the girl up and bring her to her parents when he sees her on the street with her German boyfriend. On the other hand, a second female figure is a German girl who turns Ali Ekber's situation into a discrepancy. Although Ali Ekber is against the binational couple including a Turkish girl, he falls in love with this German girl working in a little bar. Therefore, he cannot justify himself at the moment he tries to bring the Turkish girl to her family, and lets her go. With this discrepancy, the figure of the oppressed Turkish woman in Germany is presented.

Ali Ekber's father is a figure presented as a secondary guide of the movie. He tells stories and explains Berlin in details to his newcomer relative. By the same token, the audience hears that Ali Ekber's father is homesick, he is not very happy in Germany and he has been through many difficult things. On the hand, the relative wants to see German women or sex shops which Ali Ekber's father finds as insulting. While Ali Ekber's father is attached to his conservative tradition as opposed to popular belief, the relative coming to Germany who looks also exactly like the father of Ali Ekber wants to liberate himself sexually.

The film is barely bilingual; accented German is spoken by the characters only to show that they live in Berlin, and even the German director of the theater community speaks perfect Turkish. By and large, even though this movie is categorized as comedy, dramatical elements sometimes dominate the atmosphere. Most of the characters are the Turkish migrant workers, and these migrant workers seem to be trying to adjust themselves into Germany. Many of them work or live illegally, in other words there is a rivalry between the German state and them. In Ali Ekber's situation, the protagonist tries to find again alternative ways to survive, to escape the state's power and to create a resistance point for himself in order to get respect and to be accepted.

3.5. 40 m² Deutschland (Tevfik Başer, 1986)

Without any doubt, the most controversial and discussed movie of the 1980s is Tevfik Başer's *40 m² Deutschland*. One of the topics *Almanya Acı Vatan* touched upon, the case of imprisoned Turkish women in Germany is the main theme of this film. By depicting the lonely and claustrophobic life of the Turkish woman Turna (played by Özay Fecht), director aims to show the audience the trauma that Turkish women experience in Germany. Designated first as a documentary, this film points out the Turkish male oppression.

After their arranged marriage, Turna comes with her husband Dursun to Hamburg. In the opening sequence, she has a hard time adapting herself to the life in Germany, she wears her village clothes at the main train station, she tries to turn on the electric stove with matches and she is amazed by the apartment they live in. Besides, she cannot find a chance to see the outside world of their flat, because her husband locked her in claiming that he was trying to protect her. After realizing that she is locked in, Turna tries to confront her husband:

Turna: Why did you lock me in? Am I an animal?

Dursun: Listen up! Don't get on my nerves. This is not like home. We are in Germany. You don't know how sly the German men are. How did you know that you were locked in in the first place? Do you want to leave? Then go on, leave. Perhaps you'll find a pile of shit.

Turna: I don't want to leave. I just wanted to clean the floor in front of the door.



Figure 7 – Locked in the flat in Hamburg

According to Naficy, this sequence is important, because it depicts Turkish patriarchy. The last shot that shows Turna's sexual violation, and consequently Turna's shame about it: "the husband forces himself on her from behind, but with each of his thrusts, she lowers her head farther in the frame until it disappears below it" (Naficy: 193). Although Dursun promises to take her to a walk in the market place, he breaks his word, after he sees Turna is really excited. One day, she discovers that the door of their flat is unlocked and attempts to go out, however her fear from the outside world does not allow her to go very far, and she rushes into their flat. Naficy evaluates this scene arguing that: "The reasons for her withdrawal may be her fear of the German society, her awareness of her own inadequacy to survive outside as a single female and a foreigner without language and profession, and her fear of severe reprisal from her husband. (Naficy: 194)"

In this context, the figure of the Turkish woman is depicted as an oppressed person, who prefers to surrender even though she might have an opportunity to fight back and stand up to change the situation she lives in. However, after her husband dies of a heart attack, she has to liberate her self and take a step to outside.



Figure 8 – Final scene of the movie: Turna finds the courage to go out

While Makal (1987) and Naficy evaluate this film by taking cinematic criteria to the forefront, on the contrary Deniz Göktürk criticizes Başer, because she thinks that he reproduced the clichés introduced by the German literature and cinema in the 1970s and in 1980s about Turkish women (Göktürk, 2002b: 250). In our interview, when I asked him about the figure of Turkish women depicted in his movies, Başer told me that:

“Woman... This is only the director’s point of view. This is my point of view. Every director is analyzed by his/her own movie. Society creates its own man. They asked me: ‘How do you present us the Turks?’ I respond: ‘What’s that to you?’ I provoke, I provoke both sides. I do what I want. ‘But we also have to show the Germans that there are also Turkish doctors living in Germany!’ That does not mean anything. This is useless. I am not their public speaker. I just want to reflect what I see in the microcosmos into a macro dimension in order to create a universal thing.” (Personal interview with Tefvik Başer)

By analyzing an interview conducted with Başer, Makal argues that imprisonment of Turna in the movie is merely a symbol. According to Başer, even

though this same woman goes out, she is an outcast. She wears a headscarf, walks behind her husband and cannot speak to anyone. The woman, since her childhood, is a second-class citizen. When compared with the Western societies, this situation of women becomes more dramatic (Makal: 103).

His second movie, *Abschied vom falschen Paradies*, can be seen as a sequel. The oppressed and muted female figure stands against her husband -who beats her up- and kills him. She goes to jail, and there she is transformed into a courageous down-to-earth character.

3.6. *Abschied vom falschen Paradies* (Tevfik Başer, 1989)

In *Abschied vom falschen Paradies*, Tevfik Başer narrates the story of a Turkish woman in prison. Like in Turna's story, Elif (played by Zuhul Olcay) suffers from male oppression. Her husband humiliates, abuses, and rapes Elif until she stands up to him. She is arrested, and she is put in prison. The family of her husband threatens her with death even while she is in prison. Therefore, prison becomes a home and a new enclave for her.



Figure 9 – Elif on the first visit

At the beginning, she cannot speak German properly, she cannot communicate with others. However, the German women in the prison are friendly and try to help

her whenever she needs something. On the other hand, Turkish women in the prison keep away from Elif and try to avoid speaking with her. Elif learns German and makes new friends, takes out his headscarf and she even finds a boyfriend through post. Life in prison is happier than the life she shared with her husband at home. So she starts a new life in her prison cell.



Figure 10 – Elif with her German friends

Everything changes when she finds out that she will get deported from Germany, since she is a criminal. Once she is deported, she has to stand a trial which can result in death sentence. Therefore Elif wants to stay in prison. In one scene, Elif's older brother comes to prison to visit her. Elif, thinking that her boyfriend in prison comes to see her, wears the black dress a German friend gave her in prison, however she faces her brother. Her brother insults her because of the way she dresses and accuses her of being a prostitute. However, Elif is not the same person she used to be, she does not want to be controlled by anyone. She yells at her brother and tells him, that he must not come to visit her anymore. At this moment she breaks her chains and ends the male dominance in her life.



Figure 11 – Elif: “I am responsible for my self, I don’t need you!”

In my opinion, there are two different realities in this movie. One of them is about the macro Germany, which is the racial prejudice and discrimination that migrants had to endure. Although, in the other migrant movies, indigenous German characters tend to be discriminative towards Turkish people within the society; in this movie, this macro Germany is not depicted. On the other hand, film’s micro-Germany is represented with elements of woman solidarity and peace. As a matter of fact, German women also experience male violence and oppression, and they complain about it. In the prison, it does not matter whether a person is Turkish or German, they live shoulder to shoulder. The second reality is about the Turkish woman that the director asserts in the subtext. According to that, a Turkish woman can only be liberated by separating her from Turkish community, because the Turkish community is depicted as conservative, religious and patriarchal. Only then, the female figure might transcend the male dominant, repressive reality of the 1980s. However as the title suggests, the prison is a false paradise, it does not provide a normal life, it provides an illusion and a pause to normal life of Turkish women in Germany.

The movies made in this period depict migrants generally as victims in almost every aspects of life. Movies basically focus on the social and material reality of migrants. Therefore some of them are documentary-like movies in terms of including dialogues that describe the life in Germany from the eyes of migrants. Protagonists of these movies are oppressed individuals living in poor conditions, they cannot speak German properly, and they are reminiscent of the muted figure called “the seventh man.” Since these movies create an oppressed and muted character out of migrant society, it is argued that these movies divide society into two big blocks that cannot live together. Oppressors are blamed and oppressed are sympathized. However, the migrant figure is so desperate, even it is hard to empathize with him/her.

