

## Roma Children: Victims of Social Injustices in Education

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### Abstract

In this qualitative study aiming to identify the opinions of postgraduate students studying in İzmir, Turkey about the schooling practices of Roma children from social justice perspective, case study design was used. The study group included 46 post graduate students. As result of the study, it was identified that most of the participants agreed that the Roma children have limited access to schooling for such reasons as economics, Roma culture and the family structure, exclusion practices towards them, lack of social state and learned desperateness and made some suggestions accordingly. It can be argued that the disadvantaged status of Roma children and the inequities they exposed to manifest themselves as economic, cultural and thus participative injustices in education. Accordingly, improving the socio-economic conditions of Roma families thus children, valuing the culture of Roma and including Roma families and children in the education system were recommended.

**Keywords:** Social justice, Roma children, schooling

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## **Introduction**

The relationships among culture, race and citizenship have been the main point of debates about the goals of social work and social policy in USA (Katz, 2001) and all around the world. So education, one of the most important apparatus of social policy, has played a major role in the integration of all children by developing social justice discourses (Sleeter, 2001). Correspondingly, a social justice orientation in the works of educational researchers started to manifest itself (Cook and Hegtvedt, 1983; Griffiths, 1998; Brown and Ed, 2002; Gardner and Crockwell, 2006; Artiles, Harris-Murri and Rostenberg, 2006; Chiu and Walker, 2007; Eryaman, 2009; Gillmore and Sullivan, 2014) and the language of social justice research has increasingly been embraced by the researchers with such terms as equity and opportunity (Larson and Murtadha, 2002). Since such factors as social class, race and ethnicity have been among the most important determinants of the benefits that students gain from their school experience (Villegas, 2007), people have begun talking more about the integration of minority children into the education system (Gerganov, Varbanova and Kyuchukov, 2005). As one of the minority groups, the Roma communities have been characterized mostly by experiences of exclusion and rejection (Symeou, Luciak and Gobbo, 2009) and Roma children have had to face the general requirements of schooling while carrying a number of historically accumulated social, cultural and economic disadvantages (Roth and Moison, 2011, 501). These social, cultural and economic disadvantages have reproduced injustices and “despite efforts to address such injustices and protect the rights of Roma communities, they continue to remain marginalized and ghettoized in contemporary Europe (Symeou, Luciak and Gobbo, 2009) and in Turkey.

### **Literature Review**

#### **Social Justice**

The concept of social justice which has close relationships with such discourses as multiculturalism, critical race theory and democratic education (Larson and Murtadha, 2002) has been described as “both a process and a goal” with the ultimate aim being “full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs” (Bell, 1997, 3). According to Chiu and Walker (2007, 725), social justice is primarily concerned with positively equalising and improving the opportunities and prospects for the disadvantaged and disaffected members of society and disadvantage is often linked to race, ethnicity, culture, social class, gender and family structure. There are certain frameworks and dimensions dealing with the issue of social justice in the literature and Nancy Fraser’s dimensions of justice is one of the most familiar ones. According to Fraser (2003), justice and thus social justice should be considered in terms of redistribution, recognition and representation.

Redistribution called as distributive or economic justice which is derived from the idea of Rawls’s justice theory, refers to equality of opportunity. It is the most stressed dimension of social justice and related to “a more just distribution of resources and wealth” (Fraser, 2003), allocating resources and rewards equitably (Hyttén and Bettez, 2011) and the absence of exploitation, economic marginalisation and deprivation (Young, 1990). From the perspective of education, redistribution is the equitable distribution of intellectual matters as well as monetary (Cazden, 2012) and access to quality education (Tikly and Barrett, 2009). Redistribution, distributive justice in education is “the equalisation of resources available to all students and schools” (Bates, 2005, 11). Such issues as allocating information, communication and data unequitably and lack of quality and appropriateness in the provision of resources and opportunities (O’Neill, Woods and Webster, 2004) can be exemplified among the problems that can be encountered in the field of education.

Whereas redistribution is related to a vision of justice aiming to establish social equality through the redistribution of goods guaranteeing liberty, recognition defines the conditions of a just society through the aim of recognizing the individual dignity of all individuals (Honneth, 2004).

