

Spatial Segregation and Place - Making Practice in an Urban Space

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Abstract

This study states an argument for the relationship between spatial segregation and place-making practices. Place-making can be described as the entirety of the physical and mental relations with space that occurs along with a person's (or a group's) settling down to a new space and transforming it into his/her own "place". This process is extremely relevant to the immigration phenomenon because; it illustrates how immigrants can construct a network of useful relationships and meaningful activity in a new environment.

This study has been conducted over an urban space called Samatya, in Istanbul where mostly lower income immigrant and/or minority groups live in segregated areas. Vaughan (2005) has already remarked the relationship between poverty and spatial segregation. The issue investigated in this case is the syntactical structure of spatially segregated areas in relation to unintended and unexpected place-making activities of their inhabitants. The first question considered is whether spatial segregation supports place-making practice of immigrants. A second question is whether the spatially segregated spaces are also segregated socially. In effect, then, the study asks where social thresholds of spatial segregation are situated.

The analytical procedure consists of a comparison of syntactically different three segregated streets in the context of the occurrence of place-making practices of immigrants. Thus three types of data are analyzed: 1) Data related to syntactical structure, including, over and above integration and connectivity values, critical thresholds at both local and global scale. 2) Behavioral data such as frequency of encounters in those streets and in the interfaces. And, 3) sociological data collected through qualitative techniques, such as participant observation on everyday life of immigrants and in-depth interviews, which are used to comprehend the insiders' views and experiences in their "place".

In conclusion, the preliminary results of the case are as follows: Spatial segregation seems to encourage cultural and ethnical clusters to find shelter and also to develop bodily and mental relations with space, exhibited as habitual patterns of activities. It weakens the threshold between the interior and the exterior side of the buildings of immigrants. In some occasions, a segregated street can be full of life with the crowd and encounters due to the cultural and traditional life patterns. It can be a place for unplanned "events" and produces its social meaning over again just because of its segregated structure. It can be a place like home for "the others". On the other hand, segregation heightens the thresholds between the local and global, inside and outside of these streets. As a result of this, it limits the numbers of encounters in the interfaces.

1. Introduction and a Brief Theoretical Review

This study aims to interrogate whether there is a relationship between spatial segregation and place-making phenomenon. The case is conducted over segregated streets of a derelict urban settlement where mostly immigrants live. Place-making practices can be described as the entirety of the physical and mental relations with space and the habitual constructions of people

transforming space into his/her own “place”. Here, place-making notion is defined by two ways: the first is the physical relationality of an immigrant that even a researcher can observe from outside; the second is “dwelling” in the mind.

In this study, David Seamon’s phenomenological interest to Hillier and Hanson’s (1984) work seems to be appropriate as an approach. He, is interested in space syntax because it is an argument to comprehend the process of becoming to a place, not only by looking at the cultural and social experiences but also by inferring the deep indications from the spatial features and concrete resolves (Seamon, 1994). According to Hillier (2005), in most studies of cities, both social sciences and architecture focus only on their own contents; take in the city from “one side”. Space syntax combines them. Beside these views, there are lots of arguments on integrated spaces which make these spaces interesting and valuable. On the other hand, the segregated spaces are cast aside in the literature. Vaughan’s study is on the relationship between segregation in space and its social effect of marginalization (Vaughan, 2005). This study also aims to state an argument for segregation.

2. Syntactical Description of the Case Area: Samatya.

The study area, Samatya, is a neighborhood that takes place in the southern coast of the Historical Peninsula, in Istanbul, Turkey. As it is seen in the figure 1, the study area, Samatya, is bounded by Street1, Street2 and the Coastal Road in the local scale. The global integration map of the region is composed of 1114 lines. Samatya region is surrounded by two highly integrated spaces that are connected to the most integrated space in this global map, labeled as integrated1.

