

# Sociological Analysis of Tehran City in the Cinematic Works of the 1960s and 1970s with an Emphasis on “Brick and Mirror” and “the Cycle” Films\*

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Received 25 June 2017;

Revised 07 August 2017;

Accepted 29 October 2017;

Available Online 20 June 2020

## ABSTRACT

Knowing human beings, society and how they interact with urban spaces is of great importance to achieve human-centered and high-quality architecture and urbanism. So, in the present study, it is attempted to recognize society and city through the cinema as one of the important tools showing the interaction between society and the city simultaneously. The theory of “reflection” in the sociology of cinema considers films as documents in which social life is reflected. Therefore, the present study aims to criticize modernity and daily urban life, as well as to know the general reaction of Tehran’s citizens in the face of this city in a specific historical period, through the cinema and the image of the city and society provided by it. The theoretical approach applied in this study is based on the views of Lucien Goldman. Goldman’s approach to literary criticism is evolutionary structuralism which is applied to achieve the hidden structure of films through the semiotics of the image of layers and the hidden structure of the text. The present study is focused on two of the most influential films of the 1960s and 1970s, namely “Brick and Mirror” and “The Cycle”. These films display clear characteristics of modernity, including human alienation in the city, the transformation of socio-cultural behaviors and norms and their impact on behavior and urban norms, the conflict between the old and the new, the instability of physical spaces, the permanent destruction and renovation of the city and so on. Consequently, to accurately know the society who are the audience of architecture, one can use film and cinema, which provide an illustrated report on the social conditions of human beings and how they interact with space and the city in a short period of time.

**Keywords:** Tehran City, Sociology, Cinema.

\* This article is derived from the first author’s dissertation entitled “How Tehran City was reflected in cinematic works produced before the Islamic Revolution from the perspective of sociology of art”, which was defended in the discipline of architecture under the supervision of the second and third authors and the advice of the fourth author in the Faculty of Civil Engineering, Architecture and Art at Islamic Azad University (Science and Research Branch).

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Reviewing films as living and untouched visual documents reveals that the study of the evolution of many social phenomena, especially in the present century, will not be complete disregarding this global media. It is the language of different societies, and especially in the case of popular films, preserves the point of view of the society and social phenomena of each era and transmit them to future generations. The filmmaker, consciously or unconsciously, reflects part of the spirit and meaning of his time and society in cinema, and therefore, his perception of the city is part of the sociological recognition of the city. The reflection theory in cinema and the sociology of art have a long history, although different theorist differently explain how this reflection is. Lucien Goldman's view of reflection emphasizes the fact that the content of literary and artistic works may not be exactly the reflection of society. However, the worldview presented in the form of this content certainly has an external appearance in the contemporary society. Our basic assumption is that cinema, as one of the most important sociological tools, can help us better understand the society of Tehran city, which has always been a symbol of urban modernity in Iran. The 1960s is known as the decade during which the social grounds were founded to form an image of city in Iranian cinema, because this decade observed the birth of the middle class, i.e. a class rooted in urbanism. The middle class refers to a class that is neither the ruling class nor the working class. The formation of the middle class in Iran began in the reign of Reza Shah, during which the city faced not with cultural duality but with cultural multiplicity due to the presence of peri-urban immigrants and represents the tragedy of the imperious development of this period. The full sociological disintegration of Tehran and other major cities is the product of such a development. The point is, however, as abovementioned, popular cinema was responsible for advertising reforms made by the king, and it should promise secure future appearing depending on the white revolution through the positive image of the fate of its heroes (Jirani, 2000, p. 104). Since two selected cinematic works of the 1960s and 1970s are analyzed and interpreted in this article, assuming the position of sociology in cinema, one can find out and know urban issues common in this particular historical period, part of society mentality, the social unconsciousness, as well as the general reaction of Tehran's citizens in the face of this city and how man transited from tradition to modernity.