The movies of this period exactly coincide with Kaya’s differentiation of academic studies. As Kaya put it, until 1990s, academic studies concerned with economics and statistics, reorganization of family, integration of migrants to German culture. However, they did not concern with culture of migrants (Kaya: 2001, 13 – 14). Parallel to the academic studies, the movies of this period also did not focus on culture or identity of migrants. On the other hand, the movies produced in the second half of 1990s do not only focus on the material and social reality, they reverse clichéd images of Turkish-German migrants, and tell different stories aiming ethnicity, culture, and identity problems. They depict Turkish-German migrants as agents, not as victims. They emerge as products of a new culture constructed by migrant directors themselves.

4. 1990s: “Is the new German Cinema Turkish?”

“The movies are different, because the other directors weren’t born here... We were born here as migrants... We have lived here... In Kreuzberg, in Altona.” – Neco Çelik.⁴¹

The notion of generational shift in Germany is acknowledged by scholars focusing on migrant cinema as a main factor that allows them to make a detailed analysis. It is true that the stories, discourses and narrative strategies changed with the emergence of the second generation of Turkish-German filmmakers. Mennel (2002: 143) argues that: “Recent representations of Turkish-German characters lack the “social worker attitude” of earlier films that depict Turkish-Germans as a homogeneous group in need of explanation.” Moreover, as Mennel (2002: 137) puts it, there is not a clear outline that illustrates the progress from “cinema of duty” to cinema of freedom, because “there are aesthetic and political concerns which overlap the two, and there is nothing to suggest that, with institutional support, both types of films will not continue to be made.” Mennel rightfully claims about the continuity between periods, since there are movies such as *die Fremde* made in the 2000s. Therefore, even though we can articulate the emergence of the new generation of Turkish-German filmmakers pioneering a paradigm shift in the movies, this paradigm shift does not imply an obstacle to directors making movies with an old-fashioned perception towards Turkish-German community.

The “young Turks” (Göktürk, 2002b: 252) do not identify themselves as others, therefore they start subverting and softening the clichés associated with Turkishness. Since almost everyone of them is an auteur director, they script their movies by themselves, thereby they can decide what to represent. While, the films from the 1970s and 1980s are dominated by the constructed binary opposition and divided living spaces, since 1998 the characters represented in their films are hybrid in terms of language, identity and the lack of clear-cut cultural boundaries. Figures presented in the movies since 1998 are transnational. They are not victims or passive

⁴¹ (Personal interview with Neco Çelik)

characters who cannot speak, rather they have become agents who are not invisible within society. Gemünden discusses the films of last decade in terms of their influence on the concept of German national cinema, the change of the protagonists and the notions touched upon. He also dwells on the inadequacy of German high culture to explaining the cultural shifts.

“Films such as *Sommer in Mezra* (Summer in Mezra) (Hussi Kutlucan, 1991); *Schattenboxer* (Shadow boxer) (Lars Becker, 1992); *Nach dem Spiel* (After the match) (Aysun Bademsoy, 1997); *Yara* (Yilmaz Arslan, 1998); *Aprilkinder* (April children) (Yüksel Yavuz, 1998); *Ich Chef, du Turnschuh* (Me boss, you sneaker) (Hussi Kutlucan, 1998); *Dealer* (Thomas Arslan, 1999); *Lola und Bilidikid* (Kutlug Ataman, 1999); *Kanak Attack* (Lars Becker, 2000); and *Im Juli* (Akin, 2000) call into question existing definitions of national German cinema. Made by directors born in both Germany and Turkey, the transnational dimension of these films is not anchored in the biography of the filmmakers, nor is it informed by any claim to record authentic or personal experiences. These films form part of a wider European and non-European cinema that is ‘driven by its sensitivity to the production and consumption of films in conditions of transnationality, liminality, multiculturalism, multifocality, and syncretism.’ (...) These films from the last decade introduce us to German-Turkish relationships that differ significantly from those represented in the New German Cinema of the 1970s and early 1980s, taking leave of the stereotype of portraying immigrant communities in Germany as lost between two cultures and insisting instead on fluid notions of *both* German and Turkish identity. They thus confirm Deniz Göktürk’s observations regarding ‘the development from a [1970s] “cinema of duty” to “the pleasures of hybridity”,’ which she sees exemplified in Sinan Cetin’s *Berlin in Berlin* (1993). Yet the films cited previously are even more playful and ironic in their reversal of cultural stereotypes than the example she chooses to discuss, showing many incidents of humorous enactments of ethnicity; ridiculing essentialized notions of racial or ethnic identity; and relying on performance and masquerade, comedy, irony, and pastiche to portray the complex lives of minorities in Germany. They also attest to a change in German popular culture, allowing the vernacular a flexibility to reflect these changes that high culture apparently still lacks.” (Gemünden: 182 – 183)

Gemünden's remarks about movies made in the 1990s rely on the American popular culture and its influence on migrant filmmakers such as Fatih Akin. Gemünden discusses American popular culture's influence on migrant cinema by analyzing two movies of migrant directors who are born to parents who immigrated to the FRG. Gemünden interprets the role of American culture arguing that it provides a visible alternative to the German culture and it is seen as liberating and empowering. According to Gemünden, the importance of Turkish-German films lies on the challenge they suggest, because they compelled the scholars to rethink the meaning of the 'German' in German popular culture. On the other hand, movies made in 1990s introduce a very different Turkish-German figure that differs from those muted characters of 1970s and 1980s, and also put existing definitions of national German cinema in question. The controversial relationship to Hollywood filmmaking and U.S. popular culture is a very significant aspect to focus on, and for it gave the characteristic to Turkish-German movies (Gemünden: 181 – 183).

“U.S. popular culture functioned in this scenario as catalyst and antagonist, providing both foil and engine to articulate the paradoxical predicament of those born around the end of World War II. Filmmakers such as Akin and Maccarone and El-Tayeb, in contrast, belong to a generation of Germans who have learned from Hollywood in a way that Wenders and Fassbinder never wanted to.” (Gemünden: 183 – 184)

There is also another kind of auteur directors, whose films do not seem to be influenced by the American popular culture. For instance, *Ich Chef, Du Turnschuh* (Kutlucan, 1998), or *Dealer* (Thomas Arslan, 1998) do not replicate or show any stylistic similarities with the American cinema. Independently of the source of its influence, in 1990s and in 2000s movies rejuvenate both German and Turkish-German filmic landscape. However, it would seem that the directors or the stylistic approach, which is claimed to be influenced by the American culture, becomes dominant in the long run.

4.1. Berlin in Berlin (Sinan Çetin, 1993)

“How does it feel to be homesick in your own land?”



Figure 12 – Mürtüz threatens Thomas with death

A German engineer, Thomas (Armin Block), secretly takes some snapshots of a beautiful Turkish woman, Dilber (played by Hülya Avşar), the wife of a construction worker. Dilber's husband sees the fotos of her wife as Thomas left then in his office, and freaks out. The construction worker Mehmet (Zafer Ergin) goes directly to her wife in order to confront her, because he thinks that Dilber is together with Thomas. Mehmet, behaving angrily, tries to find out the truth, and starts pushing around his wife. Then Thomas tries to intervene and kills his Turkish colleague accidentally on the construction site.

Directed by Sinan Çetin and scripted by Ümit Ünal and Sinan Çetin, *Berlin in Berlin*, revolves around Dilber living with her deceased husband's awkward family. In the family, elderly parents of first generation and the grandmother Ugu (played by Aliye Rona) are attached to their traditions. Especially Ugu seems to control the whole family with her wise words about Islam and hard look on her face. Although young brothers of the family are tied to their grandmother's and their parents' apron strings, they differ significantly from their parents and grandmother.

After Mehmet's death, Mürtüz (played by Cem Özer) becomes the oldest brother in the family. At the same time he is in love in his widowed sister-in-law. Mürtüz is closer to his parents in terms of having the old fashioned understanding of Turkish tradition. Notions such as blood feud, being Turkish, or the honour of his sister-in-law are very crucial for him. On the other hand, these constructed ideas do not mean anything to his little brother.⁴² Mürtüz runs a coffeeshop in front of his house and speaks accented German. He is like a generational bridge between his parents who cannot speak German and his little brother who speaks German flawlessly.