Recognition which is also called as cultural justice is accepted as the foundation of social justice (Bates, 2005) but it's not stressed as much as redistribution. It's goal is a "difference-friendly world, where assimilation to majority of dominant cultural norms is no longer the price of equal respect" (Fraser, 2003, 3) and it includes claims for the recognition of the distinctive perspectives of ethnic, racial and sexual minorities, as well as gender difference. According to Fraser (1997, 14), cultural justice involves a principle of recognition that seeks to redress cultural domination, non-recognition and disrespect. As places enabling students to be partners in social interaction, schools are both institutions through which recognition claims are made and which actively create status inequalities. Recognition is related to the need and the right to education of minority children to be aware of their cultural heritage and to be proud of their ethnicity in classes and schools feeling at home, not discriminated against and not inferior to children of other ethnicities (Roth and Moisa, 2011).

Representation or participatory justice requires social arrangements that permit all to participate as peers in social life. Overcoming injustice means dismantling institutionalized obstacles that prevent some people from participating on a par with others as full partners in social interaction (Fraser, 2008, 16). Young (1990, 53). treats the participatory justice within the context of marginalization and powerlessness and by participatory justice she refers to the extent to which groups of people are "expelled from useful participation in social life". Participatory justice can realize itself in such conditions of democracy as "participating in forming and running institutions, and receiving recognition for such participation; playing and communicating with others, and expressing our experience, feelings, and perspective on social life in contexts where others can listen (Young, 1990, 37). Within the context of education, ordinary political representation can be interpreted regarding debates around good governance in education and can include issues such as participation, voice, accountability and decision making at different levels of the education system (Fraser, 2008).

Most of the researches about social justice deal with the issues of allocation (Tyler and Smith, 1995) and grounded in the distributive justice (Young, 1990); however, it's impossible to build a sustainable social justice ideal without taking cultural and participative, dimensions of social justice. According to Fraser, only the combination of economic and cultural justice can guarantee the 'participatory equality' (Honneth, 2004, 353) and participatory justice is a prerequisite for realising issues of redistribution and recognition (Tikly and Barrett, 2009, 5). Redistribution, recognition and representation are all vital to determine equality and justice perceptions of individuals in education. Lynch and Baker (2005, 132) argue that there should also be equality in such dimensions as "respect and recognition; love, care and solidarity; power, and working and learning" to ensure justice in education. However, some groups suffer from the lack of economic, cultural and participative injustices in the normal processes of everyday life (Young, 1990) manifesting itself in education with the increase of exclusion and decrease in engagement with learning and exaggerating the differences in performance between advantaged and disadvantaged groups (Bates, 2005). Within this context, Roma people can be asserted to be one of the largest ethnic groups exposing to distributive, cultural and participative injustices in education all around the world.

### **Roma Aspects of Injustices in Education**

Of the groups suffering from all the ill effects of marginalisation and exclusion related to their community (İlik, 2016), the Roma People are argued to be the most socially excluded members of society with a number of 15 million all around the world, almost 9 million of whom are in Europe and 2.5 million are in Turkey (İlik, 2016; Marsh, 2008). The history of Roma has mostly been characterized by experiences of rejection, exclusion, sterilization, slavery, banishment and even genocide (Symeou, Luciak and Gobbo, 2009; Murray, 2012). After centuries of oppression as slaves or nomads and persecution as an inferior race, the Roma are still suffering from high levels of poverty, poor housing, unemployment and low education (Fleck and Rughinis, 2007). According to the report of the European Commission (European Commission, 2011: 173/4), 'Roma in Europe face prejudice, intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion in their daily lives. They are marginalised and live in very poor socio-economic conditions' and as a result of this "Roma children are vulnerable and

exposed to poor health, poor housing, poor nutrition, exclusion, discrimination, racism and violence” (European Commission, 2013: 8). This exclusion is manifesting itself in educational practices as well and affecting children’s schooling experiences to a great extent.

The disadvantaged status of the Roma is reflected in the educational system in many ways: the incomplete registration of Roma children in primary schools, their extremely high drop-out rate in the compulsory school system, the negligible number of Roma students attending secondary schools and universities, as well as the lack of classes in Romany language and culture due to their disadvantaged socio-economic conditions, the indifference of Roma families to education and particular educational practices of segregation carried out in many schools (Pasavec and Hrvatic, 2000, 94; McDonald, 2009; Biro, Smederevac and Tovilović, 2009; Roth and Moisa, 2009; Greenberg, 2010). In addition, most of the non-Romas’ having such stereotypes as “the disaffection with school among Roma is natural (Flecha and Soler, 2013) and Roma people exclude themselves from the mainstream education to preserve their culture (İlik, 2016)” have also contributed to the educational exclusion of the Roma children to a great extent.

