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## SOCIO-SPATIAL SEGREGATIONS IN SOCIAL MEDIA

### *Segregaciones socio-espaciales en los medios sociales*

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**ABSTRACT:** In conjunction with developments in communication technologies, life spaces of people also change and develop. What constitutes the most important building block of these new life spaces are digital communication resources. Digital communication resources form new spaces in social media by manipulating identities and cultures. These new spaces create socio-spatial segregations, whether consciously or unconsciously. Especially in recent years, grouping is observed intensely in social media and from time to time these groups play an important role in mass actions. In this study, closed and secret groups formed in social media were examined, with qualitative and quantitative research methods. Within this context, through in-depth interviews with group admins and survey study with group members, socio-spatial segregation in social media and grouping processes in social media were examined.

**Key words:** Social Media; socio-Spatial Segregation; grouping; Digital Urbanization; facebook groups.

**RESUMEN:** El hábitat humano está cambiando y desarrollándose con los avances tecnológicos de la comunicación. Los recursos de comunicación digital son el bloque de construcción más importante para este cambio y desarrollo. Los recursos de comunicación digital están manipulando las identidades y culturas creando nuevos lugares en los medios sociales. Esto genera segregación socio-espacial consciente o inconscientemente. Particularmente en los últimos años se observan agrupaciones en los medios sociales y estos grupos algunas veces juegan un importante papel en el movimiento de las masas. En este estudio se observan a los grupos cerrados y secretos con los métodos de investigación cuantitativos y cualitativos. En este sentido se analizaron los procesos de segregación socio-espacial y la forma de ser del grupo en los medios sociales haciendo entrevistas a los directores y encuestas a los miembros de los grupos.

**Palabras clave:** Medio Social; Segregación socio-espacial; Agrupación; Urbanización digital; Grupos de Facebook.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Socio-spatial segregations have been observed in all societies throughout history. These segregations have been evaluated and tried to be understood, taking into consideration the urban poor and disadvantaged groups. In order to determine the intensity of segregation, Friedrichs (1998) focused on the topics of income inequality, educational inequality and discrimination. Income, social class, ethnic background and religion have always been in the center of segregation. However, together with the developments in communication technologies in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, identities and cultures began to change as well. While in the past it was difficult to change gender or religion in a society, this has turned into a very ordinary and simple action in the digital world. This digital world has developed new life spaces by offering people the opportunity to develop a new culture. In social media, closed groups emerge primarily based on «segregation». By closing or hiding themselves, groups create a space specific to themselves. As the number of members of the group increases and the group starts being active, it begins to offer special member-exclusive opportunities. This triggers segregation even more. The important question here is if this segregation will cause social segregation. Or will the neighbourhoods, streets and homes of the digital world feed and enhance new identities and cultures? How much will this segregation belonging to the new culture influence our daily life? This study tries to answer these questions from a general perspective. Within this scope, closed groups, which constitute the basis of socio-spatial segregation in social media, as well as segregations created by groups were examined. The study has revealed significant details regarding people's movements, social skills and creation of new culture in the digital environment.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The concepts of social and spatial segregation have deep dimensions that are connected to each other. That is why many people use these concepts together when explaining them. According to Andersen; social segregation is the spatial segregation of ethnically or socially different groups, that causes increasing social and cultural differences between groups (Andersen, 2003, p.14). In other words, social segregation means the segregation of people into classes and sections. This way people are impelled to protect themselves from others and to withdraw from them. That is to say, social segregation emerges through spatial segregation. This directs us to question social and spatial concepts (Morris, 2000, p. 139). Space is an indication of identity and culture. Reproduced by social processes, space is in a state of flux, as per form and content. The most important source of spatial segregation are the changes in life styles and social values. Spatial segregation is related to economic, social, cultural, religious, etc. factors. Each factor has different influences on spatial segregation and each of them feeds spatial segregation by creating its own dynamic (Alver, 2013, p.42). Although spatial segregation has been seen throughout history in different formats, its social influence precisely emerged in the modern era. For the understanding of spatial segregation, Knox put forth six theories (Knox, 1987, pp. 80-85):

- **Determinist Theory:** Individuals have different social content and for this reason individuals exhibit different behaviours in the spatial context. Demographic features such as age, education, etc. alienate individuals from social organization and isolate them.
- **Aggregation Theory:** Explains the crowding of individuals in certain areas. Different social groups gather in certain areas in a defensive way against other groups.