## 2. RESEARCH BACKGROUND

The encounter between the city and the cinema has been considered not only in the developed western cities, but also in the developing cities. In a book entitled "Bombay Cinema: An Archive of the City", written by Ranjani Mazumdar, it is pointed out that Indian cinema

was born due to the interaction between the city and the mentality and physics of social space, and provided the researcher with a valuable and powerful archive to address urban issues (Mazumdar, 2007, p. 18). Stephen Barber, in his book entitled "Cinema and Urban Space", discusses the impact the cinema on the visualization of human history and body over the years, and how cinema represents the historical changes and ups and downs of urban development. In his research, he talks about the representation of Europe and Japan as two vital areas in the modern world whose developments were tied to the spread of cinematic images (Barber, 2002, p. 7). Mark Shiel and Tony Fitzmaurice in their book entitled "Cinema and the city: film and urban societies in a global context", discuss how cities such as Paris and London were presented in cinema by noting that cinema is the most important form of culture and the city the most important social organization. The important point is that Shiel believes that cinema not only has represented the geography, architecture and urban fabric, but has also had a significant impact on the cultural geography, environment and urban identity of certain cities such as Los Angeles, Paris or Mumbai (Shiel & Fitzmaurice, 2012, p. 38). David Bess, who has studied the components of Rome City in Italian films, has addressed the relationship between everyday life in Rome and its urban spaces using cinematic works. For this purpose, he has considered six important components of space, including aliens, the theme of city, neighborhood, and peripheral area, the metaphorical city and the cinematic city in Rome. Moreover, he pointed out that Italian cinema contains the most natural and cultural features of this tourist city, as if tourism gets excited from the discovery of known places (Bess, 2000, p. 18). Parviz Ejlali in his book entitled "Social Change and Movies in Iran", emphasizes that one can observe a kind of balance and solidarity between social changes and continuities and the themes and contents of Iranian films (Ejlali 2004, p. 48). Kazemi and Mahmoudi, in their article entitled "The Problematic of Urban Modernity; Tehran in Cinema before the Islamic Revolution", emphasized that "in fact, the representation of the city in cinematic films is considered the history of the developments of Iranian modernity" (Kazemi & Mahmoudi, 2008, p. 91).

## 3. THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical approach applied in this study is based on the views of Lucien Goldman. Goldman's approach to literary criticism is evolutionary structuralism. According to Goldman, since "... the main creator of the work is a group within which this worldview was prepared, not the author who is the broker, the study of a work must be performed through two stages: First, the work must be understood within its structure. This stage is called the process of perception. In the second

stage, this structure should be placed in the socio-economic structure. This stage is called the process of explanation” (Goldman, 1990, p. 11). Therefore, in order to understand a social or artistic phenomenon, it is necessary to understand its macro structure or hidden generality. To find the hidden structure of films, the image of the layers and the hidden structure of the text are obtained through semiotics. In the present study, using a semiotic approach, two of the most influential films of the 1960s and 1970s (“Brick and Mirror” and “The Cycle”) are analyzed.

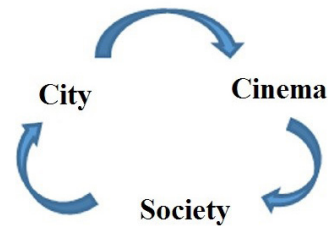


Fig. 1. Relationships between City, Cinema and Society

### 3.1. Conceptual Model

To achieve the content and social meaning of the films through semiotics, the process shown in Figure 2 must be followed.

