

# **Institutional Racism? Roma children, local community and school practices**

**Dimitris Zachos**

Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece

## **Abstract**

*This article tries to discuss the conditions Roma pupils face within the Greek educational system. In the first part, through a brief history of Roma groups in Greece followed by a short analysis of their legal status and leaving conditions, I attempt to present a critical approach in Romani Studies. Thereafter, using Institutional Racism as a lens and based on official documents and secondary data, I am trying to make a concise analysis of the educational policy of the Greek state towards Roma pupils. In the second part, based on an ethnographic research in a Greek primary school, I investigate the influence of the local Greek authorities, local communities and school personnel on Roma origin pupils' education.*

**Key Words:** Institutional Racism, Critical Romany Studies, Primary Education, Ethnographic Research

## **Introduction**

The aim of this paper is to discuss and analyze the conditions Roma pupils face within the Greek educational system. I attempt to fulfil that target through (a) a critical examination of some selective topics concerning Roma educational literature; and (b) an empirical field data from my research on the educational situation of a particular group of Roma people.

I consider this paper as a contribution to a critical approach in Romani Studies, which aims to challenge essentialist accounts of Roma identity;<sup>1</sup> to shed light on historical routes of each Roma group; and to (re)direct attention towards specific economic, social and political conditions they face today.

A Critical approach in Romani Studies should avoid simplistic interpretations, as well as unsupported generalizations and aggregations concerning Roma groups' life and activities. In contrast, it should support its arguments and conclusions on valid data derived from scientific research<sup>2</sup> and on rational critical analysis. In this way it could

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<sup>1</sup> In my view, such an approach should assume that "ethnicity, racism and sexism must be understood in the proper perspective as forms of ideological mystification designed to facilitate exploitation and weaken the collective power of the laboring classes" (Edari, R. 1984. Racial minorities and forms of ideological mystification. In M. Berlowitz & R. Edari (Eds.), *Racism and the denial of human rights: Beyond ethnicity*, 7-18. Minneapolis: Marxist Educational Press, as it appears in McCarthy [1988:271]).

<sup>2</sup> It is worth noting that studies - benchmarks for subsequent academic or journalistic reviews (papers, undergraduate or graduate works)- do not even present their methodological tools or research data to justify preconceptions / conclusions such as: 'Roma pupils are bad at school' 'education is not within the Roma value system' or 'the Roma culture is not compatible with that of the school' (Zachos, 2012a). Another characteristic of many studies concerning Roma is that they made generalizations which are supported -at best- in a small number of case studies (Zachos, 2012a).

unveil contemporary myths concerning Roma attitudes and traits to schooling<sup>3</sup> and contribute in an intercultural / multicultural / antiracist pedagogy, which rests on three propositions: “(a) Students must experience academic success; (b) students must develop and/or maintain cultural competence; and (c) students must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order” (Ladson-Billings, 1995:160).

### **Roma and Roma groups**

As I note elsewhere (Zachos, 2011: 35), Roma are individuals and groups still designated as ‘Gypsies’, ‘*Tsiganes*’ in Greek (or the vernacular equivalent in many European languages). There are many people of Roma origin, no matter the country or the continent they live, who are victims of prejudice, discrimination, racism, and persecution because of their distinctive culture and minority status. As a result, a lot of them have low life expectancy, poor working conditions, low educational credits, while their level of unemployment and child mortality are high. Another common characteristic of Roma is that many Gaje (non Roma) consider them as a social problem and a threat to their security. Roma are “racialized” (Miles, 1989), that is to say they are attributed with common characteristics and attitudes that have been largely vilified.

It should be noted that a large part of Romani Studies “contribute (deliberately or incidentally) to an approach in which the Roma cannot help but be nomads, outcasts and fugitives. When Romani life is not different from the life of ‘others’, it is interpreted as socially pathogenic” (Zachos, 2011: 33). Thus, long-lasting settlement of the Roma in a region is considered to be a compromise with exterior conditions and social needs and a condemnation of Romani cultural identity (Zachos, 2011: 33). So, the “existence of sedentary Roma groups refutes most of the fundamental principles that the Roma constitute one people with a number of fixed characteristics” (Zachos, 2011: 34).