Although Thomas is not guilty, he wants to find Dilber and apologize to her. In order to do that he tries to learn Turkish with his little dictionary that he carries wherever he goes. In Kreuzberg, in front of his coffeeshop, Mürtüz sees Thomas while he is looking for Dilber. Mürtüz chases Thomas through the streets of Kreuzberg aiming to take his brother's revenge. Thomas enters a building, where mostly Turkish people reside, and slips through an open door into the flat, which is the one Dilber and her family live in. Mürtüz discovers that Thomas is in their flat, he tries to kill him, yet his grandmother prevents Mürtüz from doing it. Fenner (2000) describes Ugu's intervention and comments on it:

“Shrouded in the traditional black veil and robe, the wizened woman insists that her family uphold the ancient Turkish tradition according to which a guest seeking a shelter and sanctuary within the confines of the home may not be harmed. Allah is testing our faith, she reasons: to defy his will is to render the family hearth forever cursed. Perhaps the filmmaker deploys this dramatic gesture of mercy toward Thomas to temper popular Western claims of Muslim fanaticism and to show that the Islamic faith is in fact a humanistic system of meaning that respects the integrity of the guest or an outsider. However, the invocation of Muslim tenets here assumes an almost mystical status when Mürtüz's agitated shouts and his family's attempt to subdue him are suddenly undercut by low, suspenseful music and a close-up of Ugu's fierce gaze. Although such popular devices for engendering drama ultimately do not serve

⁴² This contradiction between brothers is also an important issue depicted in *die Fremde* (Feo Aladağ, 2010). While the big brother is obsessed with the notion of honour or the purity of his sister, the little brother seems to be unbothered.

so much to represent Islam as a moral and ethical organizing force as to mythologize it and relegate it to the realm of superstition and the occult, the scene does come to evince the Gramscian line of reasoning in which “myth and folklore” serve as erratic strategies for resistance as well as constraint in relation to ruling groups. Ugu’s warning ironically saves Thomas’s life but also renders him a captive within the confines of their apartment, afraid to cross the threshold and return to the city where he will be stalked by Mürtüz, who also covets his widowed sister-in-law.” (Fenner: 113 – 114)

Compared to Fenner’s cultural perspective, Burns (2007) analyzes the movie from a political perspective, and evaluates the situation of Thomas by associating it with the asylum politics of Germany. According to Burns it is the reversal of the asylum situation, Thomas becomes asylum seeker in his own country in a Turkish house (Burns, 2007: 8).

Göktürk (2002b: 252) analyzes the situation of Thomas by mentioning that: “Now it is Turks who observe Germans like an animal in the zoo; the camera lingers on him (Thomas) in close-up, ironically reconfiguring the claustrophobic situation that Naficy describes as characteristic of exile films.” During that time Thomas stays in the family, many interactions occur between the characters. They observe each other very carefully. The film depicts many traditions of Turkish-Germans in a humorous way, and even ridicules them. Thomas is reminiscent of the character Elif from *Abschied vom falschen Paradies*, who starts living in prison, and for whom there is nothing but danger outside of this enclave.

At the end of the movie Thomas leaves the family by taking Dilber with him. Interestingly, Dilber, who also feels trapped in the family, leaves her son behind without any second thought, letting the German man liberate her.

Reversing the roles, transgressing the identities, making confront Turks and Germans in a flat, *Berlin in Berlin* is a very important movie from a cinematic perspective. When its box-office success in Germany and in Turkey is also considered, this movie signifies that the cinema of migration can catch the mainstream audiences (Fenner: 109).

Deniz Göktürk (1999: 5) suggests her article's name, "Turkish delight-German fright", is based on a reversal of current perceptions concerning German-Turkish relations. She mentions the Neo-Nazi attacks and the rising xenophobic tendencies since reunifications and she claims that it can be expected Turks to be the ones who are paralyzed by the fright. Göktürk mentions, there are also other indicators showing that Germans are afraid of the Turks living in Germany:

"However, there are also some indications of German fright caused by the presence of two million immigrants from Turkey who have not only introduced Döner Kebap (which has meanwhile become a staple German fast food), but who now wish to erect minarets in German cities. Instead of peacefully integrating into German society they seem to be reinforcing their Turkishness. Evidently, they have brought about fundamental changes in German cityscapes. Must we assume then that European civilization is in danger of being turkicized?" (Göktürk, 1999: 5)

From this perspective, one of the most important features of *Berlin in Berlin* is that the German character Thomas is afraid of the Turkish characters in the movie throughout the film. Cem Özer showing a bullet between his teeth becomes the symbol of the fear.

4.2. Kurz und Schmerzlos (Fatih Akin, 1998)

Kurz und Schmerzlos -along with *Ich Chef*, *Du Turnschuh*, *Lola+Bilidiki* and *Dealer*- signifies a breakthrough from the cinema of affected. In contrast to the movies by German directors, the movies by Turkish-German directors make the children of migrants speak, talk back and fight. These movies were made in the second half of the 1990s by Turkish-German directors who were born to migrant families. As second generation migrants, they discovered a new migrant reality and narrated new stories that have never been told before.

Kurz und Schmerzlos is the story of three migrant characters that are not victims anymore. They are not guest workers either. They are criminals. Since they did not have “proper” choices to integrate into society, they integrated backwards trying to redefine the rules, and thereby regulating their lives. That is what the subtext of the film suggests. The film subverts and reverses the perception of migrant, and therefore it is very crucial. It was made by one of the most significant and famous second generation Turkish-German directors living in Germany, Fatih Akin.

Set in Hamburg, the film introduces also three different criminal types. “*Gabriel, the Turk*” is the one who swears to give up any illegal act in his life, the time he spent in prison transformed him, and made him afraid of being there again. “*Costa, the Greek*” is the small time crook and thief, who is very religious in the meantime. “*Bobby, the Serb*” is, on the other hand, willing to work for an Albanian drug cartel.



Figure 13 – The three protagonists and their ethnicities⁴³

The scenes featuring the Turkish-German community are composed of long kissing scenes, not in a romantic way but in a “Turkish way”. The main characters kiss almost everyone who steps into the frame. In the opening scene, where Gabriel steps out of prison, he kisses all the family members waiting for him outside. In the wedding scene of his brother, almost every kiss is filmed one by one without excluding any characters’. While the “Turkish kiss” functions as a humorous element, it also softens the image of the Turkish-German. The Turkish wedding and the prison are also important elements that can be seen often in Turkish-German films.

⁴³ “Akin almost hammers the audience over the head with the ethnicity of the protagonists. (...) The film by no means offers the expected image of social hopelessness and a situation ‘between two cultures defined by lack.’” Mennel quotes Terkessidis’ analysis of the scene (Mennel, 2002: 148).

In *Gegen die Wand*, the wedding is depicted in a stressful atmosphere. The popular cheesy music accompanies the whole sequence. Guests playing the role of “panotticon” observe the couple being poised for criticizing. Therefore, the wedding is a process of being voyeuristically gazed, and this process might create deadly rumors. These rumors are so influential on a personal level, it can be heard that Turkish characters in movies always say: “What would others say about you?” This community observes, judges and excludes. Nicodemus (2007) rightly claims that Martin Scorsese is one of Akin’s great role models, and his Altona is reminiscent of Scorsese’s “Little Italy.”⁴⁴ Like the Italian community, Turkish-Germans are close to each other; therefore weddings do not tolerate any mistakes.

On the other hand, in *die Fremde* (Feo Aladağ, 2010), her sister’s wedding symbolizes a break point used by the female character, Umay, in order to confront the Turkish-German community. Disinherited by her family, Umay goes into the wedding hall, takes the microphone in her hand and asks for acceptance. It seems as if she faced the opposition of the whole Turkish community, as if she was kneeling during her trial in front of the judges. Her demand for acceptance turns into a situation that brings a huge embarrassment to her family. The Turkish community members of the wedding scene are like the source of “monopoly of violence” in Weberian terms, therefore the coercion and patriarchal exclusion become intense.

Prison is also an important element adopted as a fear factor or a transformative process. For instance, in this movie, for Gabriel, the prison is a place that he never wants to be in, ever again. In *Gegen die Wand*, prison changes Cahit, he becomes wise and calm, after his return from jail. In *Kanak Attack* or in *Dealer*, prison is also a factor of fear.