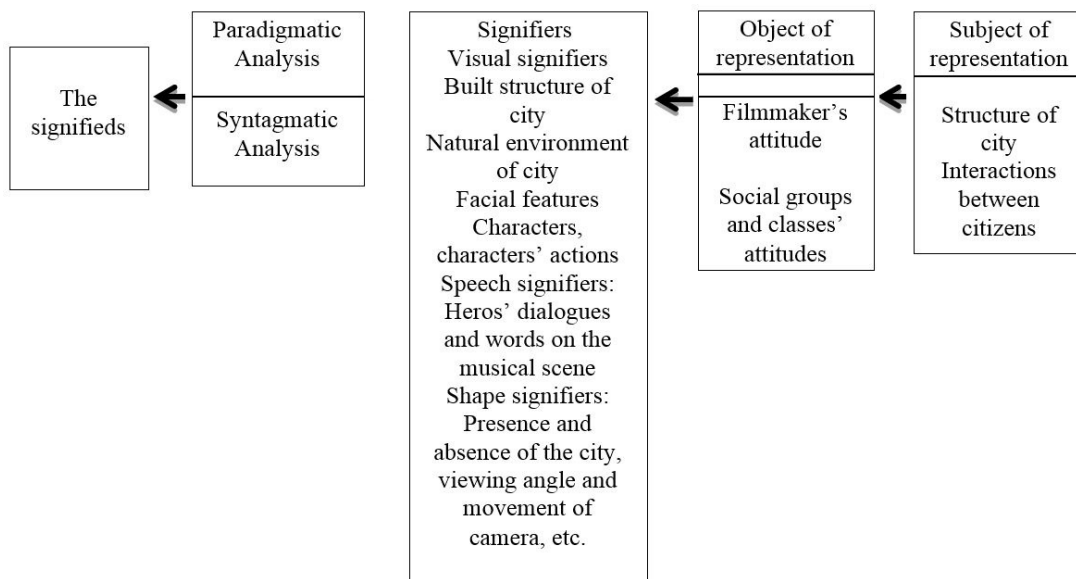


Fig. 2. Conceptual Model

### 3. 2. Data Analysis Structure

In the present study, Saussure's semiotic perspective was applied to find the narrative structure and content and qualitative analyses of the text. In the next step, these structures were compared with the social structure and changes in it, to discover the social meanings of the images. In short, after determining the images based on the signifiers in them, the two syntagmatic and paradigmatic analyses were performed to extract the structure of each image. For this end, the embellishment of the films were removed to get their main structure. Then, the structure was studied from a semiotic perspective. To correctly and logically understand the use of signs in a work, the relationships between signs must be studied, in addition to the extraction of signs from the text (here, film). In fact, the system connecting these signs to each other makes senses and the researcher must extract this structure from the text. Saussure distinguishes two methods to understand this structure: syntagmatic structure and paradigmatic structure. In “syntagmatic”

analysis, it is sufficient to identify the main characters and to extract their actions to reveal the logic of the evolution and formation of the narrative. The best application of Saussure's syntagmatic analysis is what applied by Vladimir Propp, in his famous book entitled “Morphology of the Folktale”, to understand the structure of examples. Since the publication of this work, his doing has been the best guide for researchers. Subject of representation: In the general classification of the “subject of representation”, here, Tehran City can be considered a combination of two components: “city structure” and “interactions between humans and between humans and the city.” In fact, using these two components, different images of the city can be distinguished. Since the first component emphasizes the quality of the presence and display of the city structure and the second component the filmmaker's perception of the meaning of the city, in the present study, considering both components, the authors have tried to identify and analyze how the city and society interact in cinematic works. Both the “object of representation” and the “subject

of representation” can be analyzed from another perspective. Obviously, the subject of representation is a combination of: a) Natural and artificial inanimate elements, such as buildings, streets or other artificial physical elements, or possibly trees, lakes, rain, thunder, or other natural elements; and b) beings (above all, human beings), in individual and group forms, and their interactions. These interactions are performed within the frame of identities, values and norms which totally shape the social life (here, the social life of the city). All of them can become signs or symbols following Saussure and bring meaning to mind. About the object of representation, the application of such a distinction is clear. On the one hand, there is the approach and attitude of the object of representation (filmmaker or painter, etc.) which, in fact, gives meaning to the image separated and recorded from nature, and on the other hand, there are his/her tools which play a key role in forming the image and conveying the subject of watching to the consumer of the image.

### 3.3. Modernity, Modernism and Modernization

Modernity is the elements and principles creating a new philosophy in life. It is understood as experiencing a kind of inner world, which is fluid and moving, and its fundamental and essential contents are transferred during movement. This understanding of modernity suggests a kind of transformation of experience which is constructive for modernity, i.e. the transformation of historical experience (lived experience) into internal experience (narrative experience) (Frisbee, 2007, p. 30). The former experience is a living experience of reality, but the later experience is an experience by which an individual becomes aware of himself (Jahanbegloo 2005, p. 32). Modernism is a kind of ideology, a kind of modernity that once existed in the West and has now expanded to other places. Modernism is the need for being renewed and in every society and at every time, it appears and disappears in a way. Modernization is policies which both follow the principles of modernity and reflect the ways of emergence (Ashuri, 2000, p. 230). The modern metropolis becomes an area for new social actors to experience modernity. Developments of individuals, as modern subjects in cities such as boredom, alienation, self-awareness, etc., are examples of mental experiences in the metropolis that were studied in the article.

