

# Studying Self-Censorship On Social Media Based On Bourdieu's Habitus And Social Capital Concepts

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## Abstract

Today, it is of utmost importance to investigate to what extent users of social networking sites (such as Facebook, Twitter, etc.) feel free when they share posts, about what they mostly share posts, and about what they avoid sharing posts. Facebook declares its mission as “to give people the power to share and to make the world more open and connected.” It is doubtful how much Facebook can realize this mission or how much this is manifested in real life. It is nevertheless a fact that this medium has the potential to lead to both social solidarity and social pressure. Considering the ever-increasing number of Facebook users, it can be said that it is a widely accepted and embraced phenomenon among people. However, it is observed that when people like posts or share their opinions or post comments on others' posts, they might not feel completely free and can self-censor on social media. This self-censorship is thought to have many different reasons. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate why and to what extent Facebook users self-censor and to assess the results of this investigation in detail. This paper focuses on this research topic, and the above questions will be explained based on Bourdieu's Habitus concept and definition of social capital.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

As is known, today, many social networking sites, especially Facebook and Twitter, are actively and widely used by people. TV news includes social media news almost as much as news from print media. Sometimes it is even observed that news that does not attract much attention in print media travel rapidly through social media around the world and thus find a place in TV news. With this widespread and interactive usage of social media, it can be said that it has become the most widespread communication and interaction tool in the global world. These portals include newsletters or thoughts and opinions on art, literature, politics and sociological issues, as well as personal posts on everyday life. From this point of view, it can be thought that the internet offers a vast network of communication where a wide range of opinions and ideas can be shared. This is such a vast network that

many political, social, and economic facts, events, envisagements, and arguments about people and the society in which they live can be expressed almost with no boundaries.

On this vast network of sharing, social media seems to be a very suitable medium where as many opinions as the number of users can co-exist, and these ideas can be retested or reproduced through discussion and negotiation. Moreover, social media has the capacity to bring people together regardless of categorical distinctions such as geography, society, nationality, citizenship, social class, and family.

Considering all these factors together, with its interactive nature that allows interaction among people and can be updated at any time, it is thought that social media has significant potential in terms of spreading and supporting social engagement and freedom of expression between the social strata or

between societies. It also offers the possibility to disseminate criticism of all these social domains and structures and to discuss widely different ideas. Various studies have shown that the number of social media users is increasing day by day, and the time spent on the internet is increasing in parallel. According to a study conducted by the Global Web Index, for example, 44% of users spend more than one hour a day, and 18% spend more than three hours a day on social media ( <http://sosyalmedya.co/sosyal-aglar-zaman/> ). Another study examined global internet usage and reported that 29% of the world's population is actively using social media ( <https://www.dijitaler.com/analiz-internette-ne-kadar-vakit-geciryorum-iste-internet-kullanim-oranlari/> ).

For the time being, all of this information is accumulated as quantitative data. However, what is important is, of course, to what extent real social engagement is realized and the positive expectations associated with this social engagement are met in real life. In other words, whether the possibilities offered by social networking sites cause a change in the behaviours and attitudes of users, and if so, what kind of changes they lead to, need to be investigated. In this context, it is crucial to investigate how freely users of social networking sites such as Facebook use these sites and whether they self-censor due to various reasons and concerns. A study that will investigate this will shed light on the effects of developments in this field on individuals and through them on society.

In this study, which was based on the above considerations, we created a core group of academicians using Facebook and interviewed the members of this group. We also monitored the Facebook accounts of the participants for three months through screenshots. Thus, we aimed to reach the data that can answer the above questions. The study mainly focused on answering the questions of whether and to what extent the academicians in the core group freely shared posts on Facebook. Another issue we have tried to explain

in this study is why the participants self-censor on Facebook and how they perceive self-censorship. To this end, first, we decided to find out whether the users in the study group self-censor when sharing posts or posting comments on others' posts and then, to understand why those who self-censor do so. As a result of the study, we have obtained and evaluated findings indicating that users of social media in general and Facebook, in particular, participating in this study usually face problems in expressing their opinions about a political or social issue or personal/private issues or in showing their critical attitudes towards any event, that they avoid revealing their views altogether, and that they do this consciously and for specific reasons.