⁴⁴ www.magazine-deutschland.de/en/artikel-en/article/article/fatih-akin.html



Figure 14 – The Slap⁴⁵

In *Kurz und Schmerzlos*, the figure of the father and the figure of the big brother are represented in an unusual way. Gabriel's father (played by Fatih Akin's father), slaps Gabriel (see the figure 14), when he comes out of prison, but afterwards he is not interested in his son's life. He withdraws into his shell, and he focuses on almost merely in the after life. Even, when Gabriel comes home with blood stains on his face, he does not say anything about it; he just calls him to do the daily ritual worship, namaz. Gabriel, until the end of the movie does not need to accept the invitation, yet when he mostly needs some kind of support, he goes and prays with his father (see the figure 15).



Figure 15 - Namaz

⁴⁵ Mennel discusses the importance of the slap: "Gabriel slaps Bobby three times. Between the slaps, the film conspicuously jumps the axis, choosing to interrupt identification and the flow of the narrative, and in this way drawing formal attention to the importance of the scene. The slap echoes the slap Gabriel receives from his father when he returns from jail, a function of a homosocial network of protection and care." (Mennel, 2002: 150)

Gabriel, as the brother figure, does not come down on his sister Ceyda (played by İdil Üner) about her boyfriends whatsoever, and does not exercise control over her. He even encourages her to be with her Greek friend, Costa. As a matter of fact, Gabriel knows that his attitudes toward her sister are not typically Turkish, and he gives advice in a supportive manner in the scene where he has a long discussion with Ceyda about her boyfriend Costa. On the one hand, he encourages Ceyda to be with Costa, on the other hand, he criticizes Costa for being a criminal. Gabriel thinks that Costa can deserve his sister only when he gave up his criminal life. But, further into film, Gabriel is obliged to save his friends and commits a crime, kills a man to revenge his friends.

Bobby wants to operate a drug organization for Albanian mafia boss. When his family hears about his co-operation with Albanians, they throw Bobby on the street with nationalist feelings. He does not mix his nationalist feelings with his business, for him it is only a job based on mutual profit. He defines this relationship with the Albanian mafia as “multi-kulti”. Akın ridicules also, this kind of fabricated terms in his movie, and does not limit himself back to have a politically correct language. In the movie, “Costa, the Greek” is in love with a Turkish woman; a German woman is in love with “Gabriel, the Turk”; “Bobby, the Serb” is working with Albanian mafia. In all these relationships, there is not any nationalism at all. Even the above mentioned nationalist insults and jokes do not recall any racism, since they are friends in peace, and do not need to be a politically correct to each other.

This film signifies a renewal in German filmic landscape. Director tries to rootedly subvert clichéd images of migrants. Ex criminal Gabriel tries to live a decent life, there is no oppression over Turkish woman, and no patriarchy in this sense, people from different ethnical identities can get along with each other in a peaceful way. Yet, they do not get along with German state, and its regulations.

4.3. Ich Chef, Du Turnschuh! (Hussi Kutlucan, 1998)

“Just like Charlie Chaplin does...”



Figure 16 – Dudi and his friend are at the construction site

Kutlucan’s movie is one of the most important Turkish-German movies of the 1990s. In his second feature movie, Kutlucan depicts migrants and asylum seekers and what they have been through. Göktürk (2004) claims that this movie is a special one among other movies made in the second half of the 1990s:

“Among these new productions the comedy *Ich Chef, Du Turnschuh / Me Boss, You Sneakers* (1998) deserves special attention as it marks a departure from the ghettoizing discourse of social problem films. This film, directed by Hussi Kutlucan and produced by ‘Das kleine Fernsehspiel’, a department devoted to fostering new talent and innovative young auteurs at the public broadcasting channel ZDF, presents a refreshingly mocking take on the discourse of multiculturalist differentiation.” (Göktürk, 2004: 112)

The movie begins in Hamburg with the arrival of a bus full of Indians. They are newcomers, the new residents of the floating ship which is designated as barracks for asylum seekers and refugees. Meanwhile, the Turkish migrants are deported from

their barracks to make room for the Indians. One Turk disguises himself as an Indian using a headscarf. Kutlucan does not present himself as a Turk, he aligns himself with the victim of the Turks, the Armenians (Göktürk, 2004: 114). Dudie's girlfriend Nani (played by Özay Fecht) leaves him for a German, since she does not want to live in the barracks anymore. Dudie, who does not have any reason to stay in Hamburg anymore, decides to go to Berlin. His friends are working on a construction site in Potsdamer Platz, "a desert where a whole new cityscape is mushrooming, the prospective home of the German government." (Göktürk, 2004: 114) Mennel (2004) analyzes *Ich Chef, du Turnschuh* focusing on Berlin's topography, and she compares Kutlucan's movie with another migrant movie. According to Mennel, the axis of Berlin is Potsdamer Platz and Kreuzberg remains as the margin. Potsdamer Platz is also associated with the construction of national identity. With the construction of Potsdamer Platz new hegemonic relationships will be created within the city. (Mennel, 2004: 41).

"I contrast these cinematic configurations of West Berlin's topography with the spatial politics of two post-Wall films by minority directors, Hito Steyerl's *Die leere Mitte* (*The Empty Center*, 1998) and Hussi Kutlucan's *Ich Chef, Du Turnschuh* (*Me Boss, You Sneakers!* 1998) that engages with Berlin's and Germany's new hegemonic center under construction: *Potsdamer Platz*. The two films negotiate the politics of inclusion and exclusion in a historical, political, and transnational perspective and articulate a minority perspective in the space marked as the center, an articulation traditionally relegated to the margin. They thereby radically shift the perception of margin and center inscribed into and reflected by cinematic culture. The two films appropriate the construction site as a symbol for a discursive construction of meaning and intervene in the discourse about national identity." (Mennel, 2004: 42)

As Kutlucan put it in our interview, the fall of the Berlin Wall changed everything, and created binary opposition between "us" and "them". Migrants and asylum seekers were the first residents to get excluded. *Ich Chef, Du Turnschuh!* reflects exactly this opposition between oppressor and oppressed, between center and

margin, or between migrants and natives. In the movie, there is a constant struggle to become the oppressor, the *Chef*.

“... *Die leere Mitte* and *Ich Chef, du Turnschuh!* Also negotiate the politics and history of margin and center. However, in contrast to the pre-1989 films, the two post-Wall films focus on the construction site at Potsdamer Platz. The function of the fall of the Berlin Wall as a symbol for unification has been fetishized to disavow the effects of globalization and the rise of the European Union, both of which go hand in hand with the exclusion of asylum seekers and immigrants. These complex and sometimes contradictory changes are cinematically expressed in the shifting depiction of margin and center. *Die leere Mitte* and *Me Boss, you Sneakers!* Both situate their narratives on Potsdamer Platz during its transformation throughout the 1990s, anticipating its function as the center of the new German capital city and transnational capital.” (Mennel, 2004: 48)

In order to be able to stay in Germany, Dudie has to marry a German woman. He finds a German girl who has also a son called Leo. After his mother's death, Dudie adopts him in a way. Leo dyes his hair brown, in order to stay with Dudie. Leo transforms himself to Hasan. Dudie and Leo, find an illegal way to live with a German woman, Frau Dutschke. Frau Dutschke, does not want to live with them at the beginning, however, after seeing that they are good people, she enjoys their company:

“Around the dinner table, enjoying a meal of fish that Dudie has prepared, the three form a utopian family, transgressing the boundaries of ethnicity and age. The old lady expresses her happiness about not being alone any longer by turning on some music and proposing a dance. Dudie joins with a wink, saying somewhat ironically that ‘we all have to help each other, don't we?’ while Leo/Hasan watches the couple in disbelief. (...) Happiness cannot last, however, as a jealous neighbor, the equally old Frau Zischke, calls the police to report the presence of the two illegal guests next door. The film began with an

arrival, and it ends with a departure. Dudie is deported and put on a plane with the acquired, ‘Turkicized’ German child. Despite all his efforts to reinstate the German identity of the child by pointing out his dyed hair and protesting his German mother, no one believes him, especially as the child himself adamantly insists that he is his father. The expulsion of this child, German ‘flesh in blood’, by the officials is particularly ironic and ridicules distinctions between self and other, indigenous and foreign. The ending also echoes the publicity around the case of Mehmet, a 14-year old criminal who is deported from Munich to Turkey, on November 14, 1997. (...) Humor disrupts and ‘pollutes’ the accepted convention of framing immigrants as victims on a subnational level. *Ich Chef, Du Turnschuh* is a spirited intervention into the culture of patronizing subsidy and an ironic take on current discourses about old immigrants, asylum seekers, integration, national unity and purity, passports, and citizenship.” (Göktürk, 2004: 118)

Kutlucan’s main motivation by making this movie is to encourage the migrants living in Berlin. He does not want to present migrants in a state of despair and hopelessness. His movie tells the story of Dudie, a Chaplin-like character, a strong, stubborn migrant struggling to survive in a society where everybody tries to oppress him. However, Kutlucan does not present migrants as a homogenous community and also criticizes them for being willing to oppress the other, in a way that the indigenous does.