## 4. REVIEW AND SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF TEHRAN CITY IN THE SELECTED FILMS OF THE 1960S AND 1970S

In the late 1950s, with the beginning of political movements and under the influence of critically acclaimed Italian films, the neorealist trend emerged in Iranian films and continued in Iranian cinema until the 1960s. During this period, under the influence of Italian neorealism cinema, the city and the spatial

relations within it found a new sense, so that until the second half of the 19570s, the main theme of most films was urbanization with an emphasis on the features of modern urban life. The most important themes were including duality of behaviors and sociocultural norms, the simultaneousness of poverty and wealth, alienation, constant destruction and renovation of the city on the one hand and mobility, speed, entertainment, attractiveness and seduction on the other hand (Jirani, 2000, p. 74). With the advent of New Waves in Iranian cinema (Caesar and cow waves) in 1969 and the theme and spirit of individual and collective rebellion, the process of filmmaking quite consciously become protesting and radical towards social contradictions and relationships in society (Azari, 2000, p. 9). The presence of the camera in the city and the presence of the city and the people, which were sometimes modified or not, raise the following assumption: urban cinemas are considered as the logical consequences of New Wave in Iranian cinema. In such a type of films, city is identified as an object separate from the subject (Mirahsan, 2006, p. 18). The city and citizen, individual and society, as aliens, are opposed to each other. The situation is observed across the country. Statistics showed changes in the political structure and class structure of Iranian society. These sweeping changes in the second half of the 1950s have led to social, economic, political, and cultural changes in the 1940s, and this is the subject of many of the melodramas in Iranian cinema of the 1960s (Sadr, 2002; p. 189). The subjects of this period, such as the bewildered person, the alien, the intellectual person, and the traditional person, are seen together in the society with many contradictions in most films attributed to the New Wave. In New Wave films, such as films produced by Farrokh Ghafari as well as Ebrahim Golestan, the city was quite differently depicted compared to what the audience had seen until that day. The city depicted as a place for the manifestations of modernity such as opening of bank and railway, not modern human settlements, in the 1950s, was depicted as the axis of filth and introduced as the center of evil opposite the village after the 1960s. An imperious criticism seems to have targeted its most important manifestation, i.e. the city. Films, whether popular and intellectual, reflect society involved between tradition and modernity, i.e. a society that wants to return its origin and localize modernity, while seeking renewal. Those films that try to show the localization of modernity by resorting to return to the origin” (Habibi, 2015, p. 45). The films such as *The Morning of the Fourth Day*, *Under the Skin of the Night*, *Reza Motorcyclist*, *Tangna* and *Khodahafez Rafigh* was a set of urban films in Iranian cinema which provided more and less objective and conceptual as well as more and less subjective perception of city in Iranian cinema and depicted the urban life of this period, and each in turn revealed some social problems and urban life. “Reviewing the films of the 1960s and 1970s is actually the review of the



thoughts of magisterial public demand of modernity, innovation and modernization on the one hand, and the demand of the same meanings from the public, on the other hand. The challenge between these demands gives an exceptional feature to the 1960s, and distinguishes this decade in the 20th century. Meanwhile, one of the main actors are city, urban life and their changes, which gives life to the social, economic, political and cultural developments of the next decade.” (Habibi, 2015, p. 69). In fact, the representation of Tehran City in films is the history of developments of Iranian modernity. With the representation of Tehran City, it would be possible to critically reflect Iranian modernity and to present two opposite images of modernity, the disruption of the traditional cosmic order in the modern city, the formation of incoherent rationality in everyday urban life, and all sorts of socioeconomic gaps in life as the issues represented by the cinema before Iranian

revolution. Tehran has gotten a significant position in Iranian cinema since the beginning of the 1960s and with the presence of New Wave filmmakers (Tusi & Moj, 2000, p. 125).

#### 4.1. Brick and Mirror

The film “Brick and Mirror” was made by Ebrahim Golestan in 1965. The film begins with a picture of the night in Tehran with car lights and neon sign boards of shops and the dark face of the streets and shows the modern city of the 1960, i.e. a city with specious and advertising seduction. The audience understands the city and the spaces around it with the movement of the car. The picture of the city presented by the camera aims at the utopian of the “White Revolution”, but the main character of the film introduces the audience with another layer of the city, i.e. its reality and truth.