- Order Theory: The determinists of the Chicago school underlie this theory. This theory tries to explain the segregation behaviours of individuals according to features like kindredship, neighbourliness, occupation, etc.
- Structuralist Theory: This theory argues that society is organized as socially-psychologically dependant on economic relations. People are segregating more competitively, less individually but spatially.
- Alienation Theory: This theory puts the Marxist theory in the center. It emerges as social weakening, discontent and refusal.
- Sub-Culture Theory: This is quite related to the order theory. Sub-cultures originate in societies due to various reasons. Sub-culture groups are in conflict with other groups. There is interaction among their group members, however they are spatially segregated from others.

Besides Knox's theories, many opinions have been put forth regarding Social segregation. Friedrichs (1998, p. 170) argues that in the Macro level social inequality is a spatial output originated with segregation seen in housing areas; Harvey (2002, p. 170) argues that the issue should be evaluated in parallel with social processes, not in a certain social or economic way; while Hamnett argues its close relation to the development level of welfare state policies (Hamnett, 1996, pp. 1407-1430). Approaching the issue from a different point of view, Eijk focuses on whether and how spatial segregation affects the formation and resourcefulness of networks (Eijk, 2010, p. 89). Consequently, socio-spatial segregation is an organic structure with horizontal components. Many studies have been conducted regarding socio-spatial segregation. When we observe these studies, we especially see details about the reproduction of segregation. However, advantages and disadvantages within changing spaces are still not known completely. For this reason, the concept of socio-spatial segregation changes continuously and realizes its own evolution.

The city can be expressed as the utmost spatial formation (Aslanoğlu, 2000, p. 193). Urban spaces resemble a cultural area which emerges within various habitats and where collective experiences and social encounters between statuses, races, genders, etc. take place. What brings people together in spaces are social relations that separate and integrate the social functions they carry and offer (Aytaç, 2007, pp. 199-226). City is the relations and decisions center where people meet each other, exchange thoughts and other things. Due to their organic structures, cities may be designated as centers of civilization. Civilizations express their own envisions of civilization through cities. For this reason, every city is a community and in this sense every city is both the producer and the consumer of culture as civilization (Aktaş, 2012, pp. 16-17). City is an authentic space that harbours differences. It provides the segregation of different identities and classes within its body and feeds segregations that will cause the emergence of new cultures. In a way, segregation is inherent in the city (Louis, 2002, p. 9).

Through city spaces it is possible to decipher that city's common culture of living, to trace its collective experiences, to collect data on the fictitious dimensions of daily life. City spaces may be defined as a rich sociological research area in this respect. Very important data can be acquired by potential, in-depth social analyses on cultural/psychological universes of human crowds that aggregate in these places. For what brings people together in these spaces are the social functions they carry and offer, their segregating and integrating social contexts. We can find the mystery of city life, the collective unconscious of city-dwellers, the symbolic codes of their hidden worlds in the representation power of these spaces. These spaces bear witness to the history of the city, as well as mirroring the spiritual world, esthetic concerns and consciousness map of the society (Aytaç, 2007, p. 223).

In the historical process cities have always been changing and developing. For this reason, the city could not be precisely positioned within the historical process. On the other hand, in order to meet

vital necessities, it has been continuously made sense of with different concepts. Particularly with globalization and technological developments, the concept of city began to be seriously questioned once again. At this point, the invisible city concept, which constitutes the basis of digital urbanization, was put forth by Mumford. The invisible city concept expresses that the new world we have begun to live in is not only open beyond the visible horizon, on the surface; but at the same time it is open internally as well, it reacts to stimuli and forces below the ordinary observation threshold, it riddles the visible world with invisible matter. Many authentic urban functions that had been naturally monopolized by the city until now and that had been requesting the physical presence of all participants previously, have now turned into rapid transit, mechanical reduplication, electronic transfer (Mumford, 2007, p. 677).