The movies produced in the 1990s irreversibly changed many things in Turkish-German cinema. The stories of movies narrating lives of new generation made a clear break from the past decades. It is even claimed that the directors who were born to migrant families and categorized under the name “young Turks” rejuvenated filmic landscape in Germany. As it was mentioned before, there are several factors that have influence on this shift in the movies. First of all, there were funding opportunities for the migrant directors who have different stories to tell. Even though, it is claimed that migrant directors were reduced to make movies to confirm

the clichés and depict the well known migrant figures, the young directors of 1990s could have found the subsidy to direct their movies. Second factor is the generational shift. Even though the directors of 1970s and 1980 – who were not born to migrant families - tried to establish a rapport with the migrant community, the movies tell their stories from a particular distance. Therefore, it can be argued that the movies of the young Turkish-German directors are different in terms of themes, protagonists, language.

As it was put forward before, in 1990s there were also social and global changes. First, it can be observed that Turkish-German society and German society itself began to change. In the movies of young Turkish-German directors, overmentioned clear distinction between two societies, namely the oppressor and the oppressed began to erode. In the movies, prejudice towards Turkish-German society is not that visible anymore, as it was in the movies of 1980s. Therefore, the main themes of the movies, and the social structure that is depicted in the movies changed accordingly. Second, as it was discussed in the second chapter, the understanding of national cinema was also changed in this period (Higson, 2000). Therefore, the influence of the migrant directors on cinema was acknowledged. Three years after making his first movie, at the 2001 Berlin Film Festival, Fatih Akin was to declare that his production *Im Juli* is a German movie (Gemünden: 180). Furthermore, institutions such as *das kleine Fernsehspiel* have been supporting migrant directors financially. Especially, the second half of the 1990s can be considered as a transitional stage, and define the main features of the movies produced in 2000s.

5. 2000s: “Transnationalty in a playfulway”⁴⁶

In 2000s, the Turkish-German directors have cemented what they established in 1990s. Turkish-German movies became more popular than ever, especially the movies of Fatih Akin enjoy acclaim from Germany, since he is one of the most famous “German” directors. For instance, *die Zeit* is proud of Fatih Akin, because he did not tell the story of a country “far away”, in his last movie *Soul Kitchen*. It is claimed that the best stories come from Hamburg, and therefore Akin prefers staying home.⁴⁷ It would seem that some of the Turkish-German directors become mainstream in terms of stories they are telling, the magnitude of wide audience, and the stylistic approach they employ in their movies. In this context, Fatih Akin is the best example.

Apart from Akin’s success, in 2000s, it is observable that the emergence of a new genre. Movies of this genre consist of humorous elements when narrating the light stories of Turkish-German community. Furthermore, these movies are accompanied with German comedy TV Series related to Turkish-German, such as *Türkisch für Anfaenger*. This new genre will be analyzed in further detail in the following parts. When examining the selected movies, discursive strategies, and stylistic approaches differ greatly both from 1980s and 1990s. Since the problems of migrants, the perception of the problems related to migrants changed, therefore the narrated stories changed significantly.

In this part seven selected movies will be analyzed. While, some movies signify a new genre such as *Kebab Connection* or *Süperseks*, the movie *die Fremde* will be evaluated as a return to the 1980s, namely the strategies of victimization.

⁴⁶ (Mennel: 2002: 136)

⁴⁷ www.zeit.de/2009/52/Fatih-Akin

5.1. Kanak Attack (Lars Becker, 2000):

“We are all Kanaks, our sweat is Kanak, our golden rings are Kanak, our style is Kanak...”

Based on Feridun Zaimoğlu’s novel, directed by Lars Becker, set in Cologne, *Kanak Attack* is a film about gangsta boys. *Kanak Attack*, revolves around the Turkish-German Ertan, his lifestyle and his philosophy. Ertan gets into trouble with the other Kanak criminals in Cologne, he tries to survive, run from the police and seize power with his own methods. The film can be seen as almost a low-budget sequel of *Kurz und Schmerzlos*. Along with the *Kurz und Schmerzlos* and *Dealer*, this film focuses on the life of migrant criminals that exemplify a group of angry youths trying to find alternative ways to survive.

The story is cyclical in a sense, because Ertan and his friends commit a crime, they get arrested, they wait in custodial prison, they are interrogated and threatened by a police officer who is willing to lock them in jail, they get out, they find a way to commit a crime, and this vicious cycle occurs again. However, Ertan’s friend who does not have a German citizenship gets deported from Germany. Although Ertan says that this is his story, in my opinion, the movie’s plot aimed to describe the situation Kanaks live in. There are many monologues of Ertan that reflect his values, beliefs and expectations:

“What can I say? I am one among thousands. I see Arabs, Africans, Turks, dealers, drug addicts, prostitutes ... I look into the mirror and I see my self. That’s it. That’s my story.”

In the film, the national identity is subverted by using the word Kanak. Kanak encompasses every identity, every nationality. Even the Hitler’s emphasis on “one nation” will be reversed by the protagonist, when he says: “You are a Turk, you are a Yugoslavian and I am Turk, we are one nation, we are all Kanaks!” Moreover, this

movie presents the hidden places of the city, Cologne that can only be seen through the eyes of a Kanak. The language is mostly German, only in some scenes Turkish is used by characters to swear more influentially.

As it is depicted in many other movies of Turkish-German cinema, the characters of the movie use drugs non-stop, they are almost never sober. After his best friend gets deported from the country, Ertan follows him to İstanbul. Again, in a Turkish-German movie the crossing boarder scene takes place. However, this journey turns out to be a drug trafficking operation led by a Turkish mafia leader (played by Hussi Kutlucan). As we see the size of this drug operation astonishes the judges after Ertan is taken to court. However, Ertan seems to be proud of pulling off this organization.

The figure of the Turkish father seems to be a caricature-like reflection of the past characters depicted in the Turkish-German movies. The father tells Ertan, that he sets his son free to do anything, but right after saying that, he introduces a ban of pimping. However, the boot is on the other foot now; because Ertan shows his father how he can deal with people who own him money or he enlightens the elderly with his smart speeches. The criminal Kanak emerges as a wise person, who acquires necessary information through his practical everyday life.

Kanak Attack does not present the criminal life as a lifestyle aspiring people. Living on a slippery slope, the characters of the movie have a close brush with death everyday, and even the best friend of Ertan is shot to death at the end of the movie. Being a Kanak is a lifestyle, a point of view, however being a big Kanak criminal is dispensable. Just like in *Kurz und Schmerzlos*, where the protagonist is willing to leave his criminal life behind in Hamburg and go to İstanbul; the place where Ertan lives and his lifestyle turn into something to be run away from.

5.2. Eine kleine Freiheit (Yüksel Yavuz, 2003)

This film revolves around a young Kurdish boy, who lives and works illegally in Germany. His parents are killed by the Turkish army, after their close friend tells

on them. Set in Hamburg, *Eine kleine Freiheit* turns into a story of seeking revenge, finding new dimensions of life, being illegal in everywhere aspect within the society.

In his movie, Yavuz also focuses on the Kurdish problem dominating the Turkish media for a long time. Kurds, who are not members of PKK, are criticized by the militants who fled to Germany. For the protagonist Baran (played by Çağdaş Bozkurt), these controversies between Kurds is only a thing to observe, he is only willing to take revenge of his parents. At the same time, he tries to keep away his African friend from drug dealing.

“They are both illegal migrants. This is not their fault or choice to live like this. They are forced to live like that. This is a huge problem in Germany. In media, the migrants are represented as if they were willing to be like that. This is what I want to present in my movies. This is a problem of class.” (Personal interview with Yüksel Yavuz)

In his movie, Yavuz focuses on problems of migrants and tells stories of characters that are not visible anymore for Turkish-German directors as they were in 1970s and 1980s. However, the difference lays on the way Yavuz presents the migrants. His documentary-like movies shows the problems directly with strong lines, strong characters and also with a social message.