In my view (Zachos, 2006, 2007a, 2011, 2012a, 2012b) those who are named Roma are individuals or groups, with a common cultural (traditions, customs), historical (transmigration, persecution) and social (work, socio-economic status) background. In order to dissociate myself from those who believe that Roma are one people or a nation without country I prefer to refer to them using the circumlocutions Roma group and Roma groups. Furthermore, a descriptive term is important for matching with the sources of the investigation, as well as in order to be comprehensible to whom this essay is referring to. I believe that my preferred terms, Roma group and Roma groups, do not signal some type of national, ethnic, ‘racial’ or cultural homogenization. In addition, those circumlocutions provide us with the possibility of seeing the real historical courses under which the current life conditions and economic and social status of those who are considered to be Roma were shaped (Zachos, 2011: 35).

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<sup>3</sup> This issue is further elaborated in (Zachos, 2012a).

## Roma Groups and Educational Failure

The education of Roma groups falls under the wider discourse of minority education, given that pupils of Roma origin have some common characteristics with many other members of ethnic or cultural minorities, such as low rates of educational attendance, especially at the secondary and tertiary levels, interrupted learning, low educational achievement levels, behavioural problems, as well as attitudes of contempt and racism toward them among non-Roma parents, pupils and teachers.<sup>4</sup>

Accounts of the experiences of pupils of Roma origin within various national educational systems and explanations of their failure have often emphasized their reluctance to participate in education. This is represented as a feature of Romani culture (Lloyd & McCluskey, 2008:335), as it is widely held that attending school is not part of their system of values (Divani, 2001:11). However, such an interpretation 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, and blames (exclusively) the victims.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, domestic problems such as scarcity, deficiency of permanent jobs, other economic problems, and their time of entry into the labour market are problems that many members of Roma groups face. Central is the fact that endemic poverty prevents parents of Roma origin from dealing with their children's educational needs. Furthermore, there are certain obstacles -concerning pupils' of Roma origin participation and success in schools- relating to some of their (distinct) cultural elements:<sup>6</sup> First, the language of the school, which is not their mother tongue and in many cases this language is not familiar to their home and community. Second the lack of a special / flexible curriculum and Roma absence from textbooks. Third, segregation, racism and bullying they face in schools. Significantly, in many places across Europe, segregation is a common characteristic of the education of Roma children: local non-Roma parents often oppose Roma attending the same school as their children (Vanderbeck, 2009), local non-Roma parents often decide to transfer their children to other schools (Altheer, 2002) and some school administrators refuse to admit children of Roma origin. Schools in general are poorly prepared to attend to Roma pupils' needs, teachers lack knowledge and training and commonly, Romani culture, history, and language are absent from school curricula (Bowen, 2004, Miskovic, 2009).

## Institutional Racism

The term institutional discrimination was first introduced by Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton in *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America* (1967), although the basic concept predated that work (Omi & Winant, 1994: 186). The concept of institutional racism was developed and used by theorists of civil rights and anti-discrimination movement in the U.S. to illustrate the manner in which the state and other major institutions supported the subordination of African Americans. Almost at the same time, the concept was introduced and used with insufficient

<sup>4</sup> For further details, see Sparangis, 1993, Markou, 1997, Liegeois, 1998, OSCE, 2000, Zachos, 2007a).

<sup>5</sup> In Greece, last two decades, the Ministry of Education has taken certain compensatory measures (small groups, tutorial classes, remedial instruction classes, reception classes transporting card) (Zachos, 2012b), but "did not succeed to make school attractive to Roma" (Karagiorgi at all, 2011).

<sup>6</sup> For a further elaboration of these issues see Zachos (2012a).

analytical rigour (Miles, 1989: 53) in Britain, where (Troyna, 1992: 75, 122) it was employed:

- a) To attack existing theories which blame the victims for their own racial oppression
- b) As a theoretical tool of interventionist social and educational policies against racial inequalities
- c) As a central explanatory tool which differentiates antiracists from multiculturalists

Institutional racism usually refers to racism permeating major institutions, e.g., the police force, the education system, the political system, etc. (Cole, 2004, 36) which fail to provide appropriate and professional services to citizens because of their skin color, culture, or ethnic origin (Macpherson of Cluny, 1999: 6.3.4). Institutional racism often means certain taken-for-granted customs, routine, practices, procedures (Sarup, 1991: 34) and beliefs not necessarily written into the workings of institutions (Gillborn, 2002a: 54), which end up subordinating members of a minority.