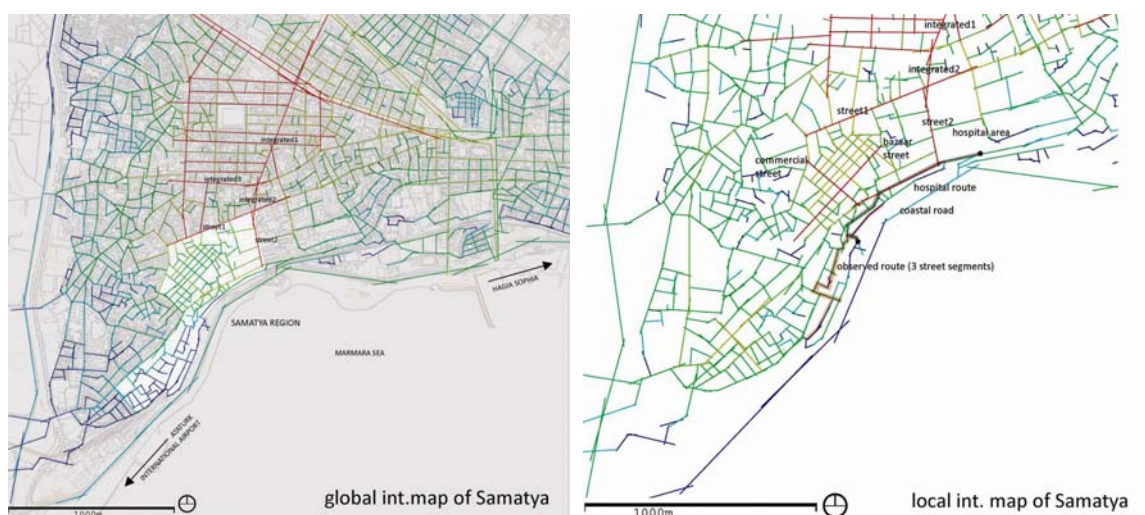


Figure 1
The global and the local integration map of Samatya Region.

Attribute		Minimum	Average	Maximum
No of Space in the global context of Samatya	1114			
Connectivity		0	3.89324	27
Control		0.0384615	0.991103	6.38016
Controllability		0.037037	0.249983	0.571429
Integration		0.544581	0.930205	1.55837
Integration R3		0.333333	1.81431	3.80543
Line Length		0.00366243	147.721	1123.88
Mean Depth		5.84277	9.322714	14.858
Intelligibility (Int-Int3) r2	0,514636			

TABLE 1
Syntactical values of the area in the global context

Besides peripheral integrated spaces in the local map, there are two other important axes in the grid configuration, labeled commercial and bazaar streets. However, the “hospital route” which is highly used by the pedestrians is not emphasized in the local integration map. This route doesn't seem to be highly integrated although it has the most frequency of dynamic movements.

The scattergram of the intelligibility of Samatya formed by the integration and integration 3 values shows a fine level correlation (figure 2). At the second scattergram (right, top), the local area is highlighted with the red dots which presents a similar distribution. However, to the third graph (left, bottom) connectivity cannot explain integration in the global context, on the other hand to the fourth graph connectivity seems to be a fine guide to integration in local scale.