Fig. 3. Brick and Mirror (A Picture of the Night in Tehran)



Fig. 4. Brick and Mirror (Roaming at Night)

A female passenger in the car tells the story of a half-constructed building: “Here was an agricultural land. Wheat, barley, alfalfa. They came and ruined everything, brought iron, excavated, made walls, made walls too much so that no pool, no room, no barely, no wheat left.” In other words, the innovative development of the city is defined. It refers to the developments that have encroached the peripheral areas and destroyed agricultural lands imperiously and quickly. Nothing of the past left, no pond, no room, no barely, no wheat. The city and the house in “Brick and Mirror”, in its all nine seasons, alluded the confusion of the Iranian man in the face of change. The expansion of the city, under the pretext of development has ruined the houses. There were some wreckages in villages, which have not resembled houses and become the only shelter for the urban refugees. Here, the city nor the house is a safe place. Hashem desperately picks up the baby and goes to the café. The café, as a new public place in the city, is the modernism form of traditional coffeehouses where there is also a collective conversation. Hashem’s

friends, who are considered to be the first listeners of his narration, each with a different ideology (one of them is an educated intellectual person and the other is a punctilious reveler), gathered in the café at night, as if they were out of their houses for hours and talking about everything was a pretext for their nightly gatherings. Depicting the faces of those in these gathering successively may represent the loneliness of each of them. This feeling of loneliness is the loneliness of modern man that has replaced social solidarity in the traditional world. Each of those in the café comments on the baby. One expresses his comment philosophically. Another one talks about the growth of Tehran by naming the southern, northern, eastern and western neighborhoods of Tehran: “The city has grown, from the north of Darband to Shah Abdolazim, from Jay and Mehrabad, Kan, and Qale Morghi to the other side of Dowshan Tappeh, Tehran Pars to the other side of Qarchak pass”. The dancer of the café, whose name was Taji, joins the gathering and sits next to Hashem.



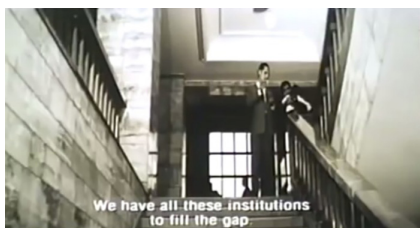
Fig. 5. Brick and Mirror (Hashem in the Café)



Fig. 6. Brick and Mirror (Hashem’s Friends in the Café)

Finally, Hashem carries the child to the police station. The child is not accepted at the police station. Hashem desperately leaves the police station. Taji is standing in front of the police station and waiting for him, and she says that her concern of the child is the reason for her presence there. It's midnight. They were standing next to Baharestan Square. Taji suggests that they go to Hashem's house. But Hashem believes that he cannot enter the house with a woman and a child due to the presence of his neighbors and this doing challenges the man who is householder of the family and has special respect, and is considered as an obstacle to comfort. These two persons begin to roam the city begins when they are both tired, they take a taxi, and Hashem, who is tired of the annoyance of others, argues with the taxi driver. Both enter Hashem's house. Taji asks Hashem to help him clean, feed and put the baby to sleep. But Hashem repeatedly notes her and the child to be silent so that the neighbors do not understand anything. Narratively, although the neighbor is not physically present in the film, but declares his invisible presence in the form of an annoying person. A strange and unexpected image of a neighbor which is not the same as the old neighbor who was a friend and helper. This is so obvious to the extent that Taji tells Hashem: "You are afraid of your neighbors. You are afraid of them even in your own home. Neighbors do not matter." A house, which is covered with thick curtains due to the fear of the dominated overseeing of unfamiliar neighbors, and its internal walls are covered with the pictures of the heroes and the women who wore scarfs, is insecure, even for two persons to whisper at night. This house is the only unsafe place for resting and sleeping and also a prison for Taji on next day. Hashem's unlimited

