THE PHENOMENON OF DISABILITY PERCEPTION IN BLINDNESS

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THE PHENOMENON OF DISABILITY PERCEPTION IN BLINDNESS

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The Phenomenon of Disability Perception in Blindness

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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- I am the sole author of this thesis and that I have fully acknowledged and documented in my thesis all sources of ideas and words, including digital resources, which have been produced or published by another person or institution;
- this thesis contains no material that has been submitted or accepted for a degree or diploma in any other educational institution;
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ABSTRACT

The Phenomenon of Disability Perception in Blindness

The present study aimed to investigate the perception differences of blind people about their blindness, the determining factors of those differences and their possible consequences. For this purpose a qualitative survey was conducted on 36 blind participants, 22 men and 14 women. The findings revealed 5 perception levels from affirmer participants to normalizers. It is found out that, while affirmers and partial affirmers view blindness as a part of their identity, a difference and are not eager for a possible cure, for negative perceivers and normalizers, blindness is certainly a deficiency and is the main causes of their troubles in their lives. Independent living skills and equal interrelation with both blind and sighted people were observed as the most determining factor of perception of disability. The role of schools for blind had dualistic effects. While they provided independence skills, they had inhibitory effects in the lives of the participants. The impact of sight degree, family atmosphere, employment area, technology and blind related NGO's as facilitator or inhibitory factors were also discussed. The findings showed that people with more positive blindness perception had more active roles on both blind related and other NGO areas.

ÖZET

Körlükte Engellilik Algısı Olgusu

Bu çalışma, körlerin kendi körlükleriyle ilgili algı farklarını, söz konusu farkları ortaya çıkaran nedenleri ve bunların olası sonuçlarını araştırmayı amaçladı. Bu amaç doğrultusunda, 22'si erkek, 14'ü kadın 36 kör katılımcıyla bir nitel araştırma yürütüldü. Bulgular, olumlayanlardan normalleşme eğilimi olanlara, 5 temel körlük algısını ortaya çıkarmıştır. Olumlayan ve kısmi olumlayan katılımcıların, körlüğü kimliklerinin bir parçası, bir farklılık gibi görüp olası bir tedaviye karşı hevesli olmamalarına karşın, tam ve kısmi normalleşme eğilimliler için körlük kesinlikle bir eksiklik ve hayatlarındaki sorunların temel nedeni olarak ortaya çıktı. Bağımsız yaşam becerileri ile körler ve gören kişilerle eşit etkileşim engellilik algısını belirleyen temel faktörler olarak gözlemlendi. Körler okullarının ikili bir etkisinin olduğu anlaşıldı. Bir taraftan bu okullar kişilerin bağımsız yaşam becerilerine olumlu katkı yaparken, diğer taraftan katılımcıların yaşamlarında çok kısıtlayıcı etkilerinin olduğu da görüldü. Görme derecesi, aile ortamı, iş yaşamı, teknoloji ve körlerle ilgili sivil toplum kuruluşlarının güçlendirici veya engelleyici olarak rolleri de ayrıca tartışıldı. Bulgular daha pozitif körlük algısına sahip katılımcıların körlerle ilgili ve diğer sivil toplum kuruluşları alanlarında daha etkin roller üstlendiğini gösterdi.

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As a totally blind person, who had many active roles in various NGOs for blind and various disability related institutions, I can define myself as an activist who seeks accessibility for all individuals. I dedicate this dissertation to all of you who work and fight for more equal, accessible and barrier-free lives of disabled individuals.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ADAPT	American Disabilities for Accessible Public Transformation
GEÖP (in Turkish)	The Platform of Students with Visual Disabilities
GETEM (in Turkish)	Assistive Technology and Education Laboratory for People with Visual Disabilities
ICF	International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health
ICIDH	International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities, and Handicaps
ICIDH-2	International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health
INAREK (in Turkish)	Research Ethics Committee of Boğaziçi University
IOM	The Institute of Medicine
LGBT (in Turkish)	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender
MMPI	Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory
MS	Multiple Sclerosis
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
OKS (in Turkish)	Assesment Selection and Placement Exam for Secondary Educational Institution
ÖMSS (in Turkish)	Assesment Selection Exam of Disabled Clerks
ÖSYM (in Turkish)	Assessment Selection and Placement Center
QDIO	Questionnaire on Disability Identity and Opportunity
RBC	Royal Bank of Canada
UPIAS	Union of the Physically Impaired against Segregation
WHO	World Health Organization

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“Seeing is living…

Meeting with a lover again is seeing.

Seeing is owning…

Seasons with all their coquetries are at order of it

Colors with all their apparitions are at service of it.

Flowers are bloomed for it.

Dawn shines for it.

Gutenberg invented printing press for it.

Hugo wrote his poets for it to read.

All women of the city dress and beautify for it.

Smiles of children are for it.” (Meriç, 2003, p. 68)

(Cemil Meriç, see APPENDIX A)

“What is blindness? Is it a ‘dying’?
No one is likely to disagree with me if I say that blindness, first of all, is a characteristic. But a great many people will disagree when I go on to say that blindness is only a characteristic. It is nothing more or less than that. It is nothing more special, or more peculiar, or more terrible than that suggests.”
(Kenneth Jernigan, 1983)

The owners of both quotations were totally blind when they told those words. They lived approximately in the same period in two different countries. While Cemil Meriç lived between 1916 and 1987 in Turkey, life of Jernigan was between 1926 and 1998 in USA. Jernigan was totally blind from birth. He was a very influential activist among blind community in USA and he had been the president of National Federation of Blind between 1968 and 1986.

Cemil Meriç became totally blind when he was 38 in 1954. However, before total blindness he also had eye condition problems. In fact, he could not go to his compulsory military service due to his eye conditions. He is a very important author and academician in Turkey. He published most of his works and books after he had become totally blind.

Interestingly, the attitude of those two important figures living in the same age to blindness is very different. Although they found many opportunities to produce many crucial things on their blind lives, their perceptions in blindness differ very dramatically from each other. While Cemil Meriç praises and mentions about his emulation of seeing, Jernigan affirms blindness. While the former perceives being sighted as living, the latter is against the perception which sees blindness and dying equal. While for Jernigan, blindness is only a characteristic and nothing more or less than that, for Meriç, being sighted is everything and everything is for it, thus implying that blindness is nothing. This big difference in perception leads us to the statement of problem of the present study.

Like Meriç and Jernigan, blind people and all other disabled people conceptualize their disabilities differently from each other. Various conditions affect these differences in perception. On the other hand, scholars who work on disability issues have been interested in the perception differences of society to the disabled people. Their arguments focus on the definition of disability and its consequences. For some scholars, disability is a personal tragedy what the experts and medical doctors should do is to cure disability in which it is not possible their task is to provide conditions to approximate impaired persons' lives to the normality. This approach is called medical model.

After 1970's, such kind of individualistic tragedy model started to change. With the impact of disabled activists in academia, the definition began to differ from personal tragedy. According to definition of Union of the Physically Impaired against Segregation (UPIAS, 1976), disability is something imposed upon the impairment. In other words, the factors which make an impairment as disability are mostly environmental and social barriers that unnecessarily isolate impaired people from the society. This definition have affected the studies in disability issues very dramatically in recent 40 years. The approach of UPIAS (1976) have been called as social model.

Such definition differences between medical and social model also affected the services provided for disabled people. While services relying on the personal tragedy model aim to make rehabilitation centers better in which disabled people are close to normality, services based on the social model focus on removal of barriers which disable the impaired person. However, in both models, it seems that the voices of disabled people are ignored. In fact, how a disabled person sees his or her disability can also influence his or her actions, behaviors, and attitudes in the life. If one considers blindness as an individual tragedy, a misfortune or fatality, then his or her expectation from the life will be the desire to be normal (seeing) and desire to get rid of blindness. On the other hand, if one perceives her or his blindness as a characteristic like Jernigan, then her or his expectation of life will be to take part equally on every field of life.

The goal of the present study is to make the perceptions of disabled individuals more visible in the literature. There are very few studies which catch up the embodying experiences of disabled individuals. In addition, there are fewer studies that report the disability experiences of blind people. Hence, with the present study, the purpose is to combine the disability definitions of disabled individuals and the definition of disability models. In addition, the aim is to discover the identity development of disabled people. The reason of this purpose is understanding disability from both external and internal resources.

The second important intention of this study is to detect different factors which make disabled people perceive their situations differently. School settings, family conditions, technological equipment, and employment experiences were questioned as possible main determining factors of perception of disability.

The third target of this dissertation is to understand results of the possible contrasting perceptions of disability. As mentioned above, the behaviors and actions of two disabled people considering their disability as a misfortune and deficiency or as a barrier deriving from societal conditions, may differ from each other. Thus, this study aims to address that inquiry.

The significance of the study comes from the three goals summarized above, if different perceptions of blind individuals are understood clearly then this can give the educators and the experts in the field clues to understand their behaviors. Secondly, when the impact of various factors influencing perception differences can be demonstrated deeply, controlling and those conditions would be also possible. Lastly, if the results of different beliefs about disability can be revealed holistically, this would be helpful to evaluate the behavioral consequences more realistically. On top of all, analyzing the perception differences of disabled individuals more closely rather than the perception of others about disabled people could be a good beginning point to understand and support the embodiment approach which is focusing on individuals own understanding about their bodily difference and environmental conditions.

The example of dramatic perception difference between Meriç and Jernigan will be useful to explain the main questions of this dissertation. In fact, the reasons of these perception differences, the conditions affecting this phenomenon and the possible consequences of them are the major point which formulates the statement of problem in this study. The following questions could be helpful to understand deeply the goal of this dissertation.

- What is the meaning of disability for disabled individuals?
- How and why is the meaning of being disabled change from person to person?
- Which factors affect people to attribute different meanings to their disabilities?
- Can people’s perception of their disability change with time?
- Can disability identity be learned?
- Why do some people prefer to fight for their rights while other try to hide their disability?

In the context of these queries the research questions were formulated. Summarization of them briefly will be useful.

The first question investigates particular perceptions of blind participants. Here, by detecting different tendencies, the aim is to reveal changing perception categories which can be affected from various factors and can cause various conditions.

The second main research question focuses on the factors which determine the perception categories. Specifically, the role of different educational settings such as blind segregated schools and main educational areas were one of the first questions. In addition to this, the effect of family atmosphere, the peer interaction, and the employment conditions were also investigated as other determining factors on perception differences.

Thirdly, the possible effect of interaction with sighted and blind peers were considered as another source of perception differences.

Fourthly, the effect of technology was specifically addressed for cause of different perception tendencies.

Fifthly, the possibility of perception change in one point of the life was investigated. Here, what kind of atmosphere could make this perception possible was also questioned.

Finally, the behavioral difference of people with different perception tendencies were attempted to be detected.

The findings of the study were organized to answer those main points and their sub-questions.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

For disabled people, their approach to their situations is similar to the medical social model dilemma in terms of perceiving disability as an individualistic tragedy or social barriers. As such, perception of them goes from medical model to social model. While people, thinking similar to the medical model, see themselves as the victim of fate, people closer to social model turn their faces to society to find their places and remove barriers. The goal of this study is to answer that why and how disabled people differ from each other in terms of their conceptualization of their disability. The reasons and consequences of that different conceptualization will be discussed in this dissertation.

This chapter of the dissertation is going to deal with approaches and approaches differences like sociology, psychology, and education. In that context the various topics from understanding of disability and definitions to practical implications, from attitudes of society to attitudes of disabled people themselves will be discussed. Firstly, the literature review will begin with the discussion of different models explaining disability. In that respect, the dilemma of medical and social models and some others emphasizing the interaction between those models will be concentrated.

Secondly, the self-embodiment experiences of disabled people are going to be focused. Both medical and social model is highly criticized that they ignore the individual self-perception and individual differences experiencing disability and impairment on their body (Shakespeare & Watson, 2001; Hughes & Paterson, 1997).

Then, from that embodiment experiences, psychology and education literature attempting to explain acceptance of disability from the perspective of individuals' psychosocial characteristics will be focused.

After that discussion, the perspectives of scholars who attempt to explain disability issue as an identity and identity development will be briefly touched upon. Lastly, it is going to jump back to sociology and psychology literature specifically Darling (2003) and Darling and Heckert (2010), Gill (1997), trying to explain perception of disability orientation rather than acceptance of loss.

The purpose on this literature journey is to explore how different school and theoretical background conceptualize, define and understand the issue of disability/impairment. After this basic groundwork, it would be easier to understand how blind participants in this study perceive their disabled conditions and where they put them from individualistic to collectivistic disability continuum.

2.1 The Medical versus Social Model of Disability

The medical and social models have dominated the field of disability/ impairment. While medical model implies that being disabled is a blame of the individual and impairment is the main reason of disability, social model insists that disability is the outcome of social and physical barriers and the blames is on the society (Shakespeare & Watson, 1997).

Till 1970's the field of disability was under the dominance of medication and medical approaches. According to main approach in those periods, disability is an individualistic tragedy and the main purpose is to cure the impaired ill body, at least to close the normality as much as possible. After that with the emergence of disabled activists, disability studies have become a part of sociology literature. The disabled activists separated the disability and impairment from each other. Oliver (1996) clearly summarize this distinction: according to him, impairment is an individualistic property and there is no causal link between impairment and disability. On the other hand, disability is the outcome of social barriers imposed upon top of our disability (UPIAS, 1976 cited in Oliver, 1996).

Carol Thomas (2004) makes a good summary about medical - social model distinction. According to her, disability is the very definition of impairment. It relies on the individualistic deviations from the mental and physical norms accepted by the community. Mobility restrictions and societal disadvantages are the inevitable and tragic consequences of having impairment.

On the other hand, Thomas (2011) summarizes that in social model, disability is conceptualized as separate from impairment. Impairment is personal and individualistic, whereas, disability is structural and public. Social model defines disability as something created by the society. It is the relation between impairment and disabling society. The underlying idea behind the social model is the imposed outside restriction on top of the impairment (Finkelstein, 1980; Oliver 1996; Oliver, 2004). Disabled people are oppressed groups and most of the time, nondisabled individuals and organizations like professions and charitable institutions, cause or contribute this oppression. Thus, the solution of this problem should be based on civil rights rather than the works of charities or compassion.

In this section, first of all, different definitions of disability by different approaches will be discussed. Then, the brief history of the social model will be analyzed. This analysis will give a broadening understanding about the attitudes of different scholars about disability issue. Following this, the literature which makes criticisms to the social model and medical versus social dilemma is going to be discussed. The other models that are mentioned above about disability will follow that discussion. Finally, the responses of scholars defending the social model against criticisms are going to be reviewed.

2.1.1 Definitions of Disability by Different Fields

Examining literature on the approaches of different models, it is clear that the first debate is related to the definition of disability. As Mitra (2006) stated, there is no common definition of disability. It has been defined and conceptualized differently from medical, sociological and political perspectives. According to Mitra (2006) defining disability differently can have different consequences. Most administrative laws and regulations use those theoretical definitions. As such, definition of disability directly affects the lives of disabled people. Thus, many scholars firstly attempt to define disability and impairment for various practical implications.

Most traditionally the medical approaches understand the illness, pathology, namely impairment is the main cause of disability. In contrast to this, people in social model consider that the social barriers and disabling environmental factors cause disability. Thus disability is a collective identity rather than an individualistic problem (Oliver, 1996). On such different definitions the implications will inevitably differ. If the policies accept that impairment is the main reason behind disability, then the actions could focus on rehabilitation, cure and health system. Thus, strengthening rehabilitation systems and individualistic precursors would be the main concentration field. On the other hand, if the policies regard the contextual and environmental disabling barriers as the main cause of disability, then the measures could be directed to remove those barriers such as accessible transportation systems, accessible integrated school atmospheres etc. For this reasons, the defining efforts of different models have important effects on the lives of disabled people.

Altman (2001) discusses the definitions of disability and theoretical background from the perspective of different models but mostly in terms of medical models. It is worth mentioning that all of the models studied by Altman (2001) except social model put pathology, impairment, disease or health conditions on top of disability. It seems that in the review of Altman (2001), social model is in the picture with only very few words. She provides a table which lists and prioritizes the reasons of disability respectively by different models. On this table, different models put different reasons to make a causal link between those reasons and disability. The Nagi Model is one of them. For this model pathology is the first reason of the disability. Impairment and disability are the next two conditions. Similarly, Verbruge and Jelte Model determine pathology/disease, impairment, functional limitation, and disability respectively. Parallel to them, IOM1-IOM2 models determine pathology, impairment, functional limitation, and disability as the hierarchy of disability. The ICIDH model is published by World Health Organization (WHO) in 1970’s, starting to use different concepts. The term pathology becomes disease and disorder. Impairment, disability, and a new term handicap were also specified as other components of disability. Also used different terminology ICIDH in both of those models, it is clear that there is a tendency to avoid from using the term abnormality or deviation. Instead of those terminologies the term health context was preferred. The second component is body function/ body structure/ impairment. The third one is activity/ activity limitation. The fourth one is participation/ participation limitation, and the fifth one is context: environmental and personal. Thus, as it can be seen, with the emergence of WHO models, for the first time, a medical based organization had welcomed to the effect of environmental and contextual factors on disability. Nevertheless, we can easily conclude that all medical base models, conceptualize disability as the inevitable outcome of impairment. Although they define impairment differently, like pathology, illness, health base body functions, the origin is the same: individualistic body characteristics.

2.1.2 Brief History and Theoretical Background of the Social Model

Although social model is highly criticized about its ignorance of individual experiences of people, most of the leaders of social model like Oliver, Finkelstein, and Hunt are disabled people as Beckett and Campbell (2015) said, social model is not born from the academy; rather it is born from the personal disabled experiences of those leaders. Beckett and Campbell (2015), Finkelstein (2001) summarized that the resistance of disabled people in England started a letter of Paul Hunt to Guardian Newspaper in 1972. After that letter Hunt and other physically disabled people established an organization Union of the Physically Impaired against Segregation (UPIAS). Most of the important theoretical and practical arguments about social models emerged and discussed in UPIAS. Thus, claiming that the social model is not taking the individual needs of impaired people into account would not be fair.

Finkelstein, in his presentation in 2001, gave a speech about history of social model in which he was there from the beginning. He mentioned that in 1970's together with Paul Hunt and other people with physical impairments, they founded UPIAS. He continued that in the time this organization was founded, there was a campaign for national disability income. People were asking they should be provided an income to compensate their impairment. However the argument of UPIAS was that the central focus should be oppression, not compensation. Finkelstein said that "We do not want to be compensated for being oppressed! We want people to stop oppressing us" (2001, p.4). He explained that in the beginning they tried to convince other disability organizations like spastic society about the priority of dominant social model but they were accused of being an extremist. Finkelstein explains the fundamental principles of their radical social approach as following: "Disability is a situation, calls by social condition, which require for its elimination (a) that no one aspect such as incomes, mobility or institutions is treated in isolation, (b) that disabled people should, with the advice and help of others, assume control over their lives, and (c) that professionals, experts and others who seek to help must be committed to promoting such control by disabled people." (2001, p.6).

To strengthen his argument, Finkelstein (2001) exemplified the US president Roosevelt: he is actually not disabled despite using wheelchair because all barriers to his presidency were removed.

As a final word, Finkelstein (2001) recommended disability organizations, academicians, and disabled people to prefer emancipatory actions rather than compensatory ones. This means that disabled people should struggle to eliminate disabling and oppressing society rather than seeking small social or financial compensations which may reproduce the inequality and disabling society again.

It seems that the disabled activists in 1970's needed to defend themselves against the medical deterministic definitions of their disability. As Beckett and Campbell (2015) stated, the social model is influenced by Foucault's approaches.

They summarize the Foucault's theorization, practices and technologies. For Foucault, the body becomes a docile target of power and the body and disabled people start resisting to that the serious spinal injury power. So, Foucault said that power creates docile bodies but also creates resistant bodies. Foucault's approach provides us a strong description that the bio power followed a normalizing strategy and produced and regulated docile bodies. In practice, it created, classified, codified, managed, and controlled social anomalies through which some people have been divided from others and *objectives* as physically impaired, insane, handicapped, mentally retarded, and deaf (Tremain 2005b, 5-6 original emphasis cited in Beckett and Campbell, 2015 p. 272). They argue that disabled people have resistance capacity to these bio power relations.

Beckett and Campbell (2015) reminded an important point. The social model creates two separated models: impairment and disability. Parallel to this, it also defines such concepts like disabling society, institutions and barriers. It also defines two types of people: disabled ones and non-disabled ones.

For them, social model enables disabled activist an oppositional device to redirect bio power relations. "As an oppositional device, it has allowed those ones categorized as 'handicapped', 'infirm', 'invalid', 'biological anomalies', and 'naturally inferior' to reject these categories, to make themselves anew as an oppressed group: disabled people (2015, p.277)."

Barnes (2012) studies the influence of social model on academic and practical life of disabled people and disability politics. Barnes argues that without the social model of disability, struggle of a more just and fair society will be difficult.

The first impact of social model, according to Barnes, occurred in World Health Organization in 1980. As mentioned above Altman's (2001) table shown that the ICIDH-2 model proposed by WHO (1980) accepted the health context as the first component of disability and separated from other models which use pathology, disease, and deviance terms. Thus, with the influence of social model the WHO (1980) started to change its perception of disability. Although it still puts impairment on top and considers the impairments as main reason of disability, it was an important step toward the acceptance of social factors on disability. This definition was four years later from the UPIAS interpretation of disability. This definition was followed United Nation Declaration of 1981 as 'International Year of Disabled People'. This declaration was giving responsibility to national governments about giving and securing equal rights to disabled people.

With the effect of social model, in the literature, it has been mostly accepted that the disabled body is constructed and disabled people started to be seen as disadvantaged minority group. The most important criticism to social model in 1990's and 2000's was that impairment related experiences are ignored. The ones who make such argument claimed that only barrier removal would not solve the problems experienced by all disabled people. Thus, embodied experiences must be taken into account.

Despite these criticisms, Barnes (2012) argued that shifting away from social model in a capitalist atmosphere may create more unequal and unfair conditions for disabled people. She says that as we entered to new millennium, the struggle for more fair and inclusive global society is more difficult, and without the theoretical explanation of social model, this struggle from the disability perspective would be twice more difficult.

Finkelstein (1993) also discusses the comparison between movement of disability organizations and civil rights movements of the blacks and feminists. He proposed that none of the black or feminist organizations would desire to be white or to be a man with a biological operation. On the other hand, even most radical disability organizations could not talk against a surgery or medical cure that will eliminate any impairment.

Hughes (2005), in his chapter on the book “Foucault and the Government of disability”, also mentions about parallelism between the second wave feminism and social model. He states that the feminist movement in 1970’s, tries to make a clear distinction between sex and gender. According to this, sex represents the biological property of body and gender is the culturally specific interpretation of the sex. Like this, the social model tries to make a distinction between impairment which is the biological part, and disability which is the social barriers imposed on impairment. As Hughes (2005) argues, feminists have found this distinction problematic later. This distinction has been also highly criticized by scholars within the social model itself (Hughes & Paterson, 1997) and by medical scholars like Anastasiou and Kauffman (2013). I will explain those criticisms later on embodiment section.

Finkelstein (1993) discusses different perceptions of disabled people. He suggested that with the emergence of steam engines, mass production become possible but a kind of ordinary people who are able to work on that production is needed. People deviated from this normality have become unemployed. Thus, being normal became a dominant criterion for employment in industrial societies. As such, people with some impairment were excluded and segregated. In those conditions, some disabled people started to be irritated by being labeled as disabled. For them, disability label can mean unemployment. Thus, for example, a physically disabled person tended to separate oneself from a person with learning disabilities. That’s to say, for some disabled people close to normality as much as possible could become the main motive for their lives.

Finkelstein, in his lecture in 1980, discusses the attitudes toward disability and disabled people. In his discussion, he tried to explain a historical outline where attitudes toward disability change. He divided to historical periods into phases. The phase one describes the pre-modern area. In those times before industrial revolution, physically impaired people had always been in society as cripples, they were not segregated in society. In those times, the physically impaired people were on the bottom of the social strata and many of them had become beggars. However, they were still in the society and they were not excluded.

Finkelstein (1980) called phase two as institutional phase. This phase starts with the mass production. Through the existence of production line the importance of able bodies who can perfectly participate to the large production had increased. Thus, people needed to segregate physically impaired bodies from the able bodies as such institutions had become tools to do that segregation. While in phase one, physically impaired people were socially active, assert their lives to live and were seen as responsible for their actions, in phase two, physically impaired people were seen as passive needing others to do chores.

With the existence of institutions like hospitals, many professional areas such as nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, social workers, counselors, etc. started to develop. Development of successful medical practices guarantied big number of physically impaired people staying in separate institutions and the medical dominance in the field.

Finkelstein (1980) conceptualizes phase three as a beginning towards attitude change. In that phase, the focus becomes the nature of society which disables physically impaired people. According to Finkelstein (1980), phase one characterizes physically impaired people as cripples who are on the bottom of the social structure, phase two creates disability and disablement, phase three will be the period which eliminates disability. So, with the coming of phase three the struggle of reintegration and independence will grow.

Oliver (1990) took the argument of social model and embedded into a theoretical background. According to this, disability was created after industrial revolution. With the need of large production, a so-called normal body is separated from the deviant bodies. Then deviant bodies were segregated from the society and institutionalized.

Finkelstein (1980) analyzed the main characteristics of phase two. For him, the norms and normative assumptions are the products of this phase. The most important characteristic phase two is all people should conform to a normal physical status. If this could not be succeeded, the purpose of medicine would be to approximate people to the normal standards as much as possible the grater the approximation, the grater the participation in the society. Thus, disability was seen as failure to meet socially imposed able body normative standards. So, Finkelstein (1980) says that because disabled people failed to conform to the standards able people, they do not have chance to be equal with them.

In order to change the attitudes of society toward disabled people, Finkelstein (1980) exemplified a hypothetical world where everyone was in wheelchairs and where material and social organization was design according to their needs. In such kind of world, the abled walking bodies could become disabled because of the height of buildings and other structural things. In such kind of environment, walking can be disabling factors and prevent someone from many things like finding jobs. Thus, Finkelstein (1980) tries to demonstrate relative structure of disability.

Finkelstein (1980) finalizes his lectures by emphasizing the dependence of everyone to each other. He says that in modern area, in urban life, independence is achieved through grater dependence of others. Also he adds that the requirement of disabled people cannot be seen as different from the dependency requirement of so-called “able” people.

2.1.3 Criticisms to Social Model and Other Proposed Disability Models

The social understanding of disability has acquired a great support from both academy and governmental policies for 40 years. Especially many disability-related NGO’s accepted the principals of social model for their self-determination fights. Nevertheless, many authors both from disability studies and medical sociology criticized the various aspects of social model (Thomas, 2004). One of the most highly criticized aspect of social model is its notion that there is no causal relation between impairment and disability and the societal and environmental factors are the only causes of disability (Thomas, 2004).

Shakespeare and Watson (2001) from disability studies argued that social model was not sufficient to explain whole issue and it needed to start it from the beginning. They claim that impairment has also roles on disability. According to their claims, people are disabled both by their bodies and social barriers. Thus the embodied states cannot be ignored. Shakespeare and Watson (2001) and Hughes and Paterson (1997) also criticized that social model left the impairment part to biology. Hughes and Paterson (1997) claimed that impairment has also social aspects.

According to Shakespeare and Watson (2001), impairment and disability represents different places in a continuum. It is very difficult to understand where impairment ends and where disability starts. Hence, social model separation of disability and impairment is not true. As can be remembered from the argument of Hughes (2005), new feminists also criticized sex-gender distinction of second wave feminist movements.

In concluding parts of their study, Shakespeare and Watson (2001) proposed a new approach: “Everyone is impaired in varying degrees” (Shakespeare & Watson, 2001, p.24). Thomas (2004) suggested that the implication of this new insight is the dismantling socially constructed divisions between the disabled and the normal. The meaning of this argument can be found in the words of Kenneth Jernigan (1983): “Blindness is only a characteristic, nothing more or less”. Although he did not use social or medical model terms, what he says is very similar with the claim of Shakespeare and Watson (2001). For Jernigan (1983), blindness is only a characteristic and like every characteristics it has some weak and strong sides. It has some limitations but its limits are not more than any other characteristic like being tall, young or intelligent. Shakespeare and Watson (2001) argues that social barriers makes some impairments more disabling than others.

Thomas (2004) also summarizes the criticisms coming from medical sociologists. One them is Michael Bury. Thomas summarizes that according to Bury (2000, cited in Thomas, 2004), the causal link between impairment and disability cannot be ignored. Unquestionably, impairment is the main cause of disability. Bury (2000, cited in Thomas, 2004) especially mentions about the effect of chronic illness on disability.

Anastasiou and Kauffman (2013) claim that because social model only chooses the sociological grounds, it detaches biological and mental elements from disabled persons. Thus, disabled subjects remained half a person at best, with only social properties and they become biologically naked.

Besides, they opposed to the hypothesis of social model which argues that the only cause of disability is social barriers and the biological, individualistic characteristics do not play a role. They claimed that the characteristics of impairment cannot be seen as similar with being female, Black, or Roman. Being Roman, female, or black may be neutral factors in the absence of social barriers but disabilities cannot. As such, this cannot be equated with other social disadvantages.

In addition, they questioned the opposition of labeling by social model. According to them, labeling is an inevitable since without speaking differences with labeling, extra and better services cannot be offered to individuals with disabilities.

Williams (1999, cited in Thomas, 2004) coming from medical sociology does not regard this issue as rigid as Bury (2000) and Anastasiou and Kauffman (2013). Thomas (2004) also summarizes the critical realism theory of Williams (1999, cited in Thomas, 2004). According to him, the body impaired, diseased or otherwise is a real entity and it has an independent causal mechanisms. As such, disability cannot be explained by the only deterministic social or biological reductionism. Rather, it is the interaction between biological reality of physiological impairment, structural conditioning, and socio-cultural conditions (Williams, 1999, cited in Thomas, 2004).

In order to decrease the gap between medical sociologists who see impairment as the main origin of disability and defenders of social model, who put environmental and societal factors on the top, World Health Organization proposed a new model called bio-psycho-social model (2000). This model suggested a systematic and measurable interaction between individual characteristics and environmental and social factors.

WHO (2000) provided a new perspective to debate of disability issue. In International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF, 2003), a new term is proposed called bio-psychosocial approach. Bio-psychosocial approach aims to capture different portions of functioning. According to this, health is influenced by biology, individual, and social perspectives. The combination of these three perspectives determines the functioning of individual. As such, ICF (2003) seeks to find an interaction between individualistic medical models and social models.

First of all, in terms of health related biological issue, ICF (2003) gives standard operational definitions which specify important features of any domain. Those definitions prepared in such a way that they can be easily converted to any questionnaire for assessment.

In order to give a whole picture about individual functioning, ICF (2003) uses four different perspectives shown with the letters B, S, D, and E. Here, B represents ‘body functions’ which is the physiological body systems including psychological ones. According to ICF (2003) impairments are problems in body functions or deviation of structure. S represents ‘body structure’ which is also related to individual characteristics. D represents ‘activities and participation’.

Activity is the execution task or action by an individual. Participation is involvement in life situation. In order to measure the activity and participation perspective of individual, the capacity and performance qualifiers are used. The performance qualifiers describes what an individual does in his or her environment (ICF, 2003). In that context, the environmental factors are also taken into account. The environmental factors included social attitudes and physical ones. The capacity qualifier tries to determine an individual’s ability to do a task or an action in a given environment. For example, if there is a screen reader and accessible interface of any job application, a blind person will have an equal capacity to do specific job compared to his or her sighted colleagues. On the other hand, if there are no talking computers or no accessible interface, the capacity of being able to do same job will not be possible for any blind individual. In other words, in the assessment of capacity and performance qualifier the interaction between impairment and various aspects of environmental factors are calculated together.

The letter ‘E’ represents environmental factors. “Environmental factors make up physical, social, and attitudinal factors in which people leave and conduct their lives” (ICF, 2003, p. 171). For ICF (2003), an environmental factor can be either a facilitator or a barrier. For example, if we take the issue from the above example, the accessibility of job specific interface may be a facilitator if present and may be a barrier if absent. Sometimes, the presence of any environmental factor such as negative pre-judgments against disabled people can also be a barrier. According to these four letters, ICF (2003) tries to quantify total functioning of individual.

As a conclusion, actually, ICF (2003) tries to define serious spinal injury condition scientifically the individual and biological factors that make the individual impaired and the activity participation and environmental factors which make one disabled. Thus, while as opposed to medical model, the bio-psychosocial model of ICF (2003) gives credit to the social and environmental factors contributing to the disability, in contrast to social model, the individualistic biological and structured characteristics of persons are also accepted as other contributing factors to disablement. However, as ICF (2003) also claims, it will not be easy to quantify and measure the influence of those different domains for different cases.

As it can be seen, WHO (2000) proposed a new systematic approach for understanding the full functionality of individual by taking the biological and environmental factors together into account. Nevertheless, measuring the degree and impacts of environmental factors is a difficult and complicated process. Wang et al. (2006) attempted to determine the underpaying elements of environmental factors. They attempted to study the effect of contextual factors on disability issue based on ICF (2003) Model. According to their hypothesis related to disability process, contextual factors can be independent, confounding, moderating, or mediating factors. If the contextual factor is moderating, it means that the participation of physically impaired person is directly affected from the presence or absence of that factor (Wang et al., 2006). For example, if a blind person on an employment does not have screen reader in the computers of job area, the lack of screen reader is a moderating factor; because when it is not there the blind person could not participate to a computer related job.

If a contextual factor is mediating, it can occur due to an activity limitation of impaired person and this in term leads to participation limitation. They give the following example a person with activity limitations due to arthritis may have difficulty to attend training programs and may not have opportunity to develop his or her professional skills. Then, the possibility of finding a new job or promotion might decrease. Here, not participating to training programs because of the activity limitation deriving from physical impairment, is accepted as a mediating factor.

If a contextual factor is affecting the participation but not related to activity of physically impaired person, such kind of contextual factors are called independent contextual factors. They exemplified that, closure of a manufacturing plan lead to loss of employment for all people including the physically impaired person; but this is not related to activity limitation of person.

If the relation of contextual factor with the activity limitation is not clear, then such kind of factors will be confounding variables. For example; age may affect the employment and unemployment level of physically impaired person; but age is also a risk factor for employment of all people. Thus, it is important to determine the effect of age on employment in general before considering the effect of it in activity limitation.

2.1.4 Other Proposed Disability Models

The scholars, who consider both the medical and social model as problematic, attempted to suggest different approaches and models that emphasize the interaction between medical and social modal. The Capability Approach of Mitra (2006) is one of them. She suggests different framework to the definition of disability and understanding its economic causes and consequences. This framework is called the capability approach which is originally developed by A. K. Sen (Mitra, 2006). Actually; Mitra (2006) stated that the capability approach has been used to understand the link between disability, gender discrimination, and poverty. Nevertheless, for Mitra (2006), it is also useful for definition of disability.

According to the Capability Approach (Mitra, 2006), disability occurs with the combination of three factors. Those are personal characteristics (e.g. impairment, age, race, and gender), individual resources, and individual environment (physical, social, economic, and political). From this perspective, the capability approach assumes that disability firstly occurs in the capability level which is personal characteristics. But this is not an actual disability level. In the second phase, resources of a person become the issue and those resources can be economic or some commodities in the basket of the person. For example, if a physically impaired person does not have a necessary wheelchair, this lack of resource will create a potential disability. However, the actual disability occurs in the third phase which is the effect of environment. If the environmental effect prevents the functionality of the person, for instance a public transportation system is not accessible, then a wheelchair user will be disabled. Thus, here the capability approach argues that disability is a deprivation in terms of capability and functioning resulting from the interaction between the individuals' personal characteristics, baskets of available goods and resources, and environment (Mitra, 2006).

According to Mitra (2006), the difference of capability model from medical, social, and Nagi models is its emphasis on the economic factors and poverty. In addition, different from those models the capability approach tries to take into account the individual differences.

The other scholar who seeks the implications of models on different contexts is Alison S. Gable (2014). She studies the different implications of different disability models on education. When medical model is employed in the research, intervention on education attempts to professionally describe characteristics and outcomes of students, and tries to determine effective intervention and assessment systems. She stated that identifying and assessing students' abilities differing from the norms is the basic functions of medical model implications on education. This knowledge accumulation in medical model is used to increase the number of technically competent teachers and improve direct or explicit instruction systems. It is also important in special education. She reviewed that medical model is rejected by the inclusive education projects.

The social model employed in education and educational research, mostly focuses on disabling institutions and social and environmental factors which excludes and prevents the participations of disabled students to the school context. Thus, here the important thing is not the investigation of the disabled, instead the institutional disability.

Gable (2014) also mentioned a concept of critical realism suggested by Baskar Danermark. According to this theory, disability is a laminated system which cannot be explained by a single level of reality. Thus, the multiple and potentially influential systems should be taken together to understand disability on education. Genetic, psychological, psychosocial, economic, political, and cultural strata are some systems in critical realism theory (Gable, 2014).

Other researchers who try to imply the concepts of disability models to education are Llewellyn and Hogan (2000). First of all, they specify the disadvantages of both medical and social model on education and suggested a new approach called 'Transactional Model'. They summarized that the medical model considers the origins of disability as only individual pathology. Llewellyn and Hogan (2000) argued that psychology also uses clinical diagnostic criteria like standardized intelligence or self-concept tests that are parallel to the medical approaches. However, with in the sphere of disability research, it is difficult to identify what is the "normal" due to methodological complexity.

According to Llewellyn and Hogan (2000), the social model of disability gives the problem and responsibility to the collective systems as a whole, and the individual part is de-emphasized. UPIAS conceptualized disability as "The disadvantage or restriction of activity caused by a contemporary social organization which takes no or little account of people who have physical impairments and thus excludes them from the mainstream of social activities.” (UPIAS, 1976, p. 3- 4).

Parallel to critical realism theory of Bronfenbrenner (1989 cited in Llewellyn & Hogan 2000), they mention systems’ approach which underlies personal and educational environmental factors are effective on the studies of physically impaired people. In that system, when a physically disabled person enters to mainstream school, this will alter the existing relationship between the disabled person and environment and create a dynamic atmosphere. Thus, system approach suggests cross-sectional studies before and after a particular life experience. For example, there may be some studies which investigates a mainstream school atmosphere before and after a disabled child comes and grows. Hence, with such kind of cross-sectional designs, it can be possible to examine the mutual effect of school community, education system, and self.

In Transactional Model (Llewellyn & Hogan, 2000) the environment is an interactive structure and individual is an active synthesizer who synthesizes the information coming from the environment. As such, the effect of environment on different individuals with the same disability may vary. In transactional model (Llewellyn & Hogan, 2000), the environment and self mutually affect each other. According to the example, the maternal anxiety may affect their interaction with child; this may negatively affect feeding and sleeping of child then, as a result, the child can be seen as having a difficult temper. Also, this difficult temper may result from the mothers’ wishes to spend less time with their child. Thus, here the interaction is very important and from the disability perspective, it can be used as the creation and maintenance of disability by the non-supportive environment.

Here, on mainstream schools by using Transactional Model, the attitudes of teacher the effect of peers' responses of physically disabled child to them can be evaluated together (Llewellyn & Hogan, 2000).

2.1.5 The Responses of the Social Model against Criticisms

In previous section, a summary of some criticisms against social model were given. It seems that there are three basic areas where social model has been criticized.

1) The distinction between impairment and disability is not realistic (Shakespeare & Watson, 2001; Anastasiou & Kauffman 2013).
2) Denying causal link and interaction between impairment and disability besides ignoring the role of impairment, bodily functions, and individualistic characteristics on disability cannot explain whole picture completely (Williams 1999 cited in Thomas 2004; Hughes & Paterson, 1997; Shakespeare & Watson, 2001).
3) The social model ignores the personal embodied experiences of impaired people (Hughes & Paterson, 1997; Gable, 2014).

The scholars of social model attended to respond those criticisms (Finkelstein 2001, 2007; Oliver, 2004; Beckett & Campbell, 2015; Dodd 2013). Finkelstein (2001) was one of those scholars. First of all he argues that what they did in UPIAS (1976) is an interpretation rather than a model. According to this interpretation it is society which disables physically impaired people: "Disability is something imposed on top of our impairments." (UPIAS, 1976 p.4). In such interpretation, changing the society and eliminating disability was the main motive. The difference of Finkelstein (2001) as a defender of radical social model from others is that, for him, just accessing the rights within an existing competitive market society is not enough. Rather, creation of society which enables impaired people as human is also necessary. Thus, a social model of disability should assist people in gaining understanding disabling nature of the system. As such for Finkelstein (2001), the social model may include civil rights but it is not a rights model and does not only depend on civil rights. So for emancipation, dismantling the competitive market society that disables us is necessary.

In addition, Finkelstein (2007) continued to respond criticism to social model. He started criticizing the movement of social model after 2000's. In his article, first of all summarizes some attacks to the social model. Some statements that want to update social model are recognitions of some institutional discriminations, recognizing that not all the things which exclude disabled people are societies' barriers. In that perspective, Finkelstein (2007) highly criticizes the effect of privatization in disability services. He claimed that making parliamentary lobbying and conceptualizing disability issue as only a paper based activity, will not bring any control of disabled people over their lives. He argued that after 2000's the disability movement is no longer setting the agenda for emancipation rather they have become prisoners of free market and Capitalism.

Yang (2014) like Finkelstein, discusses the negative influences of free market on disability services too. He obtained the issue from the disability services. He studied different interpretations of dependent- independent living for disabled people from the perspective of Japanese Government and disabled activist in Japan. First of all, the author reviews the meaning of independent living from different perspectives. In terms of professional, medical, and non-disabled people's point of view, independent living is self-sufficient living without professional assistant and supervision

(Woodil,2006 p.13 cited in Yang, 2014). Deinstitutionalization is the part of independent living. From the market economy account point of view, independent living is free selection right of disabled people of the support services they can take. As such, this account implies that instead of bureaucratic monopoly a disabled person him/herself must have right to choose what type of support services he or she can take and should choose the service provider (DeJong, 1979 cited in Yang, 2014).

However, disabled activists criticize the market economy model due to over emphasis of individualism. They stated that without any government intervention the poverty of disabled people could not be prevented. Thus, they suggest community domain which is against institutional services, emphasizes the free selection right of support services, emphasizes the importance of government financial support, and emphasizes the interdependent disabled people. This new paradigm of independent living discussed in Yang (2014) article also mentioned about an important aspect which says that disabled people should be in a service provider position. With this direction the service provision of disability activist in Yang's discussion is consistent with Finkelstein's (2000 & 2007) arguments relying on the suggestion that for an emancipatory action disabled community established their own support services.

Oliver (2004), responds to the criticism of the social model, mentioned three important points: first of all, he conceptualizes social model as an attempt to change focus from the functional limitations of individuals with impairment to the problems caused by disabling environment, barriers, and cultures. Secondly, according to him, the specific problem cannot be isolated from the total social environment. He gave an example about employment and claims that the problems related to employment area cannot be thought about the problems on education, culture, and public transportation. Thirdly, related to criticism against social model which claims it is ignoring individual needs an interventions, he argued that changing focus of individuals to the social barriers does not prevent individual based medical, rehabilitative, and employment specific interventions. Nevertheless, he needed to emphasize his important concerns about intervention. Because individual based interventions are too much focused by authorities on employment area and training, most of the times attempts to remove barriers against disabled people on whole employment market can be neglected (Oliver, 2004).

He summarized some criticisms of social model and tried to respond them. First important critic claims that the social model is unable to deal with the personal impaired experiences of individuals. According to him, this derives from a conceptual misunderstanding. He said that focusing on the collective experiences of disablement rather than the personal experiences of disablement give disabled people a tool for building a political movement. With only personal experiences of impairment, this would not be possible.

Parallel to Oliver (2004), Dodd (2013) questioned the disability services which are personalized and individualistic. While he admitted that some personalized services provide opportunities for disabled individuals to add up to the citizens and employees, most of the time it does not address most of the roots cause of disability or does not give important to disabling barriers other than individual support services. Thus, with this direction, the personalization services can violate the collective social model approach.

Instead of personalization, he suggested an integrated living approach which is more holistically removing disability barriers. Integration living approach focuses on seven life needs. Those are information, counseling, housing, technical age, personal assistance, transport, and access. As such, he summarized that the integrated living approach brought those seven needs together and considers barriers related to the seven needs areas under the name of integration plan and not only focusing on the personal assistance.

The other critic of social model is related to insufficiency of social model as a theory that explains disablement. In response to this, Oliver (2004) points out that they would not conceptualize social model as a theory. Rather, social model is a tool that provides disabled people an alternative political claim to deal with the physical and cultural barriers.

Beckett and Campbell (2015) are other scholars who attempted to defend social model as an oppositional device. They tried to respond the criticisms against social model by Shakespeare and Watson (2001). They accepted that like Oliver (2004) the social model is not a theory explaining that disability is rather it allows a formation of ‘new regime of truth’ which is contrasted to ‘regime of truth’ produced and continued by medicine, psychology, education, and capitalism. Thus, the social model can be regarded as a key which structures the field of action of others. For Beckett and Campbell (2015), the structuring operation of social model is a positive and a productive one and it causes the creation of unity with the establishment of coherent political strategy.

The different arguments related to social and medical model, firstly focuses on the definition disability. The reason for this is the notion that defining disability also determines the policies and intervention programs in all areas regarding disability. As time passes from the first document of UPIAS (1976) to 2015 the trend of merging those two opposite models can be observed. Hence, new approaches were proposed by various scholars that emphasizes the interaction between the social barriers and individualistic characteristic. Nevertheless, the impact of social model in the field is irreversible. Even the scholars who criticizes the rigid definition of social model harshly, cannot ignore the causal link between societal barriers and disability. This can be accepted as the success of disabled activists who perceive their disability as social barriers rather than an individualistic tragedy. Such difference of perception between society and disabled people about themselves will be analyzed more deeply in the following section of this chapter.

2.2 Attitudes of Others versus Attitudes of Disabled People Regarding the Quality of Life Satisfaction of Disabled Individuals

Before going on to the embodied experiences of disabled people and the factors considering embodiment literature, it will be very enlightening to mention the perception gap between the people around disabled persons and the perception of disabled people themselves about their lives, disability situation and their life satisfaction. Many scholars study this perception gap between nondisabled and disabled people about the life satisfaction of people with impairment (Stensman, 1985; Gerhart et al., 1994; Mackenzie & Scully 2007, Amundson, 2005).

Mackenzie and Scully (2007) mentioned the empathic restrictions of nondisabled people against disabled people. They argued that our physical capacity restrict us to make a complete empathy. Even if one attempts to put him/herself in the shoes of others, they said that she/he does this with still our mental image and her/his body structure. As such, for example, when a walking man sets on a wheelchair to imagine the experience of physically impaired man he will be still walking in his imaginations. Thus, he will dramatize the situation more than it is and the process will be sympathy rather than empathy. After this explanation, they summarize a series of studies which investigate the quality of life assessment disabled people and people around them. The results seems confirming their hypothesis, according to that even the people who are very close to disabled people assess the life of quality of disabled person significantly lower. In contrast, the disabled participants assess their own life quality significantly higher than the non-disabled people around them. Thus, they argued that attempting to imagine and put one selves into the mind of other person will not be an easy process. In consequences, people should be aware of disabled people's restrictions and their subjective perceptions related to others.

The supporting findings of the arguments of Mackenzie and Scully (2007) came from Stensman (1985) and Gerhart et al. (1994). In the study of Stensman (1985) 36 seriously mobility disabled participants who use a wheelchair and need daily assistance and 36 nondisabled control participants were asked to rate their overall quality of life on a 0-10 points scale. The results show that the quality life score of mobility disabled people did not significantly differ from their nondisabled counter parts. In addition, their results interestingly demonstrated that whether the acquisition of impairment congenitally or later time in life did not differ from quality of life scores of disabled participants.

Parallel to Stensman (1985), Gerhart et al. (1994) measured the attitudes of emergency care providers towards quality of life after spinal cord injury. For this purpose, 233 emergency nurses, emergency medicine technicians, emergency medicine residence, and attending physicians were given close ended questioners surveying their attitudes quality of life of people who had spinal cord injury. Their responses were compared to the quality of life ratings of 128 high level spinal cord injury survivors. The results indicated that while only 18% of emergency care providers imagined that they would be happy to live with serious spinal injury 92% of serious spinal injury survivors reported to their happiness of being alive after serious spinal injury. Consistent with the findings in 1985 only 70% of emergency care personnel did predict average or better quality of life for those impaired people whereas 86% of the actual serious spinal injury group predicted a better quality of life for their lives. That's the say, quality of life perception of emergency health care providers are more negative than that of actual serious spinal injury survivors.

Emin Demirci (2005) mentioned an interesting anecdote in his first chapters where he discussed the perception of society against blind people. He stated that in 1988, The Turkish Blind Federation asked high school students to write an essay about the lives of blind people. The things written on essays are not surprising: blind people live in a dark world, and we need to help them. Those and similar sentences of sighted students are very consistent with the findings of Stensman (1985) and Gerhart et al. (1994).

Amundson (2005) questions the biases of biomedical people against disabled people. He argues that badness attributed theory do not come from the logical results of disability itself but come from the stigma that disability carries in popular and academic culture. He reviewed the standard view of disability. First of all, the standard view devalues lives of disabled people and expresses the unfortunate parts of disabilities. In addition, he argues that that standard view has a very strong connection with biomedical ethics. He gave a very good example to show the insufficiency of medical explanation on explanation of some disability. He mentioned free identical people who use wheelchair. The medical explanation says that they are mobility impaired. The first person leaves in an inaccessible building and needs assistance to go outside. The second leaves in an accessible building but the transportation system in her city is inaccessible. The third one lives in accessible building and in a city with accessible transportation. Although those three people are bio medically identical, their mobility scores will be different according to the accessibility conditions they live. As such, not medical social conditions play an important role in the explanation of the mobility, even though people claim that mobility is the measure of biomedical trait.