## II. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DEMOCRACY, MEDIA, AND INTEREST

When the concept of democracy is adopted as the parliamentary democracy taking its power from democratic elections, the problem of providing free access to necessary and sufficient information for voters during electoral races arises. If we are to talk about the election promises that political parties and independent candidates make to the public and how these promises are reflected in people, the election promises, first of all, must reach society. Moreover, for these promises to be freely discussed, criticized, and questioned by citizens in social strata, social groups, non-governmental organizations, coffee houses, and similar places, there should be a free environment. This is the exact point that demonstrates the importance of media.

Equally important, on the other hand, is the access of political parties and political figures to the electorate to tell their plans and projects and express their attitudes and thoughts about certain issues. Undoubtedly, communication channels are the means by which politics connect with society and with voters in society. In this sense, the most common and useful mechanism is the media.

The media here is, of course, an instrument. The aim is to establish a practical link between democracy

and freedom of expression. To ensure that this link is always intact and robust is both one of the necessities of and reasons for democracy. In this context, we first need to talk about the formation that was previously defined as the press but now defined as the media. This formation has a historical background that is close to and is parallel with the development of democracy. England can be considered an excellent example of this link between democracy and the press. With the development of democratic institutions in England in the 18th century, political parties were established, and intense discussions began to be carried out based on their opinions. There is a constant struggle between the Liberal and Conservative parties. The fierce debate between these two parties on the general right to vote entered the public agenda and affected people. This process paved the way for the emergence of a new type of journalism, i.e., opposition journalism, where political tendencies were determinative (Project of Strengthening Vocational Education and Training System, TR ,2008).

During the years of the industrial revolution, considering the developments in journalism especially after the French Revolution, it was thought that the press could be added to the powers in the parliamentary democracy - the legislative, the executive, the judicial - as a fourth force, and could assume the function of controlling governments' actions. As Işık noted, the media have been called the "third eye" in democracies and the "fourth power" after the legislative, the executive, and the judicial (Işık, 2002, Baldini, M. 2000). However, subsequent developments did not allow this to happen: the hope that the press would function as the fourth power in governmental practices was not realized. A lot of water has flowed beneath the bridge since then, and the press has been transformed into mass media and the mass media into media. Since the technological developments in the field of communication started to offer more extensive possibilities than the concept had

contained until then, the definition of media began to be replaced by terms such as new media and virtual media in a brief period. However, this expansion has resulted in the fact that all these means of communication are gathered in the hands of a few people through large corporations and thus are under the control of the state and capital. In other words, the media has now become a big industry. There are, of course, relatively independent and co-operative publications outside of the media conglomerates that try to continue their existence but often fail. The number of these small-scale media companies is quite limited, and they are usually ineffective when compared to the dominant media, which we call mainstream media. Keane (2015) states this with the following sentences:

The days when the assumption that market competition provides the freedom of communication as a guaranteed thing was believed in are already over. The former 'freedom of the press' idea, revived by market liberals, brings to mind a past that has only remained in the memories:... the days when the decentralized market competition was believed to be the antidote of political despotism... Since then, the forms of ownership and control have changed a lot in publishing and on radio-TV. Well-integrated, oligopoly-like bureaucratic structures have emerged.

Reaching clear, transparent and accurate news which can enable voters to monitor the activities of elected governments in democracies has become almost impossible as news, newspaper and the media have become "owned enterprises" with many employees that need huge industrial investments. Moreover, the media has become a means of coming to power and staying in power and has started to serve exactly the opposite of what was expected from it. The prevalence of the media and its impact on the masses is felt more than ever. With globalization, this effect is felt more. Which news stories take place in the media, which will be kept in dark, which topic will be brought to the agenda when, the manipulation of any news and disinformation which is also known as the information pollution depend

on the “general publication principles”, which seem to be extremely polite and innocent, of this “media with a boss” with widespread and mass influences. If we were to ask ‘so, whose principles are these general publication principles?’ we would again come across the answer of media patronage or the ‘media barons.’

friends of freedom of the press need to understand this: Communication markets restrict freedom of communication, it puts obstacles before those who want to enter into the market, allows monopolies, restricts the options, and removes the dominant definition of information from the concept of public utility and brings it closer to a specially owned commodity. In sum, it is imperative to assume that there is a structural contradiction between freedom of communication and unlimited freedom in the market... This is nothing more than an excuse for the companies of gigantic size deciding what citizens will listen to, read, and watch, that is censoring (Keane, 2015).