5.3. Gegen die Wand (Fatih Akin, 2004): “Punk is not dead!”

“Ich will leben, ich will tanzen, ich will ficken!”⁴⁸

“In February 2004, Fatih Akin won the top prize at the International Berlin Film Festival for his feature *Gegen die Wand (Head-On)*. It was the first time

⁴⁸ This is what Sibel’s aim is. Although, Sibel is presented as a free spirit character. Throughout the film, it is observable that her understanding of freedom is limited to use of drugs and alcohol, sex, and dance.

in 18 years that a German film received this prestigious award.” (Göktürk, Gremling and Kaes, 2007a: 15).

Set in Hamburg and in İstanbul, *Gegen die Wand* has two main chapters. In Hamburg, the city they are familiar with brings them nothing but misery. İstanbul, on the other hand, is the center for a new beginning. Sibel (played by Sibel Kekilli) wants to marry Cahit in order to liberate herself from her patriarchal family. Fatih Akın presents a new Turkish-German woman figure in his film: The woman character in *40 m² Deutschland* (1986) was mute and she was not able to do anything to take a stand against her husband. In *Abschied vom falschen Paradies* (1989), the woman character killed her husband, because she did not want to be beaten up anymore. In *Gegen die Wand*, on the other hand, the woman character Sibel has to be liberated again by a man, however this time she finds an alternative way to freedom. This is the marriage of convention.



Figure 17 – The Wedding

The marriage of convention is a sociological notion that has been studied by many scholars within the context of the Turkish migration to Europe. An example of this notion is depicted in *Almanya Acı Vatan*: the male character Dursun wants to marry Güldane, in order to come to Germany to be a guest worker. The same situation

is also apparent in *Gegen die Wand*: Sibel wants to marry Cahit to be free and a normal girl.

In *Gegen die Wand* Sibel finds the solution to marry a Turkish man whom she randomly met in a clinic. As Sibel meets Cahit all of a sudden she asks: “Are you a Turk? Will you marry me?”, because her oppressive parents would only let her marry with a Turkish man. Cahit and Sibel are both suicidal characters, and they do not want to live anymore. Cahit, who has a hardcore punk lifestyle, is unhappy, because his beloved wife died. Sibel is unhappy because she has to live under the oppressive traditional values of her parents. Akin explains the logic that lies behind this movie:

“I don’t want to attack Turkish tradition or denounce the older generation. Nevertheless I hope that conservative parents –regardless of which culture they belong to- will be provoked by my film to reflect and recognize what damage they can cause with an excess of strict discipline.” (Burns, 2007: 12)

After their fake marriage turns into a serious and love affair, they face awkward situations; such as, Sibel’s sex life becomes a problem, as Cahit kills a man by accident who Sibel has slept with before. However, this accidental murder is not presented as an honour killing, since Cahit is detached from his Turkishness. As it was mentioned before, Cahit is much more different than the other Turkish-German male characters in the movie.⁴⁹ He is represented as a complex and ‘Charles Bukowski-like’ character without any will to live and passion to do something, and therefore he cannot be analyzed only as a Turkish-German migrant character.

After killing this man, Cahit gets into prison. Sibel flies to Turkey to run away from her parents who read Cahit’s story in the newspaper which is presented as an honour killing. Prison has a transformative influence on a migrant character once again. On the other hand, in İstanbul, Sibel finds a job in a hotel where her cousin Selma (played by Meltem Cumbul) works as an undermanager. Selma has perspectives, and aims. She wants to be the general manager of this big hotel.

⁴⁹ Cahit even he calls them: “Fucking Kanaks!” However, Sibel thinks it is funny Cahit calls them Kanak, since he is one of them. Cahit cannot speak Turkish, and he gets alienated among other Turkish-German characters.

However, Sibel finds this daily routine Selma lives in very pathetic. Sibel loses her will to live, she uses drugs and gets into fight with a group of men; they beat her black and blue. A taxi driver finds her laying on the street half death, and saves her life. They get married and have a child. After Cahit comes out of prison, like *Gabriel* in *Kurz und Schmerzlos* or the characters of *Im Juli*, Cahit goes to İstanbul to find Sibel.⁵⁰ However, Sibel does not want to change her life in order to be with Cahit. At the end she becomes a wife and mother, just like her parents want her to be. The uncertainty in the resolution of the plot leaves the audience with an open end. Therefore, it can be argued that the film reproduces the cliché figure of Turkish woman.

Hatice Ayten, who is also a Turkish-German documentary director, discusses in her article⁵¹ Fatih Akın's film *Gegen die Wand*. Ayten suggests that Fatih Akın's film was acclaimed and celebrated by film critics of the news papers and in television channels in Germany as a radical and uncompromising feature film that depicts the parallel society and subvert cultural values. On the contrary, Ayten argues, the film is embraced in Turkey as a movie carries on the *Arabesk* forms that can be seen in the *Yeşilçam* (Turkish Hollywood) movies. Ayten criticizes that diversity of the evaluations arguing that these evaluations of the movie are based on cultural differentiations.

According to Ayten, the female protagonist Sibel is presented as a positive example and also a reversed version of Turkish-German women who wear head scarf, as if there were only these two figures existed in the society. Moreover, Ayten also mentions that film presents the Turkish-German society as minority group living in Germany in an isolated way. According to German critics, argues Ayten, the film represents the whole Turkish community living in Berlin, and therefore it functions also as an instrument of standardization. It is a biased evaluation to mention that Fatih Akın's movie represents second and third generation of Turkish German, because a

⁵⁰ In almost every movie of Fatih Akın depicting Turkish-German immigrants, there is at least one journey to Turkey, and most of the time to İstanbul.

⁵¹ "Was Sie schon immer über die Türken wissen wollen... Zur Rezeption des Films 'Gegen die Wand.'" http://www.epd.de/medien/medien_index_27924.html

German film is not evaluated in such a way German critics evaluate *Gegen die Wand*. They do not discuss the movie, whether it represents the whole community or not.

Ayten rightfully claims that the characters of the movie embody different variations of the clichés. Especially, all Turkish male characters of the movie represent clichés, namely they are macho, patriarchal, drug dealer, criminal, ‘beater’ or raper. Even the male taxi driver (played by Tim Seyfi) in İstanbul is a drug dealer from Bayern. On the other hand, Sibel’s mother is also a passive character who quails before the father of the family.

This film of Fatih Akın reproduces the clichés, although it seems to be a brand new story with really revolting scenes and use of language. It is claimed that *Gegen die Wand* is provocative, because it is expected that the Turkish community living in Berlin would be offended by this movie. Even this expectation is a cliché. The film’s name is *Gegen die Wand* (Head-On or direct translation is *Against the Wall*), which asserts that there is a wall that limits character’s real desires. However, the characters settle down at the end of the movie without certain resolution of their conflict of predetermined roles. Sibel sets up a home and becomes a housewife, and Cahit goes back his homeland to Mersin. But, on the other hand, what Fatih Akın establishes as a Turkish-German director in Germany is extraordinary. Even though he reproduces the clichés about Turkish community, he does it in a unique way which is open to change and progress in the future.

5.4. Kebab Connection (Anno Saul, 2004) and Süperseks (Torsten Wacker, 2004): The Emergence of a new Genre

“*We die for Döner!*”



Figure 18 – The film poster of *Kebab Connection* and *Süperseks*

Directed by Anno Saul, written by Fatih Akin and Ruth Thoma, co-produced by Akin’s Wüste Filmproduction, Westdeutscher Rundfunk (WDR) and ARTE, *Kebab Connection* revolves around a young Turkish-German director İbo (played by Denis Moschitto) who wants to direct the first German Kung-Fu movie ever made. The German producer does not understand his passion to cinema or what he wants to do. He directs a commercial film for his uncle who has a döner restaurant; in his movie there are two strangers coming to a döner shop, however there is only one “döner im brot” left, so they start fighting since they are kung-fu fighters. The commercial film is shown in a cinema, and it is so influential on the audience; they rush into the restaurant to eat döner.

İbo’s relationship with his family and friends is also depicted in the movie. He has a German girlfriend, yet his father forbids him to have a German wife. According to his father; İbo can go out with German girls, he can have fun with German girls, but he is not allowed to have a German wife, because they are different than Turks. At the end, however, his father brings İbo’s pregnant girlfriend to the hospital by his Taxi and tells him that he has to stay with his girlfriend and be happy. Everything is solved smoother than expected.