After that explanation, he discussed happy slave argument of Brock (1993 cited in Amundson, 2005). Brock (1993 cited in Amundson, 2005) argued that even if a slave, an oppressed woman, a disabled person considers his or her life as highly satisfactory and has high quality of life perspectives; this is very subjective and is not correct. When evaluated objectively actually their quality of life was very low. As it can be recalled, this view is very similar to the view of emergency health care people of Gerhart et al. (1994) and nondisabled control group of Stensman (1985).

Therefore, are really the high quality life expectations of seriously disabled people on these surveys the product of happy slave example of Brock (1993 cited in Amundson, 2005)? According to Amundson (2005), the answer is no. He argues that the happy slave example cannot be applied to conditions of disabilities because the judgment of a third person who does not have any impairment will show lack of epistemology in terms of many aspects. The disabled people know their own disablement well and describe their daily difficulties related to their disabled conditions. In addition, because some of them acquired their disabilities later in their life, they will know both disabled and non-disabled life conditions. On the other hand, people from non-disabled public know something about impairment through its social stereotypes and stigma. Thus, non-disabled people cannot be in a position to judge more objectively the life quality of disabled people which they had never experienced before. Amundson (2005) asked that “Why should the opinions of non-disabled people be epistemologically privileged over those of disabled people?” (p.114). Hence, he stated that the judgment of one or another group cannot be superior to each other and cannot be evaluated as subjective or objective. As such, the happy slave example does not support happy slave judgment of Brock (1993 cited in Amundson, 2005) which claims that a non-disabled person can make better judgments than disabled people about the quality of life. As a consequence, different attitudes about qualities of life are just a conflict between subjectivities.

About quality of life, Amundson (2005) reviews the studies which claims that the quality of life perception is not affected by the degree of impairment, rather, it is influenced by the social and economic factors like employments in both disabled and non-disabled people. That is, if a person is unemployed, independent from his degree of disabled or non-disabled status, is presumed as lower. Similar to this, if people are less socially active, such as they may have few friends, they might go to parties or other activities less, their quality of life could be lower. Thus, impairment is not a factor that increases or decreases life satisfaction of a person. However, if that impairment become a disability due to societal barriers, for example a physically impaired people cannot go to a party because of the inaccessible transportation system, the factor that makes him/her unhappy will be that inaccessible transportation system not his/her physical impairment.

To sum up, impaired or not, the thing effecting the quality of life is not bodily features, rather, the disabilities met in the life. As it can be seen, the perception of society related to lives of disabled people and the perception of disabled people about themselves could be dramatically different. This difference is another reason for the need to have the perspective of disabled people to capture the whole issue.

2.3 Disability and Embodiment

Before unfolding the embodied experiences of disabled people, first of all, it will be useful to clarify the meaning of the concept embodiment. Stolz (2015) summarizes the embodiment literature and briefly says that for embodiment, treating a person as a whole being is very important. In that holistic approach, separating the physical and mental qualities of the person from each other is not possible. The person experiences the environment with his or her mind and body together and actively synthesizes those experiences continuously. He mostly relies on Merleau-Ponti's definition and argument of embodiment. According to Merleau-Ponti (1962, cited in Stolz, 2015) embodiment refers to how people experience themselves as something they inhabit as a being through the vehicle of their body. Here the important thing is that it is impossible to separate the unity of mind and body from its relationship with the world through perception and experiences.

As such, related to disability issue, embodiment can be regarded as something disabled people perceive and respond to the environment with their physical disabled bodies and their mental capacities together. That is to say, if the effect of environmental characteristics of disability from embodiment perspectives is focused closer, it will not be possible to only study to effect environment, such as without looking at the personal and mental experiences of that environment by a disabled person. Thus, disabled people's thinking and interpretation of different factors such as their impaired body characteristics, the effect of contextual factors and other things are very crucial.

Hughes & Paterson (1997) highly criticized the social model in terms of embodiment perspective. They claim that although sometimes the personal experiences of disabled people exist in social model arguments, most of the time, the impaired body is disappeared. They argued that the social model criticized the medical model, but it understands impairment in terms of medical discourse. Thus it left the body experiences and impairment side to medical understanding only. They mentioned about the sociology of the body and they insisted that there is no relation between the disability studies and the sociology of the body.

They also questioned the disability/impairment distinction of social model. They argued that this distinction is similar with the distinction of body and mind which separates culture and biology from each other. While disability refers to social exclusion, impairment represents the biological dysfunction. For them, in terms of conceptualizing the body, the approaches of social model and biomedicine are very similar: they both treat body as a physical object separate from the self.

According to Hughes and Paterson (1997), the sociology of the body opens up the sociological investigation of the flesh. For them, the social model can take something from the radical social theory which is aware of body and embodiment. With 1990’s the radical social theorists collapsed the sex and gender distinction and started mentioning the construction of body. This attempt liberated the body for social theory (Hughes and Paterson, 1997).

Poststructuralism and phenomenology are these two theoretical perspectives which perceive the body as sociological problem to help people understanding the embodiment experiences. Poststructuralism can be helpful for understanding the language and sensation. Without language, people cannot understand the meanings of sensations. Hughes and Paterson (1997) argued that with poststructuralism utilizing the perspective of Foucault, body can be the central issue. Then impairment and bodily esthetics against dominancy of nondisabled society can be reconstructed and development of the cultural politics of identity might be possible. Thus, poststructuralism can be useful to liberate body from the medical frame of references which produce impaired body. In poststructuralist view, impairment is no longer a biological fact, but a discursive product.

According to them, body, impaired or not, is an experiencing agent. People experience impairment and disability together, not separately from each other. Phenomenology can be helpful in terms of understanding the embodiment experiences of disabled people. With phenomenology, the social, emotional, cognitive, cultural, and biological lived experiences can be understood as a perceptual unity. They cannot be separated from each other's. Then, disability is embodied and impairment becomes social in contrast to social model.

As Hughes and Paterson (1997), Campbell (2009) also mentioned the production of impairment. In order to have a whole grasp of embodiment and the impact of phenomenology and poststructuralism, it would be useful to introduce a new concept: Ableism. Campbell (2009) made an excellent explanation about ableism in her book "Contours of Ableism". In that book ableism is defined as following: "A network of beliefs, processes and practices that produces a particular kind of self and body (the corporeal standard) that is projected as the perfect, species-typical and therefore essential and fully human" (Campbell 2009, p. 5). For Campbell (2009), ableism and disableism represent two distinct concepts. The chief feature of ableism is the belief that disability or impairment is inherently negative and should be cured or eliminated if possible. From this perspective, it can be concluded that for ableist point of view, an impaired person is inferior and nonhuman since he or she is not conforming to the perfect species-type human norms.

According to Campbell (2009), there are two core elements of ableism. Those are the constitutional divide between ableism and disableism, and the notion of normative individual. He continues that, in order to protect perfectionism the modern society must distinct human from nonhuman. For this purpose, purification is used and according to this, disabled people fall into the nonhuman category.

Related to the notion of normative individuals, he has stated that to form a normal person, firstly a disabled, deviant ones are necessary. The reason of this is that the normalcy defines its perfectionism with the existence of the disabled, uncivil bodies. As such, every internal group will need an outside group for their unity.

Campbell (2009) again underlined that because ableist point of view considers disability as inherently negative, developing a positive attitude and positive identity about disability is not possible. Thus, he mentioned internalized ableism. We receive messages which are supposed to be disabled is being less. Thus, we as disabled people grow up with such ableist messages. From this point, he established a similarity between internal ableism and critical race theory. Like internal racism, on internal ableism, the disabled person starts devaluing oneself and try to become normal as much as possible according to the rules of ableist culture. In ableist culture, “the nondisabled people are allowed to act as the protectors, guides, leaders and role models for disabled individuals who are assumed to be helpless, dependent, asexual, economically unproductive, physically limited, emotional immature, and acceptable only when they are unobtrusive” (Campbell, 2009 p. 18). With that approach, many disabled people have tendencies to conform to the notion of nondisabled people to keep their protection. In conclusion, internalized ableism refers to emulation of normality by disabled people and trial of embracing another identity different from one’s own. Here, the tendency is to separate and disembody the impaired part of the body from the self.

In following pages, the focus will be on some studies which attempt to rely on the subjective embodied experiences of disabled people.

Parallel to the arguments of Hughes and Paterson (1997) and Campbell (2009), Loja et al. (2013) investigated the embodied experiences and resistance of impaired bodies on ablest culture in Portugal. For this purpose they conducted a qualitative study with 7 sighted but physically impaired people. Their study mostly addressed the embodied stories of disabled people in an ablest society. They focused on the resistance of disabled people to seek recognition when they encountered with nondisabled people in daily life (Loja et al, 2013).

One of the focus of disabled respondents was the diminishing power of the pity gaze of non-disabled people. One participant was telling that one older person tried to give him a coming in shopping.

The other attribution of non-disabled gazes against impaired bodies emerged as heroism in the study of Loja et al. (2013). One of the Paralympian participant talked about this issue and stated that although he won medals, he is firstly seen as a poor cripple and his success did occur in spite of his impairment on the gazes of non-disabled people.

Curiosity emerged as another important theme on the study of Loja and her friends (2013). The curiosity gazes of non-disabled people can be sometimes invading the personal spaces of impaired people but they had to tolerate it.

They also addressed the physical capital issues of disabled people. Bourdieu (1990, cited in Loja et al. 2013) argued that the body is a form of physical capital. Thus that can collect the resources and convert this capital into economic, social and other capitals. However, due to ableist structure of the world, disabled people fall into a disadvantaged position in terms of that conversion process.

The study manifested the irritation of disabled people against the ablest thoughts and practices which undermine the physical capital of impaired people. Their physical capitals are annihilated by physical and attitudinal barriers. The participants reported that sometimes the physical barriers might be very frustrating (Loja et al, 2013).

Loja et al. (2013) exemplified that due to inaccessible public spaces, the possibility of converting physical capital to social capital can be difficult. One participant mentioned that, he could not go to some parties or other social activities because of inaccessibility.

One participant also showed the physical barriers sometimes can negatively affect the work performance and can prevent the possibility of converting physical capital to economic capital. The participant reported that as a lawyer in a trial, due to inaccessibility, she had to sit next to the suspect instead of lawyer balcony and she felt worse (Loja et al., 2013).

The other theme emerging from Loja et al. (2013) is the avoidance of disabled people from public spaces. The main reason for some of them is the irritating gazes of others. Participants just would like to be ignored and seen as normal.

The fear of rejection on intimate relations have become another theme of them. Many participants told that they avoid intimate relations due to invalidation of their impairments. Actually, those avoidance and fear of rejection findings are very consistent with the argument of Campbell’s (2009) internalized ableism.

After such kinds of themes related to the physical capital and barriers, Loja and her friends (2013) continued to summarize the resisting strategies of disabled people against ableist thoughts and practices. For instance, one participant insisted that she celebrates her difference and wear skirts and shorts without any irritation. Thus she does not fear showing her impaired part.

Some of other participants mentioned that they develop an internally based body image and rejected the social judgements about their bodies. Thus they attempted romantic relations. Another finding showed that as communal attachment with disabled minority increased, as well as the positive self-identity with impaired part (Loja et al., 2013).

They concluded that although the non-disabled gaze invalidates impaired bodies and undermines the physical capital of disabled people, the disabled people continuously develop resisting strategies against that non-disabled gaze. They suggested that in order to deconstruct the exclusive and demeaning the power of ableism, an embodied politics of recognition is necessary. In that politics diversity of bodies should be conceptualized as a plus and be affirming. In addition, pluralist and inclusive society should be the main purpose (Loja et al., 2013).

Another interesting study searching the embodied experiences of disabled people has come from Sera Varlender (2012). She interviewed differently disabled 3 managers representing three Swedish companies. Before discussing the findings, it will be important to emphasize the argument of Varlender (2012). For her, different bodily experiences of the world would encourage different ways of thinking. Thus different bodily specificities can contribute to whole differently. That approach is an important point of view because instead of conceptualizing disability as deficiency like the medical model, or considering it as something only created by society, she attempted to view the issue from the embodiment perspective and from the impact of lived experiences of disabled people with disabled parts. She stated that in contrast to social and medical model, scholars working from an embodied approach mostly focus on bodily differences. She summarized that even two people with the same disability will experience it differently.

She hypothesized that the organizations can be enriched through the employment of people with diverse bodily specificities. The findings showed some interesting themes. First of all, managers emphasized that they more care to well-being of the workers. Secondly, the participants stated that their bodily diversity lead them to think more creatively and to find different solutions to various problems. As such, their disabilities could contribute to their problem solving abilities.

The third important theme is the diversity promotion. The results of Varlender (2012) showed that under the management of a disabled person, the organization could broaden the normality concept and they could become more open to differences.

The other theme is positive energy, humbleness, and holistic view on employees. According to this, employees could start thinking more holistically and give more importance to life experiences.

Another job related survey came from Canada. Kathryn Church and her colleagues (2007) in Ryerson University conducted a project with Royal Bank of Canada (RBC). On this project, she and her colleagues made interviews with approximately 800 people with various disabilities working on RBC. A series of job related themes emerged in this inductive research.

Hiding: The survey showed that although co-workers and managers in RBC prefer full disclosure of disability, disabled people tend to conceal their situation. When the reasons are questioned, it was emerged that they want to control the flow of information about their body and they want to prevent negative reaction and unwelcome curiosity. Of course, in order to avoid discrimination, they tried to hide their disability if possible.

Keeping Up: The second important theme in that survey is the conflict between the beliefs of co-workers/managers and the real performance of disabled people. While co-workers and managers believe that disabled people might be slow and this might slow down the team work, Church et al. (2007) discovered that disable people actually are very good at finding a creative ways and shortcut programs to be fast.

Waiting: Church et al. (2007) stated that they heard many frustrating waiting stories from disabled workers. Although the new generation of disabled workers has a high degree of technical skills and high expectations, they had to wait for the work place accommodation such as ordering, receiving, maintaining, and upgrading computer equipment and software. That waiting process could have a lot of negative effects on them.

Informal Learning: They argued that a good communication and direct human contact could be solutions for many problems. For instance, they found that if they perceive good managers they can trust willingness of disabled workers to disclose their situation would increase. Thus they concluded that direct contact and experiential interaction provide a good base for further learning.

Keeping It Light: They mentioned a new strategy as they call “Keep it light”. According to this, their finding indicated that some successful disabled employees make jokes about their disabilities in order to decrease the discomfort of other nondisabled clients and co-workers. Some of them tried to get what they require without being more assertive and confrontational. However, this tendency sometimes caused no to demand some accommodations actually necessary for them.

As a conclusion, they suggested that a direct human contact is very important in addition to technological accommodations.

In preparation of this dissertation, one of the main hypotheses is that independence and being self-determined are very important aspects of perception of disability. Meaning, as the autonomy increases in the life of disabled person his or her self-esteem increases and his or her reaction of disability issue becomes more positive. One of the supporting studies to this hypothesis came from Sweden.

Karin Barron (2001) researched the reactions of disabled people who need daily help and are benefiting from the support services in Sweden. She made interviews with some of those disabled participants and reported the irritation of disabled people against not being in the decision making process. For example, one female subject reported that when her assistant could not come in such a day due to health conditions or other things because there is no any back up system they do not have chance to make their daily activities. Hence, depending on only one assistant and the condition of that assistant decreases the autonomy.

She summarizes the various approaches of professionals and service providers on the life of disabled people. According to her suggestions, while there are some service providers who struggle to support disabled people to make their personal wishes and requirements, others consider their main mission as controlling the disabled people they are interested in. The disabled people are complaining that they are not permitted to participate to the discussion of what kind of personal assistants they can take rather they are imposed a predetermined assistant system. For example, one of the female participants in her study says that her service provider does not allow her to go outside independently and make some daily activities like going to post office because it may take more time in such kind of a situation.

However, these kinds of predetermined imposed support services prevent a disabled person from being independent and doing activities whatever she or he wish. As such, she argues that if support services do not take into account the autonomy, self-determination, and independence needs of disabled people, they can become other disabling barriers instead of enabling a disabled person.

What would happen if the disability was not seen clearly? Andre Vick (2013) made interviews with 3 women who have episodic disabilities within the context of Multiple Sclerosis (MS). The findings showed that people with episodic disabilities and their dysfunction experiences and needs are mostly discredited by the society and institutionally compared to people with more visible and stable disabilities.

Because people with episodic disabilities seem as nondisabled in their routines, Vick (2013) stated that, when their dysfunction occurs, people around them approached to their situations with suspicious. Due to seeming as nondisabled, the interviewees had difficulty to define and embody their reality. In addition, people around episodically disabled persons have difficulty to believe their disability in the absence of more visible signifiers.

The other theme emerging from the study of Vick (2013) is that nondisabled people, even if they are very closer to episodically disabled person, devalue their MS. They cannot understand that why they seem and function like able bodies sometimes, and why not in other times. This dualism of episodically disabled people could be similar with the dualistic life conditions of partially sighted people. Sometimes, due to their eye conditions, they can be thought as sighted person and their blindness could be discredited. The present study also focused on that issue on my interviews with partially sighted participants.

Institutional Bafflement have become another theme in the study of Vick (2013). According to this, women with episodic MS believe that they are excluded from public policies experientially and discursively. As such, due to social, emotional, and institutional discredit of episodic dysfunction embodiment with disabled part would be difficult.

When literature of embodiment is deeply analyzed, it will be seen that few studies have been conducted which combines embodiment and disability. The reason of this might be that embodiment and disability have been brought together for 20 years at most. However, finding studies which address to embodied experiences of blind and visually impaired people is very very difficult.

Until this phase, the approaches to disability, the disability/impairment distinction, and definition of disability and perspective of different models about disability were discussed.

It will be also useful to learn the traditional disability acceptance literature. The reason of this is the fact that psychology and education mostly utilize from this literature to understand and explain various issues of disability.

2.4 Acceptance of Disability

When the disability acceptance literature is analyzed in general, it is possible to see different trends in different fields. While the studies in educational and counseling settings mostly focus on inclusion, peer acceptance and possible intervention programs, the investigation on psychological and rehabilitation setting are generally interested in the sociometric individualistic characteristics which influence the perception of disability. On the other hand, the sociology literature approach the disability issue from an identity perspective. Below, some investigations in those three areas will be summarized.

2.4.1 Acceptance of Disability in Educational Settings

There some researches in literatures which are interested in the acceptance of disabled people by others. For instance, Mpofu (2003) investigated the effect of role salience, peer interaction and academic achievement on social acceptance of students with physical disability by their friends. In order to measure this, the author used a school base program for enhancing social acceptance of adolescence with physical disability. This program includes role salience intervention, peer interaction intervention and academic support intervention and interaction of those individuals' interventions. The results of that 6-month intervention program made in 193 classrooms of ordinary Zimbabwean schools indicated that as peer interaction increased between the students with and without physical disability, the actual social acceptance of physically disabled adolescents by their friends have also increased.

Besides, the combination of peer interactions with other interventions; role salience and academic support also significantly increased the actual social acceptance. Interestingly, the role salience intervention which is related to giving the preferred schools duties and responsibilities to disabled students increased the self-perceived social acceptance of them. This may imply that feeling capable of doing something, could enhance the self-confidence of students with disability and modify their beliefs about their social status in the school. Nevertheless, how the perception of one about one's disability influence or is influenced by the peer acceptance and more generally social acceptance needs to be addressed with further studies.

Parallel to Mpofu (2003) and Zambo (2010) it also mentions the importance of the peer relations and developing social identity for adolescents with disability. In addition to personal identity, like others, disabled people also need to develop egalitarian relations with others and feel a sense of belonging to one or more groups. Here, only belonging is not sufficient. Most of the time, disabled person may feel isolated and less able in a peer group. For this reason, developing an equality based relation and becoming a contributing member of a group is very crucial. Zambo (2010) states 5 steps to improve the social identity of disabled adolescents. The first step is conceptualizing current groups and networks. According to him, teachers first need to know, which groups inside and outside the class the disabled students have relations with. Then the second step comes: understanding the adolescent's perspective. Learning how the disabled adolescent feel in different groups and his or her roles in those groups might help the teacher to go to further steps. In step three, helping adolescents with disabilities fit into group, teaching the group mission, history and members of the group would be helpful to understand the group living and behave accordingly. Then, as Mpofu (2003) also stated, becoming a contributing member of the group comes as a fourth step. As critical responsibilities and tasks for a group are given to disabled person, this will help the development of equal relations, improve self-esteem and peer acceptance. The completion of those four steps may lead one to development of identity about a group.

As both Mpofu (2003) and Zambo (2010) emphasize, only inclusion and being together with people without disability is not enough to become the active, participating member and develop equality based relations in a school. Cook and Semmel (1999) also confirmed this hypothesis. The sociometric findings of Cook and Semmel (1999) demonstrated that students with mild or severe learning disability were significantly less accepted by their peers compared to students without disability. Although the research and other findings in the literature indicated that severely disabled students were accepted more than mildly disabled students, as authors suggested, students with severe disabilities are mostly parented and nurtured by their classmates rather than an equality based acceptance or relation. Hence, teachers and educators should take extra measures to make students with disabilities feel more able and develop social identity (Cook & Semmel, 1999).

It seems that in spite of the emphasis of intervention programs in educational settings, the role of accessible school atmosphere, accessible lecture materials and similar factors do not appear to be mentioned as a part of those intervention phases. That is to say, the discourse implies that for integration and peer acceptance, the individualistic characteristics of disabled people should be concentrated more.

2.4.2 Acceptance of Disability from a Psychological Point of View

Acceptance of disability from a disabled individual's view has been conceptualized differently by different fields. It seems that from psychological point of view, acceptance means recognizing the limits and living with those limits. Li and Moore (1998) summarize those ideas from literature. According to Dembo, Leviton, & Wright (1956 cited in Li & Moore, 1998) acceptance of disability means acceptance of loss. They stated that "The extent of acceptance of disability is associated with the degree that a person (a) recognizes values other than those that are in direct conflict with the disability; (b) deemphasizes those aspects of physical ability and appearance that contradict his or her disabling condition; (c) does not extend his or her handicap beyond actual physical impairment to other aspects of the functioning self; and (d) does not compare oneself to others in the areas of limitations but instead emphasizes one's won assets and abilities (Dembo, Leviton, & Wright, 1956; Wright, 1960 cited in Li & Moore, 1998). This definition implies that accepting one's own disability requires to learn living with the individual limitations. Consistent with this view, Linkowski (1971 cited in Li & Moore, 1998) developed acceptance of disability scale and many investigators have used this scale to seek relation between acceptance of disability and other demographic and psychosocial factors.

Li and Moore (1998) investigated the relationship among acceptance of disability with demographic factors like age, gender, race, education, and income; disability conditions such as onset of disability, multiple disabilities and chronic pain; and the psychosocial factors such as self-esteem, and emotional support on 1266 adults with disability in USA. The findings showed that, emotional support from families and friends, and self-esteem emerged have positive influences on disability acceptance. On the other hand, perceived social discrimination against disabled people negatively affected the participants' adjustment to disability. Not surprisingly, people with multiple disabilities or chronic pain and people with acquired disability had more difficulty in the adjustment of disability. In addition, income and age became significant demographic characteristics related to acceptance of disability. Namely, younger people with high incomes seem to have higher scores on acceptance of disability scale. The overall findings showed the importance of self-esteem and emotional support on disability acceptance. However, which factors affect the self-esteem could not be addressed from the findings.

For that purpose, Smedema et al. (2010) questioned the relations between positive and negative coping strategies, subjective well-being and self-worth on persons with spinal cord injury. Here, self-worth was determined by self-esteem and acceptance of disability. The subjective quality of life and life satisfaction were used to determine the subjective well-being. According to the findings of them, the positive coping variables like hope, proactive coping style and sense of humor first increase the self-worth, self-esteem, and acceptance of disability then, positively influence the subjective well-being whereas, negative coping variables such as perceptions of stress, dysfunctional attitudes, and catastrophizing have both negative relations with self-worth and subjective well-being. Those findings in general indicated that coping styles of individuals with disability have a crucial effect on their adjustment to disability.

Unfortunately, there are very few studies investigating the perception of disability and acceptance of blind or visually impaired people to their disabilities. One of those studies is made by Jackson and Lawson (1995). They investigated the relationship between the perceived environment and psychological distress in 76 blind people who are taking rehabilitation at least for four months. The results showed that the family environmental traits and support strongly influences their adaptation of visual loss. If family environmental support is perceived positive by blind participant, the results indicate that this decreases the psychological distress of them. As such, the family social environment served as a predictor of adjustment (Jackson & Lawson, 1995).

Another study related the perception of disability of blind people came from Beach et al. (1995). They conducted serious of study visually impaired 46 adults. Findings demonstrated that self-esteem was correlated with free-self report measures. These are dependence of others, difficulty, and motivation to learn. Namely, adults who are less dependent of others had significantly higher self-esteem than people who receive more help from others in some daily activities like going to unfamiliar place. In addition, adults with higher self-esteem consider such kind of daily skills as less difficult. The other result in that study shows that adult with higher self-esteem reported more formally educated than the others. According to the results, the employment expectations do not have any relations with high or low self-esteem. The authors argue that just finding a job may not affect self-esteem, the job satisfaction, and other factors are also important (Beach et al., 1995).

As it can be seen, the literature in psychology and rehabilitation field mostly consider disability as an individualistic issue parallel with the medical model. Thus, for those in these fields, increasing individuals’ coping strategies and psychosocial characteristics like self-esteem will result in better adjustment to individualistic disability issue. However, like Gill (1997), there are some investigators who view the disability concept from identity formation rather than adaptation or acceptance of limitations. This can be understood more clearly from the sociology literature below.

2.5 Disability and Identity Formation

Beyond the acceptance some scholars conceptualized disability as an identity process. For Shakespeare (1996), people can use their identity to show their claim to membership of collective or wider group. He suggested that with the emergence of social model disabled people found opportunity to see their disabled identity differently from the traditional narratives of biomedical intervention or rehabilitation of misery decline and dead. As such, he distinguished two main approaches of disability in terms of identity. The first one based on the physical and medical understanding, the second one relied on socio-cultural understanding. The first one focuses physical differences. Thus, in this sense disabled people are defined as a group of people whose bodies do not work. According to this approach, disabled people are the ones who deviated from normality.

In the second approach, disability is defined as the relationship between people with impairment and discriminatory society. Disability is the outcome of disable barriers. Here, the barrier remover strategies become important. In that approach, disabled people do not have wish of extra things from society. Their only wish is to be treated as the same with nondisabled people.

For Shakespeare (1996), most of the disabled people in the first phases of their disabled lives develop a negative identity about their disabilities. This derives from the sociocultural relations in which disability is defined in the context of impairment only. In such context, disabled people might try various forms of denial about their disabilities. They try to act as normal as possible and concealment is the key point.

According to Shakespeare (1996) there are two important barriers to develop a positive identity for disabled person. First of all, disabled people live in an atmosphere where they think that they are inferior. In that atmosphere, the dominant culture send a strong message that disabled body is a deficit one. This is called internalized oppression.

Secondly, disabled people are isolated from each other. Thus, most of the time they remain far away from the sources of collective support from other disabled people. As such, communal attachment with disabled people and existence of role models are very important to develop positive identity.

The findings of Weeber (2004) confirmed the suggestion of Shakespeare (1996) about developing positive disability identity. Weeber (2004) in her dissertation made qualitative interviews with 18 disabled leaders from different disability groups various cultural backgrounds. Her aim was to analyze how their disability identity developed. She detected two processes on identity development of those leaders. The first process integration of disability positively into once sense of self and once self into disability community. The experiences of her participants showed that their disability identity become positive after they met with other disabled people. Before that, they had difficulty in accepting themselves as an equally productive person.

The second process of identity development according to findings of Weeber (2004) is the expansion of disability experiences into other diverse communities in the society. Thus, in the identity development, people start to struggle for right seeking activities for all humanity.

Weeber (2004) reported that people firstly face with cultural beliefs, values and assumptions about disability in their environment. Those values and assumptions are very consistent with the views of Shakespeare (1996). Meaning disability was perceived as a deficit and wish of being normal as much as possible is the main motives. However, after bounding with disability community and with the existence of other disabled role models new paradigm of disability identity is acquired by the participants.

There are also some scholars who studies the identity formation of disabled people like Gill (1997). She proposed four steps towards personality integration for disabled people. In the first step called “coming to feel”, disabled people stopped blaming themselves for their differences from society. In second step called “coming home”, people started to integrate with the disabiled community in which they might have rejected in the past. The third step is called “coming together”. Here, individuals start to accept their disabled part as a whole. She accepted the last step identity development of disabled people as coming out process. With this step, people firstly begin to desire a place in the society, continue to discover their places among their peers and ends with the appreciations and acceptance of themselves as a whole with their disabled part (Gill, 1997). Actually, those identity processes can be observed in the findings of Weeber (2004).

Like Gill (1997), Gibson (2006) also attempted to improve an identity development model. According to this model, there are three stages in identity development. These are passive awareness, realization, and acceptance. The passive awareness stage occurred in the first years after the onset of disability. People are mostly under the effect of medical model and deny their disabilities. They try to get away from attention.

In realization stage, having disability is realized but people start hating and getting angry at themselves. They start being concerned about the perception of others. In acceptance stage being different is not perceived as negative anymore. People establish more communication with disabled people in this stage. Self, disability advocacy and activism are some futures of this stage. Gibson (2006) highlights that disability identity is a fluid one meaning that people may be in different stages according to different conditions. For example, a student may be in the acceptance stage. However, when one faces with discriminatory action on the employment life, the identity can go back to the realization stage and anger.

In order to test identity development model of Gibson (2006), Myers, Laux, and Murdock (Retrieved November 30, 2015 from: http://www.myacpa.org/sites/default/files/ccaps_2011_convention_Myers_Laux_Murdock_REV_ACPA_2011_Disability_Idenitty_Handout_4-15-11.pdf) made a research on blind people. The purpose was to learn their perspectives regarding their identity development. This research relied on a questionnaire developed by Gibson (2006) which is composed of 25 questions. The result showed that the majority of participants with visual disability are in the acceptance stage of Gibson's model (2006). 80% of participants agreed that they felt as important as anyone who did not have disability. All of the participants stated that they have also disabled friends.

In conclusion, as Shakespeare (1996) stated with the recent political atmosphere, disabled people found a new opportunity to tell their stories and to develop a more positive identity. For such kind of positive identity development, disabled people firstly need to understand that the traditional medical perspective of nondisabled people who view disabled person less is not correct. For such understanding, as Gill (1997), Gibson (2006), and Weeber (2004) stated the communal attachment with other disabled people and accepting oneself as a whole including disabled part are basic points.

2.6 Orientation of Disability in Sociology Literature

The sociology literature conceptualizes disability differently compared to old psychology and educational literature. Namely, the focus is mostly related to society rather than the individual. The term orientation is used deliberately since the term acceptance is mostly used to explain disability acceptance literature. In sociology literature, the usage of acceptance is not observed. Darling (2003) proposed a typology in which different orientations toward disability in different disabled people might have. According to her, adults with disabilities and their parents have a variety of orientations about their disability and this orientations can change over time. Based on the previous studies and literature review, the suggested different type of disability identities are normalization, crusadership, affirmation, resignation, apathy, situational identification, and isolated affirmation. To enlighten the further purpose of the dissertation, it would be useful to explain them briefly.

Normalization: People who adapt this orientation mostly accept the norms, abilities and appearances of the dominant culture. Their aim is to achieve a life style similar to people without disability. They reject their disabilities and try to hide it if possible. Because those people have sufficient financial resources, family support, or employers they can manage to purchase accessible things which make them function normally like cochlear implants. However, they avoid using stigmatized tools like white cane. Their friends and relations are mostly people without disability.

Crusadership: Crusaders accept the norms of the cultural majority but do not have access to a normalized life style. Thus, Darling (2003) explained that the aim of those people is to become normalized as soon as possible and for this, they establish relations with disability subculture and play important roles on disability activities. However, once they achieve normalization by accessing necessary resources, their identities goes to normalization and they reject the disability identity. For instance, once a disabled person finds a job then, one avoids from having relations with disability community.

Affirmation: She stated that similar to crusaders, affirmers also identify with disability subculture for their purposes. Nevertheless, their identification becomes permanent. They see their disability as pride and their primary identity. They also try to achieve full participation in society but conceptualized their disability as a normal form of human diversity and view it in a positive manner.

Situational Identification: Some disabled people choose to have multiple identities. When they are with the dominant culture who do not have disability, they choose normalization. Whereas when they interact with their disabled friends, they tend to reject the norms of society. That is to say, they have difficulty to choose between these two identities.

Resignation: Due to poverty and other ethnic discriminations, those people have neither resources to access to the normalization nor to the disability subculture to learn affirmation. Darling (2003) stated that this is groups is the least studied one. They do not have time to cope with disability. Nevertheless, as she claimed, they are more exposed to the views of dominant culture about disability and likely to adapt the normalization orientation.

Apathy: She stated that people with severe mental illness or learning difficulty are included in this group and they are not aware of normalization or affirmation.

Isolated Affirmation: Although some people have no opportunity to access to sources of the disability subculture, they may obtain an affirmative identification. According to her, although very few, some founders of the disability community can be categorized under this identity.

She addressed further qualitative and quantitative investigations to test this typology. Then, the first findings came from again by Darling and Heckert (2010). They developed a scale called the Questionnaire on Disability Identity and Opportunity (QDIO). Then, they investigated the differences in orientation towards disability over the life course. Four categories in questionnaire are determined, disability pride, exclusion, social model and medical model. The results showed that people with higher age more tend to be in exclusion and in the medical model category. On the other hand, younger participants are more likely in disability pride. The authors attributed this difference to disability onset. That is, since younger participants are more likely to be disabled from birth, and older people have mostly acquired disability, younger people seem to live with disability longer than older participants. The authors also investigated the relationship between age and activism, and the results indicated that the middle age group between 18 and 64 are the most activist group related to disability right compared to young and older participants. Other interesting findings showed that participants who had been disabled longer, displayed higher levels of pride and participants who needed less assistance in daily living also displayed higher level of disability pride. This finding is important for further studies that seek relation between different disability identity orientation and severity of disability Darling and Heckert (2010).

They also confirmed the relationship between activism, self-affirmation about disability identity and rejection of a possible cure. They conducted a study on members of NGO called American Disabilities for Accessible Public Transportation (ADAPT). They asked to the demonstrators some questions such as the following: "Even I could take a magic pill, I would not want my disability to be cured". 47 percent of the activists agreed with statement by giving the response value of 5 out of 7 (Hahn and Belt, 2004). In general the results showed that consistent with the findings of Darling and Heckert (2010), if participants have positive self-affirmation about their disability and if living with disability is longer, the tendency to reject a possible cure of disability increased.

2.7 Significance of the Present Study

In this chapter, different perspectives related to the disability issue are reviewed. First of all, the big debate between medical and social model of disability are focused by different aspects. Secondly, the attitude differences of disabled and nondisabled people about disability were summarized. From this road, the self-embodiment experiences of disabled people and the significance of embodiment in disability studies were concentrated. Lastly, the disability acceptance literature from educational and psychological point of view and the orientation explanation of Darling (2003) were also explained.

Except embodiment literature, it can be interpreted that the social medical discussion of disability mostly occurred in theoretical base. Hence, the individual experiences and resisting strategies of disabled individuals have not been investigated frequently. The literature of embodiment studies related to disability can be regarded as a new field and is not sufficient to cover all aspects of the issue. In addition, when blind related quantitative and qualitative studies are sought in the literature very few of them could be seen.

The journey in educational, psychological and sociological literature about the acceptance or orientation toward disability emerged a number of factors that influence disability acceptance. Some demographic factors, disability conditions, severity, and some psychosocial characteristic like self-esteem and social support might have positive or negative influences on one’s perception of one’s disability. While some conceptualize their disability as form of human diversity and develop a positive identity, others try to avoid and if possible get rid of it to become normal. Although the findings give substantial clues about factors affecting disability acceptance or disability identity, because most of the studies have been conducted among physically disabled people, the cross modality confirmations is needed for a number of reasons. First of all, the participants in the western countries where those studies were conducted generally, have mostly an individualistic orientation and independence, self-identity are significant factors for them. Thus, their possible orientations toward disability may vary in more collectivist country like Turkey.

Secondly, owing to the legal and administrative measures and a long history of activism, Europe and America is much more accessible compared to Turkey for accessibility and technology. Hence, disabled people have many difficulties in every area of life from education to employment, from family life to transportation. For this reason, the effect of accessibility on disability orientation needs to be clarified.

In addition, the effect of formal and informal education on perception of disability seems not concentrated very much. Like this, the impact of inclusive or segregated schools on perception of disability needs to be addressed. Other than primary school level, the influences of inclusive education in high schools and universities, the relations of disabled people and other students and the accessibility conditions in the school might affect blind people.

Moreover, it is possible to observe that with technological advancements on computer related area, more and more blind people started to use computers and have been finding opportunities to interact with other blind people through e-mailing lists, chat rooms and forums. Thus, the impact of informal learning through these electronic communication methods should be also analyzed. Here, such kind of interrelations with other blind people through technology could also lead to coming home process in identity development of disability.

Lastly, becoming an active member of a nongovernmental organization might make meaningful changes on perception of disability positively or negatively. In those contexts, possible informal learning might occur about disability issues, disability identities and practical daily life. As a consequence, comparing the inclusive or segregated school settings, rehabilitation centers and NGOs on perception of disability can give different perspectives about the role of formal and informal education on perception of disability and identity development of visually disabled adults.

In the light of such conclusions drawn above, a qualitative and explanatory study which aids to understanding the perception tendencies of blind people, the determining reason possible consequences of these tendencies deeply is needed. The reason behind this need is the necessity of filling the gap between the theoretical approaches of disability and the embodied experiences of disabled individuals who practically lives in the disabling and enabling conditions of the environment and the consequences of their impairment.

2.8 The Present Study and Research Questions

In the light of the literature summarized above, the main purpose of the current study is to highlight blind adults' perceptions and orientations about their disabilities in Turkey. Especially it aims to test the proposed typology of Darling (2003) and to seek normalization, crusadership, affirmation, resignation, and apathy or different identities in population in Turkey from a qualitative perspective. Parallel to this, the goal is to investigate the impact of ableist culture and internalize ableism in the lives of blind people. As such, the approaches and conceptualization of blind people about their blindness is interested, how they conceptualize their disability, like medical model or social model will be one of the research questions.

In addition, the other aim of the study is to discover different factors that may affect or change perception of disability. Specifically, together with demographic and psychosocial factors, the effects of inclusive/segregated education and the impact of informal learning through NGO’s, rehabilitation centers, and electronic communication methods will be addressed. For this purpose, variety of participants who went to segregated schools for blind or did go to inclusive education from the beginning, who went to a rehabilitation centers, who are active on NGO’s and who have high technological skills were interviewed.

Besides, the effects of families were also questioned. The perception of disability of family might affect the perception of disability of the blind person. Here, whether the blind child did go to a boarding school or not could be another questionable factor.

Moreover, the influence of accessible environment or possible presented accessible facilities for disabled students on perception of disability, were also focused.

The differences within blind people according to severity of sight lost were also questioned. The perception of partially sighted people compared to totally blind person might differ and would be affected from different factors.

Lastly, the behavioral consequences of different perception of disabilitis were concentrated. Which factors lead to activism and how, are some interesting questions.

Parallel with those purposes the research questions are following:

1. What are the perception of disabilities and orientations of blind and visually impaired people?
2. Which factor could play more important role on different perception tendencies?
3. What is the effect of segregated educational settings on perception tendency?

4. What is the effect of mainstream schools?
5. Does attending to school for blind or not influence perception tendency?
6. What is the effect of family and family atmosphere on perception of disability?
7. Does the perception of blind change with time and how?
8. What is the influence of interaction with other blind people on their perception?
9. Do accessibility and technology have role on perception of disability and change?
10. What is the effect of employment experiences on perception of disability?
11. How different disability orientation cause different behavioral consequences?
12. Will the perception of disability of blind participants differ according to degree of sight lost?

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

There are three main purposes of this study. The first one is to determine the perception categorization of blind people, how they perceive their blindness, the teams which direct their beliefs and attitudes, the features that make participants differ from each other in terms of perception are the main queries of this purpose.

Secondly, the goal is to reveal the factors which may contribute to the development of the perception. The impact of school, family, employment, technology, independence, and interrelation were specifically questioned.

The third aim of the study is to search the consequences of different perception categories. The actions and behaviors of participants, their activities on NGO’s were attempted to be addressed for that purpose.

When these purposes are considered, it can be concluded that, a grounded theory design of Strauss and Glaser (1967 cited in Creswell, 2013) would be more appropriate. Creswell (2013) stated that the aim of grounded theory is to reach general explanation and make a theory from the stories of relatively more numbers of participants. He continued that, in this theory, the process, action, or the interaction of both coming from a large number of participants shaped the grounded explanation. Consistent with that approach, in the present study, 36 participants which is relatively large for a qualitative study were made interviews. In addition with open coding strategy (Charmaz, 2006 cited in Creswell, 2013), the experiences and beliefs of participants related to their blindness perception were specified and analyzed. After this analysis, with the comparisons of participants, this different perception categories have been found. Hence, as Creswell (2013) suggested, from the processes the actions of the participants a theoretical background should emerge with the present research the expressions end experiences of participants revealed the different perception categories, some determining factors and possible consequences. That is to say, what participants say about their blindness and their different experiences lead to development of the theories of perception categorizes.

In this chapter, firstly, the research settings, from which the participants were accessed, will be discussed. Later, the characteristics of participants and sampling strategies are going to be explained. Then, the data analysis process will be focused. After that, the research procedure will be summarized. Then, the interview questions related to research questions will be given. Lastly, the data analysis process will be covered.

3.1 Research Settings

In order to collect data and participants, two main research settings were used. The first one is Boğaziçi University. It can be accepted as the most accessible educational institution among other universities in Turkey. It provides a lot of opportunities to the blind and other disabled students to continue their education on an equal atmosphere. Hence, every year approximately around 30 disabled students take their education here. For this reason, since I also work in this university I could find an opportunity to interview some blind students here.

The second main source of participants in the present study came from blind e-mailing lists. With the advancement and spread of computer technologies with screen readers and screen magnifiers, many blind people started to be connected to each other through various types of e-mailing lists. Those lists have been established for different purposes varying from technological, information sharing to educational information exchange. Thus, blind people from different parts of Turkey, come together and find opportunities to share their various experiences on different areas of the lives. After announcement of present study, most of the participants were collected from those e-mailing lists. This collection strategy provided an advantage of interviewing different participants coming from different backgrounds and different parts of the country. Thus, owing to this, a maximum variation could be possible.

3.2 Participants

In this study, semi-structured qualitative interviews were made with 36 adults from blind people with mean age of 31.29 ranging from 20 to 57. While 22 of them were men, 14 of them were women. When the education levels are considered, the number of participants under university degree is 8. Number of University students is 11. The other 17 people were university graduates. 4 of them were still MA or PhD students. While 27 participants continued to segregated schools for blind some time in their educational life, 9 of them did not go to any blind segregated school at all. Among those 27 participants only 5 of them continued to those schools as day pupil and others are boarding school students. 18 of those 27 participants did go to segregated schools for blind for 8 years during whole primary and secondary school level.

In terms of degree of sight lost, 20 participants reported that they are either totally blind or have only light perception. 16 of them reported that they have some degree of functional sight like seeing the colors enabling to read some Inc. print materials.

Related to acquisition of blindness, 31 participants reported that they are blind from birth or they acquired blindness before 3 years of age. 5 of them reported that they lost their sight after 3 years of age. 2 out of those five have become blind after 20 years of age. 4 participants who have blindness from birth reported that their blindness increased seriously with time. All demographic characteristics of participants were summarized Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Total Number of Participants	36
Number of Female Participants	14
Number of Male Participants	22
Mean age of Participants	31.29
Age Range of Participants	20-57
Number of University Graduated	17
Number of University Student	11
Number of Participants under University Degree	8
Number of Participants who had Segregated School Experiences	27
Number of Participants who did not have Segregated School	9
Number of Totally Blind Participants	20
Number of Partially Blind Participants	16
Number of Participants who are Blind from Birth	31
Number of Participant who Became Blind Later	5

3.3 Data Collection Process

To obtain more information from participants, purposeful sampling strategy in which information more participants attended was used. The goal of purposeful sampling is to collect participants who would be more convenient to the aims of the study (Creswell, 2013). Creswell (2013) stated that three considerations should be taken into account in purposeful sampling strategy. Those are participants in sample, types of sampling, and sample size. Related to participants in the sample, in order to find various types of blind people who are very active in NGO's, who have different educational background or typical people, an announcement was prepared and sent to the participants through e-mailing lists where blind people are mostly following. 60 participants responded positively to this announcement. Then they were sent a consent letter to be informed about their volunteering for participation. This consent letter has been approved by Research Ethics Committee of Boğaziçi University (INAREK). It can be seen on Appendix B. The consent letter which was sent to the participants can be seen in Appendix C.

In addition, they were sent an e-mail including a small questionnaire which interrogates their demographic information such as age and gender, their blindness time and degree, their education, and working status. This e-mail message and questionnaire can be seen in Appendix D. The names and the information that can reveal the real identities of participants were changed. All general information about all participants could be seen in Appendix E.

The goal of this questionnaire is to select participants from 60 application pools who could provide the maximum variation. The second consideration of purposeful sampling strategy according to Creswell (2013) is types of sampling. Consistent with the aim of grounded theory employed for this study, stratified purposeful and maximum variation types of sampling were used. Stratified purposeful sampling refers to find participants from different subgroups for comparison (Miles & Huberman, 1994 cited in Creswell, 2013). For that sample type, participants who had experience in school for blind or not, who are totally or partially blind, and who are employed or students were chosen. By doing this, both the maximum variation and stratified purposeful sampling were aimed.

The third consideration of purposeful sampling strategy is sample size. Charmaz (2006 cited in Creswell, 2013) recommended a sample size between 20 and 30 participants for a grounded theoretical research design. Consistent with that recommendation 36 participants were used in this study.

3.4 Procedure

As mentioned above, for this study, grounded theory qualitative research method was used. The reason behind this is the intention of discovering different disability orientations, their causes and their consequences. A stated above the purpose of grounded theory in qualitative research is to make a design which enables researches to obtain explanations from the experiences and attitudes of various participants (Creswell, 2013).

Although related to disability acceptance, there are some instruments like Acceptance of Disability Scale (Linkowski, 1971 cited in Li & Moore, 1998) and Questionnaire on Disability Identity and Opportunity (QDIO) (Darling & Heckert, 2010), with semi structured interviews obtaining deeper understanding about this phenomena and establishing various relations for further studies would be more appropriate. Only, for the demographic data a questionnaire in the beginning of the interview was employed as mentioned above.

Due to complexity of the issue and existence of a lot of research questions, the interview lasted approximately 90 minutes ranging from 40 minutes to 150 minutes. Pilot interviews were conducted to determine the possible timing of the interviews and the specific interview questions. The interviews were made mostly through skype and all for them were recorded for further analyses. Nine of the interviews were made face to face on GETEM.

The detailed English and Turkish versions of interview questions supporting research questions can be found in Appendix F and G. The Turkish version of transcript examples which will be discussed in the presentation of findings chapter can be found in Appendix H.

3.5 Data Analysis

In order to analyze the data, the Inductive Analysis Model was employed (Hatch, 2000). In that model, reading the instances and reaching to the general conclusion are the basic task. Hatch (2000) summarizes a series of steps of the generalization. Those steps are following.

1) Reading the data and analysis some frames,
2) Creating domains relying on the frames,
3) Identifying the most clear domains and coding them,
4) Finding the relations among salient data,
5) Searching the supporting and counter supporting examples on our domains within the data,

6) Completing the analyses within the domain,
7) Finding the themes across domains,
8) Creating the master outline within the across domains, and finally selecting data to support the outline (Hatch, 2000 p. 161-162).

Similar to steps of Hatch (2000), following steps were taken to make analysis in the present study:

1- After transcribing the data by hiring a person, first of all, all transcriptions were read by the researcher and underlined the parts of transcriptions which can be used as different frames later.
2- The underlined frames were taken and put into different files according to the research question of the study.
3- The transcriptions were reread separately and the domains in each research questions were determined.
4- Cooperation with inter observer the relations with different research questions for each participants were revealed.
5- Sample quotations from each domains of research questions were determined.
6- Common themes from the quotations of each participants within the domain of each research questions were put forward.
7- In order to determine the effects of different research questions on each other, such as the effect of experience in schools for blinds on perception of disability, various comparisons were made between and within different domains.
8- After such comparison, the theoretical framework was formed related to perception of disability, the effecting factors, and possible consequences, then the most related samples were chosen to support the that theoretical framework.

3.6 The Story of Formation of the Five Perception Categories

The analysis of perception categories could be examples to explain the taken steps for data analysis. To analyze the perception tendencies of participants, first of all, two observers studied the interview transcripts and removed the disability related responses. After then, they separately have rated the perception responses of all participants from 1 to 5 holistically. While 1 represents the affirmation criteria of Darling (2003), 5 represents the other end which can be conceptualized as normalization or normalizer. As a third step, two observers have come together and compared ratings to provide inter observer reliability. As a result, 95 percent of ratings emerged to be similar. For conflict resolution about 5 percent, two observers have looked at the whole transcripts again for capturing clues about participants' perception. After this broadening analysis, the perception scores of all participants with full agreement could be determined.