International organisations such as the United Nations (UN), Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and many others criticized the treatments towards Roma people in Europe and attempted to offer various solutions. There have been several initiatives to improve the educational conditions of Roma children within the paradigms of integration and inclusion recently. However, the full equity and participation of Roma children to education is still a dream and most of the Roma children continue to be marginalized and remain among the lowest academic achievers all around the world. There is a gap between what is stated in educational policy documents and the reality of schools regarding Roma children (Symeou, Luciak and Gobbo, 2009). It’s indicated by several reports that the inclusive approach isn’t reinforced, integrated schools and classes can’t reach their goal; rather the educational practices turn out to support segregation (Roth and Moisa, 2011) and the methods applied to civilize the Roma reinforce this segregation to a great deal. Within this context, some practices or methods such as grouping Roma children in the same classes having lower education level (Roth and Moisa, 2011), enrolling Roma children into special schools for children with mental retardation (Vincze and Harabula, 2008) reproduce the existing exclusion of Roma.

Within the context of Turkey, only Armenian, Rum and Jewish are accepted as minorities and the legislations related to the protection of minorities are applied to only these three communities. However, other minority groups such as Syrians, Protestant Christians, Kurds, Laz and Romas can’t benefit from the rights laid down in international mechanisms (Kaya, 2012) and the right of education is one of the most important rights that Roma children are deprived of. The right of education in Turkey is secured with the 42th article of the Constitution and 7th article of National Education Basic Law. However, Roma children continue to be among the most unattached (Akkan, Deniz and Ertan, 2011) and disadvantaged groups to education (Alp and Taştan, 2011). There have been serious problems in the schooling of Roma children due to the reality of poverty and exclusive practices positioning the Roma at the bottom of social hierarchy manifesting themselves with such attributed traits as “fickle”, “superficial” and even “guilty” and “immoral” by most non-Roma people (Gökçen and Öney, 2008). In spite of compulsory education system, the problems such as absenteeism and school dropout in high levels, exclusion from the process of schooling on the grounds of child labour and child marriage are common among Roma children (Akgün, 2004; Yavuzak Taban, 2010; Akkan, Deniz and Ertan, 2011; Diktaş, Deniz and Balcıoğlu, 2016; İlik, 2016; Tor, 2017). The education level of most Roma children who can receive education is on the primary school level and not schooling the girls is a common tendency among Roma families (Alp and Taştan, 2011, 33). Even if the Roma children receive higher levels of education, they encounter social exclusion and unemployment (İlik, 2016, 35) and this makes the Roma families prefer not to school their children. The principle of accessibility in education requires the prohibition of discrimination in access to the right of education and taking the necessary precautions to enable equality of opportunity for every member of society (Karan, 2017). However, the schools where the Roma people mostly live expose to several

disadvantages since the basic requirements of the schools aren't met by the state and the school administrators have to raise funds from parents. Taken the reality of poverty Roma parents expose into consideration, the disadvantageous situation of schools reproduce the inequalities and injustices once more.

As to the researches carried out regarding the education of Roma children, it's identified that the researches are mostly within the context of inclusive education or education for all (Booth and Ainscow, 2002; Akkan, Deniz and Ertan, 2011). However, it's hardly impossible to develop an equality discourse without referring to justice issues as the basis of equality. Inclusion, thus inclusive educational practices, require not only "bringing together children with different levels of ability, cultural backgrounds and socio-economic status in the same schools and classrooms" (Roth and Moisa, 2011, 511) but also a distributive, cultural and participative justice in education, a more broad perspective in the discourse of equality and thus democracy. In this respect, this paper aims to identify the opinions of postgraduate students studying in the Institute of Educational Sciences in a university in İzmir, Turkey about the schooling practices of Roma children from social justice perspective with a focus on the equal distribution of resources and opportunities; the extent to which rights and diversities of Roma children are recognised in education and thus the nature of Roma parents' and children's participation in the education.