## 2.1. DIGITAL SPATIALIZATION

According to Campbell; the concept of internet in itself is a cyber city concept. Internet is in a position of a large cyber civilization where all people of the world and thereby their opinions are able to come together, with expanding borders and harbouring other cyber cities within itself (Campbell, 1996, p. 3). According to Virilio (1991); the city does not have a space anymore and space has turned into speed, becoming a screen as visual space, a «place that is not a place». While Baudrillard defines this «place that is not a place» expression as hypercity and sees the most significant feature of these cities as the injuring of human affairs. The postmodern city is a performance space without citizens; here inter-personal relationships gradually skid into cyber communication areas called virtual space; while internet functions as city squares, with social media people socialize in virtual spaces, becoming entirely transparent, and turn into virtual communities. This is an urban amnesia, in other words memory loss, phenomenon. Amnesia directly affects the decline in communication and amnesia weakens neighbour relations, causing increase of relationship turnover rate. For the individual who is under message bombardment every day, forgetting becomes quite ordinary. Within this forgetting, values constituting the concept of being a city-dweller, such as neighbourliness etc. disappear and the concept of city-dweller almost dies away (Demirağ, 2012, pp. 47-48). Virilio argues that speed and time destroy space and turn space into time. This change in perception of space may be seen as the source of the «place that is not a place», the urbanization in the digital world. The next stage of this will be the virtual society where cyber socialities begin to replace physical socialities, and the cyber city in which the concept of virtual city-dweller emerges. In time, continents will begin to disappear and we will be living on one continent (Virilio, 2003, pp. 14-18). The nullification of temporal/spatial distances via technology tends to polarize the human condition rather than homogenizing it. (Baumann, 2012, p. 25).

These cities brewed by «forgetting» could be laying the foundations of a socio-spatial segregation, which cannot be completely defined yet, by constituting their own existence (unsuccessful social media applications), localities (facebook groups), neighbourliness (chat rooms), wealth (online games), poverty, tools, cultures. Maybe the most important question here is whether this segregation will affect social life as much as the socio-spatial segregation seen in cities in our day. Or, what will be the effects of a segregation that cannot be defined on cultural deformation?

To determine segregations and social inclinations in digitalizing life spaces is quite an important matter for collecting data and shaping city life. Lots of instruments are used for this, such as photographs, videos, pictures. With geotagged social media data, differences between spaces began being identified in a clearer way. In this way, we became able to watch the flow of how social media shapes city life (Shelton, Poorthuis & Zook, 2015, pp. 198-211). However, when we look at the existing stu-

dies made on segregations in the digital world, we usually see the effort to correlate between the images used, twitter messages, facebook intensities and spaces in the city. However, these studies cannot escape the perspective of socio-cultural segregation, which is a part of the city life of our day. In this process where history never ends but geography is slowly pregnant with new transformations; we need to evaluate new life spaces and segregations of these life spaces independently of our current city culture. In addition, the correlation between the concepts of speed-space-memory, which cannot be completely defined yet in the digital world, must be questioned.

## 2.2. GROUPING IN THE DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT

There are many theories explaining the foundation and dimensions of grouping. These theories have been developed in connection with sociological, psychological, cultural, technological and economical developments throughout historical processes. The most significant of these are; the exchange theory of Thibaut and Keller (1959), the system theory of Katz and Kahn (1978), the social identity and intergroup relations theory of Tajfel (1981), the self-categorization theory of Turner (1987), the intergroup relations theory of Taylor and McKirnan (1984), four elementary forms of sociality of Fiske (1992), purpose and structure of Swanson (1992). All theories have been evaluated as part of a certain problem that interests the theorist, rather than a single subject. For this reason, the subject of grouping is a very complex and detailed subject.

From the general perspective, the main reasons for the forming of groups can be explained with the titles; external factors, inherent features of humans, coming together for goals that cannot be achieved on one's own, and crowd (groups which come together by chance, without face to face interaction). Here, forming of groups differentiates with regard to the members' satisfaction of their needs in the socio-emotional and work-benefit dimension. On one end of this dimension is being together, knowing-developing one's self, love, emotional support; while on the other hand there are necessities like work, productivity, profit, support for competition/conflict with an opponent (Hortaşu, 2014, pp. 81-82).

Groups are complex in a way that makes their formation and survival difficult. New social tools and digitalizing lives allow new group forming ways, such as using a simple sharing to perpetuate forming of new groups; thus relieving some of these complications (Shirky, 2008, p. 27). Groups that have acquired the chance to exist in a lighter and softer environment now, turn into new life spaces for people.

With social media, many obstacles to public expression are eliminated and thus the constraining and confining features of mass media disappear. In other words, areas that have been previously manipulated and controlled by media professionals are becoming collectively amateurized. This mass amateurization motivates the orientations of mass actions to be performed by groups. Meaning that new tools enable collaboration between wide groups by utilizing intangible motivations and facilitating widely different participation levels. The collective action, in which a group moves as a whole, is even more complex than joint production. However, digitalizing and social media tools give birth to new forms of action. In these new forms of action speed becomes an important factor. As human masses adopt simple social media tools, faster communication emerges in intergroup communication. And this causes increase of speed in the actions and orientations of groups, thus challenging the spaces (Shirky, 2008, pp. 75-143).