At the beginning, it is planned to categorize all participants under 3 categories, positive perceivers, confused perceivers and negative perceivers. However, after analyzing the transcripts, it was seen that with such categorization lightening the whole picture clearly would not be possible, because it could not be to categorize some participants as fully positively perceiving or fully negatively perceiving their disabilities. On the other hand, there were some participants the perception of whom can fall into neutral, neither positive, nor negative. For this reason, it is decided that categorizing their perception with 5 point Likert scale would be appropriate.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this dissertation is to detect the different perception tendencies of blind participants about their disabilities. In order to achieve this, a semi-structured qualitative investigation relying on the grounded theory was conducted among 36 totally and partially blind participants.

In addition to perception tendencies, some determining factors were also attempted to be found with this study. The school for blind or mainstream school atmosphere, the effect of peer relations, family and employment environment were thought to be potential determining factors of perception of disabilities.

Moreover, the possible consequences of different perception tendencies and the role of some conditions that may cause that perception change were also questioned.

Parallel with these aims, different research questions were asked. In this chapter, the answers of these research questions will be covered separately. First of all, the perception categorizes emerging from the reports of participants will be summarized briefly. In that summary, the relationship between some demographic characteristics of participants and their perception of disability tendencies will be shown in different tables. After this brief summary, the common themes revealed in each perception categorizes are going to be explained in detail.

After that long presentation, a theoretical attempt will be argued to explain the basic cause of different perception tendencies. Here, the impact of independence or dependence on perception of disability will be studied.

Related to determining factors of perception of disability, first of all, the experience in school for blinds participants will be analyzed in detail. Here, from their first their traumatic experiences to the independently living skills, from negative effects of boarding schools to the role of interrelation and educational quality will be summarized in the light of stories of the participants.

Secondly, the influence of mainstream schools in both participants who had experience in school for blind or not will be analyzed and compared.

Then, the impact of family life and employment atmosphere will be explained and the possible relation of them with perception differences will be addressed.

After those determining factors, some possible turning points which can lead the perception of disability change in the life will be sought. In that context, especially, the effects of technology, accessibility, and interrelation will be enlightened. Finally, the section will be ended with the presentation of behavioral consequences of different perception tendencies. In that part, the effect of NGO's and the changing need and expectations of participants from current NGO's will be told.

4.1 Perception of Disabilities

Related to the main perception of disability which is the main concern of the study, a series of questions were asked to participants. The first one was related to the meaning of blindness in their life: "What is blindness for you?", "How has blindness changed or affected your life?"

The second question on perception of disability detection was the question of Hahn and Bellt (2004): if there would be a magic pill, would you want your disability to be cured? The reasons of their answers to the taking peel question were also asked. Besides these basic questions, some participants had mentioned the negative or positive consequences of blindness on their life. However, not all of the participants did not report or did not make such connections between their blindness and their life.

As it was explained in the methodology chapter, 5 perception categories emerged as different perception tendencies of blind participants. Let’s summarize those 5 categories and their properties here.

1. Affirmers: Like the affirmer category of Darling (2003), participants conceptualize their blindness as a part of their identity. They see blindness as a form of difference and they reported that blindness provide them different methodology to deal with the daily problems. From embodiment perspective, they reported that their blindness bring them some advantages in their lives. In addition, according to those participants, becoming blind has changed their life and educational conditions positively. As such, they do not accuse their blindness for disabling conditions. Related to magic pill issue, most of the affirmers either directly reject such kind of cure or think that it would be very difficult to adapt new situations after such cure. It can be said that, this category is the one which is the least affected from ableism. The analysis indicated that 11 out of 36 interviewees fall in to affirmer category. Not surprisingly, 9 of them are totally blind or have little light perception. Only two participants have partial functional sight. Among those 9 participants, one of them has become blind later and other is blind from the birth. However, the results of this study demonstrate that 6 of the participants experienced a decrease of sight in their lives. When the family background is examined, it will be seen that four of the participants have also another blind person in their families.

Related to school experiences, 7 of 11 participants reported that they had experience in boarding school for blind. The average year passed on school for blind is 5.36. The mean age of affirmers has become 28.45.

2. Partial Affirmers: The attitudes of participants in that category are mostly similar to the conceptualization of affirmers, interviewees in this category also reported that their blindness is not very disadvantageous. Their transcripts indicate that most of them have strong relations with blind-related NGO’s and blind organizations. However, different from affirmers, it can be clearly seen that perceivers with positive tendencies conceptualize blindness as a deficit intellectually or emotionally. Some of them reported that they are exposed to some discriminatory attitudes and behaviors and they accused their blindness for those cases. Those people also see blindness as their identity but according to them, it is a compulsory identity with which they have to move. It is possible to see an emulation tendency to sighted life on those participants, but this emulation is not too strong. Their responses to magic pill question are mixed. Some of them reported that they do not want it because it is too late after this point. For some others, the answer is why not, but this is not their main wish in their lives. The effect of internalized ableism of Campbell (2009) is more visible on these participants. On the other hand, naming them Crusaders as Darling (2003) would, wouldn’t not be true since although they have emulation to sighted life, most of them are very active in NGO lives and despite their good carriers in their occupational life, they still continued to fight for disability rights.

The analyses indicated that 11 participants fall into this category. While 7 of them are totally blind, 2 of them have partial sight and two of them have become blind later in their lives. Again 4 participants reported that there is another blind person in their families. 8 of the participants had also experience in boarding school for blind. The average passed schools for blind years were 5.36. The average age is 33.27. Table 2 shows the demographic characteristics of affirmers and partial affirmers together.

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Affirmers and Partial Affirmers

Total numbers	22
Male	14
Female	8
Average age	32.86
Totally blind participants	19
Partially blind participants	3
Participants who have experience in school for blind	17
Participants who have experience in boarding school for blind	15
Participants who do not have experience in school for blind	5
Participants who are blind from birth or under 3 year of age	19
Participants who became blind later	3
Participants who experienced decrease in their sight	11
Participants who don’t have any experience of their sight	11
Participants who have another blind member in their family	8
Participants who do not have other blind member in their family	14

3. Confused Perceivers: When the transcripts of those participants are studied, deciding about their perception tendencies would be difficult. It seems that they do not think about blindness issue too much or they are unwilling to talk about it. Thus, it would be wrong to make implications about their perception. They have both positive and negative attitudes related to blindness but they are very mixed. Related to magic pill questions, the “yes” responses are much more in those participants. However, the reason is mostly curiosity rather than a big emulation. Although they accused their blindness more compared the first two categories, they think that they could manage blindness and perceive their blindness as not burden. It seems that the sight lost or becoming partially sighted created a confusion and adaptation process still continuing for some participants.

Seven participants fail under this category. While three of them are totally blind, three of them experienced a sight lost and become totally blind between 3 and 20 years of age. One of them is partially sighted. As it can be seen from the Table 3, four of 7 participants, more than half experienced or is still experiencing some sight in their lives. Only 2 participants reported that there is another blind in their families. In addition, participants who do not have any experience in boarding school for blind were four out of seven. This is different from the first 2 categories, where people with experience in boarding school for blinds had more school experience. Their average years of school for blind were 4.2. Their average age was 27.42. The detailed information related to confused perceivers’ category can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3: Demographic Characteristics of Confused Perceivers

Total numbers of confused perceivers	7
Male	4
Female	3
Average age	27.42
Totally blind participants	6
Partially blind participants	1
Participants who have experience school for blind	5
Participants who have experience in boarding school for blind	3
Participants who do not have experience in school for blind	3
Participants who are blind from birth or under 3 year of age	5
Participants who became blind later	2
Participants who experienced decrease on their sight	4
Participants who don’t have any experience of their sight	3
Participants who have other blind members in their family	2
Participants who do not have another blind member in their family	5

4. Negative Perceivers: These perceivers seem more complaining about the consequences of blindness in their life. Although they could be successful to live with their blindness independently to a degree, they think that their blindness prevent them to do further. Emulation to sighted life is more clear compared the other three

categories. The answers of magic pill questions is mostly yes or hopeless. The most important thing which discriminate that group from perceivers with partial affirmers is the current thinking of them about their blindness. Although many partial affirmer participants also reported that they are exposed to discriminatory behaviors, they think that currently, they could manage them and blindness become their identity. However for people who have negative tendencies and confused perceivers, blindness is not their identity but it is a burden they have experience in their lives. In addition, different from first two categories confused perceivers and negative perceivers are less active currently in blind related right based activities.

Actually very few participants fall under this category for comparison. There were only 3 participants. While two of them are totally blind, one of them is partially sighted. There was no sight change in those participants. Only one participant has another blind person in the family. Only one participant had experience in boarding school for blind. While the mean age was 27, the average years in the school for blind were 5.3.

5. Normalizers: This category is similar to the normalizer category of Darling (2003). For those participants, it is undebatable that blindness is a deficit and abnormal. Blind people are slower and abnormal for them. It seems that people in this group are very much under the effect of internalized ableism of Campbell (2009). For them, the normal is sighted life and they have the misfortune. They think that, if they were not blind, they could have an undebatable better life. According to them, blindness cannot have any positive consequences. Thus, the answers of them for magic pill question are certainly yes.

In the sample, there are 4 people who are under this category. Interestingly enough, among those four participants one is partially sighted currently. The other two experienced sight but lost seriously. Although they were blind, their blindness has increased. Only one participant is totally blind from the birth. Only one participant had experience in boarding school for blind and the average school for blind year was only 3.75. The average age was 29.25.

If the affirmers and partial affirmers are considered together, the picture might present a more clear idea. 14 out of 21 participants were totally blind on those two categories. When confused perceivers, negative perceivers and normalizers thought together, it will be understood that only 6 participants out of 14 people were totally blind from the birth. Thus, it seems that degree of sight lost might have an important connection with perception of disability.

The second important factor could be related to experience in school for blinds. On affirmers’ group 10 out of 11 participants had experience in school for blinds. The last remaining one later went to special education for blind people. If the data of affirmers and partial affirmers is viewed together, it can be seen that 17 out of 21 participants had a experience in school for blind. In fact, 26 out of 35 participants had experience in school for blind. Because the number of participants who had not have experience in school for blind before, is very few in terms of this aspect, the data may not be representative to a degree. However, the percentage rates could give a clue. While approximately 81 percent of affirmers and positive perceivers had experience in school for blinds, this percentage decreased to approximately 64.28 percent, which is 9 out of 14 participants on confused perceivers and negative perceivers. The average years spent in school for blinds also confirmed the relative effects of experience in school for blinds. While affirmers and partial affirmers went to a school for blind 5 years as average, for confused perceivers and negative perceivers the average school for blind years become 4.42 years. There is no statistical analysis to measure that whether these numbers have reached to a significant level. Nevertheless, it is possible to observe a consistent difference of experience in school for blinds between positive perceivers and negative perceivers. The demographic characteristics of negative perceivers and normalizers together are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Demographic Characteristics of Negative Perceivers and Normalizers

Total numbers	7
Male	4
Female	3
Average age	28.28
Totally blind participants	5
Partially blind participants	2
Participants who have experience in school for blind	4
Participants who have experience in boarding school for blind	3
Participants who do not have experience in school for blind	3
Participants who are blind from birth or under 3 year of age	6
Participants who became blind later	1
Participants who experienced decrease on their sight	4
Participants who don’t have any experience of their sight	3
Participants who have other blind members in their family	3
Participants who do not have another blind member in their family	4

In the next section, perception categories are stated in detail.

4.2 Presentation of Perception Categories in This Study

4.2.1 Affirmers

The interview reports demonstrated that participants under this category mostly view blindness as methodology, a difference, or a part of their identity. For them blindness did not disable them to do what they want in their life.

Related to methodology issue the consideration of participants is that blindness is something which makes them use different methods to continue their lives. Thus, this theme is called methodology. For instance Osman who is partially sighted and making his PhD in abroad emphasized the methodology part with the following passage:

> "And also, when I was having my master degree on abroad; my perceptions related to being visually disabled changed. I had always lacked something; I thought it stemmed from being blind. But then I realized what ended up being the subject of my gradation thesis; if a visually disabled person is awesome, I mean if one is good at independent life skills, if she can do the ironing or match the colored clothing or have the know-how of how to talk with people; then she is not any different from other people. That was where I realized my problem was not that I was visually disabled; but it was just that I lacked those necesary skills. If I had known how to make use of a cane during this period or if I had been able to go to wherever I wanted or if I had known how to use computer and read Braille Alphabet; it all could have been different. In the end, I got aware that my being blind did not really create any difference as long as I was able to do those things" (Osman, Appendix H.1).

Kadir who lost his sight after 11 years of age and went to a school for blind and is a very active person in blind community is mentioning about the methodology part with this interesting passage:

> "And also, though it may be a common feature for everyone or maybe it's just me but if they tell me that I won't succeed in doing a specific thing; I would try. Because, you'll eventually see if it is true or not when you try. And it is also different when you can't do something because you are blind or you can't do it because you don't know how to. For example, I tried driving a car; frankly it is not anything one cannot do. There's not a big difference between walking on the street and driving a car; it is just about the gap between the distance you cover and the time you spend transferring your walking process into your brain" (Kadir, Appendix H.2).

Participants who emphasize the methodology theme, mostly focused on the point that their blindness can lead them to seek new methods and possibilities to do different things. Thus, they mostly thought that blindness is not the cause of the lack of ability to do, only the cause of use of different methodology As such, they did not blame their blindness for their negative points in their lives.

As Damla clearly emphasized on the following lines, most of the times, rather than their own conceptualization, the perception of other people may be more tiring. Her words confirmed the hypothesis of Mackenzie and Scully (2007) which claimed that perception of nondisabled people about the lives of disabled people is more negative than disabled people themselves. Damla is totally blind and went to the school for blind for 8 years as a non-boarding student.

> "I think it is all about characteristics; and as with every other characteristics; it has different advantages and disadvantages. But, I do think a lot about people's point of view. In fact, what people go through is actually what we all go through; but just because we are blind; they have stereotypes in their minds. Being able to fit in the blind stereotype makes me question things. Sometimes it makes me angry, sometimes it makes me laugh. Sometimes, I show a reaction against it. I mean, I do show a reaction all the time, but

> sometimes it is more like an angry reaction and sometimes it's more on the informative side. Sometimes, I don't care about it but, then I do think a lot more. I even think about it even more for the last few years. My concern is not my own blindness, but people's viewpoint about being blind” (Damla, Appendix H.3).

The other most mentioned theme is identity issue. Many blind people on affirmer category think that their disability as part of their identity. Şahin who is totally blind and took his 8-year education on a school for blind expressed this very well.

> ”I' m a blind person, I've never even dreamed of being a person without any visual disability. It's because I've embraced blindness as part of my identity since my childhood. I guess the feeling of “you'll see things perfectly” thing made accepting blindness easier for me. Yes, I admit; this difference appeared on the surface even in the smallest details; and it hurts even when it is small. Those small details, or I would like to call them thorns, they penetrated into my identity; and I embarked on accepting my blindness; and also getting other people to accept it. That's why I cannot stop imagining myself doing things as the blind person I am. For example, in one of my dreams I set up a commune; and I’m the head of this commune. First, I purchase a piece of land; I produce olives on this land; then I purchase another piece of land with the money I earn from the olives and so on. People living in my commune support me by working on my lands, as workers. Then I offer them to enlarge my olive grove together because we all work for it. And then I get elected as the mayor of the village; and hear people whispering about me like “Look at this guy, he's blind but he has achieved great things.” (Şahin, Appendix H.4).

In the words of Şahin, it is possible to see the total rejection of internal ableism of Campbell (2009). When internal ableism occurred there is an emulation tendency to the normal. Şahin totally rejects this notion.

In this study, the majority of the affirmers conceptualize blindness as a difference and a different characteristic. Actually, positive or negative almost all of the participants see themselves differently but for partial affirmers, this difference does not make them inferior. That is to say, being different for affirmers and partial affirmers does not make them feel deficient.

Raşit was born in 1988 and also has 2 blind sisters. He had 8 year experience in boarding school for blind and summarizes this difference issue very well.

> “ For me, being blind is what makes me different from other people; like the color of my skin; my eyes; my hair or my ethnicity. Since my childhood, I've never considered being blind as a barrier; on the contrary, if someone tells me that I cannot achieve a certain thing just because I'm blind; I struggle even harder. In fact, my family currently tells me that I can't live on my own and I stand up to them and fight against it. I don't think being blind prevents me from doing such things because money does not have a body itself; and blindness originates in the body. It's quite easier to get accepted in the community once you have the money and succeed in leading it to the right channels; and while doing so, you can easily express that blindness is just a difference; and not a deficiency” (Raşit, Appendix H.5).

For Figen, who has a partial sight and has also a blind sister, blindness is not a factor which disables her from what she wants to do.

> “So, now it's like I can already do everything I want. I mean, most of what a sighted person can do. Once I fix the situation with reading, there's nothing in my life of which I feel the lack. Sometimes the people I have just met ask me whether everything would change for the better if I could see; but then I think to myself; what would it change, or to what extent would it change? Would I visit even more places? No I already visit enough places. Would I read more? No, I already read enough. Would I study more? No I can already study if I want.” (Figen, Appendix H.6).

For others, the religious factors affect their perception on a positive manner. Abidin is one of them. He is totally blind and did not continue to his education after primary school.

> “If God has given this to me, no I'm not going to get started on talking about fate; which I would not do at this point because there's such a thing as freewill. There's no way out once we get started to talk about it; but anyway, if I'm going through it; then I should do what I have on head. Do I have a phone or a friend to lead me; or is there a kind of material; or if I have a special skill; I try to make use of them. Maybe I'm good at music; or maybe it's something totally different. We all try hard to make use of them; if not that much actively. The sentiment of patience and gratitude are of primary importance. I've never risen against God as for why I can't see. Yes, I have

> gone through periods of misery; where I have asked myself why it happened to me. However, thank god, our sentiment of patience and gratitude have helped us to keep sane in such situations.” (Abidin, Appendix H.7).

Thus for many participants like Figen, blindness is not a disabling factor. In fact, according to affirmers, let alone negative consequences, blindness lead their life to more positive points. Remziye, a totally blind from birth university student, was one of them emphasizing the positive consequences of blindness:

> “In my opinion, being blind has affected my life in a positive way; because if I were not visually disabled; we would have been living in a village; and maybe I would not even have attended high school. I would not have studied that much if I could see. Because, in a rural setting, nobody really cares about school. Maybe people in the village would have led me to marriage, I don't know. For example, my cousins have graduated from middle school and now she is living in XXX. She started high school, she but had found a decent person to marry even before she graduated. (Laughs.) She insisted on getting married, I wonder if the same thing would also have been the case for me, if could see” (Remziye, Appendix H.8).

For Şahin, blindness affected his personality and made him more active and ambitious.

> “I guess, I would not be that ambitious. I would find a seat between the wheels of society; and would be grounded more easily. I would not put any effort in shaping myself and my future; in that sense being blind has meant a lot to me” (Şahin, Appendix H.9).

Kadir is also the participants who pools attention to personality strength.

> “Charisma is a visual thing, if you know what I mean. Thereby, I guess this is a plus for me. For example, a good many people are coherent with the system; they don't see the faults in it. Or maybe; I'm trying to see things from outside; I mean I'm kind of a person who is a questioner. But again, think of a child studying at a regional boarding middle school. There stands a handsome teacher in a suit; so is the case with women teachers as well. They have their own rooms, own toilets and so on. But I don't see any of those things. I don't have any data apart from their voice and therefore I may be not be that much affected by them” (Kadir, Appendix H.10).

When it comes to the magic pill issue, the most visible theme on affirmers seems habit and fear of starting everything. People fear that, being sighted can change and break their life routines.

Naci was among the participants who refused the magic pill directly. He is totally blind and after primary school he did not go to school for blind at all. Now he is married with a blind person.

> “I don't think about it at all. I guess I would not want. I'm not into it because I don't know what it would bring to me. What would it do to me? I don't have the slightest idea regarding what kind of a setting it would create for me. I don't even know if it would be a plus for me. I don't think so, but I'm not sure about it. I don't want to imply this; there's a certain socially constructed attitude towards blindness. They are kind to the disabled people .It has its own advantages. I'm not talking about if they travel for free; or do not have any fiscal problems. This is not what I mean by advantages. Now, I have a life style; which I constructed myself; and I plan on keeping for some time. I would think in the same way even if I could suddenly see” (Naci, Appendix H.11).

Raşit was responding this question on a more radical way and seeing this situation a conflict with his past.

> “I would set this pill on fire. It's because I don't want to be able to see; I've set my life up on the basis of this fact. This question sounds like the question of “would you want to be blind having had a traffic accident; or would you like to get your eyes probed” asked to someone who is able to see” (Raşit, Appendix H.12).

As it can be seen, the main themes emerging from the reports of the affirmers are methodology and difference, part of identity phenomena, proud of blindness and rejection of cure. For affirmers, the meaning of the blindness is a difference rather than efficiency. Thus, according to them, blindness requires only the use of different methods and those methods are not worse than others. Secondly, for them, blindness is part of their identity and has many contributions to their personality and lives.

Finally, affirmers, mostly tend to reject possible cure of blindness, since it is the part of their personality and characteristics in which they cannot give up suddenly.

4.2.2 Partial Affirmers

In the first analyses, partial affirmers, confused perceivers and negative perceivers were categorized together and were named as confused perceivers. The reason behind this is their mixed ideas and tendencies about their blindness'. It can be said that, the ideas of those participants on those 3 categories are not as clear as affirmers or normalizers. However, while some of them tend to perceive blindness more positively, some of the others have negative tendencies. Some of the others have really mixed ideas and difficult to consider them approaching to positive or negative.

As it comes to partial affirmers, the findings demonstrated that they also express the identity issue like affirmers, but this identity is not a source of pride for them. Due to this fact, they are considered as partial affirmers. In other words they are partly similar to affirmers but in terms of some aspects, they are more inclined to accuse blindness.

Ender, a 55 year-old university graduate, totally blind man maybe the person who expressed identity issue like this example.

> "Well, this is the way I think about it. You know, Catholics don't get divorced once they get married. I have started to consider blindness as my wife. I had to come to terms with living as a blind person. I did so. So, I've never really thought about it. Of course, I've had problems caused by blindness" (Ender, Appendix H.13).

However, as it can be seen in the Ender's words, part of his identity seems not totally positive. Thus, considering Ender as completely affirmer is not possible.

Another similarity between partial affirmers and affirmers are related to a factor issue. Here factors means that seeing blindness concept as a different life condition like many others, such as leaving in a rural area and having high or low socioeconomic status. Both groups sees blindness as only a factor that affect their lives, but for partial affirmers, the impact of that factor is not as positive as affirmers said.

For Yaren, a married university student, blindness is only a factor that may have impacts on her life as much as other factors. “It is a puzzle piece, there has never been a single thing affecting one's life. Supposing that one thing has shaped one's life a bit; there are probably some other things having shaped it even more” (Bahar, Appendix H.14)

Ruşen is also expressing factor related themes both positively and negatively. He conceptualizes blindness as a factor and difference similar to affirmers. However, he sees himself different from other blind people and blindness is not an affirming factor for him. He was born in 1981. He is totally blind. He has one older blind brother and one younger sister. His parents are divorced when he was 12. He went to a school for blind for 8 years. In high school period he left his home and left alone on the streets. He did not go to university. He is still working.

> “The issue of blindness is searching the path of data that I could not realize with reason, or the practicality of distinguishing the colored clothes from the others. These are the cases where blindness becomes a problem for me; that's why I find some practical solutions. Or when I understand that the girl I like does not like me back because I'm blind; I need to deal with my blindness; but in such cases I don't get offended with my disability; I'm not mad at it. Since I've my life shaped on the basis of this fact; it is my best friend. We never get cross with each other. I don't have a memory of rebellion as to why I can't see except for those from my puberty during which I think I was kind of foolish. Generally speaking, this blindness issue is more different than what is perceived by other visually disabled people. I don't have a problem with not being able to see or with others who can't see. I have an intelligence-

> based problem; mind. I'm much smarter than the most of them. They keep on living their lives without not improving themselves; on the excuse of being blind. And, on that very point; we differentiate from each other. I don't think it changes much. Suppose that there are 2 TV sets in front of me, one of them is D-Smart and the other is Digiturk. I can watch whichever channel I want, but some think that they'll not understand what they watch or they need someone else while watching it. This is where all the difference lies, in fact. I understand all that I watch. That's just an example. I go out and sit at a cafe; and order what I want. Sometimes, I spill it on my clothes; and in that case I can visit the toilet and clean it with a napkin; or else I may prefer not cleaning it or doing with somebody else with me" (Ruşen, Appendix H.15).

One of the other common themes of partial affirmers is their success to deal with the problems blindness might bring. On the other hand, this successful dealing strategy does not prevent them to see blindness as a burden both emotionally or intellectually. Most of them are also active in blind organizations. However, different from affirmers, they mostly mentioned the negative effects of their blindness. Ender is one of them. "I experienced the disadvantages of being blind during the time I worked at a pen factory because, you are familiar with all the looks. And afterwards, during my college years..." (Ender, Appendix 16).

Ender is a very active person in blind-related NGOs and he has made many contributions to blind associations. However, as it can be seen, he still perceives blindness as responsible for some negative experiences in his life.

Another mixed perception is comes from Uğur. He was born in 1975. He is totally blind. He is the youngest of 3 siblings. He went to a school for blind for 8 years. Then he finished high school with distance education. After that, he graduated from university. He is still working.

> "Of course, nobody likes being blind; this is not something to be happy about. And it brings along too many difficulties; I'm not going to lie; I think that just because it is not possible for us to do a certain thing does not mean that it is impossible to do it constitutively. But we experience really big difficulties trying to do them; it's the sad fact of life. You may have to try 5 or 10 times to do a certain thing while others need to try just one time. But, on the other

> hand; looking at all the things about blindness, I feel strong; psychologically. It's the case for not only blindness; but also other things in life. Of course, I don't know what an expert would say about it but when I look at myself; I can see that I'm not fragile psychologically; or that I don't have any psychological delicacy. Thus, I don't think that blindness has an offensive effect on me. For example, my friends may feel overly pessimistic; or they may feel that they are one step behind no matter what they do; or what would change if they could do just one thing etc. I never think that way" (Uğur, Appendix H.17).

If the common points are sought on those two people, it can be said that two of them have active right based experiences and two of them are university graduates. Thus, individually, they learned to live independently with their blindness. Nevertheless, they perceive blindness somehow a burden. Establishing similarity between those people and the crusaders of Darling (2003) will not be fair, because those people are still active in blind organizations although they made a good carrier in their occupations. The partial affirmers mentioned the difficulties of blindness emotionally or intellectually but they also reported that they somehow managed to live with blindness and their unhappiness is not the cause of their own perception rather is the cause of disabling barriers they have met.

On some other confused perceivers, it is possible to see the opposite theme of Uğur. For those participants, blindness is not an intellectual deficiency but an emotional burden. Blindness has become the cause of their many emotional frustrations but intellectually they think that blindness could easily be dealt with. Münire is the example of such people. She was born in 1974. She has 6 siblings and three of them are blind. Münire is the second child of her family and the first blind child. She went to a boarding school for blind for five years. After that, she went to a mainstream boarding school for secondary and high school level. Then she graduated from a university and works as a teacher. She is married.

> "Blindness. Well, I don't want to sound too cliché; but in my opinion blindness is a group of obstacles that can be overcome if adequate

> opportunities are provided. However, there is also the fact that even if the social conditions or family settings provide me with good opportunities, I may feel inadequate in most of the things because I am appreciated and promoted too little. For instance, I feel way too inadequate or unskilled when I see you. I feel like I do too little, or when I see people who are older than me like Gültekin Yazgan who has much worse life standards than me but has achieved more. I mean, blindness does not mean inadequacy to me; on the contrary; it means adequacy. But this is the case only if required means have been provided. I could not make my mother smile. For example, I worked for 13 years and all that I earned was theirs. I graduated from the college earlier than all my siblings; I was the first to work at an institution where my social insurance was also covered; I was the one to make their first holiday possible, so on and on. They got the chance to do such things for the first time thanks to my efforts, but my mother was never truly happy just because I was blind. She always thought this way: "She is so beautiful, she gets to do a lot of things BUT..." There was always a But. "You can do it BUT" BUT BUT BUT. Never-ending "buts". I get to observe it around my husband's family as well from time to time; and I guess most of my visually-disabled friends go through it. Unfortunately, these "buts" never seem to finish" (Münire, Appendix H.18)

If people lost their sight later on their life and if they remember their sighted life, the perception of those people about blindness is affected very much from how they can manage their lives after blindness. Like Levent, who lost his sight on his thirties, if they can learn blindness and blind methodologies and provide interactions with other blind people, their perception is not too negative. Despite this positive perception change, they cannot hide their emulations to their sighted lives.

> "The worst thing in life is illiteracy, it's a fact. I think even if a person is disabled; one will get to accomplish anything as long as he improves himself. Also, the conditions under which the disabled lives are tougher; if they are assisted; everything will be fine. That's my opinion. Sometimes when crossing the street, or waiting for the bus to come; I ask people which bus is coming; and they happen to be illiterate. I mean, once I'm on the bus I rarely ask people which way it's heading. So, it is not a problem. Now, if I was able to see; maybe I would not be that active. Now, I have to be active, I have to earn money to buy things. (…) There's one thing I miss. On Sundays, my wife would prepare the breakfast, I would go buy some bread and then read the newspaper. This is what I miss. Also, I miss the seaside. I'm very fond of living on flatlands or on mountains. I miss the flatlands. I mean, walking around the flatlands. In fact, I visit there. I visit Konya every year. My visitors come along, I show them the flatlands. Even on highlands, where

> there are earth roads, I could take them easily from one place to another on a footway. All these rocks are not going to disappear from my mind easily. Of course, there are some things I miss dearly, but there's nothing to do” (Levent, Appendix H.19).

As a result, for partial affirmers, blindness is only a factor, and like many other factors it might have impacts on their lives. In addition, for some of them, blindness is part of their identity. In terms of those aspects, their approaches are similar to affirmers. Nevertheless, due to some disabling conditions on their lives, they tend to accuse their blindness intellectually or emotionally.

4.2.3 Confused Perceivers

Actually the attitudes of confused perceivers and partial affirmers are similar in terms of many aspects. The main factor which makes those two groups distinct is their main tendency. The confused perceivers are not sure if their blindness made their lives better or worse. They tried to evaluate it more realistically.

According to Polat, who is totally blind from birth, blindness is the opposite of being sighted for a sighted person, but for him it is only reality of his life. There was no other option. Thus, blindness has become the part of his characteristics and identity.

> “Actually, blindness means nothing to me. Because, I don't know anything about sightedness since I was born this way I don't have a concept of dark or light. Blindness is the exact opposite of sightedness, that's what the sighted people say. So, I understand that I'm blind when I drop something off and can't find it but if I say “I can't see because I'm blind” , that's a different thing. If you think, Brother Çetin can't see at his workplace either? He can't boil an egg, even if he is able to see. I can brew tea, but he can't. Hence, I don't really have the perception of blindness. This is life, for me. I was born this way. I was this way when I first learnt how to walk. I would fall into what we call “terslik” when I was 3 or 4; hollows of 2 metres into which animal manure is

> thrown. Then I learnt how not to fall into them. I learned that I should not go this way. So, that's the way I learnt the life. Thus, there's no such concept as blindness for me. I really don't know. It means nothing to me" (Polat, Appendix H.20).

For Deniz, who has a very active life in blind-related NGO, blindness is actually a deficit. Deniz have become blind after 6 years of age.

> "Therefore, I think this way: you can tell anything to the blind; but you can't never tell them what the color is. There are for sure some other pleasures in life apart from that of "a color"; but the pleasure of feeling a color; how blue the sea is. I know it, I know the feeling and there's no way that you can tell it to other people. That's why I think you can tell anything to everyone; but not the color to the blind. Thus some blind people, some blind writers in fact, are weak at figuration. Those called the best writers cannot portray things" (Deniz, Appendix H.21).

On the other hand, Deniz is responding the magic pill question with following way:

> "I have not thought about it at all. Sometimes, people around me on the streets tell me that 'go to a doctor, maybe some type of cure can be possible.' I do not do anything about it except passing over them by saying that maybe I will go. I think I was in high school when the last time I went to a doctor. For me, there is no wish of seeing again or I do not say I wish I would not be blind. When I first lost my sight in my 7-8 years of age, I thought that it is a something temporary or it would heal until I go to my village but it did not. No, I did not think about any cure possibility, I do not have any expectation, think, or hope of seeing again and I do not know what would happen if I see again" (Deniz, Appendix H.22).

Hence, for both Polat and Deniz, blindness cannot be evaluated as positive or negative. It is only part of their lives, but different from affirmers and partial affirmers it is not the part of their identity. Here, it should be reminded that both Polat and Deniz have very active NGO lives, but this activity did not make them more positive to their blindness.

Çiler, another totally blind confused perceiver, who went to a school for blinds want to become sighted due to curiosity and emulation.

> “Engin: One last question. If there existed a pill to open up your eyes; what would you think of it?”
> Çiler: Such a tough question. I mean, there are probably too few people who can say “no” to this question. Those who internalize or embrace it most must have been curious about it.
> Engin: What are you curious about? What would you like to do if you were able to see? What do you long for?
> Çiler: I have things to wonder. For example, the sunrise. Because I'm a nocturnal person, I like to stay awake till morning. My sleep schedule is kind unsettled. I'm really curious about such times, about the scene during the sun rise. It's not that I'm infatuated with it; but sometimes I happen to think about it. I wonder what it feels like to have an eye contact. The moment itself, the emotions. And I can't say that I'm curious about colors; because that's how I started my life. Going from one place to another or pouring tea; that's how I have shaped my life. I mean, since I don't know what a difference it would create or what it is like; I can't say I would like to take the pill. But if it was real, I would probably consider taking it. It's not easy for me to start “seeing” things all of a sudden. I'm not kind of a person who can let things go too easily; but anyway I would not say no either. I'm content with my life this way too. No problem” (Çiler, Appendix H.23).

As it can be seen, she on the one hand have some wish and curiosity to sighted life, on the other hand, she is familiar with blind life and afraid of change.

There are also partially sighted people whose sight decreased or become blind later in their lives among confused participants. For those people, the effect of this transition can be clearly seen and create confusion. Rıza is one of those participants. He was born in 1985 and starts to lose his sight when he was 22 years old in 2007.

He has two older brothers but they live in out of his city. 7 years later he starts working again. He is living in a middle-sized city.

> “So, after you have asked this to me; I've drawn a vertical line in the middle of the darkness in my mind. Left side is for the pros and the right side is for the cons. How can I put it, it's a tie. Because, there're some certain things that I remember from the times that I could see; sometimes it's even better if you

> can't see. But, the only thing that wears me away is to be dependent on other people. And it is not like something due to a personal ambition or so. It is not like I don't need anybody or I'm good on my own. But thinking more empathetically; why should I be a burden for other people. Okay, people are fine with it but. Anyway” (Rıza, Appendix H.24).

In the words of Rüya, more negative sides of blindness can be seen compared to partial affirmers. She was born in 1973. She has one sibling but 16 years younger than her. One of her eyes had some sight until she was a third grader. Then she has become totally blind. She went to boarding school for blind after secondary school level. She also went to a rehabilitation center. She is university graduate and still working.

> “To me, blindness was meant not being able to see with your own eyes. I mean, brain can see but eyes can't. You can't see the objects but the brain can perceive everything; I can even simplify as much to call it a failure of an organ. Because, for me, what is important is not being blind but living as a blind person. Living without perceiving blindness as a challenge; or overcoming the challenges just like normal people do. (…) Yes, that was my point because I'd like to have life that is freer; I would like to hop on my car and go wherever I want. It's not what I long for all the time, but the lives of the sighted might be slightly easier than ours. Our expenses are more than theirs; both in a fiscal and spiritual way; but others can achieve things more easily. (…) I'd be at the top of my profession if I was able to see, I could get the highest positions. I could have a more quality life; my life would be more colorful” (Rüya, Appendix H.25).

When the words of Rıza and Rüya are considered, it can be concluded that their partial sight one time in their lives, made them confused and caused them to accuse their blindness in terms of dependency or not being able to do something they want. However, as it will be seen later, their perceptions are still changing since they are becoming more familiar with blindness and blind abilities. Thus, actually, for confused perceivers their perception could be different if they would be interviewed five years later since the perception of participants do not remain stable and various factors can affect and change this perception.

Zeytin is one of those participants whose blindness perception has not become stable yet. She is totally blind. She was born in 1992 and a university student. She has one younger blind brother.

> “Engin: I will put it this way, is there anything that you can't do because you are blind? Or anything that you'd like to do otherwise?
> Zeytin: (Smiles) Not being able to walk on the pavements. I'd like to walk easily; or run. Driving a car, riding a bicycle. I'd like to do all of them, but not with a partner, on my own” (Zeytin, Appendix H.26).

She had some emulation to sighted life, but her motives for this are related to some environmental factors that disable her.

Güven is another person who is in the middle of perception change period. Thus, his blind perception has both positive and negative sides. He was born in 1993. His day sight enables him to read Inc print materials and travel without cane. But his sight is decreasing. He has 3 siblings. He did not go to a special school and met other blind people on university. He is still university student. He first met with blind people in his university life.

> “I have this identity of blindness; it reflects upon most of my life. From the cone I hold in my hand, to the way I use my mobile phone. I'm not making it either a complex or a supra-identity. But, I don't deny my sub-identity either. And it's the case in the neccesary parts of my life” (Güven, Appendix H.27).

Although he says those about his blindness, when it comes to magic pill issue, his answers represents his emulation and his not ability to do some things due to blindness.

> “Engin: I ask this question all the time, if you knew that you could be cured

> and be able to see one day; how would you react to it?
> Güven: I would embrace the opportunity. I would like to be able to see, I've never denied that. I'd do what I want to do; and it would be fine. I would realize what I could not so far. I would take the opportunity, if it was possible" (Güven, Appendix H.28).

To sum up, confused participants can be considered as more negative than affirmers and partial affirmers. Some of them are more motivated to take a magic pill to get rid of blindness either due to curiosity or because of some environmental factors. In addition, they seem in the middle of perception formation. The blindness perception of some confused perceivers has not clearly formed yet, because they either lost their sight later in their lives, or they have not experienced different conditions which make them thing about their blindness more. For some others who are very active on NGO life, blindness does not contribute them for their active lives and is not the part of their identity.

4.2.4 Negative Perceivers

3 participants have been detected as negative perceivers. Actually those people were the part of confused perceivers in the first analysis but they tended to perceive their blindness more negatively, compared to partial affirmers and confused perceivers. Their perspective is closer to medical approach. For them being sighted could make their lives better. For Çağla, who is also close to confused perceiver, being sighted is a necessary factor for child rearing. She lost her sight in three years of age. She lived with her uncles and her grandfathers.

She went to boarding school for blind for 8 years. She graduated of high school and is a student in a distance university education. She is also working and living in a small city. She reported many discriminatory attitudes from her family and job environment. “I would be content with partial sightedness; but not completely. And that's not for I'm considering my own benefits but those of my children in the future; so that I could be more efficient for them” (Çağla, Appendix H.29).

Lütfü is another negative perceiver. Probably, he characterizes this category most. For him, if he had not been blind, his life could have been more meaningful. He was born in 1974 as a fourth child out of 5. His oldest sister and his mother are also blind. They have some degree of sight. He can read some big letters. Until 17 years of age, he did not know Turkish, after that, they migrated to a city. Then he went to a rehabilitation center. After that, he finished his secondary school and high school with distance education. Then he finished a university and he is on last year of another university. He is also working.

> “Lütfü: Well, it affects me a lot. If I was able to see, maybe I would be in a much better condition, financially. Or, I'd be doing even worse because the 2 options were the cases for me. My brother used to run a medical company and he was quite good at it. But over time, he went bankrupt just because he did not know-how enough. Thus, the two options were the cases for him. Even now, during my daily life it causes some problems to me; like going on a bus or something.”
> Engin: So, you think that you'd do different things if you were able to see?
> Lütfü: I'd work at my own company; and I think I have been able to do fairly good, but unfortunately being blind prevented me from doing such things. For example, while I was working with my brother our business was good; I was not doing anything actively; but mentally I was fine. Like giving advices. After that we set up our business and settled in İstanbul; he was married with children; so he did not feel the need to show concern for the job. Now, the situation is pretty bad” (Lütfü, Appendix H.30).

For him, taking magic pill would not change his life since it is too late now.

“Engin: So, what would you do if you knew there was a pill to open up your eyes?

Lütfü: If there was, I don't know, I don't know how I'd react. My productive stages in life are now over" (Lütfü, Appendix H.31).

Dursun is another person who is categorized as negative perceiver. Actually his words seem very positive, however, his following words showed his tendency to repress his emulating emotions about sighted life. He was born in 1986. His family has 7 children. Dursun is the only male of his family. His father died before Dursun went to primary school. Dursun went to a boarding school for blind for 8 years then went to a mainstream boarding high school. Then, he started to work. He did not go to a university.

> "I was fond of football, when I was a child. I aspired to be a football player. Nevertheless, I did not really worry about it. Now, there's nothing that I long for, that I wish I could do. Even when going from one place to another is hard; but you somehow find a way to go anywhere. In the end it all comes to this, and I've really experienced it, regretting for anything makes you unhappy. For instance, if I said "i wish I could see so that I could drive a car", I would make myself unhappy every time I was around someone who could drive a car. I know myself, my own psychology. Or, every time I wanted to try driving a car and failed; or could not drive it as well as I wanted; I would be disappointed and upset. So, fortunately. I don't think this way since I know that if I bewail too much for something, I would be unhappy" (Dursun, Appendix H.32).

The factor which makes negative perceivers different from other 3 categories can be considered as their emulation tendency. For negative perceivers like the medical model, the normal and the ideal thing is becoming sighted. Their suffering in their lives derives mostly from their blindness. However, they still believe that blind people can do something with their blindness. Lütfü for instance, has become very active in a local blind organization after he went to rehabilitation center. Çağla had become very successful in her mainstream high school. For Dursun, being blind did not disable him to do many things in his life. Thus, for negative perceivers, the normal thing is being sighted but they do not give up doing something to deal with their blindness. In addition, getting rid of blindness is not their main motive although they wish.

4.2.5 Normalizers

For blind participants who can be defined as normalizers like Darling (2003), their wish of being sighted and sighted life is beyond an emotional emulation. Their main difference from confused and negative perceivers is their inferior conceptualization of blindness both intellectually and emotionally. The normalization typology of Darling (2003) is very similar to those people. According to them, blindness is absolutely a deficiency and an abnormality. Thus, their tendencies fall into the medical model category. For them it is impossible to be as normal as a sighted person, and their blindness is one of the main responsible reasons behind their bad experiences. The answers of these participants to the magic pill question are undebatable: “certainly yes”.

Related to the meaning of blindness, one of the most important themes for normalizers is restriction. Oya is a good example for this perception.

She is 29 years old. . She also has a blind sister 8 years younger than her. She is partially sighted. She can read the large print materials. She did not go to a special school during her educational life. She is working as a teacher now.

> ”Blindness, in my opinion, means having to think twice before doing something quite usual like driving a car. I have to consider if there will be any stairs when going to somewhere. For example, if you are late for anywhere just as everyone are; you just rush or run. And somehow catch up on it; but if you don't know where you are going you can't run. You have to think twice” (Oya, Appendix H.33).

Of course, one of the most negative impacts of blindness is dependency for negative perceivers. Oya is summarizing this very well.

> “If I was able to see, I would not be a music teacher for sure. If I weren't blind and had the same mental capacity as I do now; I would be doing a way different profession; I would probably be a doctor. I would participate in many different things. For instance, I would love to be a folk dancer. Or ride a horse. I've never walked away to somewhere unknown. Like, going to the seaside in Istanbul or anywhere else. Going to shopping on my own. Needless to say, these are just small details.” (Oya, Appendix H.34).

Affirmers, partial affirmers, confused perceivers, negative perceivers, or normalizers, almost all of the participants mentioned driving. It seems that driving a car is the symbol of dependency or independency. For Zeliha, this became the symbol of her emulation to sighted life.

She is 31 years old. She has 2 younger siblings: one sighted brother and one blind sister. She went to a school for blind for five years, and then she went to mainstream schools. She is a university graduate and working in a private company.

> “It's going to be a bit weird; but we think about it from time to time. I will put it this way; I would drive a car if I were not blind. Not being able to drive a car upsets me. Yes, you can hear me talking about “Zeliha and her non-existent car.” I think about things related to having a car; like forgetting something back in the car. Not having a car drives me crazy (Laughs.). Also, there are some other things. Maybe, I would have a more active life. I would play the game fast; now there're some things that upset me but this car thing is the most upsetting one for me. And for the pros, I don't know if there's any” (Zeliha, Appendix H.35).

Probably, Burhan was the participant who characterizes the main features of normalizers the most.

He is 31 years old. He is the only child of his family. His loss of sight started when he was in the fifth class at primary school. With secondary school the functional decrease started but the most important functional loss became clear when he is a university student. Thus he divides his life as blind and sighted B/A. After his university life, he did not work for approximately ten years. Now he has started to work. He lives in a big city.

For Burhan blindness is a functional deficiency:

> “For me, blindness means a dysfunction of a limb; not an inner loss. Very different things may happen in life; maybe health-related maybe something else. There may be some unlucky points for you and some lucky ones; which is kind of unlucky in its own way. It's not something you can't get over or be afraid of. You never think of it this way. But I know, what I would lose, what would disappear from my life. And I think it's a deficiency for me. It's like losing your arm; but you lose your sightedness. Maybe 90% of it, 99% of it or completely. But of course, we're lucky we can make up for most of our potential; but in any case “other” people can see, can run and can go to places. We can go to places as well; but without seeing them. In different ways, in a slower and a harder way. This is a factor that limits our chance of competition. But it is not any different from any other characteristics relating to the humane side of a person, their identity or points shaping their identity. That's to say; being blind neither makes you more of a good person, or a worse person. You still stay the same; not imperfect in humaneness. But functionally, you are deprived of sightedness in the outside world, your inner world, or let’s say, your daily life. Reading, transportation or whatever. You can make up for them somehow; if you try really hard, you can even navigate a plane (Laughs.), remember those debates (both of them laugh); but you can never see the face of your loved one. Maybe you can feel it if you touch; but it's a different thing” (Burhan, Appendix H.36).

According to him, first of all blind people should accept their deficiencies and should know that they will never be like a normal people.

> “For example, “we can do anything; we have are no different from you; or why you are thinking of us that way” I consider them as people who are resentful or acting out of a hidden complex. Maybe they're not doing so maliciously; but I think stems from. Well… for example, I have this luck: I was able to see for a period of time; and now I can't see that well; so as a person who can't see “that” well; it's like I've crossed a border and it is like I've been to all sides. Hence, I know how people consider this situation; been there done that. And now, I know the low-down of the whole thing; I know how it feels to be blind. I know the things that I can do; and the things I can't.

> But the people who have never been able to see may not get the difference that easily; you somehow can't get the chance to see the things from a different angle. And those, who are sighted, can't understand it fully either. And it's fair to say that there's a kind of a communication gap between the society and the visually disabled part. And I can't think of anything to solve this problem; but I don't think we're right in asking for too many things from the society. Of course, humanely speaking, everybody should be considered equal; and you just can't justify thinking otherwise; but if you are talking about making everything economically-wise; then you have to consider all the opportunities; economy and such; then you have to think about extremely poor people. Once you are limited in your opportunities; and of course that's the idealized version, and are presented with the choices; then we're not actually disabled; you're the ones who are disabling us. No, (ironically laughs) You have experienced a misfortune; and now you can't see and you're somewhat differentiated from the normal fraction of the society. And you've become unable to realize some certain things. Yes, some solutions can be found; and definitely should be found. And it's not realistic to blame the society for small details; just because a certain thing has not been found. Of course, you can dream of a world like this where everything is reachable; and it would be perfect. But, it's just a utopia; not realistic at all. Not in anywhere; not in a rich country. You can't make everything accessible" (Burhan, Appendix H.37).

Faruk is one of the participants who are emphasizing the functional restrictions of blindness.

He is 28 years old. He is the youngest child of his family and has one sister and one brother both of who are sighted. He had partial sight until end of secondary school then he lost some of them and regained some of them. He went to a school for blind without boarding for 8 years. He is a university graduate and working currently. He lives in a big city. He has a very active life in blind-related NGO. But it seems that the change in sight degree in his life is still affecting his perception negatively.

For him if he was not a blind person, he would not continue to his education but he would be happier.

> "Faruk: Continuing to do my father's profession; or returning to the village; having 30 or 40 chickens, 10-15 ox and some geese. And also, I don't like

> brand new tractors; I prefer having an old one like mfl165, the growling one. That's my dream. That's to say; I would not attend college. Because when you're blind; deny it or not, the number of professions you can take diminishes. So, now, I can't just go and become a driver.
> Engin: So, you're attending the college out of pure obligation?
> Faruk: Yes. I like my department though but I would not attend the school if I were able to see" (Faruk, Appendix H.38).

According to him, he had to use cane but functional limitations may be suffering.