### **Method**

In this qualitative study, case study design was used. The key feature of case study design is to examine single or several cases in detail (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2005) and to discuss the factors related to a case with a holistic approach (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007; Creswell, 2007). The study group was determined through maximum variety sampling method with an aim to generate a relatively small sample and reflect the variety of the participants as much as possible and identify different aspects of the problem according to this variety (Creswell, 2007; Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2005). Within this context, 46 post graduate students, 26 of whom are MA and 20 of whom are PhD students studying in the Institute of Educational Sciences in Dokuz Eylül University, 24 of whom females and 22 of whom are males with different subject areas were chosen.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

The data of the research was collected by means of a semi-structured interview form including questions about the access of Roma children to schooling. This form was delivered to the participants by hand in January and the importance of their sincere opinions for the research was emphasized. Data analysis was performed in a descriptive way referring to the statements of the participants and the language used, the characteristics of the statements, symbolic narration and accommodation (Kümbetoğlu, 2005). The data were transferred to the computer and the replies of the participants were organized. The data was read several times, the similar and different point of views in the data were identified and irrelevant statements were sorted out. The statements that would be cited were chosen and presented referring to their original content. Also, before the analysis process, each participant was given a number and coded as MA (Master of Arts) and PhD (Doctorate); M (males), F (females) and EA (Educational Administration), SCG (Psychological Counselling and Guidance), T (Turkish Teaching), SE (Special Education), P (Physics Teaching), H (History), CE (Computer education and instructional technology). First, the researchers performed the analysis independently and later they discussed, evaluated and agreed on the themes.

### **Findings**

As for the access of Roma children to schooling, it was identified that while most of the participants (n: 41) asserted that Roma children can't access to education due to various reasons; some

participants (n: 5) stated that there isn't discrimination based on ethnicity in Turkey. The participants' opinions within this context are as follows:

*"Our schools provide a suitable environment for only Turkish-Muslim-Sunni-heterosexual-male individuals as in all Turkish public institutions. I think the problem of nonexistence of minorities in public institutions and therefore schools has several reasons"* (7F, PCG, MA).

*"I don't think there is such kind of a discrimination. Successful students are appreciated and respected everywhere. I think Roma children or other children from different ethnic origins abuse that. Unfortunately, those who don't obey the rules enmesh in this situation all over the World"* (23M, EA, MA).

The disadvantaged status of Roma children in terms of access to education in Turkey was revealed in several other studies in Turkey (Akgün, 2004; Akkan, Deniz and Ertan, 2011; Uğurlu, 2013; Çelik and Tar, 2015; Genç, Taylan and Barış, 2015; Diktaş, Deniz and Balcıoğlu, 2016; Tor, 2017). The opinions of the participants regarding the reasons preventing Roma children from access to schooling are presented in the following table.

**Table 1.** The reasons preventing Roma children from access to schooling

Reasons	N
Economic factors	9
Roma culture, lifestyle and family structure	7
Bias, discrimination and exclusion	7
Lack of social state	7
Learned hopelessness	5
Total	35

As seen in Table 1, economic factors constitute the biggest barrier which prevents Roma children from accessing to schooling. The participants described these factors as poverty, income equality and the obligation to work as a child labourer. One participant expressed her opinions within this context like this:

*"I witnessed in my both personal and vocational life that Roma children started to sell flowers by dropping out the school or married by eloping. Because unfortunately, Roma individuals are prevented from finding jobs and being employed"* (32F, PCG, PhD).

In addition to economic factors, Romas' introverted cultural structure; their unsteady family structure, demonstrating itself with travelling all the time and uneducated Roma families who ignore education, don't serve as a model for their children, consider children as a means of income and make their children marry at an early age, emerged as one of the reasons of Roma children's limited access to schooling. It has been revealed in several studies both in Turkey and abroad that Romas' unique culture and life style and parenting traditions have been significant determiners of Roma children's schooling practices (Akgün, 2004; Eyüboğlu, 2007; Symeou, Luciak and Gobbo, 2009; Biro, Smederevac and Tovilović, 2009; Roth and Moisa, 2011; Orçan, Çiçekler and Arı, 2014; Genç, Taylan and Barış, 2015; Diktaş, Deniz and Balcıoğlu, 2016).