From media and democracy, we need to understand telling about our problems, expressing our thoughts, developing opposing or alternative ideas, and the need for a medium to discuss these opposing ideas loudly and debate similar issues. Although today’s media often turns a deaf ear to such democratic and liberating demands, this necessity is a must for democracy and social peace. With globalization, these concepts preserve their characteristic of being a necessary requirement for regional and world peace. However, there is something that social groups, trade unions, NGOs, political parties off the centre, academicians, scientists or teachers with opposing views, in short, those who are opposed to the dominant view and have different analyses and interpretations must do to re-voice their demands for the widespread media to hear them without repeating themselves and being unprepared for it; it is, as John Keane put it, ‘the acceptance of the existence of a structural contradiction between the freedom of communication and the limitless freedom in the market’. Keane speaks not of one of

the many dimensions but the most critical and fundamental dimension of the problem. Everyone must confront the fact that the “market logic” gives freedom to no actor, except for its own actors, and that it never neglects the effort to annihilate even the forgotten autonomies.

Adorno also emphasized that as long as the language we are using is not the language produced from our life experiences and attributed meaning to regarding our social position but is a language that is created by the ruling elites minority or the institutions and organizations they have appointed, we cannot be the subject of our own lives (as cited in Oskay, 2014).

As can be seen, the fact that the media are subject to market rules as a commodity in the disposal of some persons can lead to countless adverse effects on societies. These negativities have undeniable impacts on political, social, cultural, and economic areas and on the capillary connections within these areas that are not visible at first sight. All this needs to be revealed in detail and discussed on many platforms such Twitter (Gómez-Aguilella, & Cardiff, 2019). If we are talking about the power of a monopolistic influence to make effective broadcasts in a certain number of centres to communities in a short period of time, and if we are looking for ways to deal with it, we need to analyze the reality as much as possible, no matter how frightening it is and how massive its dimensions are. The sustainability of this effort depends on clinging to the hope at the end of all these processes that we will reach the light at the end of the dark tunnel and live in a world with freedom of expression, democracy, and peace. In this sense, facing this reality is critical not as a need to compromise with it or to accept it as it is, but, on the contrary, as a need to interfere with it, find ways to transform it, assume an active role instead of pitiful acceptance in the effort to maintain our presence as passive interlocutors of the media and understand that even this effort will have a significant impact in the liberation of humanity.



### III. HABITUS AND SOCIAL CAPITAL AS A FIELD OF STRUGGLE IN BOURDIEU'S PHILOSOPHY

Bourdieu's habitus is a factor that determines how certain individuals will behave in the face of certain situations. In this sense, the habitus is a concept that refers to both time, space, and specific situations that lead to the visibility of their accumulations by the subject in a given situation. With the concept of habitus, Bourdieu points to our attitudes in everyday life that we exhibit almost without thinking or hesitating. Bourdieu strives to reveal the doxas (common belief or opinion) that lead to these attitudes and the scientific reflexivity that lead to the emergence of a contradictory thought in the researcher investigating the doxa. In this sense, the central axis of his sociology is a scientific struggle with the doxas repeatedly produced by daily life and to determine the correct way of this scientific struggle and to remove his own doxas in his work.