> "Faruk: Yes. Because, I'm already used to being blind. And yes, sometimes I hate this cane. I don't like holding it in my hands; I'd prefer walking bare hands. But in the end, are we dependent on it? The answer is yes; until a new technology or any other method will be discovered. So, I'm used to being blind. But apart from being blind; not being able to read all these signboards is painful. Another example is; one time I was on the bus going to the bus, a friend of mine was also on the bus we did not realize it till we reached the xxx point." (Faruk, Appendix H.39).

Here, in the words of Burhan, Faruk, Zeliha and Oya a common theme has emerged: Internalized ableism. For those four participants, blindness is a deficiency and their aim is to be closer to normality as much as possible. Thus, mentioning a positive consequence of blindness cannot be the case.

4.2.6 Some Concluding Words about Perception Tendencies

To sum up, related to the perception of blindness, 3 main categories can be made. For people who perceive blindness positively, it is a methodology, part of identity, differences or characteristics like an eye color. For them, blindness is not the main reason responsible for their negative experiences. Participants with positive tendencies can be divided into two categories as affirmers and partial affirmers. Affirmers beyond partial affirmers, think that their blindness could bring advantages in their lives. Mostly, they do not think that their blindness has affected their lives negatively. In contrast to this, being blind people has provided more positive experiences in their lives.

Although partial affirmers also mention advantages, they also emphasize the negative consequences of their blindness. Thus, their desire to being sighted with a magic pill is not too intensive but stronger than affirmers.

For confused perceivers, blindness somehow has negative impacts on their lives, but they have learned to deal with and live with blindness. For some of them, intellectually or emotionally, blindness creates a deficiency and they are more willing to take the pill to be sighted compared to partial affirmers. Nevertheless, wish of sight is not the center of their lives. For some others, as they are too young, they do not have a mature idea about positive or negative impacts of blindness.

Participants with negative tendencies can be also divided into two categories as negative perceivers and normalizers. For negative perceivers, the negative consequences of their blindness are more at the center of their lives. Emotionally or intellectually, they mentioned discriminations because of their blindness. Taking a pill is more motivating for them but still it is not at the center of their life. For them, becoming sighted would be better, but this is not their main aim on their lives. The impact of internalized ableism is more compared to other three categories.

According to normalizers, it is undebatable that blindness is a deficiency and the normal state is being sighted. For them, blindness leads their life negatively, and makes them more dependent and restricted. Except for one participant, normalizers are not active in blind organization.

Of course, many other categories and sub categories could be inferred from the interview texts, but such kind of approach is going to lead one to look the affecting factors in a more structured manner in following passages.

4.3 Independence or Dependence? That is the Question

One of the research questions of the study is to determine a main factor which can influence perception tendencies. After all transcripts were studied after each domain and the relation between domains are analyzed, a common factor has been observed in the word of almost all participants. This factor is independence. In the context of the study, independence refers to making various daily activities without the help of others. Those activities can be going somewhere alone, using computer, studying, reading a book, doing housework, and having employment equal with others. The finding indicated that when people felt successful to make these of activities alone, their perception of disability becomes more positive. On the other hand, when they feel that they are not able to make such activities as they want, this decreased their positive perceptions and caused them to blame their blindness as a source of failure.

During the interviews, many factors emerged as possible facilitators or barriers influencing their perception on disability. While for some people, the school for blind atmosphere could be more important, for others, family or peer relations played crucial role in their lives and identity development. However, among those factors, a key factor more or less affected people’s perception of their disabilities: the issue of dependency or independency. The positivity or negativity of perception of disability is mostly determined by the degree the independence need’s satisfaction. Almost every participant emphasized or talked about the importance of doing something on their own. For some of them, independence means using cane and independently going from one place to another place, for others, it is the use of computer and reading a book without needing someone else. The tools may change from person to person, but the purpose is very similar: ability to do something without the help of sighted people. If one can feel successful about one's effort, perception of disability goes to a more positive side. If one feels restricted, one mostly sees disability as the cause of that restriction or dependency.

Related to meaning or consequence of disability, almost every participant who has a tendency to negative perception or confused, was conceptualizing blindness as dependence, restriction or limitation. They were using different words, but saying the similar points.

For instance, Oya, categorized as normalizer on threating, who could make interactions with other blind people later in her life accused blindness for her selections and says: "I'm sure I would have a greater circle. At least, I would have chosen my spouse out of my preference, not obligation" (Oya, Appendix H.40).

For Lütfü, who had a partial sight and again made interactions with other blinds later, blindness has affected his life negatively. He was labeled as negative perceiver.

> "Well, it affects me a lot. If I was able to see, maybe I would be in a much better condition, financially. Or, I would be doing even worse because the 2 options were case for me. My brother used to run a medical company and he was quite good at it. But over time, he went bankrupt just because he did not know-how. Thus, the two options were the case for him. Even now, during my daily life it causes some problems to me; like going on a bus or something."(….) I would work at my own company; and I think I was able to do fairly good, but unfortunately being blind prevented me from doing such things" (Lütfü, Appendix H.41).

For the most of confused perceivers, again the need of independence or dissatisfaction could be observed. Rıza is one of them. He lost his sight during his twenties. For him the most difficult part of blindness is depending on others:

> “But, the only thing that wears me out is to be dependent on other people. And it is not like something due to a personal ambition or so. It is not like I don't need anybody or I'm good on my own. But thinking more empathetically; why should I be a burden for other people. Okay, people are fine with it but. Anyway” (Rıza, Appendix H.42).

Here it should be added that Rıza still has difficulty on mobility orientation. He says that: “I'm not sure; but I don't think I would use my cane to go from one place to another in the city where I live as long as I was not in a really bad situation” (Rıza, Appendix H.43).

As it can be seen, Rıza still has problems about mobility orientation and this caused dissatisfaction of the independence need.

For Dursun, who had 8-year experience in boarding school for blind, freedom is very important:

> ”Well, Mr. Engin, freedom is such a thing that naming it comes from one's disposition. Those, who are libertarian and claim that they would not like to be with anyone else, are probably lying. You're filled with a feeling of relief when you are free” (Dursun, Appendix H.44).

On the other hand, Dursun tried to hide his feelings about independence when it comes to driving issue thus he was categorized as negative perceiver.

> “Now, there's nothing that I long for, that I wish I could do. Even when going from one place to another is hard; but you somehow find a way to go anywhere. In the end it all comes to this, and I've really experienced it, regretting for anything makes you unhappy. For instance, if I said “I wish I could see so that I could drive a car., I would make myself unhappy every

> time I was around someone who could drive a car. I know myself, my own psychology. Or, every time I wanted to try driving a car and failed; or could not drive it as well as I wanted; I would be disappointed and upset. So, fortunately. I don't think this way since I know that if I bewail too much for something, I would be unhappy" (Dursun, Appendix H.45).

One of the confused participants Rüya, who lost her sight totally at the end of primary school, is saying that, if she were sighted she would have been more independent.

> "Yes, that was my point because I'd like to have a more free life; I would like to hop on my car and go wherever I want. It's not what I long for all the time, but the lives of the sighted might be slightly easier than ours. Our expenses are more than theirs; both in a fiscal and spiritual way; but others can achieve things more easily" (Rüya, Appendix H.46).

As mentioned above, the normalizer participant Zeliha was also emphasizing the similarity between freedom and driving. Actually almost all participants mentioned about their emulation to drive a car. The meaning of driving is the symbol of independence for them.

When the approach of affirmers and partial affirmers are analyzed, it can be seen that their independence motive mostly emerged in times, where the possible perception shifts from negative to positive occurred. In some of participants the cane experience has become a turning point.

Damla is one of them and she was categorized her as an affirmer. She was born in 1983. She is almost totally blind and she went to a school for blind 8 years. However, she continued to her education as a day pupil way. She conceptualizes blindness as a difference.

> ”Yes, I had this idea that I'm F-I-F-T-E-E-N years old, it's not possible for a cane to protect me or take me to places if I can't protect myself. I thought this way till I started college. In fact, I wanted to study at a boarding school during high school as well. I earned the right to study at a school in İstanbul, with a scholarship. However, since the school was in İstanbul and my parents would not move to İstanbul with me; they did not let me attend the school. Since this time- my childhood- I've always wanted to be independent, but there were just too many things involved. Like the concern of having a cane; my father etc. I started to condition myself into attending the school because that was what I could not do during high school. First, I moved into a dormitory because I could not just have my own apartment at first. For the first year six of us who were studying psychology were put in the same room, which was a good thing. In Ege University, there's a division that you either attend school early in the morning or in the afternoon. One of my roommates attended the school in the afternoon just like I did. We went to school together but just because we were already roommates; like we would not hang out after the school finished. Then, one day, she didn’t show up for the school. I don't remember it precisely but I guess she had something else to do. Then I remember having told myself that I might as well not go to school that day; but I was unable to bring myself to accept it. “When you come home in the evening, they will understand that you have not attended the classes today and they will know that it is just because you did not have a friend to accompany you. How can you accept that Damla?” I could not accept it, indeed. I grabbed my cane and realized that walking on these roads with someone else was not instructive at all; so I had to ask people on my way if I were on the right road. (Laughs.). Sometimes they replied yes; sometimes they told me to turn to a certain direction. On my way, I ran into three guys and they were also heading to the Foreign Languages Faculty. They offered me to take their arm, and I, fortunately declined the request. Otherwise, I would not learn how to go there. We had a chat all the way to the school. So, at the end, I both arrived at my destination and was relieved thanks to the conversation we had. I was on my own for the first half of the road; and for the rest they were with me. And that's when I realized that I had the potential to succeed in it. But of course, I did not directly jump into going there on my own; I preferred to go there with someone else for some time; but meanwhile I also reminded myself that If I can't do it now, I will never do. It's mostly related to not being able to bring myself to it. I could not bring myself to having the help of others to go to a certain place. That's why I learnt how to use a cane” (Damla, Appendix H.47).

Many affirmers and partial affirmers like Damla, mentioned about their cane experiences for their acquisition step of independence.

For some other participants perception shift occurred with the help of computers and doing their lectures independently. Figen is one of them. For her, after she was able to study herself, her perception also changed. She was categorized as an affirmer.

She went to a boarding school for blind until her 7th class. She has little sight on her right eye but she uses Braille. She has 4 other siblings and one of her older sister is also blind. In the interview phase, she was as a senior in university. Now she is working and doing her masters. For Figen blindness is not a deficiency.

> "I had this problem: I had never used a narrator in English. I only had it in Turkish. After I finished preparatory class, I really suffered from this. Since we had small work papers during preparatory class; I did not really feel the need to have a narrator. But during my first year; I studied mostly assistant-oriented. Let's call my assistant for the first XX; that was with whom I always studied. For the second year; it was YYY. And then I attended summer school and I always studied with my assistant again. For the first term of the second year, I had a spesific class which was impossible to study with someone else because you had to read like 80-90 pages per week; and you had to write a reflection paper afterwards. My GPA was around 3.0; but nevertheless I had no idea what to do. Slowly, I started to read the pages on my own. And, for this term, I studied with my assistant only for one class. Because, it was a visual class and it's better if someone else explains the examples. But back then, I was really dependent on the assistants; and I started to get rid of it during my second year. And during the second year, I remember having sent my homework to a classmate just in case I could not do it properly. That was such a stressful term, but now I'm quite relieved. That was one painful period. For the summer period of the second year, I was good to go on my own. I started to gain self-confidence, and by the time I was a 3rd grade student I was mostly independent. My second year was really tough, but now I would study with the assistants only for one or two classes" (Figen, Appendix H.48).

For Lemi, who lost his sight after 50 years of age, reading a book became the symbol of independence and made big contribution to his perception change to a partial affirmer.

> "I have listened the speech of Mr. Kerim and at that time the familiarity of computer has developed. He set up Jaws and I started to use that. In the meantime, xxx came from Braille Technical and also the translations to Turkish came. The translations came but I do not know any foreign languages. That is the thing that I have suffered the most but I could not learn.

> Even though I conditioned myself, like some people I have the difficulty of learning a new language. We continued with computer since then. (….) I became a member of XXX community. For instance, I know YYY and it is our common point because s/he also became a member later on. When s/he was reprehending everyone, s/he also reprehended me and then we talked etc. so that we became friends. We were calling each other and also sending e-mails and communicate from time to time. It happened like that, I said I am from old ones and I know writing a letter very well etc. then s/he wrote a letter to me and our friendship is established. Generally, I read almost the every book about let say that since from Reforms, the history of republic and history of Ottoman Republic and the books about Atatürk in 13 years" (Lemi, Appendix H.49).

Actually, the impact of assistive technologies for blind, the existence of blind e-mailing groups and chat rooms played a very important role on perception shift and strengthening of interrelation of blind people to each other. This topic will be touched upon later in more detail.

For Güven, the independent living skills of his other blind friends have become a motivator for his independence. And after university his perception started to change from a negative point of view to more positive one. He is in the middle of that perception shift now.

He is 22 year-old partially sighted university student. As he did not go to any blind special school, he met with other blind students in university and this has changed his life and perception of blindness.

> "Now, I am asking myself how did I walked all along that halls but I want to digress that I did not have a cane in my hand. At the first periods of preparation year, I overcame my prejudice about blindness and I started to take the cane and computer to my hand. The main reason was that the lives of my other friends who are not sighted but used cane and jaws were in a better position than my life. Great minds think alike; I mean I have to accept that whether I would continue to lose my self-confidence and not go out at nights or I would use a cane. I consider what the worse is whether holding a cane or not going out at nights and hitting several places. Anyway, after a while a see that it is not something this decreases the self-confidence by experiencing it" (Güven, Appendix H.50).

To sum up, for affirmers and partial affirmers, it is possible to find a point where they succeeded to satisfy their need of independence. For some participants, this happened with the cane experience. For others, it occurred after they started to use a computer and were able to access public information, lecture materials and books.

Maybe for most of the participants, coming together with other blind peers through a face to face interaction or internet have paved the way to independence.

For negative perceivers, normalizers or people who have mixed tendencies, it seems that satisfaction of independence is not completed as much as partial affirmers. They think that they cannot get rid of the limitations and restrictions due to blindness.

On following headings, the variety of factors that make some people more independent or more dependent like family, blind special schools, mainstream schools and peers are going to be studied. Later, issue of the perception shift and found turning points where possible perception shifts occurred will be reanalyzed.

4.4 The Impact of Experiences of Schools for Blind

As mentioned in the methodology chapter, most of the participants had experience in school for blinds. While a lot of them went to a school for blinds for 8 years, in their primary and secondary school life, some of them had five years in school for blinds. Some participants only went to secondary school for three years and some others completed three or four years in primary school for blinds. The influences of those segregated schools on participants cannot be denied. In addition, as most of the participants were boarding students in school for blinds, the impact of that atmosphere would increase more. Hence, one of the main research questions of this study is to learn the influences of school for blinds on participants.

In this section of the chapter, the impact of school for blinds is covered with various aspects. Since most of the participants were boarding students, first of all, the first day traumatic experiences of them will be focused. Then, family atmospheres of students and their relation with the adaptation to school for blinds will be discussed. After that discussion, the negative effects of blind segregated schools will be explained. Then, the positive effects of school for blinds will be also mentioned and the interrelation and informal learning atmosphere will be touched upon. In addition, the perception of participants about the educational quality of school for blinds will be also summarized. The section will be ended with the some concluding words and new suggested roles of school for blinds discussion.

4.4.1 First Day Traumatic Experiences

As summarized in the methodology part, most of the participants had experience in school for blinds in their education lives. 26 of them went to a school for blind either until eighth or fifth grade. Although currently, new generation school for blind students now study without boarding, most of the participants went to school for blind as boarding students and most of them have come to those schools from other cities. Thus, they spent most of their times, their days and nights in boarding school in a year. Hence, the effect of school for blinds was beyond the effect of any ordinary school. For this reason, various mixed effects of boarding segregated schools for blind on the participants could be observed.

First of all, beginning to this topic by mentioning about the influences of first days on boarding schools would be useful. Those first days are times where people first feel the separation trauma and feel the segregation. Many of them talked about their difficult experiences. One of the affirmer participant Asuman remembered those traumatic days very clearly. She is now a university student and she has spent her 8 years on boarding school for blind.

> “Yes, about those years. I said that after two months my mother did not sent me. One week earlier than that, I stayed at the school. Then my mother came with my father for taking me from the school. Then, on Monday again they took me to the school. Actually, my mother was insisting that she did not take me to there but they are taking me there to erase my record. Then, they came. My guidance counselor was trying to divert me. At those times I was doing lots of painting and I loved painting. They bought me crayons and sheets and they showed them. They were trying to divert me. My father, on the other hand, wanted to escape. I mean they wanted to go without showing me. I was not giving up. I was saying that I would see my mother once and then you can go. But my father said no. actually my mother was there but she did not say any words because of my father’s pressure. She was crying on the one hand and I was struggling that I wanted to see my mother. I mean to see once more and then they might go. My father said no. then, as I said I have a little vision of seeing at those times, I saw the car. I ran to car. I recognized our car in the garden and I ran. I hugged. He locked the doors and on the other hand I was trying to open. My mother came. Actually she was at my back, by my side but I could not see. I cannot forget that. I mean even now telling that I am affected. I cannot forget that day. Maybe it is one of the worst days in my life. I can say the worst” (Asuman, Appendix H.51).

Here it should be reminded that students were going to boarding school for blinds when they were 6 or 7 years old. Thus, this young age increased the traumatic experiences.

Çağla is another person who told her interesting traumatic first day experience at a small boarding school for blind.

> “I did not know that I was going to the school. I mean I took my stuff and we prepared my suitcase. Yes. After that, I love chocolate, I still do (Laughs.)

> they bought me chocolate etc. Anyway, I went and my father said ‘Now we are climbing the stairs of the school.’ But, I did not know that we would stay there. I thought we would turn back. Then, we went to the room of the headmaster. We probably did my registration etc. I do not remember. Then while I was playing with my suitcase and stuff, my father said ‘We forget a bag in downtown. I will go and take it.’ Of course it was actually for leaving me. I said ‘OK but turn back.’ He said ‘Of course I will come back around 16.00 o’clock.’ Then he went. He bought me lots of chocolate, food etc. We have put my stuff to the closet but I do not remember when we did it” (Çağla, Appendix H.52).

Like Çağla, many of the blind people were coming to boarding school for blind from different cities, and their families do not have information about those school. The experiences of Polat can tell the story more clearly. Polat comes from a very crowded family and from a village. He spent his 9 years on school for blinds. The reason behind that nine year is that, before 1986, blind people had to complete 6 years to finish primary school in Turkey and Polat is one of those students who completed primary school in six years.

> “Surely my father took me to my room. He did not left me at down stairs. He took me to my room, and then left me in there and he went. That first day I missed the breakfast. I exited from the room, walked a little and turned back. Sometimes, I could not find my room. Then I found my room.
> Engin: Was not there anybody in the room?
> Polat: There were people in the halls but few. They were at downstairs. I could not ask anybody. First time I saw a steel cabinet. It is closes with a knock. There is no lock but it closes with a knock and opens with a knock. You have your suitcase. You see a suitcase. The cabinet is there. You did not empty your suitcase; it remains still in the cabinet. Just few things are on the hanger. I was opening the cabinet and closing. Opening and closing. I was just doing that. In the Grapes of Wrath, children see the toilet pan and think that it is the place for washing clothes. While women are washing clothes, some see they are doing something different and then they flushed. After that, children flushed over and over. There is such a scene in the Grapes of Wrath. Just like that. I was just opening and closing the cabinet. Then, I entered another room. And I said why this cabinet is not opening. Did they close it with a rope or was there a lock? It was not my room. Meanwhile, I recognized the fact that the breakfast had finished. Then my father came again. He went once more and he did not come back again. My father has gone. He would not come back again. I did not know whether he arrived or not. Could he have gone? There was no telephone, there was nothing. Where did he go? He went

> outside of the school. Could he go from there? We did not know them. We would hear them from a letter weeks later. There is no phone in the village. Somehow, I went downstairs. My father did not give me any money. He said I gave your money to the administration. Everybody was drinking tea. I craved for tea. I did not have one lira in my pocket. I asked how much money is the tea. They told it is two and a half liras. I did not have money. I did not have breakfast, I was hungry. I looked forward to lunch. I ran to dining hall and waited in front of it. How did that happen? I probably asked somebody. By the way, I couldn't go to the toilet. I was asking people whenever I needed to go to toilet. Sometimes I did not ask, and found a quiet place. In the village, we made out toilet at outside just by taking down our pants. I found a place and made my toilet. Also issue was whether people saw me from somewhere or not" (Polat, Appendix H.53).

In addition to traumatic experiences, some participants like Şahin also mentioned some frustrating experiences from a segregated school. Şahin also spent his 8 years on a boarding school for blind.

> "When I was putting my stuff to the closet, I got really excited because I knew what is in the bag. I had a notebook that I wrote letters, writings etc. I had lots of pencils. Since then, I have an interest to pencils. Teacher XXX looked and asked what they are. My father said that 'They are pencils. Did not she use pencils?' S/he said no and I was shocked, I stopped and I asked whether I get education there or not. S/he said 'Yes you will but you will not be educated with those pencils. These are not your pencils anymore. You will drop them afterwards.' I felt. I felt that my father was upset. I was upset, too. I mean in that manner school started with a disappointment. The second disappointment after that was happened the same night. Yes I knew that I was going to a boarding school but I didn't not know; I guess with my childish way I supposed that my father or my mother would also come and stay with me. That night, we were in front of the class when my father and others left me. My father told that 'We are leaving.' But I hugged the legs of my father and cried as 'Dad, do not leave me!' I cried and cried for hours that day. That day, I recognized that generally I will be alone in my life and I need to struggle all alone. I mean, I felt that I should not get attached too much to any one because that bed which I lie and cry creates such a feeling in me" (Şahin, Appendix H.54).

As mentioned before, almost all participants talked about such kinds of similar first day experiences. Maybe, all boarding school students blind or not have such kinds of experiences. How much those kinds of experiences affected the perception will lead the reader to the next section.

4.4.2 Family Background and Impact of School for Blinds

Although most of the participants mentioned about first day traumatic experiences, the conclusions clearly demonstrated that 17 out of 22 participants categorized as affirmers and partial affirmers were from the people who had experience in school for blinds. Hence, in spite of its segregated and traumatic nature, there is a need to seek the reasons behind this impact. In this section, this issue will be analyzed from the point of family background and socioeconomic conditions of participants before attending to school for blinds. Beginning to that discussion with Kadir would be very enlightening because he is the one who probably expressed this issue most clearly. Kadir lost his sight when he was a fifth grader at primary school. Then, he had to wait many years to continue his education from secondary school. For this reason, possibility to continue to his education is a very valuable present for him.

He begins with bad family conditions:

> “Thereby, we made some arrangements for school. We packed but my parents did not move. There was a neighbor; we were sitting there. She asked that ‘Did not you taking Kadir to school?’ My mother said that ‘We will.’ and she asked ‘Why did not you go?’ my mother said ‘Let’s see. We can go.’ etc. Anyway, she asked ‘Did not you have money?’ (Laughs.) Of course, she has experience so she can understand. My mother said ‘We do not but we can find. We will ask from a neighbor.’ But there was no one to ask because everybody was penniless there. At least 1500-2000 liras were necessary for my father to leave me and turn back. She said ‘I have withdrawn my three months salaries. I would bring it to you. You can pay me back later.’ She went and brought that to us. She got 4200 liras. She gave 4000 liras to us. We took it and quickly got a bus to Ankara. I had a Torsan radio at that time. The brand was Torsan. There was an advertisement as ‘Whoever you asked, they want Torsan.’ (Laughs.) I remember it in that way, I forgot the radio but my

> aunt took it and ran after us (Laughs.). I was keen to the radio. We were departed to Ankara in that day. The neighbors were all fascinated when they learned that I was starting to school again. As the perception of them think like that '-What are you doing? +My son is going to school in Ankara.' Being educated in Ankara is so significant because no one has any child in Ankara. But later on, we did not say that is a school for the blinds (Laughs.)" (Kadir, Appendix H.55).

He continues with first days on school for blind and first role model:

"There was a place as Balkon. Atilla who is a teacher left from there. Fahriye who is also a teacher came, too. They got into the car and left. My father really liked that. In our area there is no car also in here the wives were driving. Already the authority has affected my father. He put his hands on my shoulder and said 'My son, you need to study. Study and became an English teacher.' (….) For instance in here, I remember that I was too happy for coming here because my references were the conditions of the village. In here I have bed, I have my cabinet and also better food then there even in the first day there were potatoes and pasta. There was just one kind of food in our house. In here there were potatoes, pasta and watermelon. You would eat three kinds of food at the same time. And then there was tea. And also, there are different people and teachers. I mean it was a reputable environment for me. I remember, there was a really good friend who was crying that why he was there. I said 'Man, are you crazy?' Even, his living conditions were worse than mine in the village. I mean he was living in a real village (Laughs)" (Kadir, Appendix H.56).

Şahin, like Kadir also is telling his motivation for school for blind was due to his bad conditions in the village.

"On the other hand, there was a specific meaning of going to school for me because I was the first person who would be educated out of the town in my village and it was giving a superiority to me. Now, when I look from here I recognize that this superiority creates the feeling of 'People who do not accept me, look, I am also here.' That feeling of superiority was the first bullet of my battle" (Şahin, Appendix H.57).

Polat is another person who mentioned very low socioeconomic conditions.

> "I wanted because we would be in the town. I wanted that because occasionally when we went to the town or when I was walking at asphalt road or when I was going to the house of our relatives I thought like 'We will live

> in a town. We will eat the town’s bread. We will eat dried nuts and fruits.’ I do not know really well that what would be done there or what I would learn. Mostly, I was interested in going to the town as a villager. In my village the bus would come and return once in a day and I was happy from the sound of water engine and listened that for hours. Going to the town was making me happier than going to the school. (…) At the end of the first week on Friday, they made us to write a letter to our families as ‘I am studying, I am fine, I started to the school, and best regards to the relatives.’ We wrote to them. Our teacher had a grocery store. He provided some needs of us. For example, the first packaged product that I ate was stick crackers. I had never seen a packaged product in my life not even biscuit. In the grocery of the village there were biscuits but it was sold from the cane of biscuits. They put that into the scales, weighed it and gave that to us after wrapping it with paper” (Polat, Appendix H.58).

As it can be seen, if the family or preschool life conditions are perceived as negative by the blind people, then, their boarding school for blind years could be strengthening for them. Kadir and Şahin was among affirmers. On the other hand, if those conditions are perceived as more positive and lovely, then school for blind years could be more frustrating. Zeliha is one of those participants who does not like school for blind years at all.

> “Adaptation process was really hard for me from beginning to the end. Actually, so to speak I was totally shocked. (Laughs.). I had a beautiful life. Why I cannot be at the home like anyone else or like any other children? Because I had peers with whom I started to school at the same time. I started to school with my sibling because there was a little age gap between us. At the beginning, I blamed my family that they did this to me. I wished that they would move for me. Then I had some adaptation problems at the school. For instance, so many things happened that I could not understand. There were people who did many things by themselves or spoke to themselves. When I was a child I also played so many games by speaking to myself but when I started to speak to my mother or my sibling, they would come and join my game. When I looked right now, I recognized that they paid attention to not leaving me alone. But when I saw that kind of weird people around me, nights were passing really hard. I blamed my family that they left us in here. Because of that something always remains. In the school, you cannot do anything that you want at any time. There were some things that I used to so that I made them record the stuff that I watch. I caused troubles at home. We experienced some problems. Mainly, I had never been adapted to the school” (Zeliha, Appendix H.59).

Zeliha attributes her negative experiences and failures in her life to her school for blind years.

> “Yes exactly like that. What we are doing? We felt like that if it happened in a different way, it would have been different. Even in that age, I have never discarded from the traumatic feelings of boarding school. (…) When I compare with my present, anything that backspacing me rooted in my boarding school years. It might be wrong of course but I have always connected them to boarding school” (Zeliha, Appendix H.60).

In conclusion, it seems that preschool background conditions, perception of people about those conditions and perception of school for blind shows a negative correlation. That is, if out of school life is perceived as attractive, then school for blinds are perceived more negatively and traumatic. Conversely, if out of school life is perceived more discriminating and inhibitory, then school for blind can be seen as a liberating opportunity.

4.4.3 Negative Effects of Segregated Education

In addition to first day traumatic experiences, due to the nature of boarding school and segregated atmosphere, many participants even who love those schools talked about a lot of disappointing and discriminating attitudes in those schools. Participants, who attended to school for blinds before 1990, mentioned about many stories containing violence. Uğur talked about one of them he had witnessed.

> “Especially, when I was in XXX School, there were so cruel teachers who behaved really merciless to children. Especially the principal and his/her assistant were violent to students. That was what they understood from education. It is necessary to show a tangible example. It left a really huge effect on people, I mean, when you witnessed such a thing when you were a child. For example, there was a child who peed one’s pants sometimes. One

> day, that child did that again when playing games and assistant principal washed him with cold water with the hose in the middle of winter. Also, s/he beat the child with that hose in front of everybody. S/he did such a thing as lesson. It is really terrifying. Maybe if it happened to you it would not be affected that much but watching someone being exposed to such a thing with a hose is really horrific.” (Uğur, Appendix H.61).

Dursun who spent his 8 years on different boarding school for blinds mentioned the discriminatory attitudes of school personnel and restricted atmosphere with following passage:

> “It was such a thing that cannot be told Engin Abi; I mean even I feel different when I am telling that. How was that deeming proper to children? There you understand that elder and sighted one have an advantage. For example, we are made to have shower with everyone, with girls and boys together. There was a tea shop where we went and drink tea as much as the teacher has told. And you can put sugar as much as the tea maker would tell you. If s/he told one, you could put one, not more. There was a balcony that is privileged. Only sighted and elder ones could go out to the balcony. We couldn’t go to the garden. I mean, they did not allowed us even the door is open. In front of the door everybody was waiting for permission to go out. We would wait for that ‘go out’ but generally it was not told. That was the first. Secondly, the food was restricted. There was no saying of ‘I am not full.’ If you are hungry, you are hungry. If you are full, you are full. For example, the soup was given. You had to finish it quickly after it is given or the dinner trolley would pass and they would not give you again. You have to finish at that time. There was such an interesting situation that terrified me when I remembered that” (Dursun, Appendix H.62).

Duygu like Dursun is also mentioning the discrimination made between totally blind and partially sighted students by the teachers.,

“Schools for blinds functioned according to the rules of Darwin. (...) All the time, something was requested from the limited sighted. For example, I always think about why teachers did not ask something like ‘E., take that water and fill it’ or ‘X, go and do that.’ from someone who is not sighted and help them to improve themselves. Why should I have to act as the limited sighted people? People were so ready to say that they were so clumsy. Why would they do that? They would not say that this person is smart or something like that. Or what could we do for people to do more or to do better? There is no ambition in these people. There is no desire for doing better in those teachers” (Duygu, Appendix H.63).

Abidin also mentions discriminatory behaviors in the context of meals. Abidin went to boarding school for blind for five years as a boarding student. Then, he did not continue to his education.

> “We, as four students, stayed in the XXX city really well. We have been hosted really well in our school. That was the menu: pea meal and rice and I really love rice but it was totally uncooked. And my point is that, I will also give the full name, my first teacher was XXX YYY. Then I would skip classes and went to the class of teacher ZZZ MMM. Teacher X asked that exactly: ‘Mrs. Y did you cook meatball today?’ ‘Yes Mr. X, I did.’ And I was really happy that we would eat meatball at that day. It turns out that, he cooked meatballs for himself that night because he was the surveillance. I have never forgotten that, it always remains in my mind. We ate that uncooked rice for three or four days” (Abidin, Appendix H.64).

Many participants told such kinds of similar experiences. Despite such bad discriminatory conditions, it seems that most of the participants have found a way to pass those traumatic days. They could finish their universities, develop a positive blind perception, and have a good job. Uğur talked about the strengthening sides of those bad discriminatory conditions with the following passage:

> “Some time Ahmet Çakar who was educated in a boarding school as well told that ‘Boarding school leaves students really damaged and psychologically its effects are not easy. But if you had passed it and finished it powerfully, you stand though and are really powerful in the life.’ I mean it is really like that. In the boarding school you learned an advanced level of knowledge in an early age. So many sighted people, I meant who stayed with their family, may not learn such stuff around 25-30 years. That is, in boarding school you learn to stay together with people, you know not to let elder ones to suppress you or you do not suppress younger ones, you learn to protect your rights but not victimize someone else or not behave badly to them at the same time” (Uğur, Appendix H.65).

Hence, from this passage of Uğur, let’s discuss some positive effects of school for blinds.

4.4.4 Positive Informal Learning Impacts of Blinds Schools on Blind Related Methods and Activities

It seems that the most crucial positive influence of school for blinds is their interactive atmosphere where people can learn blind related abilities. Learning Braille, personal care activities and other instruments which enable people to deal with daily challenges as a blind person can be regarded as the most important advantages of school for blinds. People find opportunities to understand that by using different methods, they can do different things in which people told them they couldn't before. On top of all, when people enter to those schools, they feel that they are not alone and there are other blind people like them, who have the same difficulties and who needs same solutions. Thus, in terms of providing the interrelation between blind people and in terms of identity development as a result of that interdependency, school for blinds serves an effective mission. Kadir summarizes that mission of those schools very well in the following passage:

> "For example, let's say you have never experienced achievement in the home but you get reciprocity at the school. Did I make it clear? I mean positive or negative you get reciprocity. Also to get positive reciprocity, you always make the right thing. I can memorize easily and learn really fast. When I am reciprocated, I feel more valuable. I mean say XXX, I cannot compare myself with anyone else. I mean there is nothing that made me feel valuable there. But where I came from, you can say I learn more than that or faster than those. There were no the perception of getting a good or bad score, these were not evaluated yet but people could respond to your positive attitudes immediately. In that manner, I got used to them quickly because I felt that I am meaningful and valuable. Also, you start to find yourself normal because you are among the blind people. You understood that you are not absurd and it is just something structural. In XXX you are abnormal but in a school for the blinds, I was someone normal" (Kadir, Appendix H.66).

Dursun emphasizes the role of school for blind in his competence of personal care.

> “When I look back to those times, I recognized how many things I got. And actually I learnt several talents of mine in those periods. I realized that we all learn to stay alone, organize our cabinets, taking our clothes from cabinets and wear them and combine which clothes with what by trial and error method. At the end of the secondary school, it was really hard for me to leave the school” (Dursun, Appendix H.67).

Polat is also emphasizes learning of daily skills and he underlines that school for blind changed his life permanently.

> “First of all, I became an urbanite. Firstly, I was a villager but I became an urbanite. I saw the civilization that people produced. I learnt to speak in an urban dialect. I learnt to take a shower by myself. I learnt to wear and strip down my clothes. I learnt to tie shoelaces. Maybe I did not learn to sew but I was quiet unskilled. I became literate. More than anything I learnt to write a composition. I learnt to express my feelings. I learnt to play violin but as I said before everything I got out from villager identity. It was not about embracing being villager” (Polat, Appendix H.68).

Ender mentions about his feeling of independence with the effect of school for blinds.

> “By the way, there is something I want to add that I just remembered. At the first time we started to the school for the blinds, there were cleaning problems. I knew tooth brushing in a point but I had never washed a sock till that day. Washing socks, doing your own cleaning and having a bath by yourself… Especially, having a bath gave me such a great pleasure. In a point –with my words from today- I felt freer. I mean I use the water as I wished. I had the opportunity of playing with water. My elementary school teacher, Mrs. XXX, taught me how to wash clothes. Till that time, I had not known to wash. We had a lesson as personal management which was an elective lesson. I think that should be compulsory. I chose that one. I have learnt cooking, doing the dishes, ironing, washing the clothes etc. At those times, at these lessons. I also learnt that the changes in my body that started with puberty were not something that I needed to be afraid of. I cannot forget the contributions of my teachers especially of XXX. S/he taught me the first life

> lesson about what I needed to know after I reached puberty. In that manner, I was lucky. I learnt to wash in that way around 14 or 15” (Ender, Appendix H.69).

As it can be seen, blind segregated schools played both positive and negative roles on the lives of participants. While they have various traumatic influences including many discriminating and restricted behaviors, they also provide an atmosphere where the interrelation among blind community becomes stronger and where people could learn different blind related modalities to deal with various daily skills. Şahin summarizes this.

> “If I accept the life as a riverbed and myself as a water body that flows in that bed, I think the school for the blinds was the bend that forced me to flow in a specific way in that riverbed because I saw blinds in there and I knew them. I saw how blinds are not accepted in the society and learnt what kind of missions sighted teachers gave the blinds. (…) That is blind, blind cannot be something different than a teacher and s/he can only teach if a job is given to him/her. If it is not given, s/he cannot teach at all. Maybe s/he can earn a little money that can meet his/her needs. When I started to high school, it was time to choose field in the first year. When I was in the dilemma of what I chose as social sciences or equally weighted ones, I met with guidance counselor of school for the blinds. S/he told me ‘You cannot do that. Yes we know you and you were a good student in here. We graduated you as the top of the school but it is not the same of here.’ I believed that idea at those times and I accepted it. So, I chose social sciences. Then I tended to literature and chose to be a literature teacher. I mean in my struggle, in my chose of teaching and social sciences the effect of that direction in the school for the blinds was so significant” (Şahin, Appendix H.70).

4.4.5 Educational Quality of School for Blinds

Related to the formal education quality of school for blinds, the common emphasized point by most of the participants is that it is successful in terms of social lectures and English education, but when it comes to math, science and similar lectures, the educational quality is very low. Faruk expressed this mixed effect very well.

> “I think I learnt so many things. For example, I do not think that I have learnt so many things for Turkish, Science and Math lessons. But for English, I really graduated with an excellent education that was beyond the curriculum” (Faruk, Appendix H.71).

Çağla touches upon another important point, although they think that, they are successful in education, when it comes to general exams where all students from all secondary schools and primary schools attend, their success rate is understood objectively.

> “I wanted to be a lawyer. Also everybody told that you have such a conversation. (Laughs.). I really wanted that but in the exam, we were not so successful. I mean we thought that we were successful but it was not like that in the exams. I got something like 305 or 310 in the exam but it was not sufficient enough for Anatolian high schools. At those times the points of the Anatolian high schools were high. Also we could not do math. None of us could do math. You cannot finish the problems at the proper time because of you do not do tests. At those times we did not know the questions of OKS (High School Entrance Exam). We took the exam and got out” (Çağla, Appendix H.72).

Almost all participants emphasize the lack of math education on school for blinds. Deniz is one of them.

> “I think in elementary school education was not bad. Even if we changed so many teachers, I do not think the education was bad. But when we went to the secondary school, things have been changed. Especially in the numeric field I was not bad but our math teacher had a discriminatory attitude. I do not hesitate to declare that it was really discriminative” (Deniz, Appendix H.73).

Beyond these negative points, in terms of art and music education, school for blinds had made important contributions to the lives of some participants. Polat explains the intensive art education with following passage:

> "Also, they did some good things while they are damaging. For example, they increased the hour of art education to ten classes. Such that, with the addition of three hour guidance lessons we had nine hours of lessons in three days and eight hours of lessons in two days. Imagine that we had twenty seven lessons plus sixteen more forty three hours of lessons in the school. Because of that I called it as a golden age" (Deniz, Appendix H.74).

Asuman says that she has gone to music education department owing to the influence of school for blind.

> "It has given me a lot knowledge in terms of music. I went there being really qualified. I went to a Fine Arts High School. I went to a Fine Arts High School in Çorum. I went there being really qualified and I felt that also in the university. I mean I felt the main accumulations of that. I say, I am glad that I was in that school" (Asuman, Appendix H.75).

Related to educational quality the disadvantages of segregated education system can be clearly seen. Participants reported that most of the course curriculum on school for blinds is not sufficient to catch up the quality of education mainstream schools in the same level. The power of art and language education come from the general tendency and belief that blind people can be more successful on those areas. This restrictive direction could impose on blind people that they would have borders and can be successful in only some areas. Hence, when the consequences of educational quality are considered, there is a need of reconceptualization and rethinking of the role of school for blinds.

4.4.6 General Conclusion about the Influence of School for Blinds

As emphasized at the beginning of this section, the impact of school for blinds on different participants have also become different. As such, different people experience school for blind atmosphere differently parallel to the embodiment perspective. This experience difference derives from various factors. The most important one is the family and socioeconomic background of people. If they come from villages and poor conditions compared to school for blind conditions, the adaptation of those people to this atmosphere could be easier. In addition, they feel better in those schools because they might think that they are less excluded. Münire is one of them who mentions about that exclusion.

> “Also, I wanted to go to school. I was in the school age. My siblings were going to the school. There was a school next to our home. I went but they did not allow me because I was distracting the other children. While children were in the class, I was listening from the garden. After a while, they took me to the class but put me at the end of the classroom. They put a note book in front of me and say ‘Draw this.’ But I could not do that. Forget the writings, seeing the blackboard from the end of the classroom was impossible. After that, it has never become productive. My family also saw my tendency and desire to go to school but they could not do anything. So, when the offer came from our relative my father, who is an officer and not someone ignorant about those issues, prepared my documents and we made our application. After a while, we have been approved. It was in 1981 that I have started to school” (Münire, Appendix H.76).

However, if they feel that they are less excluded and their conditions are not worse, then the school for blind atmosphere could be more traumatic. It has been exemplified on the case of Zeliha.

It can be observed that the most important advantages of school for blinds are their atmosphere where interrelation among blind people could increase. In addition, people could find opportunities to gain some independent living skills such as ironing, washing, sewing etc. As it can be seen on following sections, school for blinds also helped people to acquire instruments to deal with the effect of mainstream schools later.

Despite these advantages, those segregated schools have made people experience many traumatic events. First of all, many participants reported a lot of inhumane behaviors and violent activities. Although they are not exposed to those things directly they witness those kinds of events. As Uğur reported, when they learn to live with those things, they can be more powerful. Unfortunately, such participants who are exposed to these things directly could not be included. The participants mostly had high education, good jobs and success in something they wished. Thus, they are the ones who can develop strategies to deal with the negative effects of school for blinds. Further studies need to address the embodiment experiences of more various participants who might have low education levels and live in more negative conditions.

In addition to this negative atmosphere, many participants also mentioned the restricted effects of those segregated schools. The education quality could improve only on some social lectures and art and music activities. Most of them are not allowed to use canes. Students are imposed that they could only do some specific things. Thus, the reason behind the fact that most of the blind people choose social sciences in university might lie in their experience in school for blinds.

As a final word, it can be concluded that the role of school for blinds should be reconsidered. The number of them could be increased to serve the accessibility needs of people with poor conditions. Nevertheless, they should not serve as a complete segregated school, they should be designed in such a way that blind students could come to those places two or three times per week to learn Braille, cane, computer, assistive technologies and other blind related activities. In addition, they could find opportunities to meet other blind peers and their interrelation can be stronger. However, those blind students should find chances to attend regular schools next to their houses. School for blinds should help them to learn instruments for dealing with daily activities and requirements of those regular skills. If a blind person can learn independent living skills, braille and computer, if the lecture materials could be provided to him or her accessibly, then one will not feel alone and will not feel ashamed about on one’s blindness. Thus, the current school for blinds needs to change to prepare students for regular mainstream schools instead of segregating and restricting them.

4.5 Mainstream School Experiences of Participants Coming from Schools for Blind

There are not segregated blind high schools or universities in Turkey. Because of this, all the blind students have to continue to their education in a regular mainstream school from the high school period. As a result of some educational policies, some students have started this process from their fourth grade periods. These policies have been conducted in İstanbul Veysel Vardar Primary school for a while. According to this, some students go to a mainstream school when they are in fourth grade, but in the evenings they return back to boarding school for blind.

Some of the participants started continuing regular school with their secondary school period. In this section, the experiences of those students on regular schools are going to be touched upon and their adaptation strategies to the conditions of mainstream atmosphere will be focused. At the beginning, the first days and first discriminatory behaviors participants were exposed to, will be discussed. Following this, the academic success as resisting strategy will be explained. Problems on peer relations in mainstream schools will be covered and when there are more than one blind student in the same mainstream school, the impact of it on peer relations will be analyzed. Finally, the memories of participants related to successful individualized training strategies of their some teachers will end this section.

4.5.1 First Days and First Discriminatory Actions

Before beginning, it could be worth mentioning that some of the students were exposed to discriminatory attitudes on first days of mainstream education. Some of them reported that the school principals were not willing to accept them to their schools.

Kadir is one of them. It could be realized that older participants experienced such discriminatory actions. Kadir says that a lot of schools in his city did not accept him to high school.

> "For example, in XX city they did not take me to any high school, neither in the YY district. Then I applied a high school in XXX city. Before that, I took it as normal. It was natural that they do not want to accept a blind man. Then I learned to object that. I mean I started to be uncomfortable from unjust behaviors. We also went a high school in XXX city and they also did not accept me but as an excuse they said there is no quota. We applied to a Business High School and they did not accept me. Their excuse was that how can a blind do business. For XXX High School, we went to the town hall and gave a petition. That is, I did not say 'What can we do if they did not accept me.' and stay like that" (Kadir, Appendix H.77).

Polat is another person who reported that his high school had accepted to take him to the high school one month later.

> "Polat: In high school my principal did not want to register me. S/he said come and go that we can try and during that time we can search it because the letter which was given from the Department of Ministry of National Education was not enough for him/her. Yet, nobody knows the circular of Ministry of National Education in 1967. They also did not give that circular to us from the school. In that issue, the school was not sufficient. They sent it later. Principal found it later in Niğde. But I proved myself in a month.
> Engin: S/he did not take you but you went.
> Polat: No, s/he did not. S/he said come and go like that. I took the classes. At the end of the one month, the exams were about to start. I went to the principal and told that 'If you accept me at the end of this week I will not come anymore. The exams are starting.' S/he said 'OK Polat. Wait a little.' S/he already saw me at the classes. Other teachers also saw more or less. They witnessed. S/he had found that one and registered me. If I was not

> registered, I would not come. They did not lose me anymore. S/he saw that I will be a real student who could pass the exams by without their mercy" (Polat, Appendix H.78).

Zeytin as a younger participant had also experienced that discriminatory action about acceptance of her to high school.

> "I remember. They did not want to take me to the school. Then I and my mother went to Head of National Education and complained about that school (Laughs.). Then they accepted me to that school. It was around 2007 I guess. There were Jaws7. Because of that, I was actually searching. When they told that I was not accepted to the school, I suggested going to the Head of National Education. I said they have to accept me and my mother was really afraid etc. Then we went and they accepted me" (Zeytin, Appendix H.79).

It is possible to see some common points among those three participants. First of all, it seems that, three of them did not give up; when they are told that they will not be accepted. Three of them tried to do something and had become successful. Secondly and interestingly, their families and family support is not in the picture. They told that, they know their rights due to school for blind atmosphere or knowing blind people around them. As such, this also indicates the role of blind interrelation.

Damla had also mentioned that, although she had been accepted to high school, the school managers rejected her to accept to the super high school where intensive English education is made although her grade average is sufficient to enter that school.

> "When the principal of the high school that my parents registered me, saw my diploma grade, s/he wanted to register me to the super high school. After my mother said that I was blind, of course the excuses like 'miss, s/he is forced when doing project homework.' and 'our syllabus is really hard, s/he cannot keep pace with peers and becomes sad.' had started. Then my mother, who studies with me several times and praises my intelligence everywhere, my teacher and mother believed that. As a result, I had been registered to normal high school" (Damla, Appendix H.80).

To sum up, the first days of high or secondary school had become problematic for some participants due to first discriminations they were exposed to. However, that discouraging first expressions seems more motivating for their later educational life.

4.5.2 Academic Success as a Tool for Acceptance

In general, it can be observed that most participants had used some strategies to be included by their peers and their teachers. Most affirmer participants tried to do this with high academic success. Thus they have attempted to use their academic competence as a tool of acceptance by their peers.

Remziye, who is currently a university student and had 8-year experience in school for blind, is one of these examples. She tells the beginning process of her high school period with following sentences.

> “There has been several advantages of getting high school with a high grade. I entered as the seventh one. Among my friends it was effective because they were like ‘Wow, did you come with that grade? You must be smart.’ That is, without my effort I found myself in a circle of friends. They heard the grade and came to talk and then I realized that we had become close friends. Adapting to high school environment was easier then elementary school for me” (Remziye, Appendix H.81).

Raşit is another affirmer participant who had used the advantages of school for blind academic competence in his high school.

> “After school for the blinds, I easily became acclimatized. I have never been in direct touch with the group because I do not have a good communication in a group manner neither in university nor earlier years. I generally have a

> better communication with people in person. I also want to talk frequently with people that I care about. I only had a good group relation when I was in high school because everybody was aware of my situation and perceived me in a different way. It was not like that I was blind. I was also good at classes because I was reading all the time. There was an advantage of reading books when I started to high school so that I was speaking more than anyone else. Even I have never forgotten that when I was in the first year my history teacher was teaching a lesson. S/he missed a point in the lesson; I mean a point while s/he was telling a story. It was something that I found important. I said there is also something like that, what do you think about that issue etc. S/he said ‘For the God sake, please stop. I will give you the grade what you want.’ (Laughs.). Because of that, they think I have the potential of being placed in the university exam and I could go a very good university. So, my friends and teachers always gave me support. They always supported me to do something” (Raşit, Appendix H.82).

Here, what kinds of school they continued after school for blind could be also important for more acceptance. For example, Polat went to high school near his village. Thus he thinks that the substructure provided by the school for blind contributed him very much.

> “My success in high school is generally related with my background in school for the blinds because my high school was a village school. They were so bad in English etc. I was getting ten points from everything but math. There was the highest ranked student but s/he was getting good points from chemistry and physics. I was a little worse than her/him. I became the second highest ranked student. My school gave me a really strong self-confidence. For instance, I ran the school band in my second and third year” (Polat, Appendix H.83).