### 3. HYPOTHESES

With the changing and developing technology, socio-spatial segregation emerges in different forms. Previously defined emotional relations and efforts of gentrification now acquire a new format (Alver, 2013, p. 43). For this reason, in socio-spatial segregations formed through social media, the emotional bond that people establish between each other and between themselves and the group is an important factor and this factor has many sub-headings such as trust, privacy, othering or acknowledgement of the other (H1).

Spatial segregation is able to create a differentiating effect within the same environment. Spatial segregation points to different elements, to a social, cultural, economic situation that emerges within the context of factors (Harvey, 2002). For this reason, segregations emerge through social media, depending on factors like culture and education (H2). In addition, the segregation that begins in social media expands to different spaces and dimensions (H3).

## 4. METHODOLOGY

### 4.1. SAMPLE AND INSTRUMENTS

Within the scope of the study, qualitative, quantitative and netnographic research methodologies were used together. Within the scope of the study, 17 closed groups in facebook were approached. 6 of these agreed to participate in the study. In the section of the study in which quantitative data were acquired; among the groups that agreed to participate, N=1044 members of the «Baby Production Maintenance Repair» group filled out the quantitative research survey. Within this scope, the survey that was prepared online was filled out by members within 24 hours through the group page. Quantitative research data were examined at the  $P < 0.05$  significance level. Correlation level between the questions were evaluated having regard to spearman (rs) values. The aim of the spearman test was to determine the direction and the degree of correlation between the acquired data. Since the acquired data had a normal distribution, there was no need for another correlation. In the qualitative section of the study, in-depth interviews were conducted with group admins. In addition, the researcher has followed these groups like an ethnologist, with the netnography technique. These in-depth interviews constituted the qualitative data of the study.

2 academicians who work in this field and 2 field experts gave help for the preparation of the questions within the framework of quantitative research. 21 questions that are prepared for quantitative research first applied to 25 people, and received replies are evaluated by the experts and the number of the questions was decreased to 10. Since there is not a scale research about digital grouping whose validity reliability is granted, such a method has been followed for quantitative data. Validity reliability tests of acquired data were made, and results were discussed within the study.

On the other hand, semi-structured interview method was used in the qualitative research part. Semi-structured interview is «A data acquisition method that is commonly used in qualitative research as an interviewing method, and in which researchers can ask formerly-prepared or new questions on the topic that arise during interviewing». In semi-structured interviews, interviewing is not made only with one person; it can also be made with more than one person according to the course of the research. Through this method, researcher can deepen his/her research by focusing on knowledge and experiences of the person whom he/she interviews (Güler, et al., 2013).

A sample consisting of closed and secret facebook groups that have different demographic features was created in order for this study to reach its aim within this scope. Questions within the context of this study were prepared based on the literature review made by the researcher. Prepared ques-

tions were submitted to experts, and in consequence of their evaluation whether the questions were clear and expressed understandably was speculated. In consequence of these speculations, questions were readjusted in accordance with directives from the experts, and were finalised. Interviews were made face to face or via skype and phone. A coding system was developed with respect to the similarity relation of obtained replies within the context of the study. During the coding process, tables were created separately for each question, and coding of them were made accordingly. Thus, all replies to same question were analysed in the same table. Main themes were determined and replies were categorised by taking the data obtained within the context of this study into consideration. Dimensions of socio-cultural segregations that are experienced on facebook were discussed within the framework of the acquired qualitative data.

## 4.2. DATA ACQUIRED THROUGH QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

In this section, the in-depth interviews that have been conducted with the admins of 6 facebook groups that participated in the study were evaluated. In this context, general information about the groups that participated in the study is as follows:

### *(A1)Ankara Toki Yapacak Project Group-Closed Group:*

Group Features: A group whose members comprise of people who have bought houses from the region or live in the region, within the scope of a 10.000-unit housing project established in Ankara. The group has 5795 members. Group administration permitted the survey, however the data were not analyzed because only 22 people from the group filled it out. Therefore only in-depth interviews were conducted with the group admin.

### *(A2)XX-Secret Group:*

Group Features: A secret facebook group established by transvestites who live in İstanbul. The group has 78 members. Group administration rejected the survey that was planned to be conducted within the framework of the study. They also requested assurance that the name of the group will not be exposed in the study; hence the pseudonym «XX».

### *(A3)Çatı Dance Works-Secret Group:*

Group Features: A group established by an association in İstanbul that is interested in modern dance. The group has 59 members. Group administration permitted the survey, however the data were not analyzed because only 6 people from the group filled it out.

### *(A4)Baby Production Maintenance Repair Group-Closed Group:*

Group Features: A group that brings together people throughout Turkey who have babies or who want to have babies. The group has 28809 members. Group administration permitted the survey. 1044 people filled it out and statistical analyses were made regarding the survey.

### *(A5)Ramazan Erdem and Graduate Students Group-Closed Group:*

Group Features: A group comprising of postgraduate and doctoral students and graduates of Prof. Dr. Ramazan Erdem. The group has 72 members. Group administration permitted the survey, however the data were not analyzed because only 21 people from the group filled it out.

(A6) *Police Girls Group-Secret Group:*

Group Features: The group was established by women who have worked in a certain branch within the İstanbul security forces. The group has 45 members. The data were not analyzed because the number of people who filled out the survey was not sufficient.

#### 4.2.1. IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS WITH GROUP DIRECTORS

Question 1: Why is your group closed? Why did you create such a group?

«Baby Production Maintenance Repair is a closed group because we want to create an environment where members can behave comfortably and sincere as in a family environment, where they can unburden themselves and they will feel safe. This group is actually a self-created structure, as the extension of the Baby Production Maintenance Repair blog created by Eren Kaya. As the number of followers of the blog, in which Eren was sharing her experiences and researches she thought would also help others and articles she finds important, increased and thus the number of questions asked also increased, creating this group became a necessity. It became easier for followers to get answers to their questions and they also got the opportunity to share their experiences with others. As the number of members increased and people felt safe here, a serious support and sharing network formed here». (A4)

«We do not want to say the name of our group. In short, we are a transvestite group in İstanbul with 78 members. Our group is closed because the society does not accept or like us. What did we do to anyone? In the news or sharings in social media about one of us being attacked, people swear at us. As if everyone is God and everyone is sending us to hell. A human experience we go through is primarily interpreted in terms of religion. We are continuously subject to various attacks. For this reason our group is a secret group. To protect this secrecy we are even careful about our photo sharing. Because it is necessary to protect ourselves from the police or transvestite haters.

The reason we created this group is to help each other, to share our belongings and homes. We also have whatsapp groups but we change our numbers often due to social pressures. We are trying to hide here, as much as we can». (A2)

«A friend of mine created it, he could not take care of it, so I do. It was created for correspondence for the needs of Ya-pracık». (A1)

«Our group is the extension of the Çatı Modern Dance association, which has hundreds of members. We have groups in facebook that are open to everyone. We make organizations from here and share all kinds of activities of ours. The reason of creating this secret group, on the other hand, is to form a more concentrated group to be able to solve the problems of our association and of other dancers in a faster and easier way». (A3)

«The name of the group is Ramazan Erdem and Graduate Students Group. Our group is closed because it involves members of a certain characteristic and it is like a class. This group was created for sharing with students whom I supervise and for correspondence all together». (A5)

«Our group is closed so that not anyone can become a member. I created the group to continue communicating with my friends». (A6)

Question 2: What are the requirements to join the group? Are there criteria for membership?

«First, one has to want to join the group. Actually, the period after joining is more important. We have group rules and we want all members to abide by those rules. Many people come knowing and wanting this anyway». (A4)

«To join the group one has to be a postgraduate or doctoral student (the ones who graduate are able to stay as well) and have Ramazan Erdem as one's supervisor or even though having another professor as one's supervisor, wanting to join this group and being accepted by the group admin». (A5)

«It could be said that the criteria is knowing one of us. Because no one apart from us know about this group». (A2)



«The member has to be one of the administrators in the Çatı Dance Association. Or, a member of the association for a long time». (A3)

«She has to have served in the İstanbul Police Headquarters. Has to be a woman». (A6)

«As long as it is not a fake account there is no problem». (A1)

Question 3: What is the educational level of the members, generally?

«Most of our members are educated people. There are people among us who have not completed their education, however in general we can say that our members keep away from ignorance». (A4)

«Our members are at least postgraduates or doctoral students. On the other hand, there are also members who have finished their postgraduate or doctoral studies». (A5)

«High school graduates». (A6)

«In general they are educated people. We did not pay attention to this subject, but I guess they are at least bachelors». (A3)

«There are people from every walk of life». (A1)

Question 4: Are the members' identities real? Are people who create fake profiles the majority?

*In groups that are created by members who know each other in real life there is no such concern. However in groups that are created directly online, there is sensitivity towards fake profiles. Group admins specifically make an effort to detect fake profiles and remove them from the group.*

Question 5: Do you check the profiles of people who join the group?

«At the stage of accepting applications, we examine all profiles that have applied, one by one. We do not accept profiles that have just been opened, fake accounts or profiles that contradict with our group rules. It is very important to us that there is freedom of thought within the group. There are friends among us from every belief and nationality and we want everyone to be here in peace, without being judged or subject to bullying. For this reason, racism and bigotry are definitely not permitted». (A4)

«I do not need to check the profiles of group members, because I know them in real life as well». (A5)

«Not after they become members». (A2)

Question 6: Do you organize social activities through the group?

*Sometimes there are meetings due to member requests. These meetings take place both inside and outside Turkey and with high level of participation. People want to see up-close and talk face to face with people day correspond with everyday, people they help and receive help from. Besides that, within the group there are also culture/arts activities, animal care activities, garden/plants activities, trekking and sports activities. From time to time these activities liven up depending on the members' participation.*

Question 7: By deciding on a closed group, do you think that you are constituting a new distinctive life space?

«Yes, definitely. For most of us this is a space of existence where we can be free. It is a place where we see, with results, that we can change some things for the better, touch people, really do favors. There is a strong connection between the members, based on sincerity and trust. When one of us has a question, this is the place she first consults». (A4)

«Do you know how hard it is to live as a transvestite? In this huge internet they would consider even this little group to be too much for us». (A2)

«Yes, this is requested by the members». (A1)

«Yes I do. We share some information with our students regarding the postgraduate level». (A5)

Question 8: What do you feel about people who cannot reach you, who are left out from this group?

«We think that everyone in the group is very lucky. We invite outsiders in, as well. Non-scientific, unsupported, superstitious ideas have no place here. We pay attention so that the ideas expressed have scientific sources and do not mislead people. For this reason, we think that our group is very special and precious. We do not confuse giving wrong information with freedom of thought». (A4)

«I never thought on this subject. I cannot say that I have an opinion either. I suppose they have virtual worlds of their own». (A5)

«Other people can access us both from our association building and from our public groups. Therefore, we do not think this is a problem». (A3)

«This group is for transvestites, like us. Sometimes we want to include all transvestites but then fake accounts or ill-minded transvestite friends come in. This is a difficult question. Because it is very important to be able to help a transvestite who is committing suicide or a transvestite who has been subject to violence. But the victims cannot reach us. But we are not God either. We cannot help everyone». (A2)

Question 9: Do you contact other closed groups?

*In general the participants answered negatively.*

Question 10: Did you ever observe developing of negative relations between members within your group?

*Such problems do not exist in groups that are created by people who knew each other, such as the Police Girls and Çatı Dance group. However, in other groups negative relations between members have been observed. Generally, in this kind of situations the admin interferes. He/she tends to erase the sharings.*

Question 11: Is being a closed group the preference of the members?

«It is the common preference of both the members and the admins». (A4)

«It was my preference. I did not receive any feedback from group members regarding the group being closed or public». (A5)

Question 12: In group sharings, do features like people's educational status, social status etc. stand out?

*«As long as the situation and the comment made does not require it, nobody presents themselves with their work, occupation or career. Everyone tries to help each other, within the frame of their knowledge, and without misleading. We pay attention to not commenting on subjects we do not have full information or valid sources on. And yes, there are many doctors, lawyers, academics, teachers, psychologists in our group, people from all occupations. Whenever help is needed regarding the occupations of these people, they share their knowledge, with heart and soul, and free of charge». (A4)*

*»What we are is obvious. I mean, why can't a transvestite in Turkey study in the university? Our right to education, our social status have already been usurped». (A2)*

*«I did not witness any situations like standing out, because educations and interests of group members are alike. New members naturally might think that they are joining a privileged group. Because communicating with supervisors is a big issue for many students. In this group it is possible to access both the supervisor and the supervisor's other students (experienced people one might take advice from)». (A5)*

Question 13: Are there people who met in this group and created another group?

*Usually, in the case of breaking away from the group, these people create anti-groups. This is seen as a normal process that almost every group goes through.*

Question 14: Do you interfere in the sharings of members?