fear of his neighbors is in contrast to the heroic images of him on the walls of this house. It seems that these images are only dreamy images that were hung in Hashem's unconsciousness to confront his powerful neighbors, who are in fact the main owners of this house. Now, it is the turn of this "disintegrated city" to take advantage of the sunrise to show everything it has. The day begins with the imprisonment of Taji in this house. Simultaneously, in another scene, in the season of nursery which is another element of modern city, an image of socially disadvantaged people directs Hashem to the administration of justice. The view of the wide and long building of the administration of justice, which their corridors and many half-open doors seem have no end point, depicts the inevitable loneliness of clients for whom the modern government bureaucracy has bring nothing but confusion. In the morning, Hashem carries the child and goes to the administration of justice to accept the custody of the child. In the administration of justice, he asks a man in a suit and glasses and with a justified appearance to write a petition for him. After hearing the story, the man forbids Hashem from doing so and says that "Today, human has no supporter. You are in a relatively good financial position and have no family. Instead of putting yourself in trouble, it is better to give the child to the nursery, and spend the expenses you consider for the baby, for your enjoyment." A new definition of a person is provided, an individual who needs to be aware of himself and only help himself. The expression of "human has no supporter", which refers to the mortality of anything, is a redefinition of the transformation of common values; The tradition of cooperation is replaced by being indifferent.



**Fig. 7. Brick and Mirror (Hashem in the Administration of Justice)**

In the next part, Hashem is in the nursery. The nursery is a real symbol of a city where children are left due to economic and social insecurity. Unwanted children, which the result of unlawful sexual relationships, are



**Fig. 9. Brick and Mirror (Hashem in the Nursery)**



**Fig. 8. Brick and Mirror (Hashem in the Administration of Justice)**

abandoned by their mothers. Hashem delivers the child and returns home. He takes Taji out of the house and tells her that he has delivered the baby. Taji's imaginary world of a three-person family is spoiled at once.



**Fig. 10. Brick and Mirror (Hashem in the Nursery)**

Hashem, who has delivered the baby to the nursery, is accompanied by Taji and they pass alleys. In the middle of their way, a corpse is escorted. The funeral of a corpse in the narrow alleys, which is the reminiscent of Tehran's traditional neighborhoods, may be the convey



**Fig. 11. Brick and Mirror (Funeral)**

In this video, a set of information faced against the decision on adaptation of the baby and the formation of a family are placed by the man, shows that the modern metropolis leaves unstable and changing influences on people. The disintegration and fragmentation of the concepts and conventional ideas indicate the urban life in this film; that is a place where events and incidents attack residents in a serious and unexpected way and make them confront the concepts such as family, kinship, and social networks.

#### 4.2. The Cycle

The film "The Cycle" was made by Dariush Mehrjoui in 1974. After the film "Mr. Naive", which shows the naivety of a township resident against the deception, seduction and trickery in Tehran City, "The Cycle"



**Fig. 13. The Cycle (Suburbanization)**

The old man and his son tiredly walk in the city until the morning. In the morning, Sameri's steward puts them in a truck with a large number of addicts and poor people. The destination is a laboratory directed by Sameri and where these people give blood for 20 Tomans. The laboratory space is full of addicts. Another old man falls into a fit due to excessive blood donation. The stubborn stewards take him out. The film shows the dominance of monetary, commodity and human relations well. The price of human blood is determined by the market, and the lower classes of society compete to provide their livelihood by selling their blood. Sameri gives Ali 35 Tomans for two glasses of blood and takes the old man, with an order, to the hospital for his patient. Due to Sameri's order, the old man is admitted to the hospital. Ali happily spends his time in the hospital and be familiar with a young nurse (Zahra).

of an ancient affair that must become a memory for this city. Interestingly, this scene is the only collective action depicted in the film, showing for the city to rebirth, the only way its citizens can do is to leave all the old things.



**Fig. 12. Brick and Mirror (Thick Curtain)**

depicts a critical image of Tehran City, a city where people live by selling their blood and the innocence introduced by the character of Ali (Saeid Kangarani) to the audience at the beginning of the film eventually turns into a malice. Class conflict, like other social issues, as one of the key and explanatory components of metropolises in the modern era manifests itself in most of the films of this period, especially in the "The Cycle" film. In this film, Mehrjoui tries to show the two different worlds of the rich and the poor to the audience. By depicting an image of suburbanization, as a symbol of the class intended in the film, in this film, the story of a poor old man and his son, who are trying to find a drug and a cure and they can't afford them, is narrated. The poverty makes them to beg from a person (Mr. Sameri, the role of this character was played by Mr. Entezami) with a luxury car.