Şahin is another example person who used his academic success for peer acceptance. He told that his musical skills also had helped him. He had 8-year experience in school for blind.

> “Because of I graduated from a school for the blinds, I both have the self-confidence that I can do and a fear of how can I exist in such a different environment when I would go to high school. I always had the fear whether my friends would accept me or not. Sometimes they did not accept, sometimes they remained distant or sometimes I had friends who acted in a

> warm way but always people said that ‘she is the best student of our class’. I think I made people to accept me with my academic achievements” (Şahin, Appendix H.84).

Another interesting theme emerging from for seeking acceptance by their peers is the use of blindness and his differences. Faruk had used an interesting method to introduce himself to his peers on first days of his high school period.

> “At the beginning of the high school, I was still in a super high school. There were no classes. Everybody was speaking to each other but no one was speaking with me. I do not know why they did not. My friend XXX was not there as well. S/he was in downstairs and I was in upstairs and I was sitting by doing nothing. When I desperately thinking what I should do, I took my tablet for writing. I purposely dropped the pen because I knew somebody would give that to me and I would talk. Anyway someone gave that the pen to me and ask what this is. I explained and then I started to write. People sit around me and they wanted to write and try, too. They did and I tried to read what they wrote. There were several funny things. They laughed as they wrote that or I wrote those. After that, when I went to the class the next morning, if there were 20 students, at least 10 of them said ‘Good morning, Faruk’” (Faruk, Appendix H.85).

Çiler also mentioned that Braille has become a good tool to get attention from her peers. “And also there is that, friends came and look at the Braille alphabet etc. I mostly owe my making friends to Braille alphabet” (Çiler, Appendix H.86).

Remziye tells that her assertiveness helped her to have good friendships.

> “I went to school and I stayed alone at the first break. I said ‘OH, I was afraid of that.’ Anyway, then in the next break I really didn’t not know the girls but I went and said ‘Come on girls, let’s go to the garden and also we can meet.’ (Laughs.). They said yes because they wanted to talk but they hesitated I guess. Then we were going to the lunch and I was planning to go to the canteen but it was allowed to go out, too. 3 or 4 different groups came and ask whether I wanted to go lunch with them or not. I was shocked but said ‘That is great I can go out with one of you every day.’ (laughs.) So in the first two week I met with all groups of friends in my class and met their friends from other classes that they knew from 9th grade. Then, I found a group of friends. We had a group of five people but I was good with others, too. I mostly meet with that group of five people but with the effect of first

> two weeks I had a good conversation with other people, too. I have never stayed alone either in 10th grade" (Remziye, Appendix H.87).

This heading indicated that blind participants are continuously seeking strategies to be included by their teachers, schools, and sighted peers. If they are successful enough the academic performance can be one of the most used strategies. In addition the use of blind related abilities and embodiment experiences can also serve to the acceptance efforts of them. Nevertheless, despite all those resisting strategies due to the effect of normalization and ableism they may still experience problematic peer relations which will be discussed in the next section.

4.5.3 Problems on Peer Relations

It seems that not all people are successful to be accepted by their peers with their academic success. Zeytin is one of them. She had completed her 8 years in school for blinds. However, with the high school period, she had difficulty in having good friendships.

> "It was really weird to me that students were talking about magazines or make up stuff. And these were not in my interest. So, I could not communicate with them except from classes. The ones that I communicate were also the geeks of the class. I also went to tours with my friends. 2nd, 3rd and 4th grade was so efficient in that manner. I had communication with so many people in the class. My speeches were a bit rough and angry at those times because I had experienced insults and sarcastic speeches in Aşık Veysel. Of course in family environment I grew up with fights. My wording was not good at those times. In that manner, I had so many problems with my friends" (Zeytin, Appendix H.88).

Asuman also mentioned her difficulty to have relations with friends despite her high academic success. She also had 8-year experience in school for blind.

> “In my high school my class consisted of 11 people. There were not so many students in fine arts. Actually the quota was 24 people but there were less people because it was fine arts. They were really different so we couldn’t unite. I only united with one friend. She was also a quiet girl. We cannot see each other right now. Actually we were seeing each other. We started to become friends. We went everywhere together. I could accommodate. Firstly, my friends were so underqualified than me in every area. Like I said I went there really qualified. I went there after I learned so many things in music but they were so underqualified. At the same time, our point of views was not a match either. I meant that they were so different in the issue of friendship. They were so hyperactive. How can I say that? I felt like I am 10 or 15 years older than them. They were so childish for me. Because of that I could not made friends. They were so superficial in that manner” (Asuman, Appendix H.89).

Yaren probably is the participant who talked about her peer relations with most traumatic manner. She had always difficulty in having good friendships in her secondary and high school periods where she went to regular mainstream educational institutions.

> “Now there are two dimensions. Firstly, I did not bring so many habits from the school for the blinds but I had some adaptation problems. For example, the last four years of elementary school was the least loved ones, the ones that I tried to forget so badly and the ones that left no good memories. There were so many dimensions but I can say what I recall right now. Firstly my relation with friends was like that the teacher told that ‘Look after with your friend and be around your friend.’ At the first days, they went to the canteen with me and did some stuff with me. Especially the most hyperactive ones were stood up and tried to be friends with me. Everything was normal. There was not anything sad about that. Second thing that I can remember was that for example there were physical training classes. Friends went out and played games. I did not go out with them because I wasn’t used to them. I either sat in a corner or waited in the classroom. So, I could stay alone. I waited without getting bored. They were playing but I did not get sad about why I did not join them. I would be at home at the night and maybe I would play with my friends in the street so it was not important. Can a person cry every day? I was crying every day. I was not an irresponsible person” (Yaren, Appendix H.90).

Yaren also mentioned that her lecture problems like math, also affected her psychology negatively in mainstream schools.

> “I was really forced. I mean I always had some problems with that. I had to be in somewhere else but later I learnt most things by getting the logic by myself. Since 6th grade, when the new subjects had been added, I could not follow while the teacher was teaching at the blackboard. I was doing something in the exams via I can remember from what I heard or I could deal with that when new subjects had been added on the older ones. But when the new subjects have come, I dealt with them by getting one good and one bad grade as you also know getting four and then getting five. For example when I was in 7th grade, I was hearing that from here and there that I need to study for the High School Entrance Exam. I needed to study because I wanted to go to high school. I mean I needed to deal with math. That is, I was getting exams in a training center but I have problems in math. I was solving fewer problems in math” (Yaren, Appendix H.91).

When the peer relations are thought, it is possible to observe the tendency of acceptance. Nevertheless, just academic success may not be enough for a healthy peer relations, blind people could be in a position helper rather than the position of helped. As Mpofu (2003) argues, if blind students can have such instruments to make them obtain critical roles among their peers, this will help them to have more equal plays.

4.5.4 Existence of Other Blind Students on Regular Schools

For some participants, existence of other blind students in the same school had increased their problems of peer relations. In such kind of situation, most of the time, the teachers and other sighted peers had the tendency to gather blind people together and leave them alone. Thus, for example if there are two blind students in the same class, they could be forced come together and separated from the remaining people in the class even if they do not wish. Damla is one of those participants. After 8-year school for blind, she went to high school and in her second year of her school, when she met another blind student in the same class, her relations with sighted friends had dramatically changed.

> “I was too excited when I was going to 1st grade in high school but I was also a little bit nervous. But at the first day of the school, I met with a girl. My mother was graduated from that school and I was going there in holidays or winter breaks etc. She was from there. And also there was another guy but I do not remember where I knew him. I did not know what kind of a relation had emerged but I was so relieved because of that familiarity. From the first day of the high school I had the feeling that it would be good. Yet, I was nervous of course because I was not using the cane at that time so how it would it be? Also the idea of how I could move in such a wide area was uncomfortable. High school passed really happy and with friends but then we moved to İzmir. There were ones who are not sighted in 2nd and 3rd grades. XXXX High School was place that girls generally were boarding because of that people who are not sighted in İzmir stayed in that school. Incidentally that was the closest school to our home. Except for me, there were five more blind girls. Actually it was expected that I would be more relaxed, 2nd and 3rd grades were much darker. (…) I cannot say that those who are not sighted made me unhappy but I can say that people who have biases against blind people were increasing because for many years two or three not sighted people came to that school and they all had an act in there. So, people do not accept you as you are. I mean actually they do but they all had an experience and a point for comparison. This put people in a pattern I guess. Especially in the puberty, I always wanted to be different. I mean I always thought that I am different so, I am not that one. I felt that so obviously. Because of that, I can say those acquired thoughts limited me. I had friends in there, too but at the first day in there, when my father left me to the school, I was trying to talk about the football match of yesterday with children. I was a football fan at those times. When they were talking, I was trying to have a chat. How would I dare? (laugh) You are coming from the outside and without meeting trying to talk. Then someone came to the class. They told ‘Damla look! That is your new best friend Emine.’ I felt so uncomfortable about that. That is not about I do not accept her as a best friend but why did you just introduce me with that girl. You can also be my friend too but why Emine? It was such an uncomfortable period” (Damla, Appendix H.92).

Rüya is another person who has other blind peers in her class. She talked about the discriminatory attitudes of her teachers. She went to a school for blind for three years in her secondary school.

> “Afterwards in 9th grade, the same year, we had a math teacher, and we were 2 visually impaired children in the class in total. And she was an old one, you know that are close to retirement and she asked 'who are the ones that cannot see?' and we raised hands. She offended us among the whole class saying that "how could parent raised you into that? How did you lose your sight? What kind of people are your relatives and family that they have put you in this situation? How could they let you be here, how can you study here?" Then I got really sad and thought that how can we really study or what can we do because the teacher disgraced us in front of the whole class” (Rüya, Appendix H.93).

Like Rüya, Münire had also a lot of blind friends in her school and she had one blind peer in her class. Unfortunately their academic success was not too high and their teacher behaved them in a discriminatory way.

> “For instance, we took the English lectures from the same teacher in sixth and seventh grade, too. But she always ignored us, it was like we weren't in the class. She was quite interested in us at first just because we were writing in Braille but that was it. I was noting down the English as it came out of her mouth rightly or wrongly and she never got us to take a test during the year. But when it came to the end of the year, she told us that 'I give you the highest points out of nowhere,' and one more time disgraced us in front of the whole class” (Münire, Appendix H.94).

Deniz had always have blind peers in his all educational life including high school and university. He believes that the other blind peers on high school created an isolation. In order to get rid of this isolation, he had tried to distance himself from other blind people for a while in his high school and university period.

> “I looked back and it felt like we were getting isolated. We weren't that lonely when it came to our social circles and as the time passes by, we got to know them and they got to know us. However, still there was an isolation process and it's like that everyone would go somewhere in the idle classes and our homes were near. When I got in the university, a friend I used to work together and I were in the same class but our social circles took different paths after a one or two months of isolation process. My social circle didn't include my classmates, anyway, I was participating in the social clubs such as TOG. TOG had an important role in my life. Both in the cases adapting to the society and gaining awareness in different fields. And other seminars,

> conferences as well other than that. Our social circles of the blind consisted only of our friends and peers. I didn't really hang out with the blind in the university, and actually I have never hung out with them at all. And in that time, the blinds were from the upper grades and we rarely communicated with them. Some more people from our generation came to Gazi as well but we never formed groups with them. I guess our generation never formed groups at all. Of course they have done some things together, I think, but never in group form... There was hardly any blind in my msn list" (Deniz, Appendix H.95).

As it can be seen, the existence of other blind people on the same school may create more inhibitory conditions instead of facilitation. The most important reason of this is attitude of class teachers and school administrations to create isolated atmospheres for blind people in the same school. When those people are forced to be together in the same class in the same role the interaction possibility between blind and sighted peers will decrease. This isolated situation might call some blind people to reject and distance themselves from blindness in order to avoid from labeling and isolation.

4.5.6 The Effect of Individualized Training on Inclusive Education

Before finalizing this section, it would be very useful to talk about some individualistic interventions that participants do not forget. Giving some examples about this would be useful, since it would give an idea to educators about successful inclusion of disabled people to the mainstream classes. If an individualistic touch occurs, the motivation and success of disabled person could dramatically change. Münire talked about such kind of a teacher. As it can be remembered, she did also mention the negative effects of some of her teachers. She does not forget her music teacher.

> "We had a music teacher and even though the music lecture was and is one of the most ignored lectures, he used to take his job so seriously. He would write the notes on the board and then would come to our desk and help us to write the notes one by one. I know that it seems like an act of devotion but it wasn't. He was conducting his job and I would really appreciate him. Even though music doesn't play a vital role in my life, I never forgot the notes I learned from him. I know that I passed that course by my own efforts and it satisfies me and makes me happy. Yes, there was this side of the story as well. We had that kind of teachers too" (Münire, Appendix H.96).

Another participant who does not forget the touch of her violin teacher is Asuman. She said that she could learn to play violin owing to the struggle of her teacher.

> "Yes. He motivated me so much. It was his first encounter with a visually disabled person, he had never met one before. But it never felt like that at all. He was really different. I don't know how to put it but he was very interested in me and cared for me. He got me write the notes. I think you understand what I mean if you have anyone interested in music around. We had a certain problem with notes and nobody wanted to help us to write them. We had serious problems on that particular issue. He was helping me, sparing his lunchtime for me, teaching me. And he was giving me much of his time. And I were studying so hard without going home" (Asuman, Appendix H.97)

In general, when the first mainstream experiences of school for blind students are studied, the most salient theme can be considered as their struggle is acceptance by their peers. Some of them seem successful on this struggle with their good academic success. Some of others believe that the substructure of school for blind aided them to do this. Some participants have also used their musical skills and their difference for peer acceptance.

In contrast to general belief, if there is more than one blind student in the same school or especially in the same class, this had become an inhibitory factor. Almost all participants who experienced this situation reported that the existence of another blind peer on the same class had made them more isolated. While sometimes this isolation could occur naturally, sometimes, some teachers and peers directly made that isolation. Hence, for a good mainstream adaptation process, it is very significant to permit a blind student to create his or her own integration space with the sighted peers. Otherwise, the existence of more than one blind student helped the formation of another separate zone where other people have hesitated to enter. For this reason, living together could not be the case. Of course, for accessibility reasons and for strong interrelation, blind people in mainstream will also need to meet and share their experiences. However, if they are not left a space where they also share their differences with their sighted peers, it would be frightening that blind people would not have anything to share to each other's except for their isolated zone.

4.6 School Experiences of Participants who did not Attend to School for Blind at all

Eight blind or partially sighted people went to regular schools although they had sight problems. The participants who lost their sight after their educational life were not included to this list. Although there are some common themes between those participants and the mainstream experiences of school for blind participants, some different themes have also emerged. While the issue of academic success have become the main tool for both participants, lack of information and loneliness about blindness have emerged as the most salient themes on people who do not have any experience of a school for blind and who do not know any blind person in their school life. In addition, family support seems an important tool for their development. Let's look at those themes more closely.

4.6.1 Lack of Information

It has been observed that participants who have completed all educational stages in mainstream schools mostly suffer from lack of information about blind related issues and legal rights. Burhan who systematically have lost his sighted and have become almost totally blind in his university life, first experienced the influence of the lack of information in that period.

> "For example, there was this lecture without a book, there were only lecture notes; so I couldn't study for it when I was at Law 1 lecture and couldn't take the exam just failed it. So, we really had serious accessibility problems" (Burhan, Appendix H.98).

Oya had a lot of problems due to lack of knowledge about blind people and legal rights. She is partially sighted and has completed her all education in mainstream schools.

> "It affected my life profoundly. There was OKS in that time for instance. The Exam for Anatolian High Schools. Neither of had parents made a research about that nor the school management told us anything about it; though I could have taken the test with a reader, I couldn't. Isn't it written somewhere? It says in the guide, right? It says that a child in these conditions should take the exam in these ways etc. but no one told me about it. I could have gotten a great score out of that exam and be at another occupation. You know what, I actually contradict myself when it comes to my obligations in these days that was an obligation for me too. Of course. I couldn't make it as I can't see, I was slow. I always said that I would have gotten a much better score out of that exam if I could see. It wasn't my fault actually and that relieves me but I have never said what would happen if I took the exam with the reader. Because I had no idea what an exam reader was in that time? And because I have no idea... My brother's birth was near in that time and I would start the 8th grade. He was really young. He even didn't start to school, he was that young. Except for the three of us, I was a far cry from any blind people" (Oya, Appendix H.99).

Osman also did not go to any school for blind at all. He was partially sighted in his secondary school years and probably he is not aware that he is blind or not.

Thus, he did not know how to behave as a blind person. Let’s look at his following experience.

> “Blindness was such a thing that’s bothering me. It really hurts me. Because, I mean, maybe it was so... It was affecting me so much. Another science lecture on 7th grade. The teacher is talking about something I know. Like boiling, condensation, this and that. I don't know if I heard it on the TV or read it in a book or so but I know the topic. I want to give the teacher's question an answer; but when you raise your hand, you can't know to whom the teacher is talking to, if it's you or the one behind or in front of you. Then teacher doesn't know your name. Only call people as 'you'. You, you, you. But you cannot know who that 'you' are. I stood up once. And the teacher even told me that 'I couldn't understand what you have done. Have you stood up, sat down, talked or kept quiet” (Osman, Appendix H.100)?

The lack of information about blindness and its consequences can be more negative when it combines with the imposed of ableism.

4.6.2 Loneliness and Friendship Problems

Loneliness emerged as another common theme on the experiences of both partially sighted and mainstream school participants. The story of Oya seems very dramatic.

> ”I would go to school and come back home alone. There was the early riser and afternoon student concepts still. I remember that my friends were angry at me once. They were my friends from the same neighborhood I live and they left me. They did it saying that let's leave him so that he cannot go anywhere. They did it to make the feeling of needing them. I was so upset that day in this situation. The reason for them to get cross with me was that I got 4 and they got a lower score and they wanted to reproach me even though it didn't make any sense at all. I knew it that day, and I don't know but things like my inability to participate in things since my childhood and that I was different from the other girls burdened me. It was really important that men like you in these times for instance. Why this isn't working? Why doesn't anybody like me? I remember I that was sorry in that sense. And I remember that I ascribed it to this but I you sometimes just be the meat in a sandwich. If I can't see at all, I would say I'm blind but it's like your subconscious is always saying that

> you can comply with the other people, and that you can be like them one way or the other" (Oya, Appendix H.101).

As it can be seen in the words of Oya, she is very affected by her environment and started to feel lonely, inferior and frustrated. She begins to accept internalized ableism and begins to believe that, she would never become normal. Of course, her partial sight also influences her conditions and beliefs. Ayşe is another participant, who expressed such inferior feelings in her mainstream schools. Actually, Ayşe has an interesting school experience. She has gone to mainstream schools, but there are other blind people in her school too and in first class, the school opened a special class for them to learn braille and other activities. Nevertheless, in her later year, her feelings about herself seem negative.

> "What matters to me is the sincerity, finding common traits. I can't look like them thinking I'm different in the community, my hand movements are not like theirs. When you're talking to them there would be a silence. This silence would shake my confidence so badly when I tried to befriend them. They were different from me and it was like there was a feeling that they were a step ahead of me. Things weren't really working out as they should for me" (Ayşe, Appendix H.102).

Güven also mentioned about his friendship problems and his loneliness. He is also partially sighted. Until university, he did not know any blind people.

> "To put it simply, I don't remember any moment when I had a really serious problem stemming from my blindness but I can say that even though it wasn't something highly serious, it affected me negatively because I always was exposed to exclusion and humiliation by the kids particularly. I mean they would make fun of me, they would call me blind etc. They were dissing me when they were passing nearby. Some people knowing that I had a weakness like that would beat me and so on. That was a part of the case. I had such issues. I didn't have many friends. And that caused depression for me and my dad even registered me for another school. As I learnt afterwards, my teacher didn't want me in that school either. In his words, he thought that I was dead on my feet. There was already a steady friendship there. I went on with the

> same friends for 4 years in the primary school and they were the people I know but it wasn't the same in the other school” (Güven, Appendix H.103).

Most of the participants who did not attend to school for blinds at all in their mainstream educational life like Osman, Oya, and Güven are partially sighted. Many times, they said that they were unaware of their physical conditions. Although there are few partially sighted participants in this study to make general conditions, the impact of sight degree is clearer related to friendship problems and loneliness. It seems that the insufficient information about blindness, the unspecific sight degree and the influences of ableist atmosphere of mainstream school come together. The partially sighted people have more difficulty in establishing relations with their peers. This vague conditions have more potential to result in identity confusion between being blind and being sighted.

4.6.3 Academic Success as a Tool

It is observed that academic success again have been used as a tool for acceptance and inclusion. Let’s listen Güven again. His academic performance was good but this could not be enough for him not to feel excluded.

> “In the beginning, befriending in the neighborhood I lived and the people somehow different, namely things were working out different there. Such as the idea that if you are a good football player, they would love you etc. Though I did not have anything like that, people liked me but in a way that I couldn't understand. It was like they were rather respecting me. I was by far the most successful of the class. For example, they wouldn't want me to play with them because I couldn't play football very good and so but they wouldn't swear when I'm around and when someone swears near me, they would warn him saying that 'do not swear when he is around' or things like that. It was as if I were a teacher. So, I was feeling completely excluded from the group in these cases. Have no idea if you can link that to being blind but... My grades were great and I loved studying” (Güven, Appendix H.104).

Oya also tried to use her academic success for more acceptance.

> “There was that attitude in that time; I was completely a higher-up among the people there. There were 24 hours of English lecture. It was called preparation class in my time. And I was the only one to get a score of 4 and the rest wasn't good at all. That had been the only way to get them accept me. If I was an incompetent person, no one would even look at my face and that includes teachers as well. I'm pretty sure about that. When they saw my cognitive capacity, they thought that this is not an insignificant person. Yeah, he may not dress well and he doesn't know some stuff. And he is not like the others but he is not nothing as well. And you know what happens afterwards? They're starting to get closer to you” (Oya, Appendix H.105).

Ayşe also tried to use her academic success for acceptance but sometimes this affected her friendship negatively.

> “I was a hardworking girl. I was the best of the class in the tests. The girl I competed with were telling her that 'look at her, she is better than you even though she cannot see. That's why I had an up-and-down relation with her” (Ayşe, Appendix H.106).

Like participants who had experience in school for blind before, the participants who did not attend the schools, also use academic success as a tool for acceptance. Whether they are successful or not, determines their self-esteem and identity development.

4.6.4 Possible Reasons behind the Success of Those Participants

Despite the lack of knowledge about blindness, peer exclusion and other negative conditions, most of the participants coming from mainstream schools seem successful. Baki, Güven and Ayşe are in a university which is one of the top universities in Turkey. Osman is making his PhD on abroad. Oya has become musical teacher. Then, what might affect their success? Academic success could be one reason. Since they used academic success criteria more to seek acceptance, this might affect their carrier positively. The second important theme here is family support. Güven and Baki were very happy to be supported by their families and their schools. Güven tells this in the following passage.

> “Rather than that, my teachers, actually my first teacher in the primary school accepted me to the school willingly. I guess my dad went and told her about me and she said 'I want to take that student'. We were pondering upon creating conditions that I can see, and also thinking that education was the most important thing of my life. So the conditions where I can see were arranged and I could see. I couldn't see the board still but I could handle that. Like, for example, they placed me next to the window. Giving a friend to sit me next to me and tell me the things written on the board and also this friend's being a successful one. Also for example, if our class were on a side where there was no sunlight, we would change the class by talking to the administration. And during my 12 years of education life consisting of primary and secondary school, I have never seen a teacher or administrator who didn't do his/her best in this context” (Güven, Appendix H.107).

Baki mentions a similar supportive atmosphere. He is partially sighted. Although he did not go to school for blind, he went to rehabilitation center on his high school period. In addition, he completed his one class on high school in abroad.

> “I experienced it particularly in my educational background. We had some certain issues, especially in explaining some cases to the administration of the school. I would demand some of my needs but they wouldn't take me into consideration. Once you have to deal with them, your education life is hindered etc. But you get through all of these thing with your teachers, friends and family. You are going through them by acting in unity. What do you want now? I am a student and an individual that can partially see. Your first demand becomes the light in that case. I have a problem about sensitivity to light. You demand light and equipment related to this issue. You need photocopies. Other than that, we used whiteboard in the school for example. You are going to them and telling them your demands, in fact, these demands are only little things. It's not like creating a brand-new school. Things like white board for example. I demand whiteboard and it spreads to the school.

> The reason is that the color contrasts were helpful to me. Though I can't even see it in recent years. I would demand fluorescent light on the board, so that it illuminates the board more. By the way, speaking of which, I have this feature. I never forget the people who had labor on me. In fact, I took a lot from the administration. But there was this manager in my high school; he had cancer and died, may he rest in peace, he was such a good person. He was student-driven. Whenever I had a problem, he would solve it right away. I mean, it's not about only me, it was the same for everyone. You would understand if you saw the crowd in his funeral. So, I don't really had a serious and enduring problem when he was there in high school. Because they were solved from the top of the administration. I was still consulting to teachers, of course, but when it came to the technical stuff etc., I would go and see him immediately. Also it was the duty of the principal to solve these kind of problems. Assume that there is a problem in the hallway or you need an equipment for the class, you solve them directly by talking to the principal. Or I would go to my advisor teacher and he/she would lead me to the principal" (Baki, Appendix H.108).

Parallel to the mainstream experiences of school for blind participants, Ayşe also emphasized the importance of some individual interventions to increase the academic performance. Her high school physics teacher had affected her performance very much.

> "But I had a physics teacher in high school; while people were writing down what he wrote on the board, he would come and help me to understand using pencils etc. and he was trying so hard. He was saying that 'you don't need to know this Ayşe, but you should learn even though they won't be on the university exam, let's learn that too' and so on and he was helping me study so much. It was really great that they did the same thing in the geometry, teachers did their best to teach me" (Ayşe, Appendix H.109).

Unfortunately, not all of the participants felt this support. It was learned that Oya even was not aware that she had a right to have a reader in an exam. Lütfü and Osman reported that they learnt Turkish later in their lives. For those people, it seems that academic success could be an option to obtain higher status. Thus, for those participants' academic success not only serves for peer acceptance but also help them to obtain better life conditions.

In conclusion, related to mainstream school experiences, participants mostly suffer from lack of information about blindness and blind related legal rights, loneliness and exclusion. In order to compensate for those negative influences, almost all of them use academic success. While for some those, family support and school sensitivity have become important, for others, their negative life conditions gave them a motivation of success to get better conditions. Again like Ayşe, Baki and Güven, if some small individual interventions by a teacher or school occurs, then this individual intervention could dramatically increase the self-esteem and academic performance. In spite of high academic success, if the interrelation with other blind people could not be provided, then the perception of disability of those people could not be so positive. Only Baki and Osman were categorized as affirmers among those who had not got experience in school for blind. Here, it should be reminded that both of those participants took rehabilitation training later in their life. While Baki also spent one year in a school for blind abroad, Osman still is making his high academic carrier related to the special education for blind people. Thus, they both had opportunities to establish some relations with blind people.

Ayşe was categorized as partial affirmer. She told that after university, her perception about blindness has changed dramatically with the effect of both university atmosphere and the existence of some blind peers.

While Lütfü was categorized as negative perceiver, Oya and Burhan were considered as normalizers. Three of them also reported that they have a little connection with blind people currently. Hence, maybe not in a school for blind, but for a positive perception about blindness, interrelation seems necessary.

4.7 The Effect of Families in the Lives of Participants

When the family atmosphere of participants is examined, the influences of different themes can be seen. While for some participants, their family creates a very supportive environment, for some others their families tend to ignore them. Interestingly, sometimes, over protective and over sensitive family environments prevent participants from developing a disabled identity. For those, normalization could become the main aim of life. In contrast to that trend, unexpectedly, sometimes ignorance and child’s lack of interest either due to psychological reasons or because of poor life conditions, have given a compulsory space to the person where one has to deal with the life challenges own their own and this resulted in a more independent personality. Thus, the effects of family interest on blind participants influence their life differently depending on the interaction between family interest and the embodiment of their personal experience. In this section, different impacts of family interests on the lives of participants are going to be demonstrated. Positive family atmosphere, not acceptance of families, exclusion, and problematic sibling relations are the main themes that will be focused in that heading.

4.7.1 Positive Family Support

Some participants perceive the interest of their families as very positive. Şahin is one of them, He told that he lost his sibling in a very early age. Hence, he has become the only child of his family. Thus, his father holds him very dearly.

> “Dad would try to understand me; he would play with me especially during the times when I wasn't playing with my cousins and in his spare times from the work. He bought play dough for me, taught me the alphabet using them and he was the first person that made me think that I could read and write. He

> taught me how to paint by cutting papers, I couldn't paint with dye but I was creating some things on my own. I really loved mixing the dyes and creating new colors. I could see more than I can now in that time, now I have the light and color perception but my perception of objects are fading away gradually. It was better in those days. Dad was taking care of me closely, and after the loss of my little brother this care increased dramatically. It became his primary behavior" (Şahin, Appendix H.110).

Duygu defines her relations with her mother as very positive and encouraging in her life. She says that her mother gave her opportunities to do many things and to try a lot of different things.

> "It was magnificent with mum. In fact, my mom and I went to the fire station at that time, and to prison. We were visiting many places. Sometimes people even made fun of us as my mum walks too fast. I'm still small and so are my steps. It would seem like my mum was dragging me around. She would say that; 'let's go there, let's go that etc.' I was eager of course but I couldn't run. However, we both were highly eager and still mom is a great friend for me. They always advice not to be friends with your mom, they say it's something dangerous or so. So far, I haven't seen any danger. I do not know. I am quite relaxed about it but my father and I never had that much of a deep or sincere relation speaking candidly. We would argue often. We would argue so often" (Duygu, Appendix H.111).

Asuman considers her relations with her father as very encouraging like Duygu. However, she finds her mother too protective.

> "I want to specify something. My father was really caring. He even taught me how to write and I could write and read the normal alphabet before I learnt the braille. I could read the bigger letters or writings, he taught it to me. He would cut the papers with a scissors into smaller square pieces, he would write the letters on them and teach them through games. He invented these games or method on his own. Nobody told him to do it that way. He bought me a toy organ one day, I was singing songs with that organ and I could make the melody up by hearing. He would buy me anything I asked for. He never said I can't do anything I want. He was taking me everywhere, and buying me all I ask for. My mother was supportive too, but she was acting a little more protective and she would prevent me sometimes" Asuman, Appendix H.112).

As mentioned above, Baki did not go to any school for blind at all. However, with the support of his family, he went to a rehabilitation center; he went to abroad for one year and had an opportunity to learn about blind related activities. He also says that his family tried to create a good atmosphere where he could do whatever he wishes.

> "If you examine the family view generally, they would be protective at first. Some of my family members have that trait. But also there are people in my family who overcame it, like my aunt or dad. Well directly speaking, people will always have a special interest in you. You can always be the focal point every time, for example in your success, failure, joy and sadness. Because the idea that you are disabled clings strongly to their subconscious. I see the case in my family not as a case of pity because I was a visually disabled child but as something about their perceptions. I have always been content with these. I got enough support from my family. They always stood behind me and supported. I even know that I am the decision-making mechanism and they support everything I decide whether it's bad or good. They sign my behaviors and other things namely. They support my acts" (Baki, Appendix H.113.

Some participants' families move to the school for blind cities not to leave their children alone. Those participants continued to school for blinds without boarding. Deniz is one of them. His family moved to the location of school for blind.

"My parents dreamed about going to XXX city and of course it may be because of my eyes but it also maybe only a dream of them. Dad was asking for his appointment to XX city and probably he got the appointment by giving me as the pretext. But you may stay in a dorm for 1-2 months as this appointment would be able to take time. And I remember that I told them 'I wouldn't study then, I will start when you get there'. It happened some way finally; they rented a house in YY district in XXX city and I was using the school bus" (Deniz, Appendix H.114).

Deniz used his existence of family on development of his academic performance.

> “Dad was even learning the Braille, and I could study with him in the evenings. (..) Our teacher has this thing; he had just been a teacher and maybe it was due to his idealism though he was a tough one but we used to have a notebook. Teacher would write things in it to be given to our parents. I guess it was written in the schedule that were to be given to our families that how they can study with us. I don't know but I guess it was something like that. According to that the program in the notebook we were studying I guess” (Deniz, Appendix H.115.

As it can be observed, participants perceive their families’ interest as positive when this support help them to understand that they can do something as a blind person. If the families could create an atmosphere and space where the child feel encouraging and motivated to do something, then their perception of disability and their self-esteem increased. Nevertheless, unfortunately not all participants are lucky like Deniz, Asuman, Şahin and Duygu in terms of family support. The negative family experiences will be discussed in the next heading.

4.7.2 Rejection of Disability by Families

Not surprisingly, many of the families tend to reject the disability of their children and try to make them behave as normal as possible. Ayşe clearly reported this fact with following passage.

> “My mother was really upset, and my dad didn't want to accept it and they would ask me to do the things I can that requires vision usually; such as finding colors, distinguishing them etc. or finding something by looking. For example I wasn't allowed to find something in the dinner table in that way. And finding something on the supper table was not allowed and it made me feel like I was doing something wrong. That's why they weren't in the mood to accept and live with the reality of the situation and they really wanted me to get treatment for it. They were pondering upon the question if there is a cure for this but I already had doctor that I had been seeing since I was 9 months old. They asked him so many times whether there is a place they can take me to but there never was a surgery process” (Ayşe, Appendix H.116).

Osman who have grown up in a very crowded family tells this with a very interesting anecdote.

> “For example, you start to embrace it in the first or second year of the university. At least I've come to accept. But the family doesn't accept or embrace it. When I say I'm blind or visually-impaired, my father says that I'm not. I remember this time... This goes back a bit before, but the civil registration officer came. It was the last census. You know, you're sitting at home. He asked if there were any disabled residences. He said no. Although there were 4 people. How does this happen? It is hard for them to face it. Also people around me. Even my best friends. I mean, when I say that I'm blind, they say not at all. Why not at all? I'm blind. I mean, it's not an insult” (Osman, Appendix H.117).

The family of Uğur experienced this rejection period in a more troubling way. “Yes, I've had. In that time, of course, every parent feels sad and my father had voice paralysis so he could not talk about a couple of months” (Uğur, Appendix H.118).

As it can be seen, many families experienced this rejection period after learning that their children would be blind. If they continued not to accept this process, then this starts becoming problematic on the personal development of blind people.

4.7.3 Exclusion

The other theme emerging as a result of disability rejection could become the exclusion of child. Especially in crowded families, the disabled people could experience such exclusion. Münire explains this very dramatically. Her family has 6 siblings and three of them are blind. Münire is the second child of her family and first blind child.

> “I got used to the school and classes. First-grade classes were went well, I can say I was even above the class level. But that summer, that's when I first started. They didn't send me to XXX town because I cried a lot. My aunt and uncle, they kept me from going, thinking that I would never want come back. I think that was a huge mistake. I think, this has caused a huge decline for me in second grade. My success in the second grade was not like the first grade. Also, I was very sick in the second grade. I had a lot of children's illness in a short period of time. I couldn't attend the classes regularly. My family didn't really come or communicated with me in that period. I think that was reflected as an enormous negativity to me. (..). Neither my father nor my mother showed up to meet me in the bus station in XXX. My aunt came to greet me. That evening I stayed at my other aunt in XXX. My father came the next day, took me from my aunt's house. My sister came along. My sister told me that she'd been very bad to me, but now she would treat me nice from then on. When she saw me, this was her first reaction. Then we went home and I said, mom, I'm here, where are you. My mother was in the barn, milking the cow. I went to the barn and waited for her to finish. My mother took the milk, and passed me by. She hugged my uncle saying, my brother. Welcome back, blah, blah, blah. Then she kissed me and all, but she couldn't satisfy my primary expectations. I went there eagerly, I was hopeful and had a lot of plans in my mind about what I was going to say. I couldn't do any of it” (Münire, Appendix H.119).

Çağla also feels her family’s exclusion.

> “No my father, for instance, it was in September. Ramadan would coincided with the winter then. My father would come before the winter break. By my family, I mean my father. He was the only one supporting my education. My mother had also wanted but the thing was: We were staying together with my grandfather. Even when my father came to visit me, my grandfather would shout at him. My father always came secretly” (Çağla, Appendix H.120).

Uğur paid the result of that exclusion by not continuing to his high school in a regular class. His parents does not permit him to go to high school by himself.

> “In high school I was in my home town. I attended Open University during that period due to the conditions. No, not that they didn't let me. We had a trust issue in the family. We were far away from the town center. They could not trust me on the transportation issue. So they didn't decide to send me. If you were to go, how would you, you couldn't come back, who would get your books ready, etc. There was a friend of mine, we were going to be in high school the same time. He insisted that we went together” (Uğur, Appendix H.121).

Abidin also told that his father did not permit him to continue his education after primary school and he had to stay in his village.

“But here's the thing, my deceased father said that he couldn't look after me. I told you the way it is, like, until 2001, I didn't have my self-confidence. I came to my senses a little, but the parental pressure, my deceased father's tough attitude, etc. didn't allow me to go. Thus my father was paralyzed on one side in 96 and then the other side was paralyzed in 2001. After that he was completely bedridden. Of course, there was no one to take care of him” (Abidin, Appendix H.122).

Ruşen has very problematic relations with his families. He left his house after high school period. His mother and father are divorced and his father is married with another person now. He accused his father since he did not send him to the art high school.

> “I came first in the high school entrance exam for the fine arts high school but they didn't send me. My mother didn't have the money. My dad didn't find the money, I think. Because, it was a twelve-and-a-half liras and it wasn't an amount that can't be found. Twelve-and-a-half liras is not an amount that can't be found in 95. Now, it's maybe seven hundred, eight hundred liras. So that's how my relationship with school was cut. Because, I was studying to go to the fine arts high school since the second grade of middle school. My music teacher raised me likewise. I was eligible to go there, too. Looking from today, would anything happen if I studied there? No, nothing would happen, but a lot would be different today if I went to school then. I know this. This is why, I don't like school since then. The high school I went was an unnecessary place for me. I'd been one of the naughtiest students of the class. I started school in the front row and finished in the last row, on the right, next to the hanger. That's why I didn't tell a lot about the school. It does not mean anything to me, I mean, the school. It is full of loss and disappointments” (Ruşen, Appendix H.123).

The most important reason behind exclusion tendencies of families is their reluctance to accept disability. If they feel helpless about what to do and how to deal with the situation one of the possible conclusions is can be avoidance and total rejection. The condition of Ruşen and Çağla can be demonstrated as a sample of this hypothesis.

4.7.4 Problematic Sibling Relations

The problematic parent interests also caused problems between the blind sibling and his or her sighted siblings. Ayşe reported that due to behaviors of her parents to her and brother differently, their relations do not go well.

> “My older brother was a restless kid. He would be in and out of everything, wound his head, a classic naughty kid. Whenever we misbehaved generally my brother would carry the can. So my brother and I had a very different relationship from the warm brotherhood of others. After a certain time, I started accusing my brother even of my own doings. I knew that my brother would be punished. He loved me, too. I knew this, so I would be as combative as I wanted to. All our games ended with fights” (Ayşe, Appendix H.124).

Güven also expressed similar memories from his childhood period. Actually in Güven’s case and in many other experiences, the parents sometimes can give extra responsibilities to the sighted siblings. The sighted sibling has to take care of the blind sibling. This extra responsibility could make the sighted sibling feel worse and have negative attitudes to blind sibling. Extra studies need to address the attitudes of nondisabled siblings. Güven’s brother has such kinds of attitudes.

> "Now, it's been a process, you know, it's been actually an unsteady process. My psychological problems in the first three four years of primary school and its reflection on my brothers along with his dislike towards me, caused problems between us. I mean, I've been blaming my brother for my psychological distress and he would use this kind of thing on me. He said things like, I've helped you about this, and I won't help again. I took you to this place, I won't take you anywhere again” (Güven, Appendix H.125).

The experiences told in this section indicated that if family can create a space for blind people to feel that they could be enabled to do something they wish, if parents make them believe that their blindness is not a barrier, then people perceive this support as very positive. This supportive space can sometimes be provided by extra individualistic interests, but sometimes by leaving the person on their own to deal with life challenges. On the family experiences of Şahin, Duygu, Baki and Deniz, this supportive family atmosphere could be understood. When the interests of families goes to the point which restricts blind people more, then people could feel more excluded and restricted. In addition, sometimes, lack of interest and rejection may end up excluding the child from education and normal regular activities. In Uğur, Münire and Abidin's case this situation is very clear. In some other situations, the families have still difficulties to accept the blindness of their children. Osman and Ayşe's memories showed this theme. Hence, families should act to prepare their blind children for a more independent life. For that independent life, first of all, they should believe that blindness is not a deficiency and behave their children accordingly. To what degree they can do, determines the perception of disability level of their children.

4.8 The Effects of Degree of Sight Lost

One of the other research questions of the study is to learn how the sight degree affects the perception. Unfortunately, there are fewer participants who still has functional sight degree. Thus, there is the need to study experiences of more partially sighted people. Nevertheless, most of the participants reported sight degrees in their lives. It seems that this degree affected some of them. For example, although Faruk has a very active NGO life, his changing sight degree might make him unhappy about his blindness. In addition, although Deniz is one of the important figures in blind-related NGO’s, because he got blind after 6 years of age, his brief sighted period causes him not being willing to accept the blind identity.

Osman, Oya, and Güven are other participants who reported the effect of their sight degree. Oya and Güven reported that because they have partial sight, their families and school teachers did not consider them as blind. Then, this created lack of information. Oya had to take high school entry exam without a reader. Güven reported that he had not used the cane until he came to university. Osman told that his family did not want to accept his blindness although he has difficulty to see his environment. Burhan, in the university, had to give up his career as his sight started significantly decreased.

All of those examples showed the lack of knowledge theme again. Since partially sighted people or people around them do not consider the situation as blindness, they became reluctant to take more information or to have relations with other blind people. Then, the most important dilemma starts: neither sighted nor blind. This confusion could affect the perception negatively. Güven, Faruk, Oya, and Burhan are categorized as confused and negative perceiver or normalizer. In this perception tendency, the sight degree may have contributions. For compensation, again the need of interrelation and increasing knowledge about blind related activities can be a tool.

4.9 The Turning Points of Possible Perception Shifts

It is not necessary to be a wise person for saying that perception of disability and identity of disability is not a fixed unity and changes over the life time. There are many turning points on the life, which lead to perceive oneself and disability differently in different times. Carol Gill (1997) tried to identify those stages. According to her, the first stage is coming to feel. In that stage people decide not to blame themselves due to their differences. This is a very important beginning because before disability awareness both disabled people and their families tend to reject the disability issue at all. The interviews also showed that most families seek some curing possibilities when they learned the disability. Thus a lot of participants reported that they had to take surgeries many times. As such, hospital had become an important part of their lives for a while.

The second phase of identity development for Carol Gill (1997) is coming home. The meaning of this phase according to Gill (1997) is the integration with disability community. Gill (1997) says that people might reject to meet other disabled people before this phase. Finkelstein (1993) also mentions about that rejection period. According to him, people at first may be irritated to be labeled as disabled and tried to distance themselves from other disabled people and other disability groups. For him, this is the tool of approximating normality. The interviews also have such examples. If the words of Ayşe are recalled, she was saying that her family does not permit her to find something on a table by touching. She also was saying that her family advises her not to have more blind friends.

Actually, this is more complex than deliberately distancing. Most families and disabled participants do not have information about other disabled people and their lives. As a result, disabled people are exposed to the rules of normality and being sighted is imposed on their lives. In the interviews, especially people who did not have any experience in school for blinds reported such kinds of examples. In this section, the effects of disability interrelation of possible perception shift will be addressed. Hence, the beginning will be the experiences of participants who do not have any experience in school for blind or who have become blind later in their lives.

In addition to the role of interrelation or as Gill's (1997) term "Coming Home" process, the effects of technology and internet on possible perception shifts are also going to be studied. In fact, it will be seen that the interrelation and use of technology processes are intertwined. That is to say, it can be said that technology could be used as a bridge for more interrelation. Actually, the literature studying the effect of technologies on the lives of disabled people have controversial claims. Macdonald and Clayton (2013) summarized those controversial arguments. For example, Watson and Woods (2005) exemplified wheelchair for the effect of technology. According to their arguments, owing to existence of wheelchair physically disabled people have become more visible on the public. In contrast to this, Goggin and Newell (2003) argue that the effect of technology on the lives of disabled people in terms of enabling capability is exaggerated. Harris (2010) also stated that, due to lack of information or training, even disabled people own a technological device, they cannot use them efficiently.

After this summary, Macdonald and Clayton (2013) explained their findings about the use of technology by disabled people and other disadvantageous people in Sunderland. According to their findings, compared to the control group, the use of technology is very uncommon by disabled people. For example, 42 percent of the disabled participants reported that they never use mobile phone or computer and never access to the internet. Their data indicated that 71 percent of disabled people never used a laptop or a personal computer. In addition, 73 percent of the respondents reported that they never connected to internet. Thus they concluded that the affordability of technology for disabled people must be seen as a right rather than a privilege.

When the participants of this study are observed, it can be realized that they are very fortunate in terms of technology. Most of the interviews were conducted through skype. Almost all participants had a personal computer, internet connection and mobile phones with assistive technologies. On the one hand, this is the limitation of that study, because more disadvantageous groups for obtaining healthier results have to be included to the study. On the other hand, that is the strong side of the present study, because when people who use technology actively in their daily life are talked, the influences of technology on their perception of disability could be understood more clearly.

4.9.1 No Pain No Gain

Before discussing the effects of interrelation and technology on perception change process, talking about the "No Pain, No Gain" issue will be useful. As it could be remembered, the effects of independence dependence continuum had been summarized. If people feel that they satisfied their need of independence, their perception could possibly be more positive. However, in order to feel that they need more independence, they should understand that they have to. Thus, under the effects of over protective families or peers, the independence motive might not be satisfied.

Let's listen to words of Baki and how he decides to use cane.

> “Now, most importantly, I have a 6-month process. I used to go to school with the school bus in our xxx town. We had a study of 2 hours in school. We couldn't fix the school up with a service. For about 6 months, if I remember correctly I went by bus. There's no visible sign in my eyes regarding my blindness. Because I didn't carry a cane, I experienced communication problems on buses. I'm a sensitive person at certain points. Think about it, for example, I was 14 years old and I would feel the need to sit on a crowded bus sometimes. Because there's disorder and in order not to prevent the movement of the crowd you feel the need to sit. I always stressed out as I couldn't see the other side, and I felt under pressure. This was very effective. Because I said, this is not only for 6 months, it's going to be like this for 20-30 years. Maybe, I'm going to go out on the street every day. I'm going to go to work or to school every day. In this way, I presented this request. This is a request I will never forget” (Baki, Appendix H.7126).

Figen Also mentions that how she has to use cane.

> “I already said, I'm from a crowded family. Normally I'm very good with my family, we've had very few problems. The biggest problem we had was that we're a crowded family and whenever I wanted to go alone I was going to ask the help from the others. So it was like this. For example, I had two friends from high school. I would meet with one of them to go to the school in the mornings. He was going to a dershane (training center). In the evening I was returning home with someone else. But I wasn't using my cane even though I crossed roads. After that, as I said, I remembered again. Again, luckily, we were in the same dershane with a friend from the neighborhood. I was going with them in the morning, I was coming back with them in the evenings. But this time I was going to the YYY town. The high school was in XXX but YYY was farther. It was more likely to get confused. One day my class ended early. I mean, I didn't want to wait. On that day, I did not use a cane, but I took the minibus. I wasn't using the cane, but I would carry one in my bag all the time in high school. I was going to get off the minibus, I didn't tell my mom that I was coming. I would get off and cross the road. It was a dangerous road. It's downhill and minibuses pass by fast. I didn't know what to do. I was thinking about using the cane or not until I got off the minibus. I decided not to use it. I happened to take the cane, and since that day, I've always used the cane when I'm alone” (Figen, Appendix H.127).

In addition to Baki and Figen, Deniz tells that when her mother stayed in hospital due to her health conditions for a while, his first independence experiences began.

> “Here's a situation I've got. My mom had surgery and everyone had to visit her. I decided that I'd go to school by myself, I turned the situation into an opportunity. I had an independent action period but until the end of high school I got more heated up. Also the university preparation period etc.” (Baki, Appendix H.128).

Deniz analyzed and shared his observation about blind people who are in boarding high schools.

> “And I am going to tell you this; people going to boarding high schools have more experience on independent action. I had friends who worked as peddlers to earn money; I think it's important for self-confidence, when you're a 16-year-old” (Deniz, Appendix H.129).

According to him, this is because of the less protective atmosphere.

> “You are back on your feet again, the only difference from the school for the blind is everyone minds their own business or less people bother you. They bother you as much as they bother others. So no protectionism” (Deniz, Appendix H.130).

Levent who has become blind when he was thirty had not time to think and live the negative effects of his blindness, because he had to continue to his life for financial and family conditions. However, this has become advantage for him for better adaptation.”

> “Some events increase the resistance of people, Mr. Engin. There were people who would starve if they didn't work for another day. Not exactly so, but we had no parental support, we had to stand on our own feet. I mean, wouldn't complain about having pain, I didn't mind much. I went to the doctors. That's a different matter, but I didn't mind too much. (..) And after that period I couldn't sit and cry, I couldn't even afford it. I have kids. I didn't have time to sit and cry, because the landlord tried to get us out of the house so that we wouldn’t cause problems in paying the rent. And he did. I moved to another location. One of my sons, then had to have heart surgery. I worked for his heart surgery. I've had his surgery done” (Levent, Appendix H.131).