Despite all his contradictions, Bourdieu focuses on the question of what is the source of continuity in the social structure. To reach this source, he follows the path of trying to understand the objective conditions that underlie the tendencies of the subject, which reproduce this continuity through his/her actions in daily life. This path leads him to the social institutions that act as an effective mechanism in the reproduction of culture. With his studies on education and related processes, he makes a significant contribution to this field. To Bourdieu, these processes contribute to the structure of modern society and the formation and continuation of established classes. In this context, social positions, and the methods and processes of acquiring titles and labels, which are representative symbols of these positions, are brought to the agenda. They give us information on how habitus emerges in the practices of subjects in societies. Moreover, this process also contains the creation of the practices. Through these practices, the doxa of this social world is internalized, and habitus is created under the guidance of their framework. This set of

internalized practices, i.e., practices the how and why of whose acquisition is not questioned, enables the social world to reproduce again and again. At this point, Bourdieu looks closely at the academy and notes:

"Of course, as it appears, the market of positions offered to diploma-holders has grown steadily to the detriment of non-diploma-holders. Dissemination of acceptance attributed to diploma-holders has undoubtedly had results such as combining the qualifications recognizing the right to have social positions and the system of official titles and alleviating the effects of isolation due to the existence of social spaces equipped with their own hierarchical principles. Although the diploma has never succeeded in imposing itself, it has at least become the sole and universal measure of the values of economic agents outside the boundaries of the education system" (Bourdieu, 2015).

The society to which we were born and in which we live has some thinking patterns that were created before us and that we often take for granted. Bourdieu calls them doxas. Doxas are, in fact, fixed beliefs and opinions which do not belong to us but which we have internalized. This set of fixed ideas in the society to which we were born can be described as roadmaps on how we should think that we have found at hand in the process of forming our own identity or that is offered to, even sometimes imposed on us. In this sense, Northern Cyprus, as a mid-sized island with a relatively small population, is a country where interpersonal relations have to be frequent and close. It can be assumed that living in a country where almost everyone knows each other makes it difficult to escape from the doxas. In this context, people living in big countries and people living in a tiny land surrounded by seas on all four sides are thought to have different doxas, i.e. universes of attitude, and as a result, different dynamics of social identity-building processes. Given all this, it can be assumed that what Bourdieu says about social capital is far more effectively suitable for relatively small and less populated

societies.

Although the emergence and discussion of the concept of social capital dates back to a long time ago, the concept is still being discussed in many areas today thanks to the new and up-to-date approach that Pierre Bourdieu introduced. What is discussed today within the framework of this concept is the establishment of the relation of social capital with the functioning of social rules. To understand Bourdieu's concept of social capital, it is necessary to know his definition of social capital. Bourdieu defines social capital as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (Bourdieu, 1985). To Bourdieu, individuals living in the habitus enter into various groups, establish multiple relationships and act for a specific purpose. This purpose is an interest. The individual within the habitus avoids relationships, attitudes, and behaviors that adversely affect his / her interests while becoming involved in groups that are appropriate to his / her interests and adjusts his/her attitudes and behaviors in a manner that does not contradict the group's interests.

According to Bourdieu, one of the last representatives of the Frankfurt School, life is a field of struggle. People must have certain interests to participate in the struggle in this field. Bourdieu defines the concept of interest as "illusio." "Illusio" are the interests that motivate people to participate in the fight in the field of struggle and to achieve illusio, people accept the doxas, i.e., firmly believed opinions and rules in society, without questioning them. There are three types of capital that are effective in conflicts of interest between classes: economic capital, social capital and symbolic capital. Here, economic capital refers to economic values, social capital refers to networks of relations within society, and symbolic capital refers to the values that exist within each capital and are symbolically owned (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2003).

"A field is a structured social space, a field of forces, a force field. It contains people who dominate and people who are dominated. Constant, permanent relationships of inequality operate inside this space, which at the same time becomes a space in which the various actors struggle for the transformation or preservation of the field. All the individuals in this universe bring to the competition all the (relative) power at their disposal. It is this power that defines their position in the field and, as a result, their strategies" (Bourdieu, 1997).

According to Bourdieu's approach, almost every field of life is surrounded by struggles of meaning and power. The struggle manifests itself in conflicts of interest and to enter the struggle, one must have certain interests that he/she would not want to lose. To put it in his terms, these interests can be economic, social, or symbolic. In this context, it can be said that the citizens should have an interest that they will lose in the field in order to engage in a struggle for democracy or freedom of expression.