It should be noted that widespread employment of the concept in Britain<sup>7</sup> led to some misuse of the term. First, it was reduced to denoting a direct and causal relationship between one form of inequality (such as educational underachievement) and an institution such as the school (Rizvi, 1993: 11), thus transferring responsibility exclusively to schools. Second, there has been a tendency to use the concept in a manner to imply that racist processes are the only or the primary cause of all the unequal outcomes and exclusions which African-American (or ethnic minority) students' experience, underplaying the significance of the class and gender inequalities (Rattansi, 2005: 35).

In Greece, the concept of institutional racism was introduced by Tsiakalos (2000, 2001) to suggest that more radical responses to racism are required. More analytically, Tsiakalos (2000, 2001) has contended that in order to better confront the dominant view predicated on the notion that racism is a question of individuals lacking proper knowledge about a specific group of people (e.g. immigrants), it is necessary to adopt a better theoretical frame in which 'institutional racism' could be a useful tool. However, in Greece, the concept of institutional racism has been used to date as a theoretical tool, neither in the mapping out of policy nor in the elaboration of academic research tasks.

In education, institutional racism consists of 'differential catchment areas, stereotyping by teachers, monocultural curricula, narrow and specific standards of assessment, white monopoly of positions of authority, differential expectations by teachers of achievement, racist textbooks and the undervaluation of black experience and history' (Williams in Troyna: 1993: 83), as well as rules about appropriate modes of dress, lack of availability of vegetarian food or halal meat for Muslims, failure to communicate school messages to parents in languages other than English, and the absence of policies on racial abuse or equal opportunities (Rattansi, 2005: 23-24).

In this paper, I use 'institutional racism' as a concept to shift the focus of the discourse on race from individual beliefs and prejudices to structural factors, as well as in order to underline the systemic aspects of racism in education and society,

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<sup>7</sup> Apart from the term's use as a theoretical tool by many Local Educational Authorities in Britain, institutional racism since the 1990s has become more common in popular use (Gillborn, 2002b).

looking at the situation of the Roma in a Greek context. In my view, institutional racism entails the challenge of exploring how racism imbues state apparatuses and large organizations, as well as a weapon for those striving to link the battle against racism with the demands of social justice. For the purposes of the present research, a functional definition is employed, according to which institutional racism in education is manifested through:

- The states' allowances and settings (curriculum, economic resources, compensatory educational programs, non-teaching of Romani/Romanes [Roma home language], selection of administrators & teachers)
- Local community involvement (districts with enrolments of 'majority' pupils in schools with high rates of 'minority' pupils)
- School customs, practices and procedures (relationships with parents and guardians, language of communication with parents, ranking of pupils in low-level classes, non-creation and functioning of Reception Classes and Tutoring Departments, non-acceptance of Roma pupils in schools under the pretext they did not present the necessary documents on time)
- Teachers' beliefs and attitudes (stereotyping, differential expectations, assessment and discipline measures)

## **Methodology**

In this study, the following research questions were addressed:

- How is the education of Roma pupils supported/dealt with by the local society and their schools?
- What are the perceptions of local authorities, teachers and administrators regarding the education of Roma pupils?
- What are the attendance rates of Roma pupils?

The data for the present study comes from bibliographic research on published sources regarding Roma education as well as from an extended ethnographic research from October 2009 to June 2010 in the school complex 'Aristotelis' in Lydia, northern Greece.<sup>8</sup> The selection of this primary school was determined by the fact that it caters principally to pupils of Roma origin.

Ethnographic research can reveal facts and reasons which quantitative research has difficulty in revealing. Ethnographic research is regarded as a qualitative method, since it satisfies the three principles of qualitative research, namely description, comprehension and interpretation, and it is particularly useful when the researcher's aim is the citation of a detailed description of the life and course of an individual or a group.

The study adopts a critical approach (Fay, 1987), that is an approach focusing on the social contradictions and disputes, which attempts to reveal the historical, political and social conditions that have shaped the educational realities of the children of this group. Critical ethnography works as a means to conceive and adopt educational practices (Anderson 1989), to critically examine the content of education as well as to unveil brewing conflicts and tensions. Critical researchers pose questions that set them apart from the traditional ethnographer (Carspecken & Apple, 1992: 512), while

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<sup>8</sup> The names of the schools and towns used in this study are fictive to ensure anonymity.

at the same time adopting an objective, neutral stance. As McLaren (1999: 12-13) points out, in every study that deals with the subtle effects of school organizations, researchers put forward their own hidden questions.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 2 principals and 18 teachers of the schools, 10 local politicians. I also interviewed 2 principals of neighbouring schools, as well as 2 local educational administrators (manager of the Prefecture and Manager of the municipal).