From those experiences, it should be noted that, if people meet the life challenges alone and feel that they have to deal with those challenges, then this could increase their independence and in turn affect their perception of disability positively. Again and again, it has to be highlighted that, over protection sometimes can be very harmful if it could make people more restricted and dependent.

4.9.2 The Role of Interdependency

For people who had become blind in their later ages, or who do not have any experience in school for blind, meeting with blind organizations or community have become a turning point. For some of them, blind-related NGO or rehabilitation center changed their lives. For some others an intimate relation with a blind person has become the key factor on their perception shift. Osman, who started to lose his sight gradually and had no experience in school for blind before, made various attempts to get information about other blind people. However, at the beginning he thought that he could not meet the correct people.

> “How I met with blind people? I think it was my 3rd year in college. One day, I was walking with the child I told about, the villager kid. He showed the Blind Association ahead and we came across a couple of times more. Then I came across with people collecting donation, selling magazines to help their association. They were not like the members of the association, but 2 university students, couple of girls. It is not very common in XXX town. Probably they were volunteers, collecting money. Someday, somehow, I built up my nerve and said to my friend "come with me, let's go, come", I said. We went in, it was the first time I had communicated with the blind. I said that I was studying there and wanted to meet people there, and they welcomed us. But it was awful, they were civil servants that rarely went to work, or even if they did, they would sit the rest of the day. It was a very small room, maybe smaller than your room in GETEM. There was a little room with a table and 4 chairs. They were not doing anything just sitting there. As if they were dead

> waiting to get buried. That's not what I wanted to see, so there I sat for half an hour, but I felt like dying. I said no" (Osman, Appendix H.132)

The emphasis of Osman is very essential: correct role models. Interrelation does not mean simply interacting with any other blind individual or organization. As Osman's story shows, if the person or organization gives negative messages, the perception is more negatively affected by this and people's tendency to distance themselves from other disabled people would increase.

Asuman also confirms the story of Osman. She knows an association in her city but according to her, it is very insufficient.

"For example, we do not do anything in the association in XXX. They play games all day. There were no women, perhaps 2-3 women went there except for me. I went there several times, they don't do anything. They have no activities. I would go and spend time there, this is all I can think of" (Asuman, Appendix H.133).

Actually Asuman highlights one of the answers of a very significant question: Why do younger blind people prefer to be away from blind nongovernmental organizations? As it will be argued later, mostly, people think that those organizations are very far from meeting their expectations of blindness. As mentioned above, this will be discussed in more detail on the next section. Before that, let's look at the consequences of good examples. After university, Osman did not give up his attempts of finding a better blind organization. When he completes his master degree in other city, it seems that he could find what he seeks.

> "When I went to XXX city, my assignment was cancelled, I started my masters. I went to 2 of the blinds associations there, and particularly liked one of them at the time. After the experiences in the YYY city, young people would hang out there. The head was an older lawyer, an educated man, an activist. He was visionary, when I saw him I decided that was a good place. I started to go over there and sit, even if I never did anything, I would go there

> to drink tea and to chat. Then I met several blind friends there. We started seeing each other, having dinners and tea. We played dominoes. I first learned dominoes there. I mean, this was the first time I had a blind friend. I had to read a lot in that city. I didn't know braille and I didn't have the technological support. I hadn’t start using Jaws then, in 2007. After that, I went to random people and asked for their voluntary support, telling them that I was doing my masters and I had to read a lot. We exchanged phone numbers and they sent me the readings, I studied listening to them at home. I went to the association if there was a volunteer to help me read my master's degree courses. They introduced a woman, she helped me very much. Like I said, I've met with the blind for the first time here. And there was a nice group with 1-2 sighted friends. We went to picnic with 8 people by bus, then we walked and get to the barbeque place and ate. It was the first time I met the blind group. I met the GEOP thanks to one of the friends in the blind group. I am still in touch with most of them. That's how I became a member. Between that and GEOP and my rubbing shoulders with the blind happened by this 2 ways. Note: GEÖP is an e-mailing group where many blind students share their experiences and information. It serves to meet goal of bringing blind people together in one platform. It was the e-mailing list where many participants hear and attend to my study. Thus, I would like to thank again to the group managers” (Osman, Appendix H.134).

Lütfü utilized the existence of blind rehabilitation center very much. He could complete his primary school thanks to it.

> “When we came to the town, we noticed that we had to learn Turkish. After that it was a healing adventure. (..) XXX association had opened branches in the city of YYY at that time, I learned through that branch. There I met with a visually impaired one, that way. I've seen a lot of visually disabled and the blind, you know, I had something like a little bit of confidence or something. I can't put a definition, you know, I thought I could do something and so I held on to life (Laughs.)” (Lütfü, Appendix H.135).

Levent, who lost his sight after thirty years of age, says that he learned many things from blind associations for his adaptation.

> “XXX metropolitan municipality had a camp for the blind. I went there for the first time and I met there in the first camp. I made good friendships there. We are still friends with the people there. It's been 17 years. In short, our friendship is still continuing. It was the first time I met. (..) When they started education at xxx point, we started going there. My spouse was taking me on weekends. My eldest son had grown a bit, sometimes I was going with my

> son. Then I had cane training but the last day we went to the town of YYY for cane training we had tea. Then I came to my house for the first time by myself" (Levent, Appendix H.136).

Levent thinks that the association he is actively attending has many contributions to his life.

> "What are the contributions of it? Firstly, I knew the people. Secondly, I had the opportunity of working. Thirdly, I had the opportunity of realizing the projects in my mind. For instance, when the first time I organized a tour, I told to the friends that I was not in the board of directors. I said to my friends that 'Let's go to Çanakkale as visually disabled people; and visit our martyrs. So many people objected to me. At that time directors wanted to me to take the board because they trust me. However, I said that it would not be appropriate due to the fact that I did not know any of them. At that time, I organized the project and collected the money per person so we went to Çanakkale. It was hard because we were 45 people at that time even 2-3 people did not come. You can rest assured that, in the following organizations that we made two even three busses were not enough because I paved the way for people. Also, my self-confidence recovered with knowing that I could do some things. You also give that to the friends, what was the word, yes, idea. However, if I stayed at home, I could not be this Levent Rüştü" (Levent, Appendix H.137).

Emrah, in the middle of secondary school had to leave his school and had to stay at home for years. Thus, the rehabilitation center has become a very good thing for him. He says that it has become the rescuer of him from the house prison.

> "Previously, a library was opened in XX city. One of my teachers from primary school suggested me to go to the rehabilitation. That is, when I went to the library they wrote and also my school wrote to Istanbul Six Point Rehabilitation Center and so I was accepted in '85. And I came there, stayed in there for five and a half months. After that period it still took some times but again I went out, on my own I went out. Immediately after I came back, after five and a half months later, going inside made me worse and I wish I would not go out. I took the cane into my hand. Sometimes the cane wasn't not working for anything because some people do not go out after they come back. I did not want to be that one and I said if I drop it, I will sink, so I thought I would never drop it and I did not drop it" (Emrah, Appendix H.138).

Rüya did not go to school for blind in her primary school life. After she became totally blind, she firstly went to rehabilitation center for adaptation. The first meeting changed her attitudes about blind people.

> “I was afraid from blinds. None of them should not touch me or not talk with me. I mean I had a chill inside me. My first encounter with blinds was in the rehabilitation center. Even in the first time that I went there, hallway was all empty because everybody was at classes and I thought it is great I did not meet with anybody. I wished that it will continue like that. In the next morning when I went, there was a ceremony so that I was hoping it lasts longer, it would last longer so that nobody would come close to me. (Laughs.) An older brother came to me and asked whether I started to work in there or not. Then he took me to the canteen to introduce with his friends. There were young boys and girls who were sitting, smoking and speaking normally. I thought ‘OH they are speaking normally.’ I am blind but obviously I was thinking of other blinds differently. At that specific moment I realized that blind people are also like other people and do some stuff because I met such people in there who were drinking their tea, smoking and having a conversation. It really means so many things to me. A blind person also can sit and chat, manage his/her life, and make a conversation. It means they can also do everything. This template shows me that blind people can also exist in the life. Because of that I do not forget that template and those memories” (Rüya, Appendix H.139).

Güven talks about his other blind friends and their effect on him about his blind related abilities in university life.

> “It was at the first times of the preparatory year; I overcame my prejudice about blindness and started to use the cane and computer. The main reason of that was the life standard of other friends of mine, who did not see at all but used jaws and cane, exceed mine standards. Great minds think alike; I mean I have to accept that whether I would continue losing my self-confidence and I would not go out at nights. I consider what the worse is whether holding a cane or not going out at nights and hitting several places. Anyway, after a while I see that it is not something that decreases the self-confidence” (Güven, Appendix H.140).

Related to university life, the effect of accessibility could be also source of perception change and relaxation. Yaren is the one who expressed this clearly.

> “ It meets, it really meets. University was the turning point is the in my life, I can say it set my life Brother Engin. (Laughs.). (…) I easily say that I had no worries; I was so relaxed; I mean I could do everything and nothing could stop me. Everything that I did or I did not do belongs to me because I came to that point. It happened like that; firstly, I had to stay in the dormitory because houses were so expensive so I have never thought about staying at home. Preparation students were going to Kilyos so my father was researching from the internet. At those times you called and then our lives became easier. You said that come to see us during the registration period. We came and you showed us the whole process, you know I mean you showed us that. Our route was determined and my dormitory was fixed. After that it is known that you go to the preparatory lessons, you use those ones and your materials are here, you need to buy these stuff etc. etc. I mean that is okay, everything is determined and perfect” (Yaren, Appendix H.141).

Here, the words of participants are very clear: The rehabilitation centers for blind, NGOs and accessible atmosphere have a crucial role on informal learning of people and their identity development. For example, Emrah says that his perception starts to change after he understood that he could go to places he wished without the help of others. Osman learns the existence of computers and information of other blind people with the help of NGO in his city. Levent firstly learned cane usage with the help of the association now he is one of the managers of that association. Lütfü could finish his primary school distantly and continued to his education until university with the help of a local NGO and rehabilitation center. Rüya learnt that blind people are also human with the help of a rehabilitation center. Güven understands that use of cane and use of computers with assistive technologies could make his life easier. Yaren says that the accessibility facilities changed her perception about her future. As such, the numbers of those organizations have to be increased, but the quality of them also has to be protected. In addition, the accessibility facilities will influence the perception. Otherwise, like Osman and

Asuman, people’s tendency to be far away from other disabled persons and organizations will increase.

For some participants, having close relations with a blind person could serve a perception shift too. Naci is one of them. He says that after he begins relations with his current wife, his attitudes to his blindness and his life have changed. He understood that he could do something without the help of others.

> “We met on the December 2009. We began to see each other frequently in 2010. We even started to see each other face to face. She always told me that psychologically it is not a good environment for me. She said ‘The things that your parents have done caused damage on you.’ She said that the idea of you cannot do is forcing you and causes the loss of self-confidence and so I have to prove something especially to myself and I have to earn my life. Later on, it happened like that I tried to change my house but then I recognized that it is only possible with a job. After I made that decision I decided to try something else by absorbing everything that she did like slander, discredit, beating threatening, and all other reflections. I met with my girlfriend alone. All the time, I chose to deceive her. I went to upstairs and I told her that I am going some other places. I tried everything. (…) When I said I already knew, I mean it could be done. I had never done but when I came to home and made some food I really like it. I realized how nice it feels. I had my own house, my own television, my own computer, and my own ambience. I could come and go any time I want except the job of course. I had the opportunity of doing anything that I want. I could invite anybody I want and do anything I want. I could host them, I could help them or I could clean my own house. I mean I got used to them. Cooking was good. I liked to cook. It was interesting. It was good” (Naci, Appendix H.142).

According to Münire, her marriage with a blind person increased her independence and self-esteem. After her employment, she stayed at her local city for a long time. Although she tried too much, she could not succeed to be independent as she wishes. After she starts using computer, her life has changed, she has married and moved to a big city.

> “What had been changed in my life? For example I was coming to this city in summer holidays and February holidays for touristic reasons and I was

> always accompanied by someone. That person took me out to some places. Now, after I came to this city, my ability to go out and go to somewhere on my own developed. I can go to school on my own like in XX city. My siblings live in the other shore and I can go there and turn back from there on my own. I feel like I have the ability of going and turning back from anywhere I need to go. Before I came here, there was a fear. I felt like ‘Okay I can do it in XX city but I cannot do it anywhere else.’ I had the idea that XX city is relatively small, I can do it in here but I cannot do it anywhere else. Yet, I saw that I can do it in here, too. Yes, it is not easy, I am having problems but it is not like I cannot do it at all. I mean I do. In that manner, it really adds a really big change. I mean the people who have never appreciated me, now, accept me with my spouse and appreciate that I am an individual so shapes a relation in that perspective. I mean my uncle who has a great effort on my education but who also prevented me so much now in a position of asking advices from me and my spouse. I mean, I think it is a really significant acquisition” (Münire, Appendix H.143).

As a result, if correct people or organizations could be met, this would be a catalyzer for positive perception of disability. This study also revealed that the use of internet and technology opened a door leading to the interrelation.

4.9.3 The Effect of Technology on Perception of Disability

For blind people, technology has played a very drastic role in their lives for 20 years. Its meaning is not only just making the life easier, but it is beyond of this. With the birth of internet and with the existence of assistive technologies, access to knowledge, which is the most problematic barrier for a blind person, have become easier. Before this period, blind people had to use braille or voluntary readers to read books. In developing countries, like Turkey, production of Braille books including lecture materials is very rare. There are still no high school and university books in braille for many lectures. Thus, to be a student, to be employed, to do many things blind people had the need others. For this reason, the participants born before 1990’s suffered from the lack of information and materials and this affected their perception negatively. Let’s listen to the regression of Ender due to lack of technology.

> “After graduating, my actual goal was to work in a field that I was trained for. However, I could not say that I strived for that. But there is something for which I feel regretful. I think he is now in the XXX University but then Professor Doctor YYY was our dean. I had just graduated. I visited him to say goodbye. We sat in his room, drank tea and talked a bit. When I said goodbye he told me, “Don’t say goodbye my son, stay here as a research assistant.” “The professors love you here, I could assign you as an assistant to any professor you want. You could work with them and do your master degree here in the university. We could help you; do an academic career.” he added. But I was afraid. When it comes to why I was afraid; in today’s technologic world I would never lost that opportunity. The fear was; no matter how successful a student I was, I had some issues. For example, my books didn’t arrive on time. Then…” (Ender, Appendix H.144).

Uğur, who was a university student in 1990’s also mentioned about lack of technology as a barrier in his academic career.

> “Of course. For example, I always liked the academic part of the story. Of course in our times it was the limit. Now things are different. If we could use that computer technology at that time, things could have been different. At that time, we could only complete our education with books that are read to tapes and with these and that. For example, I think if I saw that I would want to pursue an academic career” (Uğur, Appendix H.145).

As such, when a person sees that now one read newspapers, books or any other information he or she wishes with a one keyboard motion or one double tap, this could possibly change his or her perception about blindness. For this reason the effect of technology was one of the research questions of this study. Although Macdonald and Clayton (2013) argue that the effect of technology on the lives of disabled people is an exaggeration, issue of studying from blind specific perspective is needed. This is necessary because for blind people the technology and use of internet is more than spending a free time or reading something from computer instead of from an Inc. print paper, its meaning is a switch that enables them to enable something in which they were disabled before.

What the participants tell seems confirming this hypothesis. Let's begin from the participants who have become blind later in their lives. As known, Lemi lost his sight completely, after 50 years of age. Being able to use technology and reading books have become good facilitators for his positive perception of blindness.

> "I listened to Mr. Kerim's speech and meanwhile I got used to the computer. He set up Jaws and I started it with Jaws. At that time your thing, braille, came up and the Turkish translation in the technic came. When the Turkish translation came, I couldn't speak any foreign languages. It is the thing that I most feel the absence of but I could never learn it. I either convinced myself or you know there are really people that have problems in learning languages, maybe we could categorize me as one of them. So, we carried on and since that day we are with computers. Let's me put it this way, in these 13 years I have read almost all the works written on Atatürk in addition to the history of the Turkish Republic and Ottoman since The Tanzimat" (Lemi, Appendix H.146).

Rıza, after becoming blind in 2007, had to wait in his house for five years for connecting to world again. When he went to a center in city, his life changed. He has become employed now.

> "In 2012, when ÖMSS was going to be held I was told to take the exam. I asked what would happen if I took it. They told me that I could be a civil servant and I said that even if I became one, for what could they possibly be employing me. My friends insisted on these and that but I was absolutely negative on taking the exam. Then, there was approximately 1 month left to the exam when I registered for it. After that, I met with YYY, who is the person in charge of the visually disabled library in the XXX city, just one month before the exam for the sake of my mother. After meeting him life had changed for me. Let me put it this way, after going to the visually disabled library more often; the vocalization of the book, the programming of the computers and the technologic advancement in the computers and in the phones… After seeing these, at those times there was a systematic change in the curriculum of the open plan schools; therefore, new books were only

> printed rather than vocalized. At that time, what I saw was that someone calls from Erzurum and asks that I have these things to be vocalized could you do that? They immediately vocalized them and then sent them right away to Erzurum. I saw the work and activities done and thought that it was really priceless what they did there. And I worked there voluntarily for a very long time. I went there daily and did a work sharing on the folders, we generally shared it. There I learned the computer and I learnt to use Nokia. They said that there are some apps in Nokia; they mentioned some app called Talks. Then I tried to figure out how it worked, how it was to be set up, how to learn to use it for one and a half months. Afterwards, I learned the app by myself. After striving even with the technology, I thought that a visually disabled person is only lacks the time when compared to a sighted person. I learn that we can do no other thing less" (Rıza, Appendix H.147).

Computer and doing something on computer independently has also changed the thoughts of Rüya about blindness like Rıza.

> "I could say that a computer is an important device for people who are not sighted because it is their eye. For example, reading a newspaper, using the internet. Today computer is regarded as internet. Reading daily newspaper online, I love listening to newspapers. However, who will vocalize them? Who would do that every day for me? Following newspapers, following all the news from the internet, writing something, printing something… I believe that these are good things. Almost all the things that normal people do with the computer could be done by people who are not sighted; I believe there is no difference anymore. Or course there is a difference. We are out of reach of something but I think that we will get used to it by using them more often. (…) For example in the workplace to do something, to fulfill a duty or to print a document all of these you can do as simple as calling your friend in the next desk. It showed me that I can produce something. I mean it enabled me to find various resources in various exams; the source scarcity is gone now thanks to the computer we can read many books in addition to various documents. I think the most important factor is: that it made me reach books because before these there were braille alphabet books but they were not easy to get and were pretty hard to read. In addition to that braille alphabet books were complicated when it came to print them; however, now with the computer we can find vocalized books in various libraries and this leads to the opening of more libraries. Thanks to these libraries I could easily get many books, which was really advantageous for me. In short, I could say that this is a window opening to the world" (Rıza, Appendix H.148).

For Rüya, computer and internet did not only become the opening window to the world, it has also become a base line for her right seeking activities in her employment life.

> “I could say that now it was enough! Because I strived for years, asking the authorities to build a structure, to buy a book reading machine. I also stated my request written and my institution was always by my side. At last, I thought it had been two years that I have stopped striving because it was useless. Last year, I wrote another petition and thanks to that the Ministry of Revenue Administration called me and said that I asked for an allowance and that I have to repeat my request. I asked them why I had to repeat it; because they wouldn’t send it anyway. Then lately I repeated it, I asked an allowance for a reading machine and a computer. It was a sum of 7.000 liras and we got that amount as allowance at last. However, some things cannot be reached by personal struggling. For example, there are there are hundreds of personnel that work in the treasury if we strive together we would get good consequences but like I said personal struggling does not have good outcomes. I was struggling since 2005 and now 9 years have passed and I just now could get some outcome” (Rüya, Appendix H.149).

For Münire, computer helped her to read a lot of books too.

> “MD: Now, after the computer technology book came out, you know I turned into a person that reads book like crazy. This is because I had a hunger for reading books and I still could not get enough of it. I did this also when I was in the XXX city and the books I read had a big contribution broadening my horizons. This is not the contribution of my post; this is thanks to my readings” (Münire, Appendix H.150).

Use of computer and internet changed the isolated life of Abidin dramatically. As it is remembered, Abidin did not continue to his education after primary school and had to stay in his village with his mother. Computer helped him to connect to the world and other blind people again. Here the importance of blind chat rooms should be also underlined.

> “What happened, I bought internet but I had heard it from a friend: and what happened, look there are chat rooms as this. So, because I had an inborn instinct to chat I was inclined to search them. I called some people, why do I tell you that; when people did not give an answer from those chat rooms at last I wrote “BizBize” to Google. “BizBize” chatting, because my friends who can see have read it to me and told me that there is such a thing. For “BizBize” chatting I wrote “Tim Talk” or such a thing. I came across to a number that belongs to a person from the Support and Education Association for the Blind. I directly called the number. I told him the entire story. I told that I knew nothing regarding the rooms. He told me that they have rooms and all the rest of the story and they directed me to someone else. Then they directed me to another person, from whom I got the first technical support. Arranging the room and etc. and she/he told me to get a new audio card. I was asking myself what this audio card was and what I should do with that. I was scared because I knew nothing about it. Then I shut down the computer and when I opened it, the computer was running. Then I got connected day and night and asked people these and that. What is Jaws? What is the shortcut to this? Technical support and what do I know… these and that. Whatever we learned, may God bless Engin Albayrak. We met with him in one of the chat rooms and he had a very huge contribution. Engin Albayrak teaches some courses in his chat room. I mean every week thanks to God it is a must that I ask 5-10 questions (Laughs.). (…) Look buddy, whom can I find in the countryside that know what a blind is; what blindness is. This is a big blessing. Internet is a blessing. Engin Albayrak is a blessing. It was always that way buddy, I learned it so and the apps are so” (Abidin, Appendix H.151).

In conclusion, if people have chance to use technology and if they are given the necessary accessibility atmosphere, what they believe about themselves, their abilities and disabilities could be changed. Technology, interrelation under correct models and conditions, accessibility and the necessary space for use of existing potentials are key factors of changing the perception of disability. That is to say, if people are given a necessary space to use their independent living skills, if they meet with the correct people and organizations in which they could learn independent living skills, if they own necessary technology and accessibility, what they think about their blindness and blind identity would be different from those, who cannot have such kinds of atmosphere.

4.10 Employment Experiences

Eighteen out of 36 participants in this study reported that they are currently working. Although the main aim of the study is not related to employment problems, listening the employment experiences and their affects to the perception of disability could give some clues about job interventions and further studies. In addition, this will give an opportunity to compare the self-employment experiences of this study and the findings of Church et al. (2007) in Royal Bank of Canada. Church et al. (2007) found 5 main themes from their interviews with 800 disabled workers of RBC. Those are hiding tendency of disability, the conflict between real performance of disabled workers and manager called keeping up, waiting of work place accommodations, informal learning and keeping light strategy which is making jokes about disability for discomforting nondisabled workers and managers.

Since all participants of the study are blind or partially sighted people, and since they have to formally document their disabled conditions as a part of employment process, finding hiding tendency is not technically possible. They have to disclose their disability. Nevertheless, such disclosure created some problems. In Turkey, for most of the governmental jobs, people have to take a medical health report to prove that they are healthy enough to do that job. When you are blind, the medical doctors could be reluctant to give such routine health report. Then even if you could pass the necessary exams and have rights for that employment, you would not take that job. Oya had experienced such problems after university. She had become a music teacher.

> "OD: And I take away the medical report. I have 65% medical report. The doctor did not prescribe that I could do music teaching or teaching in general. She/he also did not write that I can't. She/he told me that I am 65% visually disabled. "Go and show this medical report" she/he said. I showed the

> medical report to the Ministry of Education but they didn’t accept it. They wanted that the doctor in the hospital decides. While the doctor told me: “How could I decide that who could be a teacher. Then I will tell them that you are not able to teach. Do you want this? I do not have any criterion.” Then I took the file to the Ministry of Education. The officer there said: “Maybe she has just a high school graduation how do I know. Who would license her as a teacher?” She/he said that into my face and I can do nothing against it. I said: “Really? Would no one license me as a teacher? Then I thought that how could I possibly be teaching? If anything happens to the students I could not see it. If this happens I could not do this. And I approved it also in my mind. The person was actually insulting me and I just proved that she/he was right. This is because people around me say the same things. That moment has affected the next 5 years of my life so deeply that I cannot tell you how damaged I was. That led to many bad things. The things that I lived inside me until I was appointed for 30 days…” (Oya, Appendix H.152).

Oya could begin her occupation after a long pursuit. However, as she said, those disappointments affected her perception about herself very negatively and she fell into the trap of internalized ableism. Unfortunately, a lot of disabled people experience similar problems before taking a job in Turkey and such bureaucratic barriers start decreasing the self-esteem from the beginning of working period.

The problems actually do not finish after difficult employment process. Like Church et al. (2007) the keeping up theme also emerged as the most main theme of employment experiences. After entering a job, blind people have to prove their real performance to their managers and colleagues. Let’s listen Oya again.

> “At the beginning I had many problems here. I came and how can I say… This is the most elite school of XXX city. It is the best in many aspects. From this standpoint it is the best other than the private schools. Actually there are only two private schools. They have a different society. I mean the blind society. In this aspect it is the “50. Yıl” society. They are now a society or something like that. Of course they reproached me to this school. They really reproached me as a teacher to this school. I felt that so much that even after three and a half years later I can still feel that. They reproached me! I came and there was another music teacher that I worked with in our school. The teacher run into a parent of one of my students from my old school. She/he asked him what kind of a person I was. He answered: I don’t know him. He is new and I couldn’t get the opportunity to know him. She/he said that even though he was my best friend. We still have contact and his wife is a teacher

> at my school. He told the parent that I am a hardworking and a good person, adding that I always try to do my best about my profession. He also told that I would never avoid any difficulty and that I would do my best until the last second. He depicted me as a very good person. Then the parent replied as she should have chosen a school less in the center as this one. She could not stand it here in this school. This is not a proper school for her" (Oya, Appendix H.153).

Oya says that she still feels alone in her school.

> "I can say that I am lonely. I have never had a friend. I remember days in the school when I went to class and returned without speaking to any of my classmates. You just attend the class and leave the room and nobody talks to you. Like I said before, I wanted to join a group but there would be a disconnection in the group because of the lack of sight. I still have no group of friends that have embraced me. When you go out to get a cup of tea, how do you do? You call 4-5 friends of yours. However, I never had such a friend circle. No one would bother to question "Where is Oya?". Only if I am there and there are people that much or less love me they would ask me whether to come or not but if I am not with them there would never be one that ask whether I would come. Maybe this is my fault, I don't know. This is all linked to each other. Realizing blindness too late, being unable to build a structure, being unable to express yourself accurately to other people…"(Oya, Appendix H.154).

Damla experienced the keeping up conflict process too at the beginning. She was sent to a hospital as psychologist after graduation.

> "Yes I was appointed with the psychologist post and in the first day that I went to my workplace there was a meeting on a question that ran: "We have a new appointed blind psychologist in our hospital. What will we do? The head physician, her/his deputy, the director of the hospital and the psychiatrist; I think the head physician was meant to be there but she/he was out of country at that time. They told me to come and asked me how I plan to come to the hospital and where I lived. I said that I live in XXX center. They asked how I planned to come. I replied them that it was my problem. They told me that I have the right to change my position by mutual consent but I said that this was my choice to come here. I gained this right. I knew my right of exchanging positions but I knew nobody to exchange. I had just two days to use my right but I could never find somebody and I had no intention to do that. Then the psychiatrist told me that she/he wanted the most that they have a physiologist in the hospital. She/he did not even tell her/his name. When we were leaving I asked her/him what her/his name was. She/he told me that

> she/he wanted a psychologist but one that can do tests. Then I told her/him that when we graduate from the university when do it without test certificates. We take special courses for this and every test takes a course. If the hospital management sends me to take these courses I could easily apply these tests, I have no hindrance of doing the test and even if they had sent someone else rather than me she/he could not do the test. So, I was the best one available for that time. I was really demoralized and while returning home I cried a lot in the ferry but when I think now I was the one who had accepted everything and had asked for nothing and I believe that I put a good attitude" (Damla, Appendix H.155).

Çağla suffers from another very important fact of employment: Mobbing. Like Çağla's case, if there is a competition in a job, blindness can be exploited more by the other side of competition.

> "Then I started to work at the telephone central. A dental technician was working at that post before me. She was replaced when I came in. This is because we both were civil servants and one had to be replaced. They wanted to pull some strings and asked a favor from the main government party because the woman didn't want to leave. Therefore, they never wanted me there. The other woman in the room was a tough one; she also asked to be replaced so as not to work with me. I got used to the workplace but they wouldn't accept that. They told me to speak with the head physician and ask to be replaced to the radiography section and told that I would like that more. They meant that a person has to start form the bottom to be competent in one's job. That section was the upmost step for them. Therefore, I had to ask to be replaced to the radiography section. However, I just told them that I was unable to do x-ray. Anyway, I started to work there and time passed and a friend of mine from the other clinic came to visit me in the lunch break. For example, when a phone call came the other woman would not let me do my job. She always told me that I had to pass it to her and she will put them through. This she was doing so that she can say that I could do nothing there and I had to be replaced. They did not give me any wardrobe so that I can put my clothes in. Then, we had no fixed menu and everyone had to bring their lunch from home; however they never left me space to fit in my lunch. The woman that was replaced had not taken her belongings form the room with the intention that she would come back soon. I asked for a place to put my lunch but there were only wardrobes where you hang your stuff at the top and the slippers were put at the bottom. They told me to put my lunch above the slippers and I refused to put them there because it seemed inappropriate" (Çağla, Appendix H.156).

Ender also says that his colleagues in his first job complained about his insufficiency to the manager.

> "They always complained about me when I was working. Like I couldn't take my meal or that I was doing these and that. Like that place was no Red Crescent. Then the person who placed me to the post was the execution judge. One of my bosses was in prison because of fraud. He knew the judge from there and therefore they could not send me away. If it weren't for the judge, they would never take me in or they would sack me as soon as possible" (Ender, Appendix H.157).

Waiting emerged as another important theme related to employment experiences. Church et al. (2007) reported that disabled workers have to wait for work place accommodations like software upgrades or purchases of technological equipment. Rüya experienced such kind of process.

> "I could say that now it was enough! Because I strived for years, asking the authorities to build a structure, to buy a book reading machine. I also stated my request written and my institution was always by my side. At last, I thought it had been two years that I have stopped striving because it was useless. Last year, I wrote another petition and thanks to that the Ministry of Revenue Administration called me and said that I asked for an allowance and that I have to repeat my request. I asked them why I had to repeat it; because they wouldn't send it anyway. Then lately I repeated it, I asked an allowance for a reading machine and a computer. It was a sum of 7.000 liras and we got that amount as allowance at last" (Rüya, Appendix H.158).

Zeliha and her blind friends in a private company also experienced that waiting process. When they began working in a call center, since necessary screen reader is not purchased, they had to listen the incoming calls only for a while.

> "Yes, yes really much. We were very crowded in the call center and listened to the calls. It was a really crowded place. It was a place where we and other people didn't know what to do. We got confused and had many problems. We sat there and listened to the calls. I thought whether it would be always like that. I thought that if this is it, then why are we here? So, it was a problematic

> period for us. Yes the call center was kind of problematic” (Zeliha, Appendix H.159).

Until this phase, the negative employment experiences were told. It is inevitable to meet a prejudgment at first phases of any job for a blind person. The performances of blind people might be underestimated, mobbing can be experienced and waiting processes could occur. Here, what kinds of resisting strategies are followed is important in terms of the embodiment approach. It could be seen that the affirmer participants could show resistance to disbelief of their performance. Damla, despite the prejudgment to her performance, did not give up.

> “Thanks to the officer from the social services! She/he did no help. I always had to figure out stuff myself. I had to call every section of the hospital more than one time when a patient arrived. Then I was a person they asked for in that section. This is because I have always been a calm person and when nervous people come and face a calm one, they relax. When they saw somebody who was calm and tried to help, they relaxed. The officer from the social services was not that kind of a person. I was somebody they always asked for” (Damla, Appendix H.160).

As it can be seen, Damla used her personal embodying characteristics and this characteristic helped her to show high performance.

Berat is another person who could use his embodiment for his good performance.

> “At first, I think like one and a half year, there was a project that was operated together with the Human Resources. They were looking for an employee. We were doing that job. We called the candidates and talked on the phone and analyzed them if they panic or whether they are suitable for the job. And as they say we visually disabled people can understand the voices easier. There is really such a thing and we made use of this, choosing many employees for them. I did that a lot; I mean I remember calling 100

> candidates in 1 day. We had a simple excel table. Because we knew excel we had no problem in it" (Berat, Appendix H.161).

Polat also told that at the beginning, he experienced the similar things like Damla and Oya. However, later, he has become an important part of his working place. He is currently one of the labor union representatives of his employment field.

> "There I was successful afterwards. They liked me there and asked for me. I am now in a distinctive position. I took twice the promotion exam and got the nonsensical deputy technician post, because we pulled the strings and didn't take the exam, now I am a chef. However, despite that I am a loved person whose character they like and they trust. Nobody avoids taking the night shift with me. Even if I have a discussion with somebody we don't get offended. I mean it doesn't take long to get along again. We have such an understanding" (Polat, Appendix H.162).

In addition, when the necessary substructure is provided, the performances of blind people could be increased very much. Let's listen Damla again.

> "Then they made me take a course to learn MMPI. Better to say I said that there was an MMPI course and if the hospital was going to pay the price I would like to attend. Then one day the psychiatrist called me but I could figure out if she/he wanted to tell me a bad thing or a good one. She/he told me that she/he was reading a report of mine and wanted to know what I meant with a particular part. I told the details. Then she/he told me that she/he was not expecting me to write such a report and added that I could write good reports. Namely, I think she/he apologized in her/his way" (Damla, Appendix H.163).

Uğur also met with a positive manager attitude when he first took to the job.

> "Having a career was a good thing for me in that, the head of the financial department was a friend of my brother when the first assignments were held in the tax office and at that time that the tax offices were affiliated to the financial department. She/he talked with some of the head of financial departments so that they could arrange a good place for me. Then they assigned me to a good tax office. The manager that I was working with was a good person. She/he was not liked by many of the officials because she/he

> had a different lifestyle. Therefore, I had no problems. At that time I had an advocacy license. I was at the point of changing my post because I had done my internship. And the tax offices are not places that a blind person can work in both because of the job definition there and the systems they work in do not enable that. Then, I went there and talked to the manager. The manager asked me where I wanted to be placed. I told that she/he had the say but that the tax office is not a place where a blind person can work. I was told either to be placed in the telephone central or in the department where they hold the tax cases stemming from litigious advocacy. The manager told that there are many people in the telephone central and I would change my post in the end; therefore, I could help the tax cases the time I was there working with them. Then he appointed me to the litigious advocacy service" (Uğur, Appendix H.164).

Berat entered to a private company after the technological equipment and assistive software support is provided. Let's look at his words.

> "Then I worked casually, in professional calling, such as authorizing credit cards, address guidance and sales. I was good in the sales. I won a quarter of a gold coin for being the best in my group. (…) Yes we had a monthly sales quota. I exceeded that quota. I was the best in the team at that time. After 1 year passed I had become of one the team. Then nobody told me not to do these and that because I was visually disabled. Everybody got used to me" (Berat, Appendix H.165).

Ender mentioned about the consequences of his second employment period. After the problematic first employment process told above, Ender started a new governmental job, then he could be able to complete his high school and university with the help of this positive job atmosphere. According to him, after employment, the attitudes of his family have changed.

> "..and the working place had such an advantage: Despite graduating from secondary school, my family thought that I can't produce or work anywhere. I broke this stereotype. That was the most important for me. Then my family also accepted the fact. By the way, I want to add that before having a career they didn't take me as serious. However, after earning money and contributing to the family budget, my opinion started to mean something for them. This is a huge detail for me. This strengthened my authority in the family and I still got the authority. I even have authority over my married

> siblings. At least they don’t do anything without consulting me. This was the case. I turned from knowing nothing into knowing everything” (Ender, Appendix H.166).

Unfortunately, everyone is not as lucky as Ender. Çağla says that she is exposed to pressure to give her salary to her family. “Yes from many places. The folks in the neighborhood told me that I had to go to my grandparents and give them my debit card so that they can use it because they sponsored my school career” (Çağla, Appendix H.167).

Both positive and negative attitudes affecting the employment lives of blind people could be observed. As Church et al. (2007) stated, disabled people meet disbelief about their performances and attitudes are full of prejudices. They have to wait for necessary accommodation and sometimes they are exposed to mobbing. Despite those barriers, people do their best to develop some resisting strategies. As Sera Varlender (2012) stated, sometimes they use their embodying experiences for better performance like Damla and Berat. As Church and her friends stated, they use some informal learning strategies to make themselves accepted by their colleagues like Polat and Uğur did. Some others did not give up to fight for their technological rights like Rüya. Thus, the consequences of employment life depend on the interaction between the job related barriers and resisting strategies of disabled people. As Campbell (2009) and Hughes & Paterson (1997) suggest, when people get rid of the influences of internalized ableism and when they rely on their embodiment experiences including the disabled part, then, their resisting strategies to the hegemony of normality would be stronger.

4.11 Possible Consequences of Perception of Disabilities

One of the research questions of the present study was the possible consequences of perception of disability. The third and fourth steps of identity development of Carol Gill (1997) is coming together and coming out process. On those two steps disabled people accept their disabled part as a whole and start seeking their desired places in the society. Thus, when a positive identity development occurs, possibly people could be more active in right seeking activities and NGOs. Darling (2003) also stated that the affirmers and crusaders tried to identify with disability subculture for more accessibility and play active roles on disabled right seeking events. Hahn & Belt (2004) also confirmed that most of the activist disabled people have positive self-affirmation and they reject the magic pill for a cure.

Thus, it has been hypothesized that if the perception of disability is more positive, then the struggle of activism could be more. The reports of participants partly confirmed this hypothesis. Among the affirmer participants 8 of them reported that they took part actively either in an NGO or disability office of their universities. While four of them are currently active in an NGO, two of them reported that they were managers of disabled organizations in the past. Two of others, are not in an NGO but taking active roles in disability right seeking struggles of their universities.

When it comes to partial affirmers, 7 of 11 participants reported that they took part actively in an NGO. 6 of them are currently active.

The interesting result has come from confused perceivers. All of the participants who have mixed ideas about blindness and who are not sure that blindness is a deficiency or not, reported that they played active roles in NGOs or other right seeking activities. Thus, if people think that there must be something to do for more accessible, more independent and barrier free life, the degree of pride does not make difference.

However, when the normalization tendency increased to a point, the right seeking activities can decrease. Only one participant out of 7 negative perceivers and normalizers reported an active NGO life.

Beyond the numbers, the important curiosity is to seek what motivates people to attend to the right seeking activities and NGOs. Some possible answers of this question are going to be focused on the remaining pages of this section.

In order to seek the reason of the motivation, first of all, the possibility of right seeking tendency will be discussed. The second motivation theme has become the lack of accessibility, discriminatory actions, and resisting strategies of people against such disadvantageous situations. Those concepts will be discussed in detail. Finally, the negative perceptions of the current NGOs among older and younger participants will be focused and some suggestions will be made related to this issue.

4.11.1 General Right Seeking Tendency

To analyze the motivation of participants that attend to NGOs, the talks of most activist participants in all groups were studied. Three participants from affirmers, three participants from partial affirmers, three participants from confused perceivers and one participant from negative perceivers who played very active roles on NGOs currently or in the past were reanalyzed. When those 10 people are considered, it can be seen that most of them are also active in different NGOs other than blind related organizations. Baki is one of them from affirmers. He is a young university student but very active in different NGO’s.

> "I have contact with the other NGO's. There is a magazine XXX. I try to enhance myself. I try to do some readings. I try to improve. Other than this when there is a panel or meeting in the school and if it fits me I try to participate. (…) The last 3-4 years I wouldn't miss the 1st of May for the world. I just couldn't participate when I was in the States. I can go to various activities not just protests. Such as concerts" (Baki, Appendix H.168).

For Baki, the right seeking struggles have to be thought holistically.

> "I think we have to see the bigger picture. For example if we think of a disability NGO, we would focus on disabilities. But there is a fact that we have minority problems, the Kurdish problem, the Alevi problem, LGBT problems and etc. I personally think that while handling a problem, one has to discuss it not with the respondent but with people that have other problems. Then I think the person you are discussing could be more understanding. So, we have to be in a dialog, be part of it" (Baki, Appendix H.169).

Ender from the partial affirmer group had firstly done something's on labor unions before his activities on blind related NGOs.

> "Ender: In 1979 I again discussed with my family on this topic. Because of the political atmosphere of that time I participated in political protests. I was really political that time. I was in the protest both personally and as a group with friends. My father was afraid and even thought not to let me go to school. Thanks to a relative I made it working in a factory. At once I started to earn money. Then I was fired from my first job."
> Engin: Why?
> Ender: Because of trade-union activity. I was not going to stop" (Ender, Appendix H.170).

Deniz also reported that before blind related activities, he had attended to a lot of NGOs and volunteer organizations.

> "Let's go from general to personal. With the energy of my youth, we read leftist books such as Deniz Gezmiş's life and their generation. I saw the injustice in the society and linked it into today's world. Then we wanted to help the country, help the world. We were excited, extrovert and had a courageous soul and had to start from somewhere. And in some of the blogs I

> asked where to start. There was a columnist website, maybe it still exists. It was called "Yazar port" and there people from every political view could write something. One had the opportunity to write once a day. It was like really writing in a column. There everybody was a writer. Both the leftist and the rightist… Everybody that was a member of the website could comment. I didn't like it because I want that even people that have no membership could comment. Even people who just visit the website should be able to comment, so that there will be as many aspects as possible. Nobody thought such things but we thought of such stuff. We had to start from somewhere to change something. This started in the second semester of my high school education, maybe when I was 15 or 16. It even dates back earlier than this date because I found the attitude of some of my classmates rude when I was in secondary school, especially the relationship between girls and boys. I didn't like it when boys were dominant; I never accepted the fact. I tried to support my girlfriends but when I intended to do so I faced a strong reaction. I think this is an inborn instinct or it has to do with the upbringing of the children. If I weren't working in an association concerning disabled people, I would be working in a platform concerning people's rights. The fact that I am working in a job that concerns the disabled is that it has to do with me" (Deniz, Appendix H.171).

As mentioned before, Polat is still very active in his labor union.

> "İstanbul Altı Nokta Association came later, it was not in the university. That is afterwards. We had some clubs in the school. We became members of Uluslararası İlişkiler Kulübü, Atatürkçü Düşünce Kulübü, Halkbilim Kulübü. (…) I have been actively the representative of the syndicate. In the end we are officials that are bound to the 657 numbered law and the officials are members of the syndicate. In the education field of operation, health field of operation and office field of operation…" (Polat, Appendix H.172).

Those participants, summarized above, have taken their NGO and right seeking experiences in to the service of disabled community later.

4.11.2 The Role of Lack of Accessibility and Discriminating Applications

Another motivation of blind people to attend blind-related NGOs is their bad experiences and their exposure of discriminatory actions. Figen is one of them; she experienced her first disappointments in ÖSYM exam like Baki.

> "Engin: Have you ever participated in a protest?
> Figen: I was in the OSYM protest because I had been affected badly.
> Engin: What was in OSYM that disturbed you and made you participate?
> Figen: If I was placed in the XXX University in 2007 it was not because of me it was because of OSYM. It was a bad year for me and OSYM was the cause of that. I know that this is personal but I would never want that people experience what I went through. When I compare the questions that I was exempt from and the ones that I was not; the ones that I was exempt from were really easy 20 second questions while the others were difficult integral questions. There was no difference I mean if I was asked the other ones there might be a possibility that I correct my faults. There is a huge difference between math1 and math2. The question type that is in math1 is not available in math2. For example both were factorizations. And there was my reader. Normally I finish the Turkish part in 45 minutes but that day it took 70. Once I have finished the literature and social sciences part in just 9 minutes; however, that day it took 50 minutes. So these were things not related to me" (Figen, Appendix H.173).

Ender also suffered from the inaccessible exams and fought for them.

> "They kind of help us. That year a history teacher came to help us in math. I also helped a bit. Because the history teacher could not read math. I told them that a professional in the field of mathematics should be here. The history teacher held my hand and drew a triangle. The teacher was well intentioned but could not the read inside and outside the parenthesis. Because of this I couldn't pass math in my first year. I failed a course that I normally could have passed. The second year we protested against it. We said that if they really wanted to help us there had to be professionals in their own field. Then it was asked to the management of the XXX High School. It was then asked to the Ministry of Education and they accepted it. So, we passed the mathematic classes. Because there is a huge difference between the reading of a branch teacher and one that has nothing to do with that field" (Ender, Appendix H.174).

When Deniz first went to university, he met an interesting application for their exam and this increased his assertiveness.

> "When we first went there research assistants took our exams. We thought that the general process was this way. The professor came the other day and asked whether or not we had our reader and laughed sarcastically. This was the second thing that I could not forget. One is the thing of the director and

> the other is this. “Oh my god what for a tradition is that.” and people laughed sarcastically. This has to be something that raises your self-confidence; for example you ask for something but even if it is complete nonsense you enhance your ability to ask for something. We were looking for readers in cafeterias, cafes and this went on for classes, for weeks and even one semester” (Deniz, Appendix H.175)

Here there is an important question: a lot of people are exposed to such kinds of accessibility problems and discriminatory attitudes. Then, why do some people prefer to fight to change? The key factor is their previous beliefs about themselves and prior successes. Figen was a very successful student before university and she knew that she could manage academic difficulties. Baki was also a very bright student in his high school period. Ender spent a very good school for blind period, then independently he attended to many right seeking activities and had become successful. Deniz has also a very good academic and intellectual background. Thus, when those kinds of people met with an inaccessible situation, they did not give up and choose to fight to change such inaccessible traditions.

4.11.3 Negative Perception of Current NGOs

One of the other motives of some participants for their right seeking activities is their dissatisfactory ideas about the current NGOs. Most of them think that the current blind related organizations could not meet their needs and they try to found new organizations. Uğur tried to highlight the problems of old generation blind associations in which he took part.

> “This has actually various reasons. The first is the general situation of NGO’s in the country. Apart from some exceptions NGO’s cannot have any struggle for rights because to be honest these are not in a place to gain any rights. There is a fact that these critics are in some way true, namely nowadays we

> are following the steps of one man in the country. People have no chance to get what they need unless they directly talk to the prime minister. The minister and other state officials are in no use. Not to state the protests, so there is no way left for the blind associations. This was the first reason. The other is that they have inactivated the associations in that the blind people in the associations started to think about their profit. These people were those who invested their money to the association in the 80's and 90's when we were very active. Then we were students and if there was a trip these people organize they would finance it. Then after things got better and the association started to gain some money they thought that they have paid enough and started to gain profit from this. And this caused the manipulation of the association. For example XXX and I were in the branch management, we were even in the Ankara branch management which I learned afterwards. They told me that Turhan İşli had good expectations from me and that he thought of me as the next president. He had the intention to train me. Then, for example the general secretary of XXX association or such things; we don't use them anymore. This was one of the main disagreements between us. We had some fundamental disagreements; therefore, they inactivated the association. Then the youth has seen that there is nothing left, they just drifted apart" (Uğur, Appendix H.176).

Like Uğur, some other participants told that they are not willing to take part in those organizations currently. Kadir and his friends found their associations under those conditions in 1990's.

> "There you see that there is something to be done, opportunities to make use of. There are really stuff that could be useful. For example it is now kind of a funny story but then the associations were in a dilemma. For example what could unite the associations was that the blind had not enough copies of braille alphabet books and there was no library. So nobody had worries of accessibility. Going somewhere or a cane was not the real problem. Then, between the years 88 and 90, canes were not in production here. Then people had no expectations, no demands. Necati Adıbelli, thanks to him, he started a service in the 90's. He read the newspapers to tapes. So, even if it was with a two day delay, people could listen to the news. We look and found many opportunities. For example, the computer is a fantastic thing. Going to the university is a fantastic thing. Many attend open class schools and get scholarships. We opened many courses such as prep. class courses. And seeing these activities, people like to invest in such services and people want to support us. We now change from being a normal association. For example normal associations either manage a music band or oppose them. Political or ideological structuring was common in the associations, there still is. After getting a good education we are now not interested in such stuff. You have the opportunities to do other things. You see that you have the power to do

> these things. And I went to the States in ‘92; the relationships and the friendships there led to good things” (Kadir, Appendix H.177).

Deniz and Faruk, like Kadir decided to contribute to a new organizations due to insufficiencies of the current structures. Deniz says that they also use the effect of technologies. He also adds that owing to collective discussions, they have also learned and developed.

> “I was in an association in the University prep class but they didn’t take me serious because they had some stereotypes and even if you proposed the most reformist idea you had to convince them first. So, it didn’t go well. I couldn’t even build a website. We did work a lot, prepared the documents but couldn’t get the password from the personnel. And you see what is wrong while you were just in the beginning of learning something. You feel that something is going wrong but you cannot explain that. There is also a mass that believes that something is going wrong, so you are not alone. However, these people are not united. While founding it we thought that there is a social categorization in sociology, people who live in different places but think of the same thing. I actually found it on this basis. This social category can now gather much easier thanks to the internet and the mailing group. I proposed to open a blog but XXX opposed and told that it won’t work. And she/he was right because we barely knew each other and nobody would enter the blog. This was the case and at once we found us in it. And the blind society that was really small once starts to get bigger. Now more than half of the members of the Facebook page consist of blind people and I even don’t know some of them. You are young, understanding and you understand the problems of the disabled rather than their disability. Of course we can also from time to time I cannot say that I know everything. The archive of that group is actually our process of development. We have to go through the mails from 2010 to 2011 and the ones from now. There was a huge change. We, many members and the youth especially have changed. Maybe we oppose the idea that we once supported dramatically or vice versa. However, this always came through development. We educated ourselves here” (Deniz, Appendix H.179).