Also, Roma children's exposure to discriminatory behaviour of principals, teachers and other students during their educational life and later exposure to bias and discrimination during the employment process were found to be another determinant of their limited access to education that cause them to feel excluded and alienate themselves from the school environment. One participant asserted her opinions as following:

*“There are some common bias in our society. Unfortunately, these bias appear in schools as well. Roma, Kurdish and Armenian students are in a constant struggle against both different attitudes of their teachers and their friends’ bullying. This estranges them from education and supports the beliefs of families regarding schools. This is a vicious circle” (17F, EA MA).*

Within this context, it’s interesting to find that there are discriminative statements in the participants own discourses:

*I know some Roma people who are educated and become civil servants. Even more, one of them became a member of Parliament in the latest elections. I don’t agree on the common belief that Romas face discrimination. This is completely related to Roman culture and life styles of families. I can exemplify Romas’ view of life with such kind of a narration: “One of the Romas studied and became qaimaqam (a deputy governor in Turkey), hankered after tambour while inspecting the city”. [a humiliating statement] (43M, T, PhD).*

Within the context of discrimination and segregation towards Roma children, it’s revealed in several studies in Turkey that what removed Roma children from school is the exclusive practices towards them. Roma children stated that they often disguised themselves as non-Roma children didn’t want to play with them, they also exposed to teachers’ and school administrators’ discriminative behaviours and attitudes (Akkan, Deniz and Ertan, 2011; Demirel, 2012; Orçan, Çiçekler and Arı, 2014; Çelik and Tar, 2015; Genç, Taylan and Barış, 2015; Diktaş, Deniz and Balçioğlu, 2016) .

Some of the participants discussed the drawbacks of Roma children to schooling in macro level and addressed these drawbacks or reasons within the framework of lack of social state. They asserted that the state don’t provide employment opportunities; the problems in disadvantaged districts aren’t solved; coercive measures to provide Roma children with access to education aren’t implemented with political anxieties; there are antidemocratic administration practices such as not letting Roma children speak their mother tongue and the inefficiency of student follow-up projects to solve the drop out problems of them.

According to the opinions of the participants, all the factors mentioned above cause Roma families and children to have such beliefs as they will already fail and even if they are successful, they will have difficulty in finding jobs; in other words they feel learned desperateness, have prejudices towards education system itself and prefer to opt themselves out of schooling practices.

The recommendations of the participants regarding to improve the access Roma children to schooling are presented in the following table:

**Table 2.** Recommendations regarding to improve the access of Roma children to schooling

Recommendations	n
Social state and equal rights	10
Recommendations for Roma families	7
Recommendations for educationalists and educational researchers	5
Total	22

As seen in Table 2, the participants emphasized the importance of social state and equal rights on a large scale. They suggested that joint projects with municipalities, institutions and foundations should be developed to find solutions to the employment problem of Roma people; a more democratic and secular understanding of education should be adopted and within this context, compulsory education practice should be functionalized; various policies to enable Roma children to attend schools should be encouraged; the education system and curriculum should be flexed with such practices as selective courses at flexible hours, more emphasis on music and physical education

courses, training for secure job opportunities with informal education practices after school. The opinions of one participant regarding this issue is like that:

*The situation of Roma children is due to the antidemocratic structure of the administration. I think ethnicity constitutes the resource of polarization. Equality of opportunity in education must be enabled. Roma people don't think there is an objective education approach. They feel excluded. Democratic and secular understanding of education must be universalized. They should be able to feel free in terms of expressing themselves and defend themselves against discriminative approaches. National identity must be blended with ethnic identity and equality must be provided" (30F, S, MA).*

The participants argued that Roma families themselves have important roles to improve the opportunities of Roma children to access to schooling. They suggested that the families should strive hard to enhance their education level and change their conscious and attitudes towards education system; attempt to adapt to social structure by protecting their ethnicity and as a result demand the change themselves. One of the participants expressed his opinions with those statements:

*As a teacher, I agree on the evaluation that Roma children are among the disadvantaged groups in terms of access to schooling. However, I think that these obstacles will be overcome progressively with the education of families initially and later including children in social inclusion policies (23M, EA, MA).*

Lastly, participants made some suggestions for the educationalists and educational researchers as well and suggested that educationalists should be objective; show Roma people who are successful in their educational life as role models and thus Roma children should be included in education in some other way. The participants also suggested that educational researchers should make researches about the views of minority students and families towards education system and schools; they should examine what educational administrators think about the education of minority groups and how politicians deal with this situation.