#### IV. SOCIAL MEDIA AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Social media are new communication environments that new communication technologies have offered to us. These environments created through the Internet are also called new media. Along with developments in research in the field of information and communication, in the 1970s, the concept of new media emerged during the studies carried out by researchers in political, social, economic and cultural fields. However, it was not until the 90s that the scope of this concept was broadened and it started to become widely used. In these years, the developments in computer and internet technology accelerated, and these developments opened the doors of a completely different world (Dilmen, 2007). With all these developments, internet usage increased continuously in the following years. Then, websites, portals, and blogs became widespread and diversified. After the ever-increasing popularity of social networks such as Facebook and Twitter in the

2000s, social media entered into almost everyone's lives and became a phenomenon that concerned and is concerning almost everyone.

From another perspective, the new media is capable of bringing together all the different media available, which is called multi-media. Multimedia, which includes features such as video, photography, text, and sound, is distinguished from traditional communication tools (Dilmen, 2007). What distinguishes social media from conventional means of communication such as television, radio and print media is the fact that it has removed communication from being unidirectional.

Due to the fact that traditional means of communication are unidirectional and closed to feedback or allow limited feedback, it has been claimed throughout the historical process of these means that they allow only a limited number of people freedom of expression, which can lead to the manipulation of news or information. On the other hand, social media makes possible a simultaneous and mutual dialogue between the communicators if such a will is put forward concretely. Thus, a two-way flow of information emerges (Sayımer, 2008).

With the development of mobile technologies today, it has become an easy and ordinary practice to connect to the internet, read online news, communicate, or post about our private lives or political or social issues. With this feature, social media is the subject of many studies, and its effects are tried to be observed. Whether the freedom of expression in social media serves this purpose as a democratic right and freedom is a matter of interest in research and scientific circles. Political parties also benefit from these common and easy-to-use features of social media. They also use social media to learn about the characteristics and tendencies of social media users, whose number is increasing day by day, and to shape their election campaigns or political discourses accordingly. On the other hand, some people think that democracy, in its current form, is incomplete or the use of its means in the

social domains is very limited, and conclude that there is, in fact, no democracy at all. They are, at least, opening up for discussion how much 'democratic' the democracy in its current form is (Tilly, 2014).

## V. FREEDOM OF THOUGHT AND EXPRESSION

Freedom of thought and speech is a right secured in the constitutions of almost all nation-states that were established after the French Revolution. ECHR's article on freedom of expression is as follows: "Article 10: Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. ECHR's article on freedom of expression is as follows: "Article 10: Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers" (<http://www.turkhukuksitesi.com/showthread.php?t=6584> ).

In this context, freedom of thought is solely and only for these situations. Therefore, these two concepts are almost always used together. "Freedom of expression is one's freedom to put into words his/her thoughts that are in his/her own mind and cannot be known to anyone else unless he/she wants, that makes it become known to others" (Akgül M.E., <http://dergiler.ankara.edu.tr/dergiler/38/1656/17685.pdf> ).

The problematic that has led to the emergence of the concept of freedom of expression still continues today. This problematic which is the cause of the emergence of the concept gives us a clue about the problem, which is the reason why the right to freedom of expression has been raised at various times and on various grounds and why this right should be placed under a legal protection umbrella. Of course, it is not the conversations about fashion and popular issues involving the mundaneness of everyday life that are to be taken under protection here. What needs to be taken under protection is the thoughts related to the political sphere and often

including a stance against power or sovereign discourse. These thoughts are, in short, the thoughts that are not endorsed by the politically powerful or advocates of dominant views as they consider them a danger to their status and interests especially when they are voiced loudly and often accuse them of “disrupting the peace of society” or “damaging the unity and solidarity of society.” In this context, freedom of expression is not merely “freedom of speaking.” For this reason, the relationship between freedom of expression and democracy has been studied by many researchers throughout history (<http://www.libertedownload.com/ldt/ifade-hurriyeti/ifade-ozgurlugu-ve-sinirlari.pdf> ).

Due to this extensive scope of freedom of expression, it is also almost impossible to make a perfect definition of freedom of expression and to put it under legal protection with laws or constitutions, even with international conventions that have a position above the laws of the nation-states. The existence or absence of freedom of expression or to what extent it exists can be experienced through testing of states or power foci through practices.