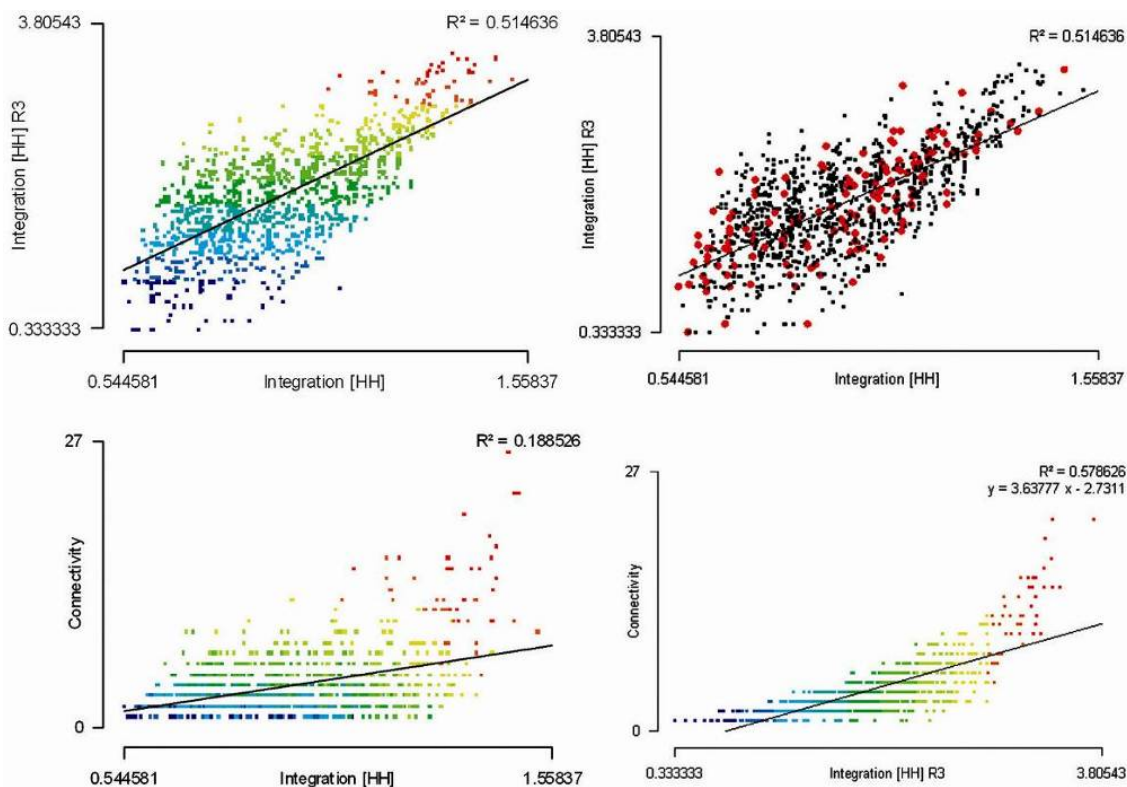


Figure 2

Scattergrams of intelligibility and the correlation between connectivity and integration Rn-R3 values.

3. Methodology: Procedure of the case study

The analytical procedure consists of the comparison of syntactically different three segregated streets in the context of the occurrence of place-making practices of immigrants, encounters and movements inside the streets and in the interfaces.

The process of the case study has been going on over one year. The neighborhood has been investigated by the “participant observer” technique to understand the daily routine of the local inhabitants. Particularly for this pilot study, movement and behavior counts are recorded in November and December 2008. Movement and behavior counts are made in a restricted area which covers 3 segregated street segments on a route and their interfaces. These chosen 3 streets with their similarity in physical features, are the most segregated ones in the local area containing routine place-making practices of their inhabitants. SS1 and SS3 are dead-end and the other is permeable. The most important difference is their farness to the center-the square of the region. The route (in figure 1) is observed over 20 times, including different times of the day and the week by the “moving observer” technique (Hillier et.al., 1993).

4. Behavioral and Sociological Data Analyses

The route consists of 17 axes, 3 road segments. The observed activities are the routine, cultural and habitual activities of immigrants that can occur outside home but are not very common to be seen in a street in the urban life.