Faruk attributes their successes to their imaginations and decisiveness for solution of accessibility problems on educational institutions.

> “We were dreaming of the expansion of the group and doing some stuff. For example we had problems such as accessibility in the university. Problems concerning the professors. In 2004 the Ministry of Education assigned some

> teachers but there was controversy that appeared in the media. We thought through and what we could do against it. We were doing brainstorming as to expand. For example, Hz. Osman had a hadith which ran: God will fulfill all the things that you dream for. We dreamed of it and it came true" (Faruk, Appendix H.179)

The positive effects of blind nongovernmental organizations and rehabilitation centers on identity development of blind people cannot be denied. Many blind participants told that they first learn mobility orientation and other independent living skills owing to the existence of those organizations. However, it seems that the existing associations have difficulties to adapt to the new needs of blind people and accessibility problems. The old managers fail to catch up with the technological changes on the lives of blind people. Thus, new generations tend to distance themselves from those associations. Although there are some attempts to form new organizations, the number and size of them is not enough. Nevertheless, for accessibility needs, for strong interdependency, NGOs and internet platforms are very necessary. When people feel that they are not alone and the problem of blindness derives from the environmental barriers, the power of blind related right seeking platforms will increase. But first of all, the current ones need to make people believe that they could address the education, discrimination and accessibility problems of disabled persons.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This dissertation has begun with two quotations from Cemil Meriç and Kennet Jernigan (1983). Cemil Meriç is a very famous and important author and a sociologist in Turkey. Kennet Jernigan is a very important and famous activist and a leader in blind community in United States. The common point of those two people is their blindness. Both of them lived with blindness. Jernigan is blind from the birth. Meriç had become blind when he was 38. This difference of blindness age most possibly determined their attitude gap to blindness very drastically. Yes, becoming blind after middle ages will create a big emulation to sighted life. But, Meriç wrote most of his books after he was blind. Thus, his blindness did not prevent him from producing. However, these two men conceptualize blindness opposite to each other's. While Meriç defines sighted life as living implying that being not sighted is not living, Jernigan directly opposes to this idea and sees blindness as only a characteristic like being tall or short, being right handed or left handed. Then, why could those two blind people define blindness differently although they could do a lot of important things when they are blind? Could becoming blind early or late be the only reason? And why is that difference so important? What could be results of such differences of perception?

As a totally blind person, the researcher experienced the same dilemma in his life. He decided to make that dissertation after two events he experienced. He reported these events in following quotation. “One day, I went to the house of a friend of mine who is also totally blind. She was living with her sighted sister together. In their houses, I observed that the environment is full of barriers. Furniture and coffee table with glass on it were in the middle in an inhibitory position. I asked my friend about the reason of this. She said yes, it is difficult but my sister said it looks esthetically very good. Why would she accept the esthetic value of her sister despite her difficulties? On the other hand, my two blind friends decorated their canes with ribbon for their wedding to show their blindness proudly and they embossed their wedding card in Braille also. Why and how those people perceive their blindness differently?" The researcher experienced many controversial tendencies like the quotations above and decided to attend to explain those tendencies.

Such tendencies differences about blindness form the basis of this dissertation. There are a lot of efforts seeking to answer the perception of society about disabled people. Nevertheless, how disabled people live in such an ableist atmosphere is not addressed very much. As Hughes and Paterson (1997) argued, body is an experiencing agent and experienced impairment and disability together. Thus, the synthesized experiences of different bodies differently will create various ideas and this will lead to the different perception of disabilities.

The aim of this dissertation is to understand the self-perceptions of blind people about themselves in an atmosphere where being normal and ableist culture is imposed on disabled people. As Campbell (2009) explains, to construct a normative individual, there is a need to create disability. Since disabled people fall into the nonhuman category, abled bodies should act as protectors of them. The impact of such a devaluing position and the resisting strategies of disabled people caused different typologies of perception.

Darling (2003) first mentioned those typologies related to the orientations of disabled people. She categorized disabled people under 7 categories in terms of their perceptions about their disabilities. These are normalizers, crusaders, affirmers, situational identifiers, isolated affirmers, or people who live in resignation or apathy. After that suggestion, Darling and Heckert (2010) developed a questionnaire to measure that typology called questionnaire on Disability Identity and Opportunity (QDIO). In that scale they studied the perceptions of disability under 4 categories which are disability pride, social model, medical model and exclusion.

In the interviews of this study, the findings revealed that the perception of participants can be evaluated under disability pride category on a 5-degree continuum. According to this, if the disability pride is the most, those participants can be rated as 1 and when the disability pride is least, they can be scored as 5. After such categorization strategy, it emerged that the perception characteristics of participants rated as one is very consistent with the affirmer typology. Like that, participants who are rated as 5, are very close to the normalizer definition of Darling (2003). The other participants have tendencies to carry some characteristics from affirmers, crusaders, situational identifiers and normalizers, but considering their characteristics on a continuum rather than labeling them could give more robust point of view.

Before discussing the characteristics of those 5 categories, it should be worth mentioning that almost none of the 36 participants talked about a chaotic, meaningless or dark life. Thus the findings again confirmed the hypothesis of Mackenzie and Scully (2007) and suggestion of Amundson (2005). For McKenzie and Scully (2004), the approaches of nondisabled people to the lives of disabled people are more sympathy rather than empathy and this dramatize the situation.

Related to blind people, the anecdote of Emin Demirci (2005) indicated that the high school students thought that blind people live in a dark world. However, the interviews confirmed the findings of Stenzman (1985) and Gerhart et al. (1994 who found that disabled people evaluate their quality of lives much higher compared to the evaluation of nondisabled people. It has been also observed that almost all participants have some life routines like having a job or education, different free time activities and have various hopes and expectations from the life like all people disabled or not. Even writing something about this topic is meaningless, but it is important to emphasize that disabled people in general and our blind participants on that study do not have lower expectations from the life as nondisabled people think.

As Amundsen (2005) suggests, actually the approaches of nondisabled people about disabled people's quality of life is the consequence of the medical approach which thinks that disability is an individualistic tragedy. When you think the condition of an individual as tragedy and deficiency, then it is evitable to exaggerate the very little life satisfaction of that trajedik individual. As a result, it will be easier to consider that life satisfaction as happy slaves discussed in Amundson's paper. According to this, disabled people deceive themselves about life expectations. However, as Amundson responded to that argument, the judgement of nondisabled people about the lives of disabled people cannot be considered as more superior or objective than the judgements of disabled people themselves. Nevertheless, such kinds of judgements will not be surprising when the ableism literature is studied closely. Campbell (2009) suggest that there is a tendency to devalue disabled people and conceptualize them as nonhuman. When the disabled individual starts making such devaluation about him or herself, then this becomes internalized ableism. In fact, this dissertation can be seen as the search for the degree of internalized ableism among blind people. The findings showed some symptoms of internalized ableism. However, even the participants who most tend to internalized normalcy did not show very lower life satisfaction. Hence, for further implications, it is important to know that the expectations of blind people from the society and environment are not happiness or getting rid of the dark world, but accessibility and removal of barriers. That is to say, most of the participants do not have problems with blindness and not seeing something, but have problems with attitudes of people about their blindness.

This chapter has been organized in such a way that each research questions will be discussed under different headings. First of all, it will begin with the discussion of perception categories. The five perception categories emerging from findings, their similarities and differences with the literature will be focused under this section. Secondly, the most important factor, independence issue, which is believed to affect perception tendencies the most, will be discussed in more detail. The impact of school for blinds and the impact of mainstream schools will follow the independence issue. After that, the influence of family and its relation with the education and perception will be covered. Then, the question of how a perception can change and what can change it will be discussed more under the heading of possible perception shift. From this study, it can be concluded that the role of technology could be demonstrated very clearly. Hence, the effect of technology has been included to the discussion chapter with a separate heading. Lastly, the influences of employment life with comparison of previous literature will be summarized and discussed. After those determining factors, the consequences of different perception tendencies, and the discussion of current life in blind-related NGO in Turkey will be made.

The limitation of this study and suggestions to further studies will follow that long discussion. After some concluding words, the dissertation will be ended with a recommendation section. The aim of that section is to make recommendations to the teachers, families of disabled people, peers and anyone who have close relations with a disabled person to utilize the findings of present study.

5.1 Discussion of Perception Categories

As mentioned before, 5 perception categories have been determined starting from affirmer blind people to normalizer blind people. In that determination, the suggested typologies of Darling (2003) has become the beginning point. When the perception of affirmers who take one in the current scale is examined, it will be seen that the most clear-cut characteristic is their conceptualization of blindness. For them, blindness is a methodology issue rather than a deficiency. From that perspective, what they say and the approach of social model seem consistent. As known, the most basic approach of the disabled activists in England and USA is the sentence that "Disability is the outcome of social barriers imposed upon top of our impairment (UPIAS, 1976). Later Finkelstein (1980), Oliver (1996) and Oliver (2004) used this basic background and contributed to the development of the social model. According to them, the cause of disability is not the impairment which is individualistic and related to body. Rather, the social restrictions, attitudinal barriers and environmental problems will cause disability.

What the affirmer participants says is parallel with that perspective of the social model. Affirmer participants said that blindness as impairment does not disable their life conditions. It only made them to seek different methods to do something differently. The negative experiences and consequences on their lives is not the result of their blindness rather they are the results of some disabling factors. That characteristic clearly emerged on the question of magic pill. As known, Hahn and Bell (2004) asked the disabled participants an imaginative question: “If there would be a magic pill, would you wish to cure your impairment”? 47 percent of the participants rejected such kind of a cure. In the interviews, that question has been also asked and another question has been added to this: “If you were not a blind person, what kind of life could you have”? This second question distincts the affirmer participants from all other four categories. Most of them told that, being blind made their life better in contrast to general belief of others.

Two important factors might play an important role on such positive answer about blindness. First of all, most of the participants reported that they come from relatively low socioeconomic conditions. Before school years, their families lived in a rural area where the financial income is low and there is lack of information about blindness. 5 of the 11 participants reported that they were living in a village before preschool years. 2 of them were living in small cities. Secondly, 7 of the participants have experience in school for blinds. When one comes from a relatively low income region, the school for blind can play an important role to obtain higher status compared the previous life. Thus, blind people think that if they were not blind, then could not be able to achieve such positions by looking at their old peers and relatives. Hence, affirmers are not sorry due to being blind. In fact, for some participants, the existence of such kind of pill could make their life worse because it can change their all routine. In addition, some participants claim that, currently, they can do anything they wish, and being sighted from this point, would not make a positive change.

In the first presentations of those findings to a blind group, some of them did not believe that some people may be happy with blindness. Their reactions reminded the happy slave example of Amundsen (2005). For people in an ableist atmosphere and living with rules of medical experts, being happy with an impairment could be only a deception. However, the most important reason behind such affirming tendency is the feeling of less disabled. Most of the affirmers graduated from universities, obtained good jobs and believe that they have good life conditions. Thus they feel less disabled or overcame the disabilities imposed upon their blindness. Confirming the hypothesis of the social model, if the social and environmental barriers could be removed, people would not feel impairment as disability (Finkelstein, 2001).

The other important tendencies of affirmers confirmed the claims of Carol Gill (1997) who explain identity development processes of disabled people. According to Gill (1997) disabled people passed four steps for disabled identity development, Those are coming to feel, where they stop blaming their impaired part, coming home, where they come together with other blind people, coming together, where they accepted their impaired part as a whole and coming out, where they seek their place in society as a disabled people. One of the main themes of affirmers in this study is their tendency to see their blindness as a part of their identity. For example, as Şahin, Kadir and Damla said, blindness made their personality more assertive and active. As Raşit said, blindness is only a characteristic like Jernigan (1983) suggest. Hence it seems that most of the participants have completed those four steps.

When the partial affirmers are studied, it can be said that most of the characteristics is similar with the affirmers, In fact, maybe if other observers could read their passage, they could consider themselves sometimes as affirmers, but sometimes confused. Intellectually, they see that blindness is not something most of the times which disable people. A lot of them also have overcome many barriers.

The first important theme emerging from the reports of partial affirmers is the issue of identity like affirmers. However, in that point, people perceive blindness as a compulsory identity in which they do not have the chance to get rid of. If their tendencies from the identity development of Gill (1997) is considered, it can be understood that, they pass coming to feel and coming home steps, meaning they provide interdependency with other blind people and stop blaming their blindness to a degree, however the coming together process seems problematic. They still have difficulty to accept their blindness as a whole.

The reason of this partial acceptance lead us to the other theme observed in positive perceivers. People on this category feel disabling barriers more in their lives. For example, according to Ender, if he had not been blind, he would have been more successful in the academic area. He lost his first job due to his blindness. For Uğur, blindness also prevents him from making a better carrier. For Münire, due to her blindness, she could not make her family happy and she could not obtain her independence until recently.

It is also possible the impacts of crusaders proposed by Darling and Hall (2003) on partial affirmers. Meaning, they are together with blind community, but on some of them, it is possible to see a tendency to distance themselves from them when possible. Ruşen says that he does not like coming together with other blind people if possible. Uğur says that now he has very weak relations with blind organizations compared to his past years. Those tendencies confirmed the claims of Finkelstein (1993) also. He argued that some disabled people tried to distance themselves from others to feel less disabled. However, this is not the main definitive characteristic of those people. In addition, it is very difficult to measure this with such kind of design.

The other emphasized theme is emulation to sighted life. Levent who lost his sight later in his life mentioned this. However, his emulation does not prevent him to think that blindness will not be disabling when the necessary conditions are met.

As such, for partial affirmers, the feeling of disablement because of blindness is felt more and they accuse their blindness for their disabilities, however, this blaming does not lead them to internalize ableism. From that point their tendencies are consistent with the suggestion of Shakespeare and Watson (2001). As Thomas (2004) and Finkelstein (2000) said, Shakespeare have come from the social model perspective and tried to rectify it. According to Shakespeare and Watson (2001) impairment has also roles in disability and it is very difficult to know where disability starts and where impairment ends. However, they suggest that everyone has impairments but some people like the physically impaired or the blind feel disability more compared to other people who are taller or shorter. Thus, like Shakespeare and Watson (2001) suggest, the positive perceivers accepted the role of their blindness on their disabilities more, but they still believe that other social and attitudinal barriers are more important disabling factors than their blindness.

When the perception of confused participants is thought, the influences of various themes depending on the degree of sight lost or change on degree can be seen. For some totally blind people like Polat, Zeytin and Çiler blindness is a factor in their life but it is not the part of their identity. They are not sure that whether it influences their lives positively or negatively. On those participants the influences of situational identification typology of Darling can be found. As known, Darling (2003) suggested that some people have affirming identity when they are together with disabled people and they might have tendency of normalization when they are together with nondisabled people. Although Polat, Zeytin and Çiler have active lives in blind-related NGO to an extent, but at the same time they do not hide their emulation and curiosity to sighted life. For them, blindness is more disabling compared to affirmers and positive perceivers.

The impact of emulation can be more clearly seen on participants who have some sight previously. Although Deniz is very active in blind-related NGOs, for him, colors cannot be told to a blind person. For Rıza, when he has been blind, he has become more dependent to others. For Rüya, after being blind, her life is more restricted. What distinct those people from positive perceivers is their answer to magic pill question. Most of them said that blindness could disable and restrict their life more, thus they could think about taking this pill. Again the felt disability of impairment emerged as a definitive factor.

The other significant factor emerged as continuing perception shift process of some participants. When the interview was made, 7 years had passed after Rıza lost his sight and he told that he met with other blind people and accessibility on recent years. Güven, met with other blind peers and accessibility with university on these last years. Zeytin and Çiler are very young university students trying to find their identities. As such, for those participants the identity formation of Gill (1997) is still continuing. It seems that they are on the coming home process where they come together with other blind people. Thus, what kinds of identity development they will have, can be seen more clearly in their later years.

As a conclusion the general characteristics of confused participants showed parallel points with the bio-psychosocial approach of World Health Organization (2000). World Health organization continuously tries to take environmental and social factors into accounts when defining disability. In 2003, they tried to classify disability under the heading of ICF which is international classification of functioning. Since then, this process is still continuing to be developed and revised. The main idea on this functioning struggle and on bio-psychosocial model is that the interaction between biology and environment defines functioning. The body function and body structure explains the impairment of the individualistic part of the functioning. Activity, participation and environmental factors are also in the picture to measure the whole functioning. ICF is a very important instrument to measure the whole functioning issue, but it is very difficult to think of all factors together and it still puts biology on the top of disability and functioning issue. Thus like bio-psychosocial model, the confused participants are not also sure that whether their blindness disable themselves or not.

Starting from the negative perceivers, the effects of internalized ableism is seen more clearly. Although it is not as much as normalizers, they wish to take the magic pill and for them the ideal and normal thing is becoming sighted. In addition, as Lütfü said, being blind made their life more disadvantageous in an undebatable manner. For Çağla blindness is a limitation for child rearing. For Dursun, sighted life is a hidden emulation for his life. Thus, what those people said approach to the suggestions of Campbell (2009) which proposed that some people internalized that their disability make them more abnormal and deficit. In addition, it seems that those participants feel restriction and disability more compared to other people.

Actually the tendencies of negative perceivers indicate consistent points with medical sociologist Michael Bury (2000 cited in Thomas, 2004). Thomas (2004) summarized the claims of Burry. For Burry (2000 cited in Thomas, 2004), the causal link between impairment and disability is undiscussable. Impairment is the main cause of disability although some environmental factors have also influences.

In addition, it is possible to see symptoms of crusader typology on negative perceivers. None of them reported and NGO activities except Lütfü. He also stated that after employment he stopped his relations with blind-related NGO. Thus, they have limited relations with blind people but mostly they seem frustrated due to blindness.

There were only 3 people who fall into the category of normalizers. Not surprisingly three of them had partial sight in their lives although two of them have become totally blind currently. As such, this is very important to show the relation between perception of disability and degree of sight lost. If people are partially sighted or have some kinds of sight until their adult years, then the potential of negative perception increased significantly. Of course, this does not mean that all partially sighted people perceive their disabilities negatively. For instance, Osman who had also partial sight until the end of his high school age, falls into the affirmer category. However, the reason is very clear for his case. He took a very intensive education related to blindness and blind related abilities in his after university life.

On the other hand, for Oya and Burhan, this is not the case. Burhan reported that he lost his sight completely in the middle of university, then for 10 years, he preferred to stay at his home and give up his carrier. Oya is still partially sighted. Since she did not go to any blind special school, she could not meet other blind people until university. She reported a lot of frustrating events in her educational and occupational life and she believes that the unique reason of them is her blindness or her partial sight.

The most important characteristic of normalizers is their dissatisfaction of their current life in contrast to affirmers and partial affirmers. They are sure that, if they were sighted, their lives would have been better and they would become more independent. So, they believe that they are restricted because of their sight level. Thus, their approaches are very consistent with the medical model and its various versions. Altman (2001) explained different versions of medical related disability model. For instance, Altman summarized that, Nagi model sees pathology and impairment as the main cause of disability. Like this, Verbruge and Jelte model, IOM1 and IOM2 models puts pathology, impairment, functional limitation and disability as the main causes of disability hierarchically. Thus as Burhan clearly summarized, they are disabled because they are blind. Thus for him, fighting for rights is not realistic because the normal is the nondisabled world and they have to conform to that world.

In conclusion, analysis of the different perception categories of blind participants has been made in this heading. The interviews showed that people tend to perceive their blindness from a characteristic or part of identity to the burden and deficiency in their lives like Kennet Jernigan (1983) and Cemil Meriç (Meriç, 2003) quoted at the beginning. Darling and Hall (2003) defined those perception styles as typologies. If their terms are used, the perception ranges from affirmers to normalizers. The perception of people differ according to how they conceptualize blindness in their lives. While affirmers think that, blindness did not disable them and even provided some advantages, for normalizers, blindness is the source of all problems in their lives. As such, the degree of their felt disability and satisfaction, the degree of their felt restriction or independence affected their perception. In the next headings, the effects of different factors on this perception difference will be discussed.

5.2 Discussion of Independence and Perception

Among many determining factors, underlying the role of independence and independent living is necessary. The findings clearly revealed that almost all participants, categorized on 5 perception levels, talked about independence and dependence issue. For normalizers and negative perceivers, the meaning of blindness is dependence and restriction. In other words, they have difficulty in satisfying their desire to live independently. The meaning of independence is very simple: going somewhere alone, reading a book, using computer, shopping on their own etc. That is to say, independence means doing the basic things without the help or permission of others.

It seems that positive perceivers feel more satisfaction for this need. For example, Osman tells that when he succeeded to go on vacation own his own, he has understood that he could do many things as a blind person and blindness is not a disability for doing those things. Damla realized that when she could use cane and go to her classes independently, this starts to change her self-esteem. The self-satisfaction of Figen has increased when she discovered that she could do her homework on the computer. All of those examples are the indicators of independence and change of perception.

When the literature is studied, there are also some studies which indicate the influence of independence in the lives of disabled people. Darling and Heckert (2010) tested the typologies of disabled people. One of their findings showed that disabled people who needed less assistance in their daily lives more took part in pride category. Meaning their perception about disability is more positive. The role salience intervention program of Mpofu (2003) also indicated the importance of independence. In that program the disabled students are given important role in their classes. The results indicated that, when students felt capable of something, their self-esteem increased. The findings of Beach et al. (1995) and the expressions of participants in this dissertation is parallel with the independence dependence issue. Beach et al. (1995) made a series of studies on 46 blind adults. One of their findings demonstrated that adults who felt less dependent on others had also high self-esteem.

Finkelstein (1980) argued that on phase three the reintegration of disabled people to the society will become possible with the effect of technology and increased independence could play an important role. For Finkelstein the independence of people could be achieved through dependence in modern life. The important thing is the right of free choice on independence.

Baron (2010) explains the meaning of independence as autonomy in decision making process. Her interviews in Sweden indicated that disabled participants who needed daily help mostly desire self-determination of the provided services. Oliver (2004) and Yang (2014) also emphasized the importance of independent decision making when demanding a service. As Yang (2014) suggests, independence is not only living self-sufficiently, but it is also facility to make their own decisions in every area of the life. According to him, independence is also independence from institutions.

To sum up, independence have different meanings in literature and in this study. One of the main point is living self-sufficiently. When the self-sufficient skills of participants increased, their perception about themselves and their disability become more positive. In addition, free of choice, self-determination is also a part of independence. People should be given an atmosphere where they can decide what to do, how to do and when to do. Thus education programs about blind people firstly must take the need of independence into account in determining their schedule. Once people believe that they are self-sufficient to do whatever they wish and when they have right for free choice, this will satisfy their need of independence.

5.3 Discussion of Impact of Schools for Blind

Twenty-six out of 36 participants had experience in school for blinds in this study. So, there was an opportunity to seek the mixed effects of school for blinds on the participants. The further studies need to include more people who had totally desegregated education experiences. Related to the influences of school for blind, the dice has two sides. On the one hand, it strengthens the interrelation between blind people which is necessary for identity development, on the other hand, it restricted people's ability to do different things and made participants experience a lot of traumatic and frustrating events. Let's look closer to those two sides.

The emergence of social model happened mostly against segregation of disabled people from the society through big institutions (Finkelstein, 1980, Oliver, 1990, Becket and Campbell, 2015). Finkelstein (1980) summarized the place of disabled people in society in 3 phases. The characteristic of phase one is the conceptualization of disabled people as cripples. For Finkelstein (1980), before industrial age, disabled people are at the bottom of social structure but existed still together with the society. The characteristic of phase 2 is segregation. He suggested that with the industrial age, disabled people were segregated from the society through big institutions like hospitals and schools. The defining characteristic of phase three is the reintegration process of disabled people with the society. Oliver (1990) explains those phases on a more theoretical way. He also argues that segregation and institutionalization are the main characteristics of the industrial age. Finkelstein (2000) in his presentation explains one of the fundamental principles of social model as deinstitutionalization.

In that respect, blind segregated schools can also be seen as part of such institutions. People in their six or seven years of age had to be separated from their families and homes and stayed in boarding school for blinds. Most of the participants still remember the first days and their traumatic experiences. This is different from an ordinary first day school experience of a sighted child who begins to a school next to one's home. Blind children experienced two frustrations together. First, they were separated from their parents. And second, they were segregated from their peers in their neighborhoods. Thus, the findings brought about two tendencies. If participants in their preschool ages felt excluded and discriminated, then they tended to adapt to the school for blind atmosphere more easily. However, if they feel a rich atmosphere where they have a lot of peers or relatives to spend time, and where their parents are more responsive, then the effect of first day trauma lasted for a long time.

When the discriminatory stories of them is added to the picture, the negative impression about school for blinds continue. Many of the participants told some violence or very discriminatory events. It seems that they mostly witnessed to these events or the influence of them in their lives remained limited. As Uğur told, maybe those experiences even increased their capacities of resistance. Again further studies need to include other blind people who did not have chance to continue their education after school for blind years in order to observe the whole effect of school for blinds.

Related to the educational quality, again mixed findings have emerged. Participants mostly reported that, in terms of language, music and social sciences, they took a high quality education. Nevertheless, when it comes to math, science and similar things where numbers maps and other spatial tings are the case, the educational quality dropped drastically. This also indicates the restricted effects of school for blinds. People are forced to go one direction. Thus, a lot of blind students had to continue to social sciences. Since the necessary substructure is not provided sufficiently, this creates a belief that blind people could be successful only in some areas.

Despite such kinds of negative effects, 17 out of 22 affirmers and partial affirmers had experience in school for blinds. Of course, school for blinds have an important role for such positive perception. The most important effect of school for blinds is interrelation. When people come to those schools, they understood that there are other blind people like them and they are not alone. This feeling increased their self-esteem and capability. If they also come from a poor and discriminatory environment where they feel the ableist culture and their deficiencies more, the school for blind atmosphere could act as liberator. This finding supported the argument of Campbell (2009) which suggest that in order to get rid of the influences of ableist culture and internalized ableism, interrelation is necessary. Again Gill (1997) stated that, for identity development, firstly people need to stop themselves due to their disability and come together with other disabled people. Oliver (1996) in his book wrote his experiences about his disability. He admitted that at first, he avoided to be together with other disabled people. However, with time, he understands the power of collective movement. The findings of Loja et al. (2013) also confirmed the interrelation hypothesis. She and her friends made interviews with

7 sighted physically disabled people in Portugal to understand their embodied experiences and resisting strategies. One of their themes emerged as the power of communal attachment with minorities. As people's attachment with other disabled people increased, so did their resisting strategies.

Thus, school for blinds seem to bring the most important atmosphere where the communal attachment strengthens and this could increase the possibility of positive perception. In addition, as many participants told, those schools gave them new instruments to develop resisting strategies in their high schools and universities. As such, school for blinds provided a base for some participants to continue their educations and employments further.

Here, another important finding needs to be mentioned. 10 out of 11 affirmer participants are either university graduates or university students. Thus, they could also have been successful in mainstream schools. That is to say, people may need to understand that they can also exist among nondisabled people. If they do not feel such sufficiency, then their perception about blindness could decrease.

As conclusion, school for blinds have negative and positive effects on participants. In terms of some frustrating and traumatic experiences, those institutions left some probably permanent psychological damages. In addition, the quality of education has restrictive influences forcing people to limited areas. On the other hand, in terms of communal attachment and strong interrelation, those atmospheres have potential to give new instruments for new resisting strategies. Participants found opportunities to learn independent living blind related skills in those schools from their teachers or their peers. Those independent living skills have made them more powerful in integrated life conditions.

Hence, combining the influences of mainstream atmosphere, where people could take more equal education and catch different educational opportunities, and the role of strong communal attachment with others, school for blinds will be necessary. For this, first of all, blind students should continue to their neighborhood schools and should not be separated from their families and childhood friends. This will decrease the traumatic effects of school for blinds. In addition, to provide interdependency and independent skills, they should also go to school for blinds one or two days per weeks where, they could meet with other blind people and learn braille, cane and other instruments to make them powerful in mainstream atmosphere. In school for blinds, besides individualistic training, the collective courses or atmospheres must be provided, because students will need to share and exchange their mainstream school experiences with their other blind friends. In other words, the role of school for blinds needs to be reconsidered. Instead of a segregated atmosphere, the status of those schools can be conceptualized again as preparing institutions for mainstream education. With this new status, the number of them can be increased to provide services to all blind students coming from low socioeconomic conditions.

5.4 Discussion of Mainstream Education

The mainstream education experiences of participants who had experience in school for blinds and who had not, indicate some similarities and some differences. In terms of similarities, both groups used academic performance as a tool of acceptance and resistance strategy. In addition, both groups reported some discrimination directly from school administrations, their teacher or their peers. Lastly, both groups developed some strategies to have more peers.

When the discriminating actions are examined, it is possible to observe the reluctant attitudes of school administrations and teachers. The most common excuse had become the substructure problems and not being ready to accept those students. The supporting arguments from literature has come from Ferri and Connor (2005). They analyzed the articles, reader's and contributors' interpretations on very diverse newspapers about segregated and desegregated education. In that analyses they compared the segregation struggle of racism and disability together. They concluded that school administrations mostly tend to slow down the desegregation process. In addition, special education is used as a tool to segregate people with different races.

After these analyses, they used a new term: gradualism. According to this, school administrators, teachers and nondisabled community excused that the structure of education is not ready enough to include disabled people into mainstream education. This tendency is very similar to reluctance of including people with different races to mainstream education. So, the authors concluded that the inclusion history of race and disability is intertwined.

Oreshkina and Lester (2013) made a similar examination on newspapers about the segregation and inclusion discourses of people in Russia. They examined 32 newspaper articles for teachers. They mentioned two tendencies. While some of the articles supported the maintenance of segregated education support the medical based interventions, some others tried to highlight the importance of inclusive initiatives. Thus, those two studies summarized above, indicated that there is resistance from teachers, school administrations and even from families of disabled people to inclusive education.

Some of the participants in current study also showed negative attitudes to the closure of school for blinds. They argued that when there is no school for blind, a lot of people from low socioeconomic backgrounds will not have opportunity to receive education due to discriminatory implications and lack of support.

Some experiences of participants who had not attended school for blind education at all supported their argument. Those participants told that due to lack of information about blindness they experienced various traumatic events. For instance, Oya had to take the high school entry exam without a reader since she did not know such kind of right. Many of the participants did not have accessible lecture materials. They had no idea about assistive technologies, cane and other blind related tools. People with partial sight can be seen as lucky compared to totally blind people, because schools showed less resistance to accept them and like Güven, with small adjustments they could maintain their educational life.

The other theme experienced on mainstream schools emerged as friendship problems. Many of the participants had difficulty in friendship with sighted peers. If there are other blind students in the same class, this difficulty had become worse. In fact this finding confirmed the findings of Cook and Semmel (1999). According to their sociometric findings, students with mild or severe learning disabilities are less accepted by their peers compared to nondisabled students. When it comes to blind people, the reports of our participants show a similar pattern.

In order to be more accepted, participants talked about various resisting strategies. The most apparent one is academic success. Both participants with and without previous experience in school for blind, have reported that their academic performance increased their acceptance in the class. This confirmed the findings of Mpofu (2003) and Zambo (2010). As mentioned above, Mpofu (2003) found that when disabled people are given critic roles in a class and when their academic success increase, their acceptance also increased. Zambo (2010) mentioned about 5 steps to have more acceptance. For this, developing and equality based relation and becoming the contributing member is important. That is to say, disabled people should be also in a helper and contributing position rather than being helped every time. Figen showed a good example of it. She told that with secondary school when she went to mainstream schools, she helped the courses of her sister and her friends, then this increased her acceptance.

The second apparent theme for acceptance emerged as assertiveness. Some participants preferred to use their differences to show something to their peers and this has become effective. This assertiveness is directly related to perception of disability. When someone is willing to share his or her blind related experiences with others and when there is no shame of disclosure about disability, the nondisabled people can also feel comfort to have relations with their disabled peers. Such struggle of assertiveness also confirmed the keeping light strategy of Church et al. (2007). Actually this study is related to employment area in Canada, but according to the authors, when disabled people make jokes about their disabilities and willing to discuss it, this comfort the nondisabled colleagues. They call this strategy of keeping light. Hence, when students also use such kind of resisting struggle, their acceptance could increase.

To finalize this section, it can be concluded that only being at the same room and class is not enough for good practices of inclusive education. Teachers, school administrators and counsellors should take extra measures to include disabled students to the classes. Giving them some critical roles, making small adjustments, showing some individualistic sensitivity can make big difference. A lot of participants told that they do not forget the individualistic interventions of their some teachers. By doing this, not falling into the trap of gradualism is very important. It will be very easy to find an excuse and to say that that the conditions of the school are not ready for inclusion of a disabled student. Providing some adjustments and making minor individualistic interventions are not difficult tasks for any educator. In addition, the responsibility to make the schools ready belongs to school administrations and government. It cannot belong to a disabled person.

5.5 Discussion of Family Impact

The effect of families on the lives of disabled people is very dependent upon how they approach to the child. Two opposite tendencies have potential to harm personal development: over protectiveness and total ignorance. It is possible to see both of them in different families. Some families prefer to do everything for their children including the most basic independent things. However, this style violates a very important need which is compulsory for perception development: independence. Participants felt very insufficient until they got rid of the protection pressure of their families.

In contrast to this, total ignorance of the child also could be very harmful. Some families have difficulties to accept their blind child as he or she is. If there are crowded families the attitudes and privileges presented to the other siblings may not be provided to the blind person. Then, this ignites mistrust to the family and blaming of oneself because of blindness. Thus, families need to know where to stop in their interests to their children. Nevertheless, they must make the child feel that they accept him or her as a blind person by not behaving as if he or she is not blind.

It seems that if participants perceive their family interests as positive, this has become very helpful. Some participants told that their families moved to places around the school for blinds they attended. Here, in which time people perceive the interest as positive, will emerge important questions. From the stories of participants it was observed that if participants feel that their families create an atmosphere which permits them to do something independently, such kind of interest is perceived as lovely and positive. Şahin told that his father had become the first person who gave the message that he could read and write. Duygu and Asuman defines their relations with their mothers and fathers respectively as very encouraging for them to do various things and to go various places. Deniz tells that his father learnt braille to help his child. As it can be seen, when families are perceived as positive, it could do something which make their children more independent and more capable.

When the literature is analyzed, it will be seen that the findings of the present study confirmed the findings of Jackson and Lawson (1995). They investigated the effects of families on 76 blind people in rehabilitation centers. The results indicated that when blind participants perceive their family environment as positive, their adaptation to loss of vision had become easier. The other supporting evidence has been provided by Li and Moore (1998). Their findings demonstrated that the emotional support from families and friends affected the self-esteem and disability acceptance positively.

Unfortunately, the families of all participants are not perceived as positive like the examples above. Two negative perceptions were observed from the interviews: Rejection of disability, total ignorance and exclusion of the child. In some families, the effects of ableism, as Campbell (2009) mentions, can be observed very clearly. Ayşe tells that her parents did not permit her to seek something by touching. Osman tells his father's rejection of the existence of disabled people in their families. Uğur's father experienced a very serious health problem when he learned that Uğur was blind. Actually all families experience such kinds of shock after learning the disability. Here the problem is continuation of this rejection. When families start to force their children to behave like sighted or nondisabled person, this affected the disabled people very negatively in terms of psychological and perceptional aspects. Disabled people may feel guilty because they could not satisfy the wish of their families. Besides, such kinds of ableist atmosphere increase the possibility of internalized ableism.

Total ignorance and exclusion emerged as another negative family influence theme on the interviews. Such ignorance caused Ruşen, Uğur and Abidin to stop their educational life for a while. For Münire, her family would never be happy because of her blindness. Çağla tells that only her father visits her in the boarding school for blind. In fact, such ignorance can be considered as the consequence of rejection of disability. In this time, the families are hopeless to change this situation and this leads to total ignorance of that child. Sometimes, the problematic parent interests or disinterests can also create problematic sibling relations. In overprotective families, the parents attempt to give some parenting and caring role to the other sighted siblings. This could result in negative relations between blind and sighted siblings. Some families start to ignore the needs of sighted sibling and all of those attitudes create psychological distress and conflicts. Ayşe and Güven are the ones who mention such conflicts. Further studies need to address the sibling relations of disabled and nondisabled people in more detail.

If a conclusion is drawn from the family impacts on the lives of disable people, it can be said that in order for a family to be perceived as positive, it has to create and facilitate an atmosphere in which the blind children feel that they are valuable, they are capable and they can have independent life as blind children. The ableist pressures, over protection or exclusion have the same origin: rejection of disability. Darling (2003) reported that the families of disabled people have also typologies like normalization or affirmation. Here the counselors and other experts in the field have a very crucial role. They have to persuade the families that their disabled children are not deficits and abnormal people, the real abnormality is their struggle to force their child behave as if they have no blindness. This does not mean restriction of activities, oppositely, this means opening new areas to the child where he or she can do something with blindness.

5.6 Discussion of Possible Perception Shifts

One of the aims of this dissertation was to seek clues about how a person's perception about him or herself can change. This is crucial, because if some points that influence the perception change can be found, those could become recommendation for educators and other experts in the field who are interested in the encouragement of disabled people. The findings demonstrated that independence and interrelation with other blind people emerged as two key factors which directly affect the perception change of participants. In addition, the stories of participants indicated that technology and life necessities have become two key factors which affect the independence and dependence issue. Those concepts will be discussed more closely in next paragraphs.

The importance of independence for disabled people had been stated before. By confirming the literature such as Darling and Heckert (2010), and Beach et al.

(1995), the participants in this study reported that when they feel that they can overcome the real life challenges without assistance or less assistance, meaning independently, their self-esteem and positive self-perception also increases. In this section, the question of how they satisfy their need of independence will be addressed.

One of the most crucial components leading people to behave more independently is their life obligations. The researcher called those effects of obligations as “No pain No Gain”. For instance, Levent told that, after he had become blind, her house owner want them to evacuate the house with the justification of they could not be able to pay the house rent anymore. Baki, Ayşe and Deniz had to go to their courses alone for a while. Thus, when the felt protection is absent, people have two choices: giving up, or seeking other ways. The participants exemplified above are the ones who sought different ways. When they find those ways, then their beliefs to alternatives have also increased. In fact, this is a very essential resisting strategy. Most possibly, those participants would not prefer such kinds of obligations if they could have chance. However, maybe this lack of chance changed their lives, because those obligations gave them a space where they can show their capacities of resistance. Hence, those examples might give very critical clues to adult educators. By working with disabled people, we have to leave a space for them to express themselves and their resisting capacities. When they understand that their capacity is sufficient to do various things, the real positive self-perception will grow in that point.

When the concept of independence is mentioned, the meaning of it is not only the independent life skills. It has another meaning for people who had too much blind experiences before. For instance, Deniz went to a school for blind in primary and secondary school years. Moreover, there were three blind people in his class on high school. Damla, Şahin and Figen had also experience in school for blinds. All of them have a common point, they distance themselves from blind people for a while and have more sighted friends. Polat, Deniz, Figen and Damla could do this with their university lives. That is to say, they become independent from blind people for a period of time maybe also due to obligations.

All of those people established friendships with blind people again later. And all of them have become active on blind-related NGOs after they return. This separation process is very important to form strong self-sufficiency. Actually, people tend to have different relations to see that whether they can exist in different contexts as they were among blind people. If they feel capable, and if they obtain contributing roles among their nondisabled friends too, then, their beliefs about themselves could become more stable.

Here, different from the crusaders of Darling (2003), those people succeeded to continue their interrelation with blind people again. The most important cause of it is their previous knowledge about blind related independence skills. Figen could acquire contributing roles when she could start using the cane and when she could use computer with screen reader more effectively. Deniz started to go somewhere independently with the help of his cane. Polat learned many independent skills like cane and other things when he came to university with more sighted peers. Thus, those people succeeded to exist among their sighted peers as blind individuals, not ones who emulate to sighted life and hide blindness. As such, as blind person with the cane, with the computer with screen reader and large font size, when she or he can take part in mainstream life areas, this enhances the self-belief that he or she could exist among both his or her blind and sighted friends together. That is to say, for healthy interrelations, an independence period could be necessary. The crucial point in that issue is that people should establish interrelation with other blind friends not because of they have to, but they want to. Belief of coexistence among both blind and sighted people as a blind friend without the effect of internalized ableism will increase this interrelation for more coexistence struggle with more accessible tools. As a consequence, interrelation with both disabled and nondisabled people together is important. Isolating oneself from one of them creates more restriction and decrease of perception.

From this aspect, the situations of participants who had not blind friends before could be reevaluated. These kinds of people seem isolated from blind people at the beginning. For those people, meeting with blind friends had become the turning point for their perception shift. The most important reason of this is their frustrations driven from living continuously in an ableist atmosphere where vision and being sighted is imposed as normal. When those people from an ableist atmosphere meet with correct people or organizations, they could see that actually their situations and behaviors are not abnormal as they thought before. They conclude that actually doing something with different methods could be easier than attempting to do it like sighted people. For instance, Güven understood that, he can use computer with screen reader more easily, instead of looking at screen with tired eyes. For Osman seeing that some blind friends could use audio materials had become a turning point. The educational life of Lütfü changed radically when he went to a rehabilitation center. Levent who lost his sight later learned blind related skills in an NGO. Rüya told that when she met with first blind people, she could understand that they can also do something and survive.

In addition to those people who had been isolated from blind people before, some of the people who went to a school for blinds had to experienced isolation after school for a long time and for them the interrelation also played an important role for their perception change. Different from coexisting participants, those blind people like Naci and Abidin lived in an atmosphere where they felt the effects of ableism more and they could not have another chance. Their families and sighted peers do not permit them to use their blind related abilities and they had to live being dependent on them. Thus, for those people, meeting with some closer blind friends have become the tool of independence. Hence, it seems that, in order to satisfy the need of independence, first of all, provision of some interrelation with other blind people could be useful. Parallel to this, for some blind people, to provide strong interrelation with a communal group, first of all remaining independent from them for a while could be a prerequisite. To sum up, living interdependently with both disabled and nondisabled groups will be very important.

5.7 Discussion of Technology Impact

The perception change discussion until this point has shown that, living independently by protecting the interaction with both blind and sighted friends seems the key factor. In that respect, for some people living isolated from blind people and meeting with them have become turning points. For others, living mostly isolated from sighted life due to school for blinds or existence of other blinds in the mainstream school, learning to live with their sighted peers and become the contributing member of that mixed group have become turning point for perception shift. Technology and accessibility enters to the picture just in this point. Although

Macdonald and Clayton (2013) mentioned that most disabled people could not own assistive technologies, they did not answer the question what would happen if they had. This study has such potential to respond to that question, because interviews were made with the participants who use assistive technologies to a degree. From that perspective, when the people who use assistive technologies in their daily lives are examined, it affected them on three areas: access to information, independence and interrelation.

First of all, as emphasized also on the findings part, the meaning of a digital technology is not the only change in usage habits for a blind person. A lot of information sources like newspapers, magazines and lectures' books that are not accessible before have become accessible to the blind people. This is a very revolutionary idea. Most of the participants who met and start to use new digital technologies mentioned the crucial influences of it. Reading a lot of books was one of the most repetitive theme by those people. In addition, for most students, use of internet and access to resources that were not accessible before increased their academic performance and broadened their horizons.

As such, technology provided access to information and access to information increased the independence experiences. Especially on employment and school areas, in daily life like shopping and other things, blind people found opportunities to do whatever they wished with the help of technology. Besides, accessibility goes hand in hand with technology for provision of independence. Rüya and Rıza emphasized the importance of independence the most. According to them, after meeting computers and accessible smart phones, their belief about what they could do increased.

The third important effect of technology is provision of interrelation with both blind and sighted people. Abidin who had to stay at his village for a long period of time found an opportunity to come together with his blind friends owing to internet. Münire found her friends married after she met with computer. Deniz and Faruk found their blind-related NGO with the power of assistive technologies. Besides, Deniz says that he writes different articles in various news sites and forums. Most students found opportunities to share information with their sighted friends through those technologies. Thus for strong interrelation and shared information, technology and accessibility acts as catalyzers.

The perception shift clues of this study showed that living independently by protecting interaction with both blind and sighted friends can give the perception shift areas where those conditions are met. For some people, they obtain independent living skills like use of computer or use of cane, due to some life necessities. For some others, meeting with technology made them both more independent and provided more interaction with their blind and sighted friends. In other words, in order to create a perception change in a positive way, leaving space to disabled people and giving them the necessary tools for resisting strategies will be helpful.

5.8 Discussion of Employment Experiences

Half of participants in this study mentioned their employment experiences. They both talked about negative and positive attitudes in working atmosphere. First of all, as Church et al. (2007) argued, people met disbelief about what they can do. Most employers and colleagues are hesitant to work with a disabled colleague. This finding also confirmed the arguments of Alan Roulstone (1998). Roulstone (1998) studies the effects of technology on employment lives of disabled people. He argues that when used appropriately, technology could become very enabling for disabled people. The expressions of Berat and Rüya are also confirming that hypothesis. Nevertheless, as Roulstone (1998) also reported from the interviews with people with various disabilities, participants met with three important barriers in working environment: Jealousy over the provision of specialized technologies, job adjustments and extra training to disabled people, resentment or disbelief of disabled workers' employment performance, and active discriminations against disabled workers. Roulstone (1998) found that related to attitudes of other nondisabled colleagues, pity, existential discomfort and esthetic shock emerged as key factors against disabled employees. The findings of the present study also confirmed some those attitudes. As it happens in Oya's and Çağla's employment experiences, a clear jealousy and active discrimination occurred. As it is in Damla's case she had to make their colleagues and managers believe her performance for a long time. As Zeliha and Rüya told, sometimes people had to wait the necessary technological purchases and adjustments for years like Church et al. (2007) stated.

Despite those negative conditions, participants also gave some positive examples related to their working atmosphere. For example Uğur told that since his manager believes in his performance at the beginning, his performance and job satisfaction has become higher. Zeliha said that, after the long waiting process, with the installation of necessary computer software's, she felt equal with others. Berat also confirmed this. Since he had used the same computer programs accessibly, his job performance had become very higher and he could succeed to be an equal worker with others due to his expressions. This equality theme is also confirmed by

Roulstone. The findings of Roulstone (1998) indicated that with the contribution of technology, disabled people feel more equal on working areas.

Those findings are consistent with the educational experiences. When we give a contributing role to an employee, disabled or not the self-satisfaction and performance will increase. In our days, technology could ease the active working processes of blind individuals. With web based job applications and with the help of computers with screen readers and screen enlargement, now it is much easier than before for a blind person work in various fields of employment. Here, as Roulstone (1998) expressed very well, the role of technology should be removing the disabling barrier; not restoring the sight of person. Hence, blind people can start to believe that, as blind people, they can work equally with others. For this purpose, the prerequisite condition will be to eliminate disbelief and resentments of managers and colleagues in job atmosphere. Technology and other substructures could become facilitators, but without eliminating the prejudgments and disbelieves, those cannot alone be helpful. That is to say, the most disabling part of working areas is not the physical atmosphere. The attitudinal background and tendency of making disabled people work under qualifiedly are key disabling elements. As the active working role of blind individuals increase, such barriers can be decreased, and this active performance can also affect the self-perception positively.

5.9 Discussion of Perception Consequences

One of the most important motivations to do that thesis on this dissertation was to understand the reasons behind different tendencies of disabled people about right seeking activities. Why do some of them prefer to fight for disabling conditions while others try to avoid? How could we make people believe that their disabling conditions can be changed? The literature summarized before was saying that, when people form a positive identity about their disability, then, they tend to take part in right seeking activities for finding their places more in the society (Gill, 1997; Darling & Hall, 2003; Darling & Heckert, 2010; Hahn & Belt, 2004; Loja et al.,2013).

After studying again and again the experiences of participants' activities related to their disabilities, the researcher realized a key point which could explain the tendencies more: interdependency with both disabled and nondisabled groups. It is clear that the positive perception could play an important role for attending to nongovernmental organizations or similar platforms. 15 out of 22 participants among affirmers and positive perceivers reported that they had attended to NGO activities regularly in their lives. All of the confused participants reported an NGO activity. Thus, perception can have positive influences on right seeking attempts. The reason of this is very clear. If you believe that the source of your disability is not your blindness but the other conditions, this means that you are ready to change the disabling conditions.

Nevertheless, only perception tendency is not enough to explain whole picture. Not all affirmers or positive perceivers are very active in blind-related NGOs now. When the characteristics and life experiences of active people in terms of right seeking struggles are examined in this study, it will be seen that most of them have also relations with other NGOs, labor unions, platforms or political parties. For example, Baki has a very active life on different platforms, Şahin attended to various NGOs in his university life. Kadir is also an active member of a political party. Polat is very active in a labor union. Ender attended to many political demonstrations before 1980. Deniz had become the member of a foundation for a long time. It is possible to multiply the examples. Here the important point, necessary to be underlined is that, if people can be successful to have relations with both blind and sighted peers at the same time, and when this is combined with the positive perception, the right seeking possibilities of them also increases. Nevertheless, the lack of interrelation with blind or sighted peers decreases this activity.