**Fig. 14. The Cycle (Suburbanization)**

Without any previous familiarity, the nurse helps them to make appointments in other parts of the hospital quickly. This is the start point of the familiarity of Ali with Zahra. In the following, Zahra give lunch to Ali and his father and provide a job for Ali in the hospital's Procurement Department. One of the most influential part (sequence) of the time is where Ali and Esmal (which was played by Ali Nasirian) go to an aviculture, because in this sequence Ali, whose innocence was not still spoiled and converted to immorality, saves a chick from the many chicks dumped in the well. On the other hand, the film criticizes the medical system of that time. Doctors often take bribes and consume infected bloods provided by Sameri for more profits. Healthcare becomes a commodity in the speculative business cycle. This time, Zahra sends Ali to the south of the city, where he sells a plate of food to addicts.



By seeing many hungry people and being aware of the commodification of the blood, Ali takes them to Sameri's laboratory to sell blood. Samery likes his doing and invites him to his home. Ali, a poor person, inevitably enters the market cycle to provide his livelihood. He becomes one of the main brokers of



**Fig. 15. The Cycle (Southern Part of the City)**

The class community, apart from social change and rejection and attraction of individuals, is redefined: "My name is Ali, my little child, I'm unemployed." This is the beginning of Ali's accidental acquaintance with the nurse. One of the most influential and challenging scenes in the film is because in it, Ali, whose innocence has not yet been looted and turned into a mere morality, saves the young from the many jars that are dumped in the well. It is based on the medical system of the time. Hospital doctors are often bought with money. And they consume contaminated Samaritan blood, which is more profitable for them. Health care also finds a commodity aspect in the business cycle of the trader. Zahra this time he sends Ali to the southern area of the city, where he sells a plate of food to addicts. Ali, seeing the many hungry and aware of the commodification of



**Fig. 17. The Cycle (Ali in Sameri's House)**

The "The Cycle" film depicts a merciless society in a metropolis and monetary and commodity relations, a society in which human and social relations have been faded and human beings do not have mercy on each other. In this speculative world, everything is expensive, whether human or human blood. The society depicted in the film is a society in which no one maintains their individuality and are inevitably resolved in it; a society in which the close relationship between wealth and power has encouraged being modern and magisterial, or an innovative doing. The underdevelopment emphasizes commodified urban relations, i.e. relations in which no basic human principles and no right to the city are observed. In trying to provide living expenses, human life can be traded at a price set by the market, and the struggle to make that deal forces the lower class

Sameri. The difference between a hero and an anti-hero fades in modern society, and the value of individuals is determined solely by the market price, and gentility is sold at a low price to the extent that the death of Ali's father in front of the hospital did not affect him.



**Fig. 16. The Cycle (Ali's Brokerage to Sell Blood)**

the blood, takes them to the Samaritan to sell the blood. The Samaritan greets him and he Ali, a lowly person, inevitably enters the market cycle in an attempt to make a living. He is one of the main brokers of summer. It happens. The difference between a hero and an anti-hero in modern merchant society fades, and the quality of individuals is determined solely by the market price, and honor is sold at a low price. So much so that Ali's father's death in front of the hospital did not affect him. Because he is involved with the emotional alienation of this product of the metropolis and the speculative economy, and thinks only of the rapid delivery of infected blood to the hospital. In the last sequence, where his father is buried, Esmal sees Ali and beats him. Ali, who is now bloody, is still indifferent and watching the funeral of his father's corpse.



**Fig. 18. The Cycle (Ali's Indifference When Watching the Funeral of His Father's Corpse)**

of society to do anything. The interchangeability of persons, which is the subject of a speculative economy, can make a man a demon. The young boy, who was a shy, kind, and innocent person at the beginning of the film, and carried his father despite of his unkindness, attracts the interest and affection of the audience but at the end of the film, he became a demon whose father's death did not influence him.