The main questions posed to the teachers,<sup>9</sup> concerned information about:

1. The profile of the pupils and the teachers themselves
2. Schooling, grades and students' behaviour
3. The kinds of relationships among the Roma pupils as well as with pupils from other cultural groups
4. The ways and forms of educational benefits provided by the school and the teachers themselves
5. Teachers' expectations, discipline issues, school performance and the reasons for school failure of the Roma pupils, as well as the changes that should be instituted to deal with this problem

Questions 4/5 formed the basis of the interviews with the two principals of the school complex 'Aristotelis'. The questions regarding the ways that the local community deals with the education of the Roma pupils as well as possible supportive initiatives formed the basis of the interviews with the local politicians. The issue of Roma pupils enrolment and attendance in other-than 'Aristotelis'- schools frame the interviews with the educational administrators and the principals of the other schools.

## **Ethnographic research**

The school complex 'Aristotelis' is situated about a thousand metres away from the town of Lydia on the east, towards the city of Domna. Two Roma settlements are contained in the geographical boundaries of the school. In the first, the settlement of Nauplion, there are some 500 inhabitants. Most of them work as flea market vendors in nearby cities. Their houses are in good condition with all modern facilities. In the second settlement, Kara Dere, some 2,000 Roma are resident, their ancestors having lived there since before this region became part of the Greek state. Most men in this settlement are blue-collar workers, while a small number are engaged in petty commerce. Roma women are often employed as domestic workers. In this settlement there were literacy classes during the 1980s with apparently positive outcomes.<sup>10</sup>

Most members of the abovementioned Roma communities are Orthodox Christians and they are politically active. In terms of their education, most of them are functionally illiterate. Their first language is Romanes, but most of them have a spoken knowledge of Greek.

The school was established in 1926 in a small building, which was later extended<sup>11</sup> to cover the ever-growing educational needs of the people in the area. In the summer of 2010, there were 18 classrooms in use for both schools, one additional classroom for

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<sup>9</sup> Worth noting that none of them was of Roma origin.

<sup>10</sup> The estimates of the educational level of the residents of the Roma settlements were made by staff at the General Secretariat for Public Education (Kostoglou, 1988).

<sup>11</sup> The last extension was in 1958 (Archives of 'Aristotelis' school).

the inclusion class, one for art lessons, one for remedial teaching and a computer room. There is one more classroom that used to be a bathroom and which is now used for PE (physical education). It should be noted that ten of the school classrooms are too small, since they were made by dividing bigger rooms or had been originally built for other purposes (e.g. storerooms, offices etc.). The problems in school infrastructure are manifested by the lack of kitchen and dining hall for the pupils who attend the all-day school, as well as the lack of offices for the two principals. In the school complex, there is a canteen, a teacher room for both schools and a separate room outside which is used as a gym.

### **The local community**

The members of the local community in the town of Lydia do not seem to be particularly friendly towards the Roma groups of Nauplion and Kara Dere, and have certain prejudicial views about their Roma neighbours. The local politicians I interviewed pointed out that the Roma people in those areas are largely responsible for the illegal activities in their town (drug trafficking, fights for controlling night clubs, petty theft, etc.). Similarly, the people who reside within the geographical boundaries of the school complex 'Aristotelis' refuse to enrol or choose to transfer their children from this school because they "don't want their children to go to the same school with the Gypsy children".

**Table 1. Pupil cohorts, 1990-2003**

<i>School</i>	<i>Enrolled</i>		<i>Transferred</i>				<i>Expelled</i>		<i>Graduated</i>	
<i>year</i>			<i>Within the city</i>		<i>Within the county</i>		<i>For reasons of age</i>			
	<i>Ro ma</i>	<i>Non Roma</i>	<i>Rom a</i>	<i>Non Roma</i>	<i>Ro ma</i>	<i>Non Roma</i>	<i>Ro ma</i>	<i>Non Roma</i>	<i>Ro ma</i>	<i>Non- Roma</i>
<b>1990-91</b>	29	17	1	3	3	1	4	0	21	13
<b>1991-92</b>	22	19	1	3	3	2	3	0	15	14
<b>1992-93</b>	30	16	0	3	1	0	14	0	15	13
<b>1993-94</b>	23	22	0	5	2	2	9	0	12	15
<b>1994-95</b>	22	18	0	4	3	0	11	0	8	14
<b>1995-96</b>	21	16	0	2	2	1	6	0	13	13
<b>1996-97</b>	19	15	0	3	1	1	2	0	16	11
<b>1997-98</b>	27	13	0	5	2	0	5	0	20	8
<b>1998-99</b>	32	18	1	8	1	1	2	0	28	9
<b>1999-00</b>	38	21	0	8	3	0	4	0	31	13
<b>2000-01</b>	29	18	0	8	1	1	0	0	28	9
<b>2001-02</b>	28	18	2	8	1	0	0	0	25	10
<b>2002-03</b>	32	16	3	8	0	0	5	0	24	8
<b>Total</b>	352	227	8	68	23	9	65	0	256	150