The other important theme emerging from the experiences of participants is their tendency to distance themselves from the current blind-related NGOs. Both people with older and younger ages touch upon the similar aspect: The current big blind-related NGOs are far away from meeting their needs. The technological transformation and the effect of it on the lives of blind people have been discussed before. Now blind people have different accessibility problems. However, the old organizations have difficulty to keep up with those needs. They fail to make their targets and missions up-to-date. Especially related to the educational needs, the current associations and federations have very few things and programs to say. Most of the blind managers on those associations even do not use computers and other new assistive technologies due to lack of information.

Younger generations struggle to form new platforms, new associations and used new instruments like e-mailing lists and chat rooms to act together with other blind people. Thus, technology resulted in the formation of new interrelation types. However, this new struggles are not mature enough to make big difference. For this reason, in the future the novel ideas of young disabled generations and the disability experiences of current NGOs should be combined. When the current leaders of disability movements transfer their knowledge and experiences to the younger generations and when the younger generations reflect their mobility’s and life changing ideas, the organized disability movement can be stronger again. Otherwise, there is a danger to remain alone in an ableist culture. As Campbell (2009) argues, disabled people can resist to the rules of ableist culture with communal attachments. As such, the blind-related NGOs must adapt to the technological transformations and needs of young generations. Besides, the young generations must find a way to include more blind people in right seeking activities.

5.10 Conclusion

The aim of the present study was to reveal the perception tendencies of blind participants in Turkey. In addition, the effecting factors like school, family background, peer relations and employment area on the perception tendencies were questioned. Lastly, the possible consequences of different perception tendencies in terms of active participation to the right seeking attempts and NGOs are tried to be learned. For those purposes, approximately one and a half-hour interviews with 36 blind people were made. While most of them are totally blind, some of them had partial sight. Again most of them are blind from the birth, but some of the participants had become blind in their later ages. Meaning, maximum variation was attempted relying on grounded theory qualitative study approach.

From the interviews, five main perception tendencies have emerged. Parallel to Darling (2003), the first category under which people consider blindness as a pride was called as an affirmer. Again consistent with their suggestion, the fifth category in which people consider blindness as a big burden and deficiency was called as a normalizer. For participants in the affirmer category blindness is only a difference.

According to them it does not make a disadvantage in their lives and they reject to take a pill to eliminate blindness.

The second category in continuum is also composed of participants who perceive blindness positively. According to them, blindness is not a big burden and most of the time, the conditions are disabling rather than the blindness itself. Nevertheless, those people report more disadvantages deriving from their blindness. They are hesitant to take the pill for curing their blindness. Thus they were called as partial affirmers.

The participants in third category is in between the positive perceivers and negative perceivers, and they were called as confused perceivers. For those people, blindness is a deficit and they were more willing to take a pill. However, they found various instruments to eliminate the disabling conditions of blindness to a degree.

Participants on the fourth category were called negative perceivers, who perceives blindness negatively. They thought that many disadvantages in their life happened because of their blindness.

For people in fifth category were called normalizers, related to blindness, no positive result could be mentioned. Opposite to affirmers, they certainly preferred to get rid of blindness if possible.

The most crucial factor that affected the perception tendency was the issue of independence. People who satisfied their need of independence in terms of doing something with less assistance or own their own, tended also to have a positive self-perception. In contrast to this, people who felt more dependent and restricted accused their blindness for that dependency.

Most of the participants of this study had attended boarding school for blinds. They spent their first five or 8 years in a school for blinds. The influences of school for blinds on their perception have mixed aspects. On the one hand, school for blinds provided an atmosphere where they established strong interrelations with others and they could learn many independent living skills, on the other hand these segregated institutions had become very restrictive, isolated and discouraging. After school for blind years, participants who also could make interrelations with sighted peer groups mostly had positive self-perception. However, some participants remained isolated in mainstream schools due to the existence of other blind students in the same school.

There were fewer participants who did not have experience in school for blinds at all in this study. However, their stories gave many clues about their experiences. The lack of information about blindness caused them to experience traumatic events. In addition, since most of them are partially sighted, the feeling of identity confusion is very common in them. They have problems belonging to neither blind groups nor sighted groups. When this is combined with the lack of information, their school lives were full of traumatic stories.

The family atmosphere also affected the educational life of participants. People coming from relatively poor family environments where they felt some discrimination, exclusion and financial problems, the school for blinds had become an opening door for their current life. Nevertheless, participants who reported a relatively richer preschool and family life, school for blinds had become a torture especially at first days.

Related to effect of families, the most positively perceived ones emerged as families who provided a space for their children under which they have chance to do things they wish. Over protection and ignorance had become the most negatively perceived family attitudes.

The possible turning points where self-perception changed were also questioned. The findings showed that technology and some obligations played important roles for independence of participants. Owing to technology, access to information and access to other blind people becoming easier, the self-esteem has changed. Besides, for some participants having to live in different cities for university initiated the perception change process. In both conditions, again the independence enters to the picture.

The other important theme causing perception change is interrelation. People coming from school for blinds tried to make connections with sighted peers and when they become successful, this started changing their self-perception. In contrast to this, people who did not have any blind people in their life changed their perception about blindness when they met with other blind people in universities, NGOs, e-mailing lists or chat rooms. Here the important thing is to make connections with different groups in which they did not have relations before.

When examining the impact of employment, again the effect of technology and giving critical roles to the disabled employees have become important themes. The most complaining attitudes in employment is underqualified demands, disbelief and discriminations from managers and colleagues. When those negative points could be overcome, then this would affect the perception positively.

Related the consequences of perception tendencies, it is possible to conclude that, perception tendency itself cannot explain the whole idea. The effect of perception tendency and interdependency together could explain the right seeking activities better. Most of the participants, who have active roles in blind-related NGOs also reported that, they are active in other NGOs, labor unions, platforms or political parties. This indicated that interrelation with different groups and not isolating themselves with only one group is crucial for right seeking activities.

To sum up, this dissertation aims to express the voices of blind participants more in academic life. Because of this, there were very flexible questions in the interviews and participants had chances to tell everything related to blindness experiences from childhood to current time. Most importantly, the expressions showed that no participants have unhappy or chaotic lives in contrast to belief of traditional models. All of them developed a resisting strategy to the internalization struggles. When they are provided more space for their independence, those resisting strategies have become more successful to eliminate internalized ableism, and when this elimination occurs this positively affect their encouragement for more accessible life. Hence, for more equal, accessible and barrier free life, independence, interrelation with communal minorities and deconstruction of normality with the struggles of disabled people will be the key factors. In order to bring those key factors together, first of all disabled people must believe that they are different, not deficient.

5.11 Recommendations

For this study, 36 participants were interviewed, lasting over 50 hours. Many interesting anecdotes, experiences, attitudes and perception styles have emerged from those talks. Various types of perception tendencies, various factors affecting them and different behavioral consequences of those perceptions were summarized. Thus, from the reports of participants, some important results and recommendations have been revealed. Sharing them with everyone for further interventions and policy development will be useful. Those recommendations can be also accepted as the voices and demands of blind people. In fact, the actual aim of this study is to express the voices of disabled people in the academic literature. This is very crucial, because the principal of ‘Nothing about us, without us!’ (Charlton, 1998) requires us to talk with disabled people, not to talk on behalf of them. Following, the recommendation items by item briefly will be stated. Actually, all of them were discussed before in the dissertation. Here, the most emphasized ones under a list are going to be highlighted for ease of understanding.

- In order to increase the positive self-perception tendencies of blind people, the interventions should aim to create an atmosphere, where they can satisfy their need of independence. As people feel that they are more self-sufficient and could do things without less assistance, the effect of it will be more positive.
- The role of school for blinds should be reconsidered and redefined. They should act as facilitators to provide interdependency of people and provision of independent living skills related to blindness like use of cane and use of assistive technologies. In addition, they should act as preparation places for mains stream schools rather than being segregated institutions.
- In mainstream schools, only being together with sighted peers is not enough. The schools and administrators should take necessary measures for accessibility and equal conditions. In addition, teachers need to give critical roles to disabled people for increasing peer acceptance. On the other hand, they need to avoid from labeling and privileges which irritated the other students in the class.
- The mainstream schools certainly must avoid from creating separate zones for disabled students. If possible, there should not be more than one disabled student on a class. If not, the teachers must behave those people differently according to

their needs. If they do not wish, two disabled people should sit different places in the same classroom.

- Parents should avoid from over protection and restriction due to that protection. The blind and sighted siblings should not feel discriminations and privileges. The most influential families are the ones that provide a space for a child to express him or herself without shame. For the children to accept themselves as a whole with the disabled part, first of all, families must accept them as a whole, not less. For this acceptance, being aware of the ableism tendencies of the environment is important.
- Counselling services should be more active to protect both families and blind children from the effects of ableism.
- On employment life, the technological adjustments should be more included to the general routines. Underqualified working requirements and disbelief are the most inhibitory employment conditions for disabled people. Thus, the managers and colleagues should not hesitate to give contributing roles to the disabled person. Once they do this, the results will be positive for both all employees and disabled people.
- The government and policy developers must provide a system where all disabled people can access and own necessary assistive technologies. In addition, the training about the usage of those technologies should be guaranteed.
- The nongovernmental organizations and rehabilitation centers should renew themselves according to the needs of new generations. They must catch up the technological transformation in the lives of disabled people.

- Lastly, all educators, parents and NGOs should attempt to create spaces where disabled people could establish strong interdependent relations with both blind and sighted peers separately.

5.12 Limitations of the Current study and Suggestions for Further Studies

Like all other research studies, this study has also a series of limitations. First of all, the findings cannot be generalized to all blind people. Most of the interviews were made with blind people who have higher education, use technology to a degree or have good occupations. In other words, those people can be considered as advantageous; since they could have opportunities to catch up with blind related abilities and technologies. There is a need to hear the voice of blind people who could not obtain such kinds of opportunities due to financial reasons, ignorance or lack of information. Thus further studies need to address the experiences of more disadvantageous blind people who could not continue to their education and who could not have facilities for independent living skills.

Secondly, the results cannot be generalized to other disability groups. The aim of this dissertation is to fill the gap about the life conditions of blind people in the literature. There are very few studies investigating the embodiment experiences of blind people. Thus, this study was planned as blind specific at the beginning. Every disability group will have different embodiment experiences. As Hughes and Paterson (1997) argue, even two disabled people under similar conditions could experience their disabilities differently. For that reason, with further studies the disability tendencies of other disability groups should be analyzed deeply.

Thirdly, due to qualitative nature of the study, only tendencies and possibilities could be stated. In fact, choice of such kind of design is deliberate. The quantitative studies measuring disability acceptance do not seem enough to learn the whole experience. There are two disability acceptance scales. The first one is developed by Linkowski (1971). This scale is developed in the times where medical model is very dominant and social model is not in the picture yet. Thus the questions mostly tend to measure the acceptance of the deficit. The second scale is developed by Darling and Heckert (2010) called questionnaire on Disability Identity and Opportunity (QDIO). This questionnaire is closer to aims of the study, but since the purpose is to learn the whole life experiences of participants, it will not suffice that need. Thus, this dissertation should be considered as an exploratory attempt. By utilizing from the findings of current study, other scholars can improve a reliable and valid scale. In the long run, completing the gap with more quantitative studies will be necessary.

Fourthly, as stated in the methodology part, most of the interviews were conducted through skype. For some people, face to face interaction could be more helpful and more comfortable to feel their emotions and expressions. On the other hand, this provided a great advantage. If such kind of facility were not the case, inclusion of participants from different regions to this study would not be easy. From another point of view, use of technology could exclude some participants directly due to lack of that technology. Thus, with further studies both face to face interviews and the use of internet should be used together to include more people from different groups.

Fifthly, the objectivity of the study may be problematic. In fact, the researcher himself is also a totally blind person who passed in first eight years of his education in boarding schools for blind. Besides, he has a very active role in blind related NGOs. Moreover, he is the manager of GETEM which is the largest e-library for blind in Turkey. In addition, he gave a lot of assistive technology trainings for blind people. As such, most of the participants previously knew the researcher and the researcher also knew them. Hence, this could prevent them to express everything. On the other hand, this has become an advantage. People are more comfortable to express their blind related problems to a blind person who also experienced similar things. If a further study could combine a more quantitative study with such kind of qualitative survey, the results will be more objective and reliable.

In addition to all of those limitations, further studies can include the teachers, parents, school peers, colleagues and employers of a blind person together with his or her experiences. Such kinds of case studies could be more helpful to understand the influencing factors of perception.

APPENDIX A

POEM OF CEMİL MERİÇ

SEEING IS LIVING

Görmek yaşamaktır.

Vuslattır görmek.

Görmek sahip olmaktır.

Mevsimler bütün işveleriyle emrindedir,

Renkler bütün cilveleriyle hizmetindedir.

Çiçekler onun için açmıştır.

Şafak bile onun için parıldar.

Gutenberg matbaayı onun için icat etmiştir.

Hugo o okusun diye yazmıştır, şiirlerini.

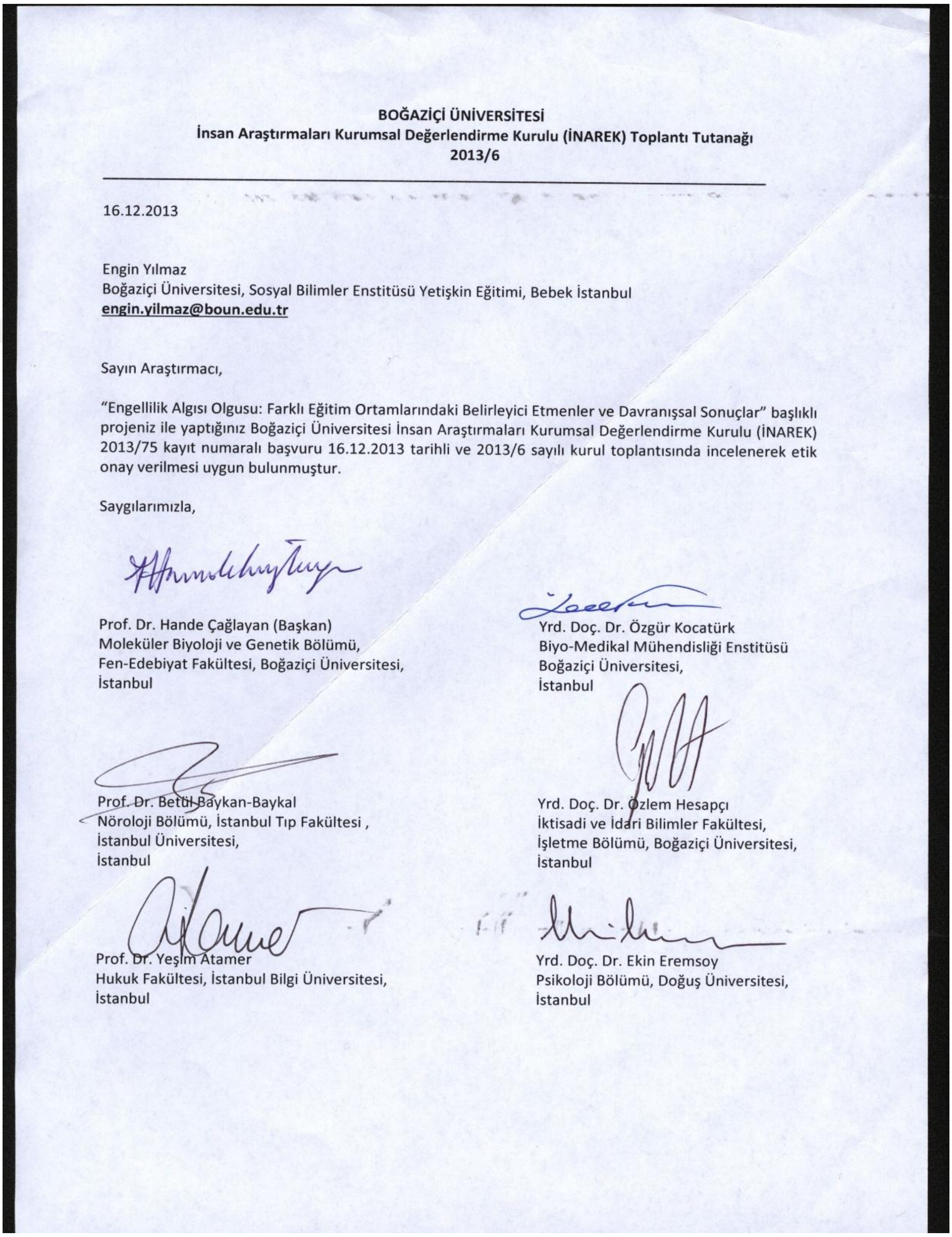
Şehrin bütün kadınları onun için giyinip süslenir.

Çoçukların tebessümü onun içindir.

Cemil Meriç

APPENDIX B

BOĞAZİÇİ UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION COMMITTEE APPROVAL



BOĞAZİÇİ ÜNİVERSİTESİ
İnsan Araştırmaları Kurumsal Değerlendirme Kurulu (İNAREK) Toplantı Tutanağı
2013/6

16.12.2013

Engin Yılmaz
Boğaziçi Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Yetişkin Eğitimi, Bebek İstanbul
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Sayın Araştırmacı,

"Engellilik Algısı Olgusu: Farklı Eğitim Ortamlarındaki Belirleyici Etmenler ve Davranışsal Sonuçlar" başlıklı projeniz ile yaptığınız Boğaziçi Üniversitesi İnsan Araştırmaları Kurumsal Değerlendirme Kurulu (İNAREK) 2013/75 kayıt numaralı başvuru 16.12.2013 tarihli ve 2013/6 sayılı kurul toplantısında incelenerek etik onay verilmesi uygun bulunmuştur.

Saygılarımızla,

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İstanbul

APPENDIX C

INFORMED CONSENT IN TURKISH

Projenin Adı: Engellilik Algısı Olgusu: Farklı Eğitim Ortamlarındaki Belirleyici Etmenler ve Davranışsal Sonuçlar

Sayın Katılımcı,

Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yetişkin Eğitimi programında doktora öğrencisi Engin Yılmaz tarafından görme engellilerin kendi engellerini nasıl kavramsallaştırdıkları konulu niteliksel bir araştırma yürütülmektedir. Araştırmanın amacı, görme engellilerin çocukluk yaşamlarından bugüne dek, kendi engelleri konusunda neler düşündükleri, yaşadıkları süreçler, eğitim ve günlük yaşamlarında engelli olmalarının kendilerine yaşattığı duygu, düşünce, tutum ve davranışları ortaya koymak ve bu engellilik algısının nelerden etkilendiğini anlamaya çalışmaktır.

Araştırmanın yürütülebilmesi için, halen üniversitede öğrenci ya da rehabilitasyon merkezlerinde eğitim alan, sivil toplum kuruluşlarında etkin görev alan ve/veya mesleki yaşamına başlamış görme engellilerle yüz yüze görüşmeler yapılacaktır. Görüşmeler ve veri analizi yürütücü tarafından gerçekleştirilecektir. Kabul etmeniz halinde sizinle en az bir defa görüşme gerçekleştirilecektir. Türkçe olarak gerçekleşecek bu görüşmelerin 60 ila 90 dakika arasında sürmesi tahmin edilmektedir. Sizin de bir görme engelli olarak bu araştırmaya katılmanız, çalışmaya önemli bir katkı yapacaktır. Çalışmaya katılım gönüllük esasına göre gerçekleşecektir. Böyle bir çalışmada bulunmak, engellilik algınızla ilgili geçmişten günümüze bir yolculuk yapmanızı sağlayacağı için, bazı noktaları yeniden değerlendirmeniz açısından size yarar sağlayabilir. Çalışmanın sizin için ciddi bir risk taşımayacağı beklenmektedir. Öte yandan geçmişten günümüze engeliniz konusunda yapacağınız yolculuk size belli bir psikolojik yük getirebilir. Eğer çalışma sonrasında böyle bir psikolojik yük hisseder ve yardım almak isterseniz, Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Psikolojik Araştırma Merkezi BÜPAM ile temas kurabilirsiniz. Aynı zamanda formun sonundaki iletişim bilgilerini kullanarak yürütücü Engin Yılmaz'dan da dilediğiniz zaman destek alabilirsiniz.

BÜPAM Tel: 0212 287 24 81 / 0212 263 19 64

GSM: 0 532 365 16 63

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Sizinle yapılacak bu görüşmede kişisel bilgileriniz tamamen gizli kalacaktır. Verdiğiniz bilgileri kullanırken, isminiz yerine takma ad kullanılacak, kimliğinizi ortaya çıkaran bilgilere yer verilmeyecek veya bunlar değiştirilecektir. Görüşmemiz ses kayıt cihazıyla kaydedilecektir. Bu durum daha ayrıntılı görüşme yapılmasına olanak sağlayacak bir zaman kazandıracaktır. Görüşmenin ses kayıtları yürütücü ya da yazıya dökülmek üzere görevlendirilecek ve sizleri tanımayan bir görevli tarafından dinlenilecek ve yürütücü tarafından analiz edilecektir. Görüşmeyi yazıya dökecek kişi, görme engelli olmayan ve sizi tanımayan kişiler arasından seçilecek ve kayıt gizliliği konusunda kendisinden imzalı belge alınacaktır. Yine de kayıtların yalnızca yürütücü tarafından yazıya dökülmesini isterseniz, buna uyulacaktır. Ses kayıtları yürütücünün dışında kimsenin ulaşamayacağı bir yerde saklanacaktır. Bu konuyla ilgili tez, makale, karşılaştırma gibi çalışmaların tamamlanması ardından tüm ses kayıtları silinecektir. Bu çalışmaya katılmak tamamıyla gönüllüğe bağlıdır. Dilediğiniz an görüşmeyi sona erdirebilir veya dilediğiniz soruyu yanıtlamayabilirsiniz.

Aşağıya atacağınız imzanız, bu çalışmaya gönüllü olarak katıldığınızı göstermektedir.

Görüşmeyle ilgili her türlü sorunuzu çekinmeden paylaşabilirsiniz. Çalışmayla ilgili daha fazla bilgi almak istediğiniz taktirde irtibat kanalları:

Engin Yılmaz

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GSM: (0532) 552 1140

Görüşme hakkında etik olarak yürütücü dışında biriyle irtibat kurmak isterseniz Tez Danışmanı Prof. Dr. Fatma Gök ile aşağıdaki irtibat yoluyla iletişim kurabilirsiniz.

Fatma Gök:

E-posta: gokfatm@gmail.com;

Teşekkür ederim.

Bu formun imzalı bir kopyası bana verildi.

Gönüllünün Adı- Soyadı:

Yaşı:

İmzası:

Adresi (varsa telefon ve/veya faks numarası):

....

Tarih

APPENDIX D

THE E-MAIL MESSAGE AND DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION QUESTIONNAIRE IN ENGLISH

Merhabalar XXX. Öncelikle tezime destek vermeniz dolayısıyla çok çok teşekkür ediyorum tekrar. Sürece devam etmeden önce görüşmelerle ilgili zaman çizelgesini oluşturabilmem ve bazı demografik bilgileri toplamam için sizden bir iki bilgi rica edeceğim. Ayrıca bu iletinin sonunda onaylamanız gerekli Katılımcı Bilgi ve Önem Formunu bulacaksınız. Eğer görüşürsek bu formu size basılı olarak da imzalamanız için göndereceğim. Şimdilik üzerinde bir şey yapmanız gerekmiyor. Yalnızca bilgilenmeniz için gönderiyorum. Aşağıdaki birkaç soruya yanıt verirseniz çok sevinirim.

Şimdiden teşekkür ediyorum desteğiniz için.

Not: Yalnızca 1. 2. Yazıp yanıtladığınız iletiye cevapları yazmanız yeterli. Soru sizinle ilgili değilse hiçbir şey yazmanıza gerek yok.

1. Doğum yılınız
2. Doğuştan mı görme engelisiniz?
3. Eğer doğuştan görme engelli değilseniz, kaç yaşında görmenizi kaybettiniz?
4. Görme düzeyiniz (Tamamen kör, yalnızca ışık, renkler ve yüzleri tanıyacak kadar görme gibi)
5. Hiç körler okuluna gittiniz mi ve gittiyseniz kaçıncı sınıfa kadar?
6. Hiç rehabilitasyon merkezlerinden birinde eğitim aldınız mı?
7. Halen öğrenciyseniz öğrenci bulunduğunuz eğitim düzeyi (İlköğretim, üniversite, yüksek lisans vs)

8. Öğrenci değilseniz en son mezun olduğunuz eğitim düzeyi (İlköğretim, üniversite, yüksek lisans vs)
9. Halen bir yerde çalışıyor musunuz?
10. Görüşmeyi kabul ediyorsanız, müsait zamanlarınızı belirtir misiniz?

APPENDIX E

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF PARTICIPANTS

Abidin

He was born in 1979. He is the youngest children of 7-sibling family. He is totally blind and there is no other blind person in the family. He went to a school for blind for five years then he did not continue his education and live in his village. During preparation of this interview, he was about to marry.

Asuman

She was born in 1991. She is a university student in music department. She has a light perception. She attended to boarding school for blind for 8 years.

Ayşe

She was born in 1993. She has only a little light perception. She has 2 siblings. She had inclusive education in primary school. First 3 years with blind people. She is still a university student.

Baki

He was born in 1993. He did not go to a school for blind. His sight enables him to read large inc print but his sight is decreasing. He has no siblings. His parents are divorced. He is an university student. In high school he took classes on abroad for one year.

Berat

He was born in 1986. He is blind from birth. He has one sibling 7 years younger. Due to his eye conditions, he had been operated 26 times. At the end his both eyes had been taken. He is still working in a private company.

Burhan

He was born in 1981. He is the only child of his family. His sight lost started when he was a fifth grader in the primary school. With secondary school the functional decrease started but the most important functional loss became clear when he is university student. Thus he divides his life as blind and sighted. After university life, he did not work for approximately ten years. Now he started working. He lives in a big city.

Çağla

She was born in 1991. She has two brothers. She lost her sight when she was three. She lived with her uncles and her grandfathers. She went to boarding school for blind for 8 years. She is a high school graduate and a student in a distance university education. She is also working and living in a small city.

Çiler

She was born in 1993. She is totally blind. She went to a school for blind for 8 years but she is not in a boarding school. She has one four-year old blind brother. But her two uncles are also blind. She is still a university student.

Damla

She was born in 1983. She is almost totally blind and she went to school for blind 8 years. However, she continued to her education with a mainstream way.

Deniz

He was born in 1989. He has one smaller brother. He is totally blind. But his one eye had some sight until the age of 6. He went to a school for blind for 8 years but not boarding. He is working as a teacher and continues to his academic life. He has a very active NGO life.

Dursun

He was born in 1986. His family has 7 children. Dursun is the only male of his family. His father died before primary school. Erol went to boarding school for blind for 8 years then went to a mainstream boarding high school. Then started to work. He did not go to university.

Duygu

She was born in 1990. In addition to her total blindness she has some hearing loss and she has four fingers on her hands and feet. She has no siblings. She went to Boarding school for blind for 8 years. She is still a university student and working at the same time.

Emrah

He was born in 1957. He has 4 siblings. The smallest one is also blind. He went to boarding school for blind until the second year of secondary school. Then his father went to abroad and he left school. He is not working.

Ender

He was born in 1960 in a small town. He is totally blind. He is the youngest child of 5 his family. He went to a school for blind until high school period but because he skipped some classes. He is now retired and have a part time job.

Faruk

He was born in 1987. He is the youngest child of his family and has one sister and one brother both of whom are sighted. He had partial sight until end of secondary school then he lost some of them and regained some of them. He went to a school for blind without boarding for 8 years. He is university graduate and working currently. He lives in a big city. He has a very active life in blind-related NGO.

Figen

Figen was born in 1988. She went to boarding school for blind until her 7th class. She has little sight on her right eye but she uses braille. She has 4 other siblings and one of her older sisters is also blind. During interview phase she was a senior student in university. Now she is working and doing her masters.

Güven

He was born in 1993. His day sight enables him to read ink print materials and travel without cane. But his sight is decreasing. He has 3 siblings. He did not went to a special school and met other blind people on university. He is still an university student.

Kadir

He was born in 1966. He lost his sight when he was 11. After five years of loss, he went to boarding school for blind on secondary level for 3 years. He is very active in NGOs and many aspects of the life.

Lemi

He was born in 1952 but he lost his sight totally in 2002. However, his one eye had sight problems since secondary school. He continued to his education until university and when he was 50 his other eye has also became blind. 5 years later he has retired.

Levent

He was born in 1963. He has 3 older siblings. He lost his sight in one eye in twenties and lost the other one in thirties. He is retired now. He has a very active life in blind-related NGO after blindness.

Lütfü

He was born in 1974 as a fourth child of 5. His oldest sister and his mother are also blind. They have some degree of sight. He can read some big letters. Until 17 years of age, He did not know Turkish. After 17, they migrated to city. Then he went to a rehabilitation center. After that, he finished his secondary and high school with distance education. Then he finished a university and he is a senior student in another university. He is also working.

Münire

She was born in 1974. Her family has 6 children and three of them are blind. Münire is the second child of her family and the first blind child. She went to boarding school for blind for five years. After that, she went to a mainstream boarding school for secondary and high school. Then she graduated from a university and works as a teacher. She is married.

Naci

He was born in 1982. He is totally blind. He has a sighted brother who is 17 years older. He went to a school for blind for five years in a nonboardingly way. Then he went to musical school throughout secondary school hi school and university. He is still continuing to his academic life and he is working.

Osman

He was born in 1985 to a family that has 9 children. He has 3 older siblings. His elder sister and younger sibling are also partially sighted. He has some vision. After high school he learned that there will be no cure for his sight. He learned Turkish after secondary school. He is currently making his PhD Abroad.

Oya

She was born in 1986. She also has a blind sister 8 years younger than her. She is partially sighted. She can read the large print materials. She did not go to a special school during her educational life. She is working as a teacher now.

Polat

He was born in 1971. He is totally blind and has 5 siblings. Only 2 of them are younger than him. He grew up in a village. He went to a school for blind for 9 years. Then he returned to his village for high school and came to İstanbul after high school. He is still working and married.

Raşit

He was born in 1988. He has for older sisters and two of them are also blind. After 2-year mainstream school experience, Raşit went to a boarding school for blind for 9 years. He now graduated from a university.

Remziye

She was born in 1994. She is totally blind. She has one older blind brother. She went to a school for blind for 8 years. She is still a university student.

Rıza

He was born in 1985 and started to lose his sight when he was 22 years old in 2007.He has two older brothers but they live in out of his city. 7 years later he started working again. He is living in a middle-size city.

Ruşen

He was born in 1981. He is totally blind. He has one blind older brother and one younger sister. His parents are divorced when he was 12. He went to a school for blind for 8 years. In high school period he left his home and lived alone on the streets. He did not go to university. He is still working.

Rüya

She was born in 1973. She has one sibling but 16 years younger than her. Her one eye had some sight until she is on third grade. Then she has become totally blind.

She went to a boarding school for blind after secondary school. She also went to a rehabilitation center. She is university graduate and she is still working.

Şahin

He is the only child of his family. He is totally blind. He lost his one siblings in a young age. He was born in 1990. He went to a special school for the blind for 8 years as a boarding student. In the phase of interview, he was preparing to KPSS as a university graduate.

Uğur

He was born in 1975. He is totally Blind. He is the youngest of 3 siblings. He went to a school for blind for 8 years. Then he finished high school with distance education. After that the graduated from university. He is still working.

Yaren

She was born in 1994. She has one younger blind sister. She went to a school for blind for four years then she continued to schools in near her house. She has some degree of vision but not much. Her father is a teacher and mother is house wife. She was married in university. She is a student currently.

Zeliha

She was born in 1981. She has 2 younger siblings: 1 sighted brother and one blind sister. She went to a school for blind for five years, then she went to mainstream schools. She is a university graduate and working in a private company.

Zeytin

She is totally blind. She was born in 1992 and a university student. She has one younger blind brother.

APPENDIX F

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Disability Stories and Attitudes of Family and Environment

- Could you tell me how you have become disabled?
- How did you understand that you are disabled?
- How can you define the attitudes of your parents related to your disability?
- Could you mention the attitudes of your siblings and relatives?
- How about your peers? How did they behave you in general?

Formal and Informal Educational Stories and Experiences

- Could we talk about your disability experiences on the schools beginning from primary school to current?
- How were your relations with your school peers?
- How was your interaction with your teachers?
- How did the school management provide assistance for your education?
- Have you ever met the discriminative attitudes, implications and behaviors?
- How was the educational support of your family?
- If you look at your educational life in general, have your perception about your disability changed over time?
- If you went to a school for blind can you tell about the first days of the school?
- If you had chance to take your primary, secondary school education differently, could there be a change on your life and perception of disability?
- How does your interaction with other blind people affect your life?

- Which kinds of working methods are you following in your educational life?
- According to your perspective, does becoming disabled contribute to your educational life negatively or positively?
- If you went to a rehabilitation center or any association, how is the effect of it on your perception of disability?

Impact of Sight Degree

- How does your sight degree (partially sighted or total blindness) affect your life compared to others?
- If you have experienced sight lost later on your life, can you tell the effect of it?

The Influences of Accessibility and Technology

- Which kinds of accessibility issues can be enabling you in your life?
- What kinds of accessibility facilities which decrease your disablement have been presented to you until now?
- How did you feel when you take such kinds of accessibility arrangements?
- What is the meaning of accessibility for you?

Perception of Disability

- How did being disabled affect your life till now?
- If you were not disabled, what kind of life you would have?
- What is the meaning of blindness for you?
- If you had a chance to get rid of your blindness by taking a pill, would you want to take that pill? Why?

Possible Consequences of the Perception of Disability

- When you met difficulties related to your disability in your educational life, what did you do to solve them?
- Did you disclose your disability and talked about it with your teachers and school managers? What kinds of demands did you ask?
- How are your relations with blind-related NGO’s?
- What kinds of expectations do you have from NGO’s?
- Have you ever participated to demonstrations and marching?
- What kinds of purposes should blind-related NGO’s have for you?

APPENDIX G

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS IN TURKISH

Engellilik Hikâyesi ve Tutumlar

- Bize Engelli olma hikâyeni anlatabilir misin?
- İlk olarak engeli olduğunu nasıl anladın?
- Anne babanın sana karşı engelinle ilgili ne tür tutumları oldu?
- Kardeşlerinin ve akrabalarının sana karşı davranışlarını anlatır mısın?
- Çevrendeki diğer insanların tutumlarını anlatır mısın?

Eğitim Hikâyesi

- İlkokuldan başlayarak bugüne kadar gittiğin okullardaki Engellilik deneyimlerini konuşalım mı?
- Arkadaşlarınla ilişkilerin nasıldı?
- Öğretmenlerinle etkileşimin nasıldı?
- Okul yönetimi sana ne kadar yardımcı oldu?
- Ayrımcı uygulama veya tutumlarla karşılaştın mı?
- Ailenin eğitim desteği nasıldı?

Eğitim Kurumları

- Eğitim hayatına genel olarak baktığında yıllar içinde engelliliğe bakışın değişti mi? Nasıl?
- Eğitiminde nasıl bir çalışma yöntemi izledin ve izliyorsun?
- Engelli olmak senin eğitim hayatına artı veya eksi bir şeyler kattı mı?

- Bulunduğun rehabilitasyon merkezi veya dernek, engelliliğe bakış açını nasıl etkiliyor?

Kaynaştırma veya Körler Okulları

- Körler okuluna gittiysen ilk başlangıç deneyimlerini anlatır mısın?
- Körler okulunda olmak veya olmamak seni nasıl etkiledi?
- Aldığından farklı bir biçimde engellilerle bir arada ya da değil, eğitimine devam etmiş olsaydın, hayatında bir şeyler değişir miydi?

Engellilik Derecesi

- Az görmek ya da hiç görmemek diğerleriyle karşılaştırdığında seni nasıl etkiliyor?
- Sonradan görme kaybı yaşadıysan bu seni nasıl etkiledi?

Erişilebilirlik

- Bir engelli olarak hayatını nelerin nasıl kolaylaştıracağını düşünüyorsun?
- Kişisel olarak bu güne kadar engellenmişliğini azaltan ne gibi düzenlemelerle karşılaştın?
- Bu düzenlemelerle karşılaşmak sana neler hissettirdi?
- Senin için erişilebilirlik ne demek?

Engellilik Algısı

- Bugüne kadar engelli olmak çeşitli ortamlarda seni nasıl etkiledi?
- Engelli olmasaydın nasıl bir hayatın olacağını düşünüyorsun?
- Senin için körlük ne ifade ediyor?

- Bir hap alıp engelinden kurtulma şansın olsaydı, bunu hangi açılardan ister, hangi açılardan istemezdin?

Engelilik Eğiliminin Sonuçları

- Eğitim hayatında engelinle ilgili karşılaştığın zorluklarda bunları nasıl çözmeye çalıştın?
- Hocalarınla veya okul yönetimleriyle durumun hakkında konuştun mu ve konuştuysan ne gibi taleplerde bulundun?
- Üniversitede veya dışarıda derneklerle nasıl bir ilişki içindesin?
- Sivil toplum kuruluşlarından ne gibi beklentilerin var?
- Hiç yürüyüş ve gösterilere katıldın mı? Katıldıysan hangi konularda?
- Sence engelli örgütlerinin amaçları ne olmalı?

APPENDIX H

THE INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTIONS IN TURKISH

1. Osman: Bir de ben yurt dışındaki masterımda, o zaman aslında görme engellilikle ilgili benim çok algım değişti. Ben de hep bir şeyler eksikti ve ben bunu körlüğe yoruyordum. Ama orda gördüm ki biraz da tezimin konusu olan bir görme engelli müthişse bağımsız hareketi iyiyse işte bağımsız yaşam becerileri iyiyse yani ütü yapmayı biliyorsa, renklileri eşleştirmeyi biliyorsa, insanlarla konuşmayı biliyorsa bu adamın gören insanlardan hiç bir farkı olmuyor. O insanlardan hiçbir farkları kalmıyor. Ben o zaman fark ettim; benim sıkıntım görme engelli olmam değil. Benim sıkıntım o becerilerimin eksik oluşu, ben baston kullanmayı bilseydim o dönemde yani her yere gidebilseydim işte iyi bilgisayar kullanmış olabilseydim, kabartma yazı okuyabilseydim, o tür becerilerim olsaydı, bence o farkındalık yarattı ben de yani ben onları becerdikten sonra benim kör olup olmamam hiçbir şey fark etmiyor yani.
2. Kadir: Bir de mesela, belki kişisel özelliğim de olabilir, herkes de bulunan özellik de olabilir, bana yapamazsın dedikleri zaman deniyorum, yani denediğin zaman yapıp yapamayacağını kendin de görüyorsun. Bir yapamaman kör olduğundan dolayı mı? Yoksa bilmemenden dolayı mı? O da ayrı bir şey. Ben mesela araba kullanmayı denedim, işin doğrusu araba kullanamayacağın bir şey değil. Mesela yolda giderken yürümekle araba kullanmak arasında ciddi bir fark yok sadece o sürecin yani bastonla

yürüdüğün süreci beynine aktardığın zamanla yürüdüğün mesafenin aradaki fark meselesi.

3. Damla: Bir karakteristikten ibaret olduğunu düşünüyorum ve şey her karakteristiğin olduğu gibi farklı avantaj ve dezavantajları olduğunu düşünüyorum. Ama bununla ilgili şu anda insanların bakış açılarıyla ilgili çok sık düşünüyorum. Yani insanların yaşadığı şeyler hepimizin yaşadığı şeyler aslında. Sadece kör olduğumuz için ve onların kafalarında kurdukları kör kalıbına uygun kalmak beni çok düşündürüyor, bazen kızdırıyor, bazen güldürüyor, bazen tepki koyuyorum. Yani her zaman tepki koyuyorum da bazen kızgın bir tepki koyuyorum, bazen öğretici olmaya çalışıyorum, bazen umursamıyorum falan ama bu zamanlarda daha çok düşünüyorum. Son birkaç senedir daha çok düşünüyorum. Ben kör olduğum için değil ama insanlar kör olmayı nasıl algılıyor diye daha çok düşünüyorum.
4. Şahin: Körüm ben, hiç bir zaman gören olmayı hayal etmedim çünkü ben körlüğü kimliğimin bir parçası olarak küçük yaşta kabul ettim, o göreceksiniz, görürsünüz hissi sanırım benim körlüğü kabullenmemi kolaylaştırdı. Evet, küçük şeylerle çarptı suratıma bu farklılık fakat çarptığı zaman çok hani yine yüzeyi küçüktür ama çarptığın zaman batar işte bunlar da o tarz vakalardı sanırım. O iğneler körlüğü benim kimliğime çabucak işlediler ben körlüğümü giyerek körlüğümü sırtlanarak o kabullenme ve kabul ettirme mücadelesine giriştim. O, yüzden ben hayallerimde hep kör olarak bir şeyleri yapardım. Mesela hayallerimden biri, bir komün kurmuşum ve o komünün yetkilisiyim, kendi köyümde önce küçük bir toprak alıyorum, sonra o topraktan zeytin üretiyorum, sonra o zeytinden elde ettiğim topraklarla yeni topraklar alıyorum ve bana insanlar önce emekleriyle katılıyorlar yani işçi

çalışan olarak katılıyorlar. Sonra ben diyorum ki arkadaşlar bu zeytinliği benimle beraber büyütüyorsunuz bu zeytinlik hepimizin gelin bunu beraber büyütelim ve ben köyün belediye başkanı oluyorum, sonra yoldan falan geçerken insanların arkamdan fısıldaşmalarını duyduğumu hayal ediyorum vay be adama bak kör kör neleri başardı gibi.

5. Raşit: Benim için körlük; beni diğer insanlardan farklı kılan yüz rengim gibi, göz rengim gibi, etnik kimliğim, saç rengim gibi bir şey. Çocukluğumdan beri ben körlüğümü bir engel olarak görmedim ve körlüğümden dolayı bana birisi bir şey yapamazsın diyorsa onu inatla yapardım, hatta şu anda ailem benim yalnız başıma bir evde kalmamı kabullenemiyor ve ben onlara bunu yapabileceğimi söylüyorum bunu mücadelesini veriyorum. Körlüğün bunlara engel olmayacağını düşünüyorum çünkü paranın vücudu yoktur, körlük vücutta olan bir şeydir. Para elinde olduğunda ve parayı yönlendirmeyi başardığında çok daha rahat toplumda kabul görebilirsin ve bu işi yaparken de körlüğünün aslında sadece bir farklılık olduğunu çok daha rahat ifade edebilirsin, bir eksiklik olmadığını çok daha rahat ifade edebilirsin.
6. Figen: Yani ben şeyim, ben her şeyi yapıyorum şimdi. Yani gören bir insanın yaptığı çoğu şeyi yapıyorum. Çok eksikliğini hissettiğim şu anda ders olayını da hallettikten sonra özellikle, yani görmememin hissettireceği hiçbir şey yok hayatımda. Bazen hani şey yeni tanıştığım insanlar gözlerin açılsa iyi olmaz mı dediklerinde düşünüyorum, ne değişebilir ki hani, ne kadar çok şey değişebilir, daha mı fazla bir yere giderim, hayır zaten gidiyorum, daha mı fazla kitap okurum, yo zaten okuyorum, daha mı fazla ders çalışırım, böyle de zaten çalışıyorsam çalışıyorum.

7. Abidin: Allah bana bunu verdiyse, ha her şeyi kadere bağlayan bir şey değil bu, bağlamam cüz-i irade de var o apayrı bir konu. Bu konuya girersek çıkamayız da sonuçta ben bu durumu yaşıyor muyum? Ben bu durumda ne yapabilirim. Elimde telefon var veya elimde bir arkadaşım mı var veya beni yönlendirecek birisi mi var veya beni yönlendirebilecek bir materyal mi var veya benim gelişmiş bir yönüm mü var, müzikal olur başka şey olur, bunları değerlendirerek bir şeyler yapmaya gayret ettik. Az da olsa pek de aktif olmamakla beraber yine de bir şeyler yapmaya çalıştık. Bu sabır ve şükür duygusu çok önemlidir. Ben bu görmeme yönünden dolayı hiç bir zaman Allaha isyan etmedim, ha dönem dönem bocalamalarım oldu niye böyle oldu diye ama Allaha şükürler olsun ki sabır ve şükür duygumuz bizi baya bu durumlarda sağlıklı tutmaya yetti.
8. Remziye: Benim hayatımı kör olmam baya olumlu etkiledi bence, çünkü eğer görüyor olsaydım biz bir köyde kalırdık ve ben belki ortaokulu falan okurdum sonrası gelir miydi gelmez miydi bilmiyorum yani. Görüyor olsaydım bu kadar çalışmazdım da derslerime bence. Çünkü köy ortamında kimse önemsemiyor okulu falan. Herkes aman boş ver evlensin gitsin mi derlerdi, bilmiyorum, kuzenlerim var mesela okul bitti, yani şu an onlar XXX'de yaşıyorlar ama başladı liseye ama bitirmeden (gülerek) buldu birini, ben evleneceğim diye tutturdu acaba diyorum bende mi öyle olurdu eğer görseydim.
9. Şahin: Ama bu kadar hırslı olmazdım diye tahmin ediyorum, yani bu kadar arayış içinde olmazdım. Yani toplumun çarkları arasında toplumun bana biçtiği değerler arasında çok daha çabuk yer bulur ve o çarklar arasında çok

daha kolay ezilir biçimlenirdim. Kendimi biçimlendirmek için çaba göstermezdim bu bağlamda kör olmak benim için şeydi.

10. Kadir: Karizma görsel bir şey yani, anlatabildim mi. Dolayısıyla benim burada bir avantajım olduğunu tahmin ediyorum. Mesela çok insan uyumlu yani sistemle, yanlışları görmüyorlar. Belki şu da olabilir; ben kendimi olayın dışına çekerek de bakıyorum yani sorgulayan, filan bir tip olarak da görüyorum. Ama mesela yatılı bölge okulundaki çocuğu düşün; karşısında sert yüzlü, kravatlı, takım elbiseli jilet gibi böyle, belki kilolu kaslı göbekli bir şey, kadın hocalar da öyle. Onların odaları ayrı, şekilleri ayrı bilmem tuvaletleri ayrı falan filan öyle bir havaları var ben bunların hiçbirini görmüyorum, sesinden başka verim yok o yüzden de çok ondan etkilenmeyebilirim yani.
11. Naci: Hiç düşünmem. İstemem herhalde. Niyetli değilim. Çünkü bana ne getireceğini bilmiyorum. Ne yapacak? Nasıl bir ortam yaratacağına dair hiçbir fikrim yok. Bana gerçekten avantaj sağlayacak mı onu da bilmiyorum. Sanmıyorum yani. Emin değilim bundan. Şunu söylemek istemiyorum. Körlüğün bazı toplumsal olarak yaklaşımı vardır. Engelliye iyi yaklaşıyorlar. Avantajları var. Bedava seyahat ediyorlar ya da mali olarak sorun yaşamamak gibi bir şeyden bahsetmiyorum. Avantajla kastettiğim bu değil. Benim şu anda kurduğum bir hayat düzenim var. Kurguladığım ve bundan sonra da yapabileceğimi düşündüğüm bir hayat düzenim var. Gözlerim açılsa da ben aynı şeyi düşüneceğim, açılmasa da.
12. Raşit: O hapı ateşe atar yakardım çünkü istemiyorum ben gözlerimin açılmasını, ben bütün hayatımı bunun üzerine koydum bu çerçeve üzerine oturttum. Bu soru bana hayatın görmek üzerine kurmuş bir insana sen

gözlerin bir trafik kazasında kaybetmek ister miydin ya da bir şey olsa gözlerini kaybetsen, gözlerine mil çeksinler ister miydin gibi bir soru gibi geliyor.

13. Ender: Valla ben onu şöyle düşünüyorum. Hani Katoliklerde şöyle bir şey vardır ya, evlendin mi bir daha boşanamazsın. Ben körlüğü benim hiçbir zaman atamayacağım nikâhlı eşim gibi görmeye başladım. Bununla birlikte yaşamam gerektiğini kabullenmek zorundaydım. Kabullendim. Onun içinde… Yani bunu çokta fazla düşünmedim açıkçası. Körlükten kaynaklı zaman zaman yaşadığım sıkıntılar olmadı mı, oldu.
14. Yaren: Abi yapbozun parçalarından biri ya, insanın hayatını etkileyen tek bir şey hiç bir zaman olmadı, illa bir şey etkilediyse daha çok etkilemiş bir sürü şey vardır. Her şeye kadar etkiledi yani.
15. Rüştü: Kör olma meselesi benim için aklımla fark edemediğim bir datanın yolunu aramak benim için ya da çamaşır makinesine çamaşır yerleştirirken renklerini ayırabilme pratikliği. Körlük böyle yerlerde benim için mevzu bahis oluyor ya da buralarda ondan dolayı pratikler üretiyorum ben ya da hoşlandığım bir kızın benden görmediğim için hoşlanmadığını anladığımda yine körlükle muhatap oluyorum ama kızmıyorum ben ona yani. Çünkü ben düzenimi buna göre oturttuğum için o benim iyi bir arkadaşım. Küsmüyoruz biz onunla hiçbir zaman. Ben gençliğimdeki, çok fazla akıllı olmadığımı düşündüğüm zamanlardaki birkaç küçük isyan patlamasının dışında hiç niye görmüyorum dediğimi hatırlamam yani. Kör olma meselesi benim için genel görmeyenlerin algıladığı yerin dışında bir yer. Benim görmemekle ya da görmeyenlerle görmeme temelli bir problemim yok. Zeka