## 5. CONCLUSION

In this article, the main hypothesis was that cinema, as one of the most important sociological tools, could help us understand the social issues in Tehran City and facilitate the understanding of current contradictions in Iranian everyday life. Since two selected films produced



before the Iranian revolution were analyzed and interpreted in the present study, assuming a cognitive position for cinema, one can find out and know urban issues common in this particular historical period, part of society mentality, the social unconsciousness, as well as the general reaction of Tehran's citizens in the face of this city. The analysis of the semantic layers hidden in the images of the films shows the harmony in presenting the message that can be seen in the whole of Iranian cinema. The main theme of

most films was urbanization, with an emphasis on the features of modern urban life: duality of behaviors and sociocultural norms, the simultaneousness of poverty and wealth, alienation, constant destruction and renovation of the city on the one hand and mobility, speed, entertainment, attractiveness and seduction on the other hand, part of which are listed in Table 1 entitled "syntagmatic semiotics of the image of Tehran city in "Brick and Mirror" film".

**Table 1. Syntagmatic Semiotics of the Image of Tehran City in "Brick and Mirror" Film**

Signifier	The Signified
Neighborhood/ metropolis	Urban expansion A description of suburbanization in the 1960s The story of the half-constructed building told by the female passenger: "There was an agricultural land etc. Oh, they made many walls to the extent that etc". The conversation of Hashem's friends on the growth of Tehran: "The city has grown, from the north of Darband to Shah Abdolazim, from Jay and Mehrabad, Kan, and Qale Morghi to the other side of Dowshan Tappeh, Tehran Pars to the other side of Qarchak pass".
Old neighborhood/ city Narrow alleys/ movement of pedestrians/ wide streets	Old city, human scale, large metropolis, superhuman scale.
Coffee house/ cabaret, cafe, administration of justice, nursery, etc.	Emerging public spaces in the city (influx of the manifestations of Modernity).
Old neighbors who were friends and helper/ Taji said You are afraid of your neighbors. You are afraid of them even in your own home. Neighbors do not matter". An annoying being	Change in values and behaviors in neighborhood relationships.
Making a decision on the adaptation of the baby and formation of a family Today, human has no supporter. You are in a relatively good financial position and have no family. Instead of putting yourself in trouble, it is better to give the child to the nursery, and etc".	Traditional values/ new values, a redefinition of the transformation of traditional, the tradition of cooperation is replaced by indifference.
Ordinary clothes, veil/ suits, tie and glasses To sass/ To speak in pedantic style	Traditional lifestyle/ modern lifestyle
Fervency/ manhood and cooperation/ intellectualism and indifference to each other Taji/ Hashem	Heroism/ Anti-heroism
Nursery	The real symbol of the modern city, unwanted children (from an unlawful sexual relationship, etc.), transformation of relationships and values.
More presence of women in private and semi-public spaces/ active presence of women and girls in the new spaces of the metropolis	Change in attitudes towards women

These films included clear characteristics of modernity. As previously mentioned, since the arrival of cinema in Iran, city, and urban life, as one of the factors of modernity, were one of the main themes of Iranian cinema, often as a background, where it was wanted to depict the location of events and realities, and

sometimes with a determinant role in the story. In the present study, by reviewing Iranian cinema since the advent of it from a sociological perspective, and deep review of it in the 1960s and 1970s (two "Brick and Mirror" and "The Cycle" films), it was attempted to study the changes in the city and sociocultural and

economic behaviors and norms, their effects on urban behaviors and norms and how man transitions from tradition to modernity as well as specific issues and problems of Iranian society through the cinema of this period. Cinema is a language that presents a set of messages in a certain expressing matter. Architects and urban planners can use the cinema and film as a suitable tool to use the critical view of films to the

design of urban spaces and recognize citizens' different needs. This finding could be a new way to obtain a more accurate perception of human society, as an audience for architecture, and the city using film and cinema, which provide a brief overview of the social conditions of human beings and how they interact with space.

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### HOW TO CITE THIS ARTICLE

Ravanshadrnia, S., Mokhtabad Amrei, M., Diba, D., & Panahi, S. (2020). Sociological Analysis of Tehran City in the Cinematic Works of the 1960s and 1970s with an Emphasis on "Brick and Mirror" and "the Cycle" Films. *Armanshahr Architecture & Urban Development Journal*. 13(30), 51-61.

DOI: 10.22034/AAUD.2020.90591.1225

URL: [http://www.armanshahrjournal.com/article\\_108575.html](http://www.armanshahrjournal.com/article_108575.html)