As evident from Table 1, the number of non-Roma pupils transferred from 'Aristotelis' has been increasing in the 13 years for which figures are available (from 3 in 1990-1 to 8 per year in 1998-2003), whereas the number of non-Roma parents who choose to enrol their child in the same school is on the decline. More specifically, in the school year 2009-2010 when this research took place, the number of the Roma pupils in this school, as shown in Table 2, rose to 82.3 percent of the total students

enrolled (193 out of 235), whereas only 42 pupils (23.73 percent of the total students enrolled) did not belong to the Roma community, 25 out of whom were children of economic immigrants or refugees.

A key characteristic of Roma pupils' schooling is that 58 of them (30.05 percent of Roma pupils) did not attend school on a regular basis; this indicates that the problem of school integration for those children is real and needs to be dealt with. However, the number of Roma pupils that attended school regularly reached 135 (76.27 percent of the total pupils who attended 'Aristotelis' school regularly), of these, 30 (according to their teachers) lived in makeshift (wooden) houses.

**Table 2. Schooling 2009-2010**

<b>Class</b>	<b>Number of Enrollments</b>			<b>Number of Graduates</b>			<b>Total</b>
	<b>Roma</b>	<b>Non Roma</b>	<b>total</b>	<b>Roma</b>	<b>Non Roma</b>		
A	46	6	52	19	6	25	
B	44	5	49	36	5	41	
C	31	2	33	24	2	26	
D	26	7	33	19	7	26	
E	27	8	35	25	8	33	
St	19	14	33	12	14	26	
<b>Total</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>177</b>	

To reach this point, non-Roma parents had to exert pressure on politicians, who in turn exerted pressure on education administrators (head of the education directorate, head of the education office and school principals) in order to allow the enrolment of several pupils who reside outside the geographical boundaries of their schools.<sup>12</sup>

"I was under unbearable pressure. Every day I received phone calls from people in ministers' and members of parliament's offices. In the end I had to give in, since I was asked to do the same by my administrative superiors". (X. K. Principal in the neighbouring school complex 'Fedra').

The decline in pupil numbers in the school complex 'Aristotelis' led to an even further decline in school prestige. The general opinion held by those who had a say in the educational affairs in Lydia characterised 'Aristotelis' as a 'ghetto', the 'black people's school', 'the school of those 'white' kids who have no way to enrol in neighbouring schools', and, finally, 'the school where those who teach have no means of finding a teaching position in other schools in town'. All this resulted in further declines in student numbers, which came this time from the Roma people themselves, some of whom reacted to the ghettoization of their school in the same way as their fellow citizens, the Gatze: they sought and achieved the enrolment of their children in the two neighbouring schools, 'Fedra' and 'Hercules'. So, according to the principals of those schools, the number of Roma pupils who reside within the geographical boundaries of 'Aristotelis' and have enrolled in their schools is in excess of 70.

<sup>12</sup> In Greece, each child whose home is located in a demarcated area is legally obliged (Hellenic Republic, 1998, article 1) to attend a specific school of this area.

As a result, the school complexes ‘Fedra’ and ‘Hercules’ (especially ‘Fedra’) took in a large number of pupils, which caused operational problems, since the number of students per class exceeded that of the other schools in town. This issue was of serious concern to the ‘Fedra’ teaching staff. In June 2010, they filed a complaint to their administrative authorities and the local press regarding the illegal enrolments, in which they spelled out their worries about the quality of education and the pupils’ safety. In their view, this had been compromised by turning auxiliary spaces (labs, sheds) into classrooms.