## **Discussion**

The purpose of this study was to identify the opinions of postgraduate students about the education practices of Roma children from a social justice perspective. According to results of this study, it was found out that almost all of the participants agreed that the Roma children have limited access to schooling for such reasons as economics, Roma culture and the family structure, exclusion practices towards them, lack of social state and learned desperateness and of all these reasons, the economic factors are the most emphasized one by the participants. It's stressed in various researches in the literature that the schooling problems of Roma children are a direct consequence of the reality of poverty and their disadvantaged socioeconomic conditions (Posavec and Hrvatic, 2000; Biro, Smederevac and Tovilović, 2009; Symeou, Luciak and Gobbo, 2009). According to Connell (1994), while poverty is a result of maldistribution of resources and wealth in industrial countries, it's a result of lack of resources and wealth in the third world countries. Thus, it can be asserted that Turkey which is somewhere between an industrial and third world country is experiencing both maldistribution and lack of wealth and the minorities get the least slice of the cake. It's identified in many studies both in Turkey and abroad that the most prominent factor of social exclusion is poverty (Barnes, 2002; Genç, Taylan and Barış, 2015) and what determines the schooling experiences of Roma children is economic insufficiency (Akgün, 2004; Biro, Smederevac and Tovilović, 2009; Akkan. Deniz and Ertan 2011; European Commission, 2011; Uğurlu, 2013; Diktaş, Deniz and Balcıoğlu, 2016; Tor, 2017) manifesting itself with having difficulties in covering the costs of schooling (uniform, books, computer, etc), finding pocket money, the inefficiency of opportunities and environments to study, having to work with the mentality that "schooling is impractical and ineffective for real life as it restrains them to contribute to family economy" (Cozma, Cucos and Momanu, 2000). Within this context, the economic insufficiency of Roma people occupies an important place in the injustice redistribution policies.



Actually, segregation of Roma children is discrimination against both the individual child and its ethnic community (Atger, 2009). In addition to not being recognised within the mainstream education system, the Roma culture is mostly seen as something inferior (Georgiadis and Zisimos, 2012) and labelled as black sheep with the humiliating traits attributed to them by the society. Although the emphasis on cultural rights strengthen policies for accepting diversity, recognition (Bates, 2005), and education is accepted as the path to emancipate from discrimination and dispossession by many minority ethnic groups worldwide (Georgiadis and Zisimos, 2012), the full participation and access of Roma children in education has still been an ideal and Roma children rarely reach their full academic potential, and very few of them attain advanced education degrees (Symeou, Luciak and Gobbo, 2009). Therefore, the schools have been places reproducing cultural injustices rather paths to emancipate from discrimination. Notwithstanding this, Roma children are mostly blamed for their cultural characteristics and family life structures as a drawback to their integration into the school system (McDonald, 2009; Roth and Moisa, 2011; Georgiadis and Zisimos, 2012; Çelik and Tar, 2015). Not participating in education is mostly accepted as a characteristic of Romani culture and it's thought something outside of their systems of values (Divani, 2001: 11). However, it should be born in mind that most mainstream schools aren't welcoming and they are insensitive to the needs of Roma children in terms of curriculum, materials, assesment practices and teaching strategies. Also, the teachers mostly lack of necessary knowledge and training as to the culture and family structure of Roma children (McDonald, 2009; Miskovic, 2009) and they feel discriminated against or punished by having to work in those schools and call these schools as the places of exile (Erdeniz, 2005; as quoted in Orçan, Çiçekler and Arı, 2014). In addition to these, blaming Roma children, actually the victims, for their schooling practices "overlooks the economic and social conditions of many members of Roma groups and their relation to educational failure / success, while it turns a blind eye to the role of the state and its apparatuses, like the educational system (Zachos, 2012, 55) which is also identified in the participants' own opinions with the words "lack of social state" in this research.