In a similar fashion, *Süperseks* tells the story of a young Turkish-German man Elviz (also played by Denis Moschitto) who wants to start first Turkish-language sex-

hotline in Hamburg. However conservative Turkish men, who also call this line, want to destroy Elviz's company claiming that he runs a business of sin.

Both movies derive from humorous ideas focusing on a Turkish-German character who is willing to establish "a first thing which has never been done before" in Germany or in the Turkish-German community. Since this character is Turkish-German, it is expected that the movie gets funnier because it is based on the contradictions of both communities. Yeşilada (2008:77) labels these movies as a new genre, namely the "Turkish-light". She also discusses movie in terms of their functionality, in accordance with the public debates:

"Both films set their stories in a multicultural (mostly German-Turkish) milieu, operate with the plot device of a young, attractive hero getting into trouble and solving the problem in a creative, rather unconventional way, thereby creating comical chaos with a happy ending. And both productions present the migrant milieu as one of tradition and taboo, invention and creativity, chaos and comedy at the same time. They gain lightness through their fast pace and general tongue-in-cheek tone, and they profit from a remarkable range of (young) actors of Turkish or multicultural descent (like Denis Moschitto, Hilmi Sozer, Tayfun Bademsoy, Adnan Maral, Adam Bousdoukos, and many others). They are reminiscent of productions like *East is East*. (...) Interestingly, this 'Turkish light' genre emerges at the same time as German public debates over the supposed 'failure of Turkish integration and the existence of a Turkish (Islamic) "parallel society" that 'threatens' German society with orthodox religious views, rigid traditionalism, domestic violence, and honour killings. According to this debate, which is lead by major institutions of the German media, the concept of multiculturalism has 'failed'. Turkish feminist rights activists like Seyran Ates or sociologists like Necla Kelek accuse Turkish men of threatening the liberalism of German society with their violent orthodoxy – a view that is not, however, shared by all critics (Cheesmann 2007: 114f). Still, the debate has renewed old stereotypes of the violent Turkish-Muslim enemy, not least through countless pseudo-objective 'documentaries', which constantly present the same topics from the problem area: Islam (terrorism, menace), the women's question (headscarves), patriarchy (honour killings, forced marriages), social problems

(unemployment, criminality), often confusing information with cliché. The tendency to construct an image of the ‘problematic Turk’ in the media has increased since the terror acts of 9/11. Media and politics have continually depicted Turkish immigrants as part of the Islamic menace to western society ever since (Butterwegge 2007). (...) On the other hand, probably in reaction to this negative trend, the public broadcasting services have tried more recently to pay tribute to (Turkish) immigration to Germany. The aim is to establish a positive picture of the integrated migrant through TV (Buettner 2007). In a recent and new turn in German television, the notion of ‘Integration im TV’ not only calls for an increased representation of migrants on and behind the screen (i. e. presenters, hosts, actors, scriptwriters, directors), but also opens the door to Turkish themes in the fictional realm. This is how two productions of the ‘Turkish light’ genre for German television came about, and it is interesting to see how they deal with the task of depicting Turkish migrant life in Germany.” (Yeşilada: 78 – 79)

Yeşilada evaluate these films along with the ethno-comedy and new Tv-Series focusing on Turks such as *Türkisch für Anfaenger* which presents a family with Turkish and German members for the first time on German TV, the TV series also reflect the growing rate of bi-national marriages in Germany (Yeşilada: 81 – 89).

These productions signify the role of humour in the German-Turkish movies. However, at the same time; they do not coincide with the Kutlucan’s understanding of comedy, “a serious comedy”, rather, in my opinion, they are the transformed version of the style Hollywood which had a liberating influence on the Turkish-German filmmakers (Gemünden: 183). In other words, the influence of Hollywood can be teamed neither by the Turkish script writers nor German directors. It becomes increasingly influential. In this context, movies made by Turkish-German directors include humor, however narrated stories are slightly stronger than scripts of soap operas.

5.5. Evet, Ich will (Sinan Akkuş, 2008)

“There was a *Cosby Show* once, it’s something like that.”



Figure 19 – The film poster of *Evet, Ich Will!*

Directed and scripted by Sinan Akkuş, *Evet, Ich Will!*, has four main stories, and Akkuş tries to deal with almost every single problem and contradiction that Turkish-Germans face in Germany. Film’s main aim is to show and resolve binary oppositions by using love stories of different couples. A Kurdish man wants to marry the Turkish girl who he works with. However, since her father is a strict secularist and nationalist, he does not want her daughter to marry this man, whose family is both Kurdish and religious. There is also a Turkish-German gay, whose father does not know anything about his sexual identity. He wants his son to marry a Turkish girl, however this Turkish girl carries the baby of an African man. On the other hand, there is another binational couple, the woman is Turkish and the man is German. All these couples attain their desire at the end of the movie.

All these problematic couples are depicted in a humorous way. Numerous clichéd questions are asked by the characters of the movie about “the other” nationalities and identities, so that prejudices and stereotypes are reversed and subverted by characters trying to find logical answers for them. Some time later, clichés lose their significance, and the film turns into a romantic comedy. The movie

mirrors a collage of problems, and at the end it breaks the mirror with the sledgehammer of humor. Sinan Akkuş is proud of having done a movie like this, because he does not feel comfortable with movies depicting migrants as clichéd stereotypes. Exactly as the compliment made by Mehmet Kurtuluş' for Akkuş's movie: "For the first time, there is a movie that does not show the Turk as a monster!" (Personal interview with Sinan Akkuş)

5.6. Die Fremde (Feo Aladağ, 2010)

"Didn't you tell me that blood is stronger than water?"

Over stated phrase is one of the other phrases that reflect the values, beliefs and expectations in the movie. Accordingly, a contradiction between water and blood is established in order to depict the Turkish family. In this context, water can flow, it takes the form whatever it is in. This quality of water symbolizes unboundedness and flexibility to adapt. On the other hand, blood is defended against external factors and condemned to stay in the human body. It symbolizes the purity and loyalty for the nationalists. Needless to say, blood symbolizes family bonds. Turkish family depicted in the movie is stubborn, insists on living with moral laws and resists changing.

Six years after *Gegen die Wand*, Sibel Kekilli plays again a second generation Turkish-German woman character who is the victim of the patriarchal oppression applied by her Turkish family and her husband. The movie opens with the arrival of Umay to Berlin in order to have an abortion. However, only his sister in law knows about it. After turning back to her husband and his family living in İstanbul, her husband's aggression can be seen. Umay and her boy get beaten up for no reason. She runs away to her family living in Berlin. However, they do not want to accept her to the family, because she is seen as a sinister female figure who has walked out the values of patriarchal tradition. From this scene on, Umay tries to make her family accept her once again; however she failed on every attempt. Meanwhile, her elder brother harasses her, insults her, and even tries to beat her up with every opportunity

he gets. On the other hand, her little brother and sister stay, regardless to her situation, but they also think that she has to stay away from the family for the common good; because the little sister's fiancé is about to cancel their wedding. Her little sister has to marry him because she is pregnant, and her father tries to find a way out of this situation, at the end he bribes his daughter's father-in-law.

In the poster of the film, Umay kisses a hand of an elderly family member; this symbolizes her obedience towards her family. Feo Aladağ depicts an interesting woman character that can be associated in some ways with the figure of woman depicted in 1970s and 1980s; on the other hand, Umay is not entirely muted and oppressed character. She can speak perfect German, she tries to start a life, and she tries to communicate with her family. Umay's relationship with religion is one of the key factors, because although she wants to leave patriarchal traditions behind, she cannot leave her family. In one scene, she tries to confront her father (played by Settar Tanrıöğen) who wants to take Umay's son to his husband, yet she does not do anything against her father, rather she cuts herself with the knife in front of him. Her father goes back to their village to ask his father's idea. Afterwards, the father wants the little brother to kill Umay. While Umay's little Turkish German brother is associated with a murder; on the other hand, the figure of German man –the boyfriend of Umay- is associated with the liberty and happiness. At the end of the movie, the little brother is not able to kill Umay and runs away. Yet, her oldest brother seems to be waiting for Umay, and at the moment she turns around holding her son in her arms, he kills her son instead of Umay by accident. The last scene could be seen as the victory of old fatherly tradition and the blood, symbol of boundedness and family bonds. belong to the youngest of the family. Hence the son of Umay who is the embodiment of the coming generation is murdered by the tradition whose values will continue to dominate the new generation. Therefore, this scene asserts the idea that tradition will not be overthrown by the up coming ones no matter how zealously they –in this case the female figure- revolt.