### **Irregular schooling**

As shown in Tables 1 and 2, the most important problem that the administrators and teachers in the ‘Aristotelis’ school are facing concerns the irregular schooling of Roma pupils. This problem is two-fold: first, some Roma children fail to enrol in the school at the appropriate age (when they turn six years of age) and second, they fail to attend school regularly, which prevents them from being promoted to the next grade. Regarding the issue of children failing to enrol at the appropriate age, both principals and most of the schools’ teachers think that they should not get involved at all, since it is not their responsibility. The same stance seems to be adopted by the local authorities, who are reluctant to take any initiative towards solving or at least lessening the problem, even though there is a legal side to it as well. As a result, it is not unusual for children aged 10 to 13 years to appear to enrol in primary school for the first time.

“It is a big problem for us, which we face in the beginning of every school year, when older children come to enrol in our school. Those children usually have discipline problems, since they often speak inappropriately and bully younger children. The state has left us completely helpless and there are no institutional means or measures to help the situation. Additionally, whereas we need more teaching staff for remedial teaching and dealing with such cases, the state intends to merge the two schools from the coming school year, which will increase the student-teacher ratio and make educational work more difficult” (N.T., principal of one school in the ‘Aristotelis’ complex).

In commenting on irregular schooling, i.e. pupil absenteeism or their refusal to participate in school activities, such as festivals, events and field trips, some teachers state clearly that they do nothing about it. To account for their inaction, they say that is it useless, since “the Gypsies do not care about their children’s schooling”, “schooling is not part of the Gypsy culture”, and ‘the only concern of the Gypsies – and not of all of them for that matter- is that their children acquire the primary school diploma so that they are able to get a driver’s licence and a flea market vendor licence’ (T. P., teacher).

It should be noted, however, that some teachers have different views, and in some cases try to contact the parents in any way they can (by telephone or through other children). Some female teachers actually point out that this issue should be handled through a kind of administrative intervention:

“School does not handle things properly. Teachers should go outside in the neighbourhood to bring children back to school. It would also be good to form a committee from people working in the school and in some local social services (e.g. psychologists, social workers), which will look at why the child is absent and deal with the parents’ obligation to enrol their children in time” (A.T., female teacher).

### **School – home**

As indicated by the quotes above, the parent-school relationship is far from that which is described by the majority of the researchers as necessary for success of the students (Zachos, 2007b). Roma origin pupils’ environment is not one that promotes school culture, one that “there aren’t books even as an abstract concept” (Tsiakalos, 2004:156).

Almost all teachers in the ‘Aristotelis’ complex state that the lack of family support and encouragement is the most important reason for school failure among the Roma pupils. However, most of them are reluctant to participate in an effort to improve the home-school relationship and create such a level of contact between the two sides which would improve the pupils’ academic achievement. Yet it should be noted that some of them consider that the parent-school relationship should become the primary concern of the administration, which if promoted could “be able to bring the parents close to school from the beginning of the school year. I remember once there was a school festival with music and free food and almost all parents participated. By raising parents’ awareness through seminars and lectures, I believe that we can be helped both as far as the children’s academic achievement and behaviour problems are concerned” (D.X. teacher).

### **Concluding remarks**

The present study shows that the Roma pupils who attend ‘Aristotelis’ School in the town of Lydia are victims of institutional racism, both because they are members of a distinctive cultural group and because their school is one of the poorest in the area. Additionally, the Balamo (the non-Roma Greeks in the area), with the tolerance and assistance of local politicians and educational administrative supervisors, have removed their children from the particular school, creating a de facto segregation of the Roma pupils. A third point that leads to this conclusion is the inability of the two schools to cater for the special educational needs of the Roma pupils, since their procedures and practices seem to be incapable of preventing the attrition and the irregular schooling of its pupils. They also need to develop a good parent-school relationship which would undoubtedly improve the children’s academic integration and achievement.

Finally, I should note that although I interviewed a number of parents of Roma children, as well as Roma pupils, their views have not been presented here due to limited space. My intention is to present their views in another paper, as I have already made<sup>13</sup> with Roma relations to curricula and textbooks.

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<sup>13</sup> See Zachos (2012a).

## Author Details

**Dimitris T. Zachos** is a Lecturer in Pedagogy at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Faculty of Education, School of Primary Education.

**Email:** [dimzachos@eled.auth.gr](mailto:dimzachos@eled.auth.gr)

**Website:** <http://users.auth.gr/~dimzachos/index.htm>

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