#### Self-Censorship: What It Is And How It Works

Cook and Heimann (2010) discuss the existence of a censorship factor independent of the person in the emergence of self-censorship. They believe that there are two types of self-censorship: public and private. Public self-censorship refers to a range of individual reactions to a public censorship regime while private self-censorship is the suppression of one's own attitudes where a public censor is either absent or irrelevant. (<http://egifder.gumushane.edu.tr/article/download/5000197470/5000174956>).

In fact, it is censorship that gives birth to self-censorship. In other words, the existence of self-censorship is proof of the existence of censorship. Self-censorship is, in this sense, the form of censorship that is no longer visible. Censorship has disguised itself and has placed itself in the internal

dynamics of the individual, rendering the existence and control of an external authority unnecessary. This internalized self-censorship mechanism can only be prevented by eliminating the external dynamics that create it. Only after the censorship mechanism is stopped can it be possible to discuss the ways of eliminating censorship that has transformed into self-censorship and has permeated into human existence.

Of course, it is -at least today - impossible to get rid of the censorship mechanisms that feed on the many layers that shape society such as morality, religion, belief, and politics and serve for the protection and maintenance of these. However, as in all the prohibitions that oppress and negatively affect people and the society consisting of people, we need to start taking action against censorship at some point, as well. According to Zeybek and Koyuncu,(2018) “these negativities have undeniable impacts on political, social, cultural, and economic areas and on the capillary connections within these areas that are not visible at first sight.”

According to Raymond Williams (1990), “Society is also a constructive process with very strong repressions. These repressions tend to manifest themselves in political, economic and cultural formations and are internalized to become ‘individual will.’ Such decisiveness - the complex and interrelated process of boundaries and repressions - exists throughout the social process and is not seen anywhere else” (Williams, 1990).

In this context, the repressions that create self-censorship - i.e., censorship- do not arise solely from the state itself or from various power foci; these are processes that exist and reproduce themselves in relationships in a way that is spread and embedded in society itself. Similarly, Williams holds that media is not a force or a center that creates culture. On the contrary, media, like other factors, is a structure through which culture is reproduced.



## VI. METHOD

Rapidly spreading and becoming a phenomenon, Facebook has received intense interest in the TRNC, as well. It is observed that the number of Facebook users is increasing day by day, and people can spend a significant amount of time on Facebook. Having a Facebook account in our country is considered a very common thing, and it is regarded as strange when a person does not have a Facebook account. Facebook offers a wide range of possibilities, such as sharing texts, photos, or videos.

As a new social phenomenon, Facebook is seen as a highly productive field for sociological research. The present study aims to investigate how free Facebook users in the TRNC feel themselves in terms of freedom of expression and whether they self-censor when they share posts on Facebook, and if they do, the reasons behind this self-censorship.

A core study group consisting of four female and four male participants was formed. The participants were academicians working in private universities. Interviews were conducted with participants in a quiet environment using open-ended questions, and interviews were recorded. Then, the records were transcribed verbatim and examined.

### Findings Obtained As A Result Of Analysis Of The Interviews

The first question asked to the participants was as follows: "Do you feel free when sharing a post on Facebook?" Some participants responded negatively while others stated that they felt free when sharing a post about social or cultural issues but not about political issues. It would, therefore, not be wrong to think that the participants self-censor. In fact, all of the participants stated that they were afraid of falling foul of their family members, friends, colleagues, or managers and receiving damage as a result when they share their political views and, so, they self-censor on Facebook.

What is interesting here is that the participants were afraid of falling foul of not only their managers or

colleagues but also of close acquaintances like family members or friends.

We asked the participants whether they thought that their Facebook accounts are being monitored. Three of the participants stated that they think that their Facebook accounts are being monitored by the government and its institutions. On the other hand, the other participants stated that although they do not think that the government monitors their Facebook activities, they think that their friends on Facebook might spy on their Facebook accounts and get the data regarding themselves to "relevant authorities."

Three participants stated that Facebook is not a suitable medium for discussing political and social issues. They also said that Facebook has now become a medium where users usually share photos or videos. Two of these participants stated that they prefer Twitter to comment on political issues as most of their family members, close friends, etc. do not use it. Other participants reported that they prefer to share their political views in different settings.