It's a well known fact that Roma people have greater difficulty in accessing social rights and benefitting from these rights compared to the other groups of society (Genç, Taylan and Barış, 2015). Of all these rights, the socio-economic rights are in the foreground and Roma people expose to exclusion, thus injustices, in the economic life and participate in economic life at limited level. Work areas of Roma people are mostly temporary, part time or off the books and they are also made to work ignoring health and security concerns (Helsinki Citizens' Assembly, 2008). Also, such domestic problems as deficiency and scarcity of permanent jobs and their time of entry into the labour market are that many members of Roma groups face and thus prevent them from dealing with their children's educational needs (Zachos, 2012). In fact, the socio-economic projects provided for Roma people aren't sustainable and political anxieties are mostly in the foreground in the process of distribution of the services provided for them (Eyyüboğlu, 2007). In addition to problems caused by their socio-economic situations, Roma parents are mostly excluded from participating in school wide processes with such practices as not letting them go into the school and making them wait outside of the school (Marsh, 2008; Genç, Taylan and Barış, 2015) which prevent them from interacting with principals and teachers (Diktaş, Deniz and Balcıoğlu, 2016) and representing themselves in the education system. However, engaging Roma parents in their children's education is an important way both to increase students' educational opportunities, to help them do better in school (Roma Education Fund, 2010) and ensure their social participation (Diktaş, Deniz and Balcıoğlu, 2016). Also, it has been found out in various studies that Roma children don't participate in educational and social activities at the expected level (Akkan, Deniz ve Ertan, 2011, Uzun Mercan ve Bütün, 2015), as they are sometimes excluded from national festivals and graduation celebrations (Genç, Taylan and Barış, 2015) and they mostly live in the suburban neighborhoods outside the city where they can't benefit from the city's cultural and social life offerings (Orçan, Çiçekler and Arı, 2014). This situation of not accessing social rights based on right of asylum, education and employment also causes Roma people experience political exclusion (Barness, 2002). It has been revealed in various studies that Roma people show unwillingness in democratic and political participation and prefer to opt themselves out of the process (Kolukırcık, 2007; Yavuzak Taban, 2010; Çelik and Yüce Tar, 2015; Genç, Taylan and Barış, 2015)

keeping their voice for themselves and serving as a model of silence, some kind of learned desperateness and prejudices against education system for their children. The Roma children also mostly prefer to opt out of education process to struggling (Genç, Taylan and Barış, 2015) without any expectation from education (Orçan, Çiçekler and Arı, 2014; Çelik and Yüce Tar, 2015).

Concerning the reasons of Roma children's limited access to schooling, the participants made some suggestions for Roma families themselves stating that Roma people should change their own minds, demand change themselves, etc. However, these suggestions for families themselves have some kind of blaming minorities for their exclusion from the society and preferring to close the eyes to avoid of seeing the big picture, the lack of a social state which emanated the schools from becoming a public service that every individual of the society will benefit equally. From the social justice perspective, Turkish education system has been experiencing injustices in terms of both distribution of resources, wealth, opportunities and recognition of diverse cultures, ethnicities and races; thus participation in education. Although it's argued that some concrete steps to ensure social justice such as free school books, school meals, including certain languages and sects in the curriculum, it is still far away from a just system which gives an ear to the voice of the majority and the single culture and but not of the plurality and diversity. Turkey, which is accepted as a social state and that's also written in the constitution must provide justice for it's all citizens. In theory, what is expected from a social state is that it must make positive discrimination in the redistribution of the income obtained. Within this context, social state must come into prominence not only with powerlessness, poverty and the sustainability of the current situation but also with the functions that transform the injustice practices which constitute impediment to education, a basic human right, create inequality and reinforce the current injustices. "Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past (Marx, 1999, 5) and Roma children, bringing all the disadvantages of who they are, wherever they go, expose to several economic, cultural and thus participative injustices within Turkish education system. Education both as a means of stratification and as the only way to abolish the same stratification has a vital role in the empowerment of schooling experiences of Roma children. "It is true that education is not the ultimate lever for social transformation, but without it transformation cannot occur" (Freire, 1998, 37). When Turkish education system includes and values the culture of Roma and hear and recognize Romani voices, Roma disaffection turns into passion' (Gómez and Vargas, 2003, 560) and this is only possible with the transference of the concepts of social justice, diversity and equality to Turkish education system both in theory and the practice. Last but not least, as the participants have already suggested, the concept of social justice shouldn't remain in theory and in the words and educationalists and educational researchers should adopt a fair approach and the current educational administration literature should include the discourse of social justice and give voice to the minorities.

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