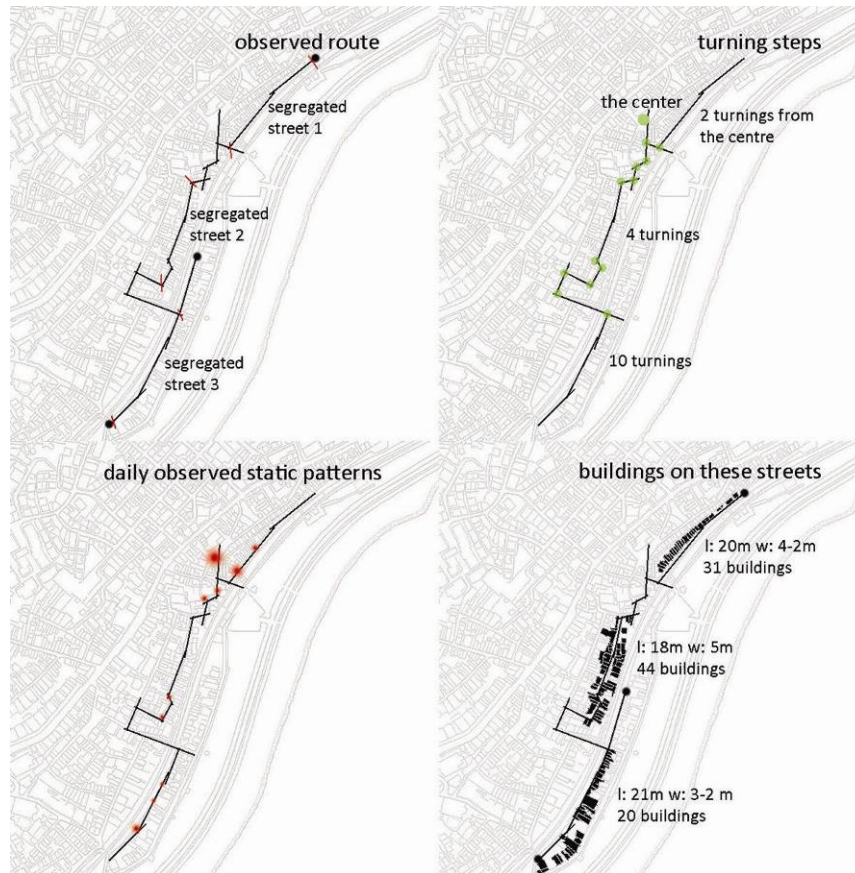


Figure 3

The observed route, turning step distances of the segregated streets from the center, daily observed static patterns, the physical features of three segregated streets.

Streets	Connectivity	Control	Integration [HH]	Integration [HH] R3	Line Length	Mean Depth	Mean Depth R3
S1 Average	2	0.9167	0.689529	0.654707	102.7409	11.9677	2.2500
S2 Average	2	0.8889	0.616513	0.838113	110.5996	13.2953	2.2829
S3 Average	3	1.0208	0.646134	1.185863	64.7647	12.7262	2.2192

Table 2

Syntactical values of segregated streets in the local region

The local integration value of the whole system and three selected streets are tabled above. As it is seen in figure 3, SS1 is only 2 steps far from the center, the most segregated street of all and it has the highest static pattern. SS2 has the highest integration value of these three streets but the least static behaviors occur on it. On the other hand, SS2 has the highest dynamic pattern. SS3 has a medium average of local integration value which is 10 turning steps far from the center. It has static behaviors in it more than SS2, but less than SS1. It is expected that SS3 would have the most static behaviors as it is the farthest street from the center.

Place-making activities seem to be in a negative relation with integrationR3. To the graph (the left top) in figure4, place-making activities are frequently observed in the SS1. On the other hand, dynamic movements are not observed at the same frequency. SS2 has the maximum movement on it comparing with the other two streets. Therefore, encounter frequency increasing with the IntR3 value, seems to be highest in the SS2. However, in the frequency of encounters, SS1 comes secondly. Even the dynamic movements are rare, as it has the top static behaviors, encounters seem to be increased.

It is a little bit strange that the interface of SS1 has the highest movement trace. It is expected that SS2 will have the highest movement pattern in its interface. However, as a result of the hospital route from the train station to the hospital, the interface of SS1 has the highest capacity of pedestrian movements. This would not have been understood without observing.