In response to the question "About what you never post on Facebook?" the participants gave various answers. Two of the participants stated that they never share their photographs unless they have to. Another participant said that they would never share a photo of their newborn, which they find as a breach of privacy. The other two users stated that they do not share anything that would attract the attention of the government and that they have recently paid particular attention to this. The remaining participants said that they would never share any content that includes racism and discrimination.

All of the participants stated that they take care to add as friends the people they know or their friends. Additionally, they stated that they also add as friends the people who have made a name in certain fields and whose professional activities they value and want to follow. They emphasized that they

found it important for their own security. These findings show that, in the face of the disappearance of face-to-face communication, the relationships in the virtual environment cause insecurity.

All but one participant stated that they add their students as friends on Facebook as they consider this functional. However, they also stated that having students as Facebook friends affect what they share and that they take care in order not to ruin their reputation among students when they share posts on Facebook. The participant who stated that they do not add their students as friends on Facebook said that they do this for security concerns.

## VII. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

It can be said that for various reasons, the participants self-censor when sharing content about political and social issues on Facebook. The reasons they listed for this are the fear of losing their jobs, the fear of being isolated in their workplace due to their political views, avoiding possible consequences of having different political views with their superiors. Also, some of the participants stated that they think that the government or their managers monitor their Facebook accounts to learn about their political views; therefore they do not share content about political and social issues on Facebook. It has been found that they believe that the government and its institutions are using Facebook to spy on citizens. They stated that they think that this situation has become quite serious, especially in recent times. Moreover, they emphasized that they do not feel free when using Facebook with the fear that the government or their managers could reach their friends on Facebook to get information about themselves.

Besides, the participants stated that since they are well aware of the relations between the institution they work for and the government or political parties, and the attitudes of their institutions towards social events, they feel that they must consider these relations when sharing content on Facebook. During the interviews, they stated that although they are not

explicitly warned by their managers, they impose self-censorship on social media as they know their managers' views on social or political issues. In fact, it can be said that there is no need for any warning.

Furthermore, it was observed that the participants self-censored on social media for fear of "being misunderstood" by their family members, friends, colleagues, or students, or for fear of "harming their reputation" among students. When we asked what they mean by "being misunderstood," they stated that they were afraid of being left out in the society because of opposing cultural patterns widely agreed-upon or generally accepted by most within the society. It can be said that although they have views that they feel might not be approved by most within the society, they do not want others to know about these views. Some of the participants attributed this to their profession. It was understood that they were afraid that people would not understand them and that they would damage their reputation in society. Some participants also emphasized that they want neither the society nor their students to misjudge them.

When all these findings are put together, it can be said that everyone in the core group selected among Facebook user academicians imposes self-censorship. The main factors leading to self-censorship can be listed as follows: a) the fear of getting into trouble with the government or managers (the fear of being fired, not being promoted, or worsened working conditions); b) the fear of falling foul of family members or friends (the fear of being left out and losing the support of the people around); c) the fear of damaging reputation among students or of being misunderstood (the fear of losing influence over family members or students).

Consequently, based on Bourdieu's argument that people must have certain interests in order to enter the struggle in the areas where the struggle for meaning and power continues, we can say that the

participants of this study do not have any interests that would require them to enter in a struggle to express their views freely on Facebook. On the contrary, their interests require them to avoid such a struggle and to maintain their current attitudes and behaviors.

### VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Facebook is not trusted by a large number of users who think that posts per accounts are monitored by governments or other public authorities. However, it can be said that this does not prevent the widespread use of Facebook and that users try to overcome this unwanted situation by imposing self-censorship. It can be stated that users have come to terms with this situation and have internalized self-censorship. Further research is needed to investigate whether the internalization of self-censorship by academicians on Facebook affects their attitude towards expressing their thoughts and findings in other settings.

It has been observed that the academicians participating in this study impose self-censorship for fear of not only having problems with the government or with employees but also damaging their reputation in the society or among their students. It needs to be investigated whether academicians, who are constantly involved in research activities due to their profession, fear “damaging their reputation” when disclosing their research findings in academic settings or when sharing them with people in other settings, and if they do, what strategies they employ to cope with that fear.

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