Figure 20 – Umay tries to stop his husband from taking his son to Turkey

In her first movie, Feo Aladağ deals with the life of the Turkish-German women in Germany. In 2005, Hatun Sürücü was killed by his brother. In one of her interview, Feo Aladağ mentions that her film cannot be associated only with this case of Sürücü, rather the film symbolizes every honour killing occurred in the last fifteen years.⁵² As it is mentioned before, except Tevfik Başer, every directors and actors that I have conducted my interviews with, mention that the story of Aladağ is a singled out case. It does not reflect the reality of German-Turkish women in 2010. Moreover, they neatly blame Aladağ behaving eagerly to get subsidy and an award from a festival, because as it is analyzed in the previous parts, they think that Feo Aladağ has made a movie to serve the German taste.

After 1980's, it is noticeable that the space for creativity of the Turkish-German directors has expanded. Moreover the cinema of duty that Turkish-German directors have been reduced to began gradually erode. However, even in 2000s, it is possible to see some examples of an old understanding of cinema of duty. For instance, the controversial movie of Feo Aladağ, *die Fremde*, focusing on the victimized Turkish-German woman by her oppressive family and husband indicates that there is still a stereotypical storyline that can be used by the directors. Most of the interviewees suggest that this kind of stories pleases the German taste, and this makes

⁵² <http://tiefkultur.de/2010-03-12/%E2%80%9Edie-fremde%E2%80%9C-von-feo-aladag-interview/>

it easy for a director to find subsidy and acquire right to access to film festivals. Otherwise, interviewees suggest, it would be not easy to find financial support. Even Fatih Akin, who is one of the most famous directors of Germany, should have established his own production company to finance his own movies. By doing this Akin expanded his own artistic area of freedom.

On the other hand, there are still Turkish-German directors, such as Sinan Akkuş, who are dependent on financial support. On the one hand Akkuş does not have an expanded space for creativity like Akin enjoys, and also he is not that famous like Akin. It is very logical to see a famous director producing his/her movies continuously. It is, however, not a common thing to observe that an unknown Turkish-German director having the same space for creativity and financial support as a well-known Turkish-German (or an underrecognized German director) has. That means, even though the clichéd images of Turkish-German figures have been reversed by some movies, and some directors have made different movies than anticipated, there is still a position prescribed for Turkish-German directors in Germany.

Conclusion

In his influential work *European Revolutions 1492 - 1992*, Charles Tilly (1996: 11) draws an analogy between traffic jams and revolutionary situations occurred in history. In a similar manner, I also would draw an analogy between the position of the motorcyclists in the traffic of İstanbul and the position of Turkish-German community in the society of Germany.

In the traffic in İstanbul, motorcyclists cannot properly position themselves on the carriageways. According to the traffic regulations, motorcyclists have the same rights and equality as car owners in traffic. But, car owners do not give them the opportunity to drive safely. In the traffic, motorcyclists are perceived as a second class vehicle, as if they are invisible and not suppose to be on the road. The road belongs to the car owners, and they run over motorcyclists.

Their status as a normal vehicle is taken away by the de facto dominance of the cars. Therefore, they create alternative ways to survive in the traffic. Especially, when there is a traffic jam, they can drive between the cars, while car owners giving them the stink-eye. However, it is not a safe way to drive in İstanbul, this alternative rides often cause traffic accidents resulting in the death of one party. Needless to say, the ones who are harmed are motorcyclists. Their situation is reminiscent of migrants in two respects. They both are disadvantaged in the struggle to acquire “social” status, and they are both trying to create alternative ways within this struggle.

As compared with the situation of Turkish-German directors, traffic jam resembles to a cultural obstruction. In times like these, migrant directors, who can tell stories that have never been told before, come to the forefront and rejuvenate the filmic landscape. The stories that they tell are also connected to the alternative ways that they find. The quotation below is about a term Zygmund Baumann suggests that coincides with the alternative ways for both migrants and motorcyclists.

“The disintegration of the social network, the falling apart of effective agencies of collective action is often noted with a good deal of anxiety and

bewailed as the unanticipated ‘side effect’ of the new lightness and fluidity of the increasingly mobile, slippery, shifty, evasive and fugitive power.” (Baumann, 2004: 14)

The figure of migrant is stuck in the middle of power struggle, negative perceptions towards himself/herself or discrimination attempts. Just like in the case of motorcyclists, these alternative ways of migrants often result badly. One example can be the criminality issue represented in Turkish-German movies. The majority of these movies do not flatter the criminal character, rather they are like warnings. They warn the character not to underestimate the state’s power and they indicate the difficulties of the lifestyle he/she chooses. According to films representing criminality, this is not the proper life to maintain.

What must be done to show that the migrant is not “one person” and to mention that the migration is not always a homogeneous and trouble-making process. In order to do that, scholars have to reject the nation-state based theories, and focus more on the ongoing processes and the transnational arguments when defining migrant, migration, and migrant culture.

When we look at the movies from different decades, it is obvious to see that Turkish-German movies underwent noticeable changes. These changes are based on several factors. First factor that influences the character of the movies is the origin of the director or the generation he/she belonged to. First generation of Turkish-German directors (who were not born to guest worker families) focus on the social and material reality of migrants. These well-meaning productions along with the movies of New German Cinema confirmed and reproduced clichéd images of migrants rather than reversing it. In the course of time, social context changed, and new funding possibilities arised for Turkish-German directors. Moreover, in the second half of 1990s, a new generation of Turkish-German directors (who were born to migrant families) began to make their first movies. This was a clear breakthrough from the cinema of duty. This was also the moment when scholars began to question the term “national cinema” and consider a cinema that was not based on one nation-state, and a cinema that does not allow communities imagine themselves.

Until 1998, Turkish-German directors were stuck in the traffic with the all other German car owners. They were reduced to make films of the same stories and characters. 1998 onwards, they have been directing movies with brand new approaches and they have been subverting the clichéd images of the migrant figure. Until now, there are not so many accidents on the way, let's hope we would not see in the future.

Portraits of Interviewees

Tevfik Baser

Tevfik Başer was born in 1951, in Çankırı Turkey. He studied cinema in Hamburg in 1980s. He acquired citizenship in 1989. *40 m² Deutschland* was nominated for the Federal Film Prize in 1987. *Abschied vom falschen Paradies* was also nominated for the Federal Film Prize. Başer's third movie *Lebewohl, Fremde* served as Germany's official entry to the Cannes Film Festival in 1991. Tevfik Başer lives in Turkey since 1997. He is still teaching cinema at the *Kadir Has University* in İstanbul.

Yuksel Yavuz

Yuksel was born in 1964 in Karakocan, Turkey. He came to Hamburg in 1980. He studied cinema. He is still making feature films and documentaries for German televisions.

Hussi Kutlucan

Hussi Kutlucan was born in 1962 in Kemah, Turkey. In 1971, his parents came to Berlin. He played in the punk band "Solient Green" (also known as *die Aerzte*). He took private acting lessons. He started to act in theater productions. He has scripted and directed three important movies. He is still playing in movie productions and TV-Series in Germany.

Sinan Akkuş

Sinan Akkuş was born in 1970 in Erzincan, Turkey. He studied cinema and he was graduated in 2000. First he scripted short movies. His first feature movie is *Evet, ich will!* (2008)

Neco Çelik

Neco Çelik was born in 1972 in Berlin (Kreuzberg), Germany. He made two feature films, *Alltag, Urban Guerillas* and *Kısık Ateşte 15 Dakika*. He stages *Gegen die Wand* as a musical.

Mürtüz Yolcu

Mürtüz Yolcu was born in 1961 in Iğdır, Turkey. He is an actor, and has been organizing the *Dialog Theater Festival* for fourteen years.

Tuncay Kulaoğlu

Kulaoğlu is a filmmaker, journalist and he also works as dramatist in Ballhaus-Naunystasse.

Remziye Uykun

Remziye Uykun was born in 1972 in Tokat. She came in 1979 to Germany (Altona, Hamburg). She studied sociology. She has been working since 2000 as social worker and project manager with people with migration background.

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Neco Çelik – 25.06.2010, Kreuzberg, Berlin

Tunçay Kulaoğlu - 01.07.2010, Kreuzberg, Berlin

Tevfik Başer – 07.07.2010, Kadir Has University, Istanbul

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