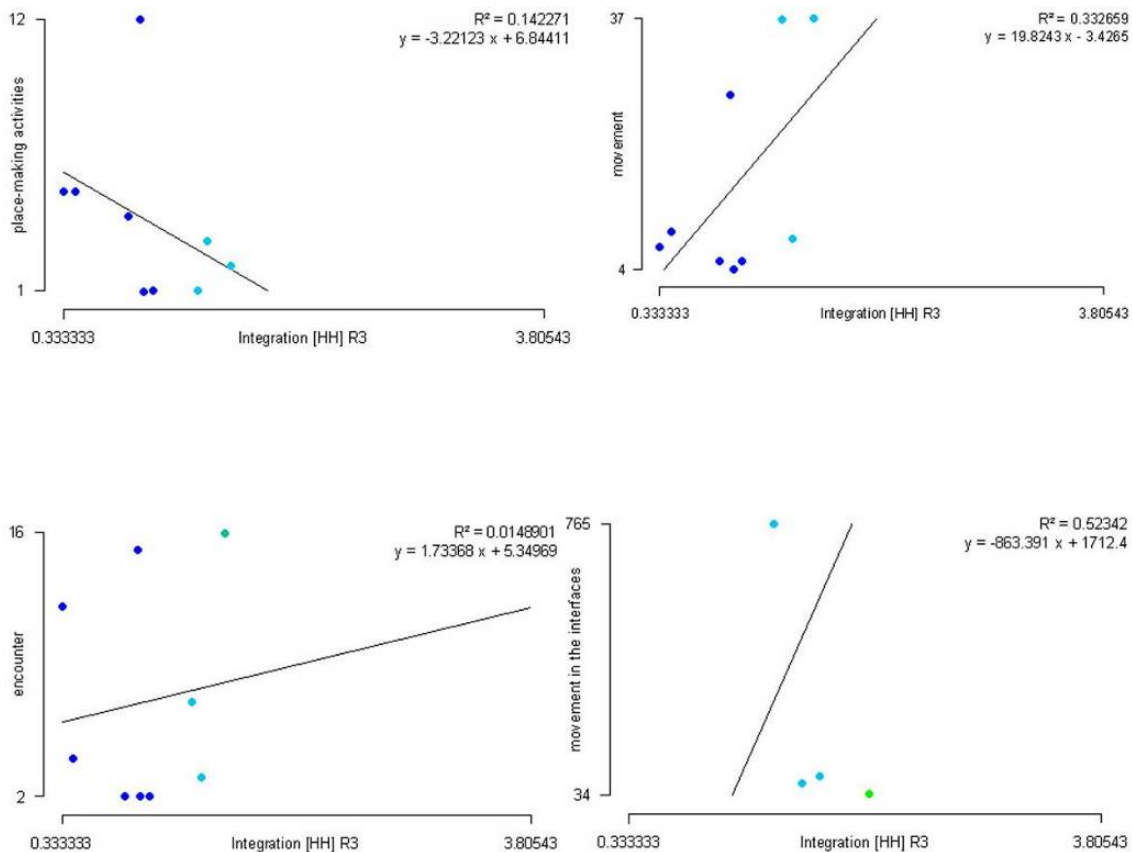


Figure 4

The relationship between observed behaviors and integration R3 values of three segregated streets.

All of these observations are made by the observer-subject and told by the outsider. However, in addition to these observations, what is told from inside should be considered. Consequently, in-depth interviews have been made with 10 immigrant householders living in those three streets. In the first street, 5 householders (2 woman, 3 men), in the second street, 3 householders (3 woman), in the third street, 2 householders (1 woman, 1 man) attended to the interviews.