*«Yes. We delete comments that we are sure are not true, that might mislead people or that might be life-threatening; and we warn the commenters. In the same manner, we also interfere in situations that we observe in which group rules are not abided by. In situations we find unacceptable, we may cast out commenters without a warning. For example, we remove people who advertise without permission, with no warning at all». (A4)*

*«If there is inappropriate, unfavourable content, we delete it». (A1)*

*«Members do not share in a way that contradicts with the founding purpose of the group. I do not recall any inappropriate sharings, but if there were I would have interfered». (A5)*

### 4.3. QUANTITATIVE DATA

Within the framework of the study, an online survey was applied to the Baby Production Maintenance Repair Group in facebook. 1044 people participated in the study. 1027 of the participants were women (%98.37), 17 were men (%1.67). 836 of the participants had spent most of their lives in large cities (%80.66), 203 of them in small or middle-size cities (%19.44). 40 of the participants had doctoral degree (%3.8), 201 had postgraduate degree (%19.3), 689 had bachelor degree (%66), 98 were high-school graduates (%9.4), 5 were secondary school graduates (%0.5), 2 were primary school graduates (%0.2). The number of people who use their real profiles in the group were 1042 (%99.7), people who use fake profiles were 2 (%0.03).

Table 1. Answers given to the questions within the scope of the study

	I absolutely disagree	I disagree	I am indecisive	I agree	I absolutely agree	Mean	standard deviation
Questions	N	N	N	N	N		
Q1: It Is Important To Me That This Group Is Closed	55	55	112	275	547	4,153	1,374
Q2: I Meet The People I Became Acquainted With In The Group In Real Life As Well	293	219	214	183	135	2,666	1,383
Q3: I Feel Safe Within The Group	40	60	202	300	442	4	1,092
Q4: I Meet The People I Became Acquainted With In The Group In Other Social Media Environments As Well	233	194	162	229	226	3,02	1,471
Question 5: There Is An Emotional Bond Between Me And The Group	88	104	202	281	369	3,707	1,272
Question 6: The People In The Group Care About Each Other	27	40	142	361	474	4,163	0,974
Question 7: There Are People In The Group With High Level Of Education	12	17	82	325	608	4,436	0,799
Question 8: If This Group Was Open To Everyone I Would Leave It	216	210	290	122	206	2,896	1,387
Question 9: In This Group You Can Obtain Information About People's Socio-Economic Level	49	98	229	402	266	3,706	1,089
Question 10: I Join Groups In Social Media In Order To Meet People Like Me	249	241	191	230	133	2,767	1,364

Source: Authors' calculations.

The answers to the 10 questions that determine the judgements of participants about the group reveal the socio-spatial segregation tendencies of group members. According to this, the question «There Are People In The Group With High Level Of Education», regarding education, which is one of the most important factors underlying socio-spatial segregation, has the highest average (4,436). Other high-average expressions are: «It Is Important To Me That This Group Is Closed» (4,153), «The People In The Group Care About Each Other» (4,163), «I Feel Safe Within The Group» (4,000), «There Is An Emotional Bond Between Me And The Group» (3,702).

Table 2. The Significance Level Between the Questions After the Spearman Test

		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9
Q2	rs	.146**								
	P	,000								
Q3	rs	.319**	.314**							
	P	,000	,000							
Q4	rs	.217**	.683**	.422**						
	P	,000	,000	,000						
Q5	rs	.296**	.451**	.570**	.551**					
	P	,000	,000	,000	,000					
Q6	rs	.258**	.260**	.581**	.346**	.590**				
	P	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000				
Q7	rs	.242**	.215**	.396**	.295**	.402**	.443**			
	P	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000			
Q8	rs	.311**	.070*	.076*	,051	,009	,049	,058		
	P	,000	,024	,014	,098	,760	,110	,060		
Q9	rs	.131**	.221**	.206**	.271**	.297**	.249**	.350**	.073*	
	P	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,018	
Q10	rs	.118**	.207**	.168**	.272**	.221**	.143**	.170**	.116**	.223**
	P	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000

Source: Authors' calculations.

The significance level between the questions was analyzed with the spearman test. The significance level was  $P < 0.05$ , while the correlation level between the questions was calculated with the spearman (rs) coefficient.  $rs < 0.30$  suggests intermediate correlation,  $rs > 0.30$  suggests weak correlation. In this context, Question 9 is the only question that does not have significance level with other questions. While Question 7 is the one that has most significance with other questions.

Table 3. The Significance Level Between the Answers  
Given to Questions Regarding Level of Education

Questions		Your Level of Education
It Is Important To Me That This Group Is Closed	rs	,005
	p	,861
I Meet The People I Became Acquainted With In The Group In Real Life As Well	rs	-,120
	p	,000
I Feel Safe Within The Group	rs	-,089
	p	,004
I Meet The People I Became Acquainted With In The Group In Other Social Media Environments As Well, Such As Instagram, Twitter	rs	-,118
	p	,000
There Is An Emotional Bond Between Me And The Group	rs	-,116
	p	,000
The People In The Group Care About Each Other	rs	-,093
	p	,003
There Are People In The Group With High Level Of Education	rs	-,069
	p	,027
If This Group Was Open To Everyone I Would Leave It	rs	-,002
	p	,945
In This Group You Can Obtain Information About People's Socio-Economic/Cultural Levels	rs	-,120
	p	,000

Source: Authors' calculations.

The correlation between the educational levels of the participants of the study and the questions has been interpreted at the  $P < 0.05$  significance level. Within this context, in questions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 10, as the level of education increases their average rates also increase. That is to say, as the level of education increases, there is also increase in the rates of caring about each other, feeling of safety, emotional bond and transferring of communication to other media. On the other hand, there is no

meaningful correlation between the increase or decrease of educational level and the group being open or close.

## 5. CONCLUSION

With globalization and developments in communication technologies, the concepts of identity and culture have entered a process of grand evolution. The most important part of this process are spaces that contain and feed these concepts. New spaces occurring in the digital world give birth to new segregations and directly influence social life.

Among many studies examining socio-spatial segregation, this particular study has adopted a rare approach, handling the digital aspect of socio-spatial segregation, through grouping in social media. Within the framework of this study, segregations that emerge through social media groups have been examined and several conclusions were drawn.

It is known that many groups are being created in Social Media, however even though these groups have thousands of members, many of them do not carry the skill and characteristic of being a group. For instance, the Toki Yapacak Project group, which was included in the sample as part of the study, has 5782 members; nevertheless when sharings within the group are observed very little number of likes or comments are seen. This reveals that group memberships in social media are divided into two categories: passive and active. Group members generally either only view sharings and try to be informed about general activities or actively react to group sharings. This reveals the necessity for the improvement of assessment and evaluation criteria about grouping in social media.

Through grouping in social media socio-spatial segregations emerge. While in the normal urbanization perspective people's economic levels and ethnic backgrounds play a role in segregations, these are not important in social media. The in-depth interviews and netnographic examinations have shown that the urge for cooperation and coming together with like-minded people underlie grouping. On the other hand, the participants of the study have stated that they are able to obtain information regarding the socio-economic situations of other group members, indicating a latent class segregation.

The study reveals that perception of security in social media segregations shows similarity with perception of security in real life segregations. People are inclined to avoid fake accounts and create a secure area for themselves. For instance, groups that are marginalized and excluded in real life (transvetites etc.) are inclined to create their own space in social media, where they will not be marginalized. They generally use their real identities in this specific space they create for themselves. There is an emotional bond between social media groups and their members and people feel safer within the group.

People have different perspectives about groups they are not involved in and about other individuals. While groups created by people who knew each other in real life do not want to include other individuals, segregations that begin in the digital environment want to approach «others» as well. Once the group is formed, it is important for the members that it is a closed group, as can also be seen by the considerable amount of people who would want to leave the group if otherwise. This asserts the importance of concepts like privacy and trust. On the other hand, people who are removed from groups compose reaction segregations by creating anti-groups.

In regard to administration of the group, the concept of administrator definitely exists and secret censorship applies. It was observed that this secret censorship is to ensure the continuity of the group and to take precautions against people who spread spam. Group admins in social media think that with this segregation they are creating new distinctive life spaces for themselves. These segregations

on social media can be transferred to new spaces and intensify, generating digital communities. These digital communities, can also meet outside of digital spaces and intensify their segregations.

It is suggested to develop scales which have international validity and reliability in order for socio-spatial segregations in digital platforms to be researched in more detail. Thus, new dimensions can be brought to the topic by analysing segregations among different cultures.

In conclusion, with technological changes and developments, socio-spatial segregation emerges in different forms, as was shown with this study. The study has also explored the emotional bond that people establish between each other and between themselves and the group in social media, confirming that this is an important factor; also addressing factors like trust, privacy, othering or acknowledgement of the other. According to the study, segregations emerge through social media depending on factors like culture and education. Spatial segregation is able to create a differentiating effect within the same environment. In addition, the segregation that begins in social media expands to different spaces and dimensions.

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