Most of the inhabitants of the first street are relatives or citizens. To their narratives, most of the men living in this street are unemployed for a long time. Most of the adult women are housewives. Especially, people with Southeast and East Anatolia backgrounds tend to have 8-9 children. When asked the reason of their migration to Istanbul, the people interviewed with, stated it as more job possibilities, but some of their neighbors were obliged to leave their villages because of the terror in the eastern Turkey. Nearly half of the population is renters. Two or three floored wooden houses are shared by two-three families.

The frequency of their encounters and meetings, doing collective works in the street is higher than in the others. "We feel free at outside as much as we do inside because everybody knows each other. Everybody helps to a work. For that reason, we do our works outside together." Although, the movement and encounters are very often inside the street, movements from inside to outside are rare except the routine movements for daily shopping, school and hospital. "We usually sit and chat in the doorsteps. We generally don't go anywhere to have fun. We have fun in here already. Sometimes, I take my children to the coast and make picnic." Despite of the syntactically segregated structure of the street, it is interesting to see the energetic life and the aliveness on the street. The more interesting thing than this is the occurrence of the strangers. Despite of this, their doors are always open to the street, even at night in summer. The extrovert lifestyle of the immigrants is seemed to be related with clustering and familiarity. "Even if we move somewhere together, we live in the same way; we used to live in the east in the same way."

Even most of the immigrants came from the east of the Turkey; they are all from different cities and villages in the second street. The general view of educational and social conditions is similar with the street ones'; however the economical income of the inhabitants seems to be higher. Doing works together and helping each other is also observed in this street. Movement and encounter frequencies are higher in this street because, on the upper street, there are two primary schools. Parents bring to and then take their children from the school. The second street is wider and covered by two sides of buildings. Street 1 seems to be a private courtyard comparing to street 2. "Sometimes we stand chatting on the street near the doorsteps while children play football. We used to live in this way in my village but we cannot do many things here."

In the third street, families are mostly relatives and familiar neighbors. The most important feature of this street is its closure to the outside world. On contrary to the first street, the activity pattern is rare here. Common works are observed on the street however, seeing a stranger in this street is nearly impossible. "We came from the east villages because of the terror force. I don't like being here... I am afraid of everything in Istanbul... I don't know anywhere except this region..." From these sentences, it can be thought that the people do not feel belonging and wants to return to their natal villages. Because of this problem, they live self-enclosed and do not use their environments too much. It can be claimed that there can be a relationship between internal "place" and the frequency of using the environment.

5. Discussion

The results for the comparison of three segregated spaces in terms of place-making activities are specific for only this region. It should not be generalized. Segregation seems to support place-making activities for these three streets. Because segregation makes easier to be out of sight and to built one's own "place". In the beginning, it was thought that place-making activities seemed to be occurring only in the dead-end streets. However, the second street proved that these kinds of events can exist on a permeable street. On the other hand, even the third street is a dead-end; there are not many activities as it is expected.

The cultural pattern of the households living in a street seems to influence the use of the streets in place-making activities. In the first street, people are seemed to appropriate the street, have a strong power on the street. This cannot be implied for the third street even if they have similar physical and syntactical pattern. It is thought that if the inhabitants' life styles are extroversive, the street takes the stranger in, even inside the apartments. On the other hand, if the immigrants are introverted and conservative, the street doesn't take the stranger in. For that reason, SS1 has a variety of activities and it is full of life. Their homes effuse to the outside. The main difference of these streets is not only the spatial segregation values and physical features but especially also the social segregation and cultural spaces of the immigrants.

At last, spatial segregation seems to encourage cultural and ethnical clusters to find shelter and also to develop bodily and mental relations with space, exhibited as habitual patterns of activities. It weakens the threshold between the interior and the exterior side of the buildings of immigrants. In some occasions, a segregated street can be full of life with the crowd and encounters due to the

cultural and traditional life patterns. It can be a place for unplanned “events” and produces its social meaning over again just because of its segregated structure. It can be a place like home for “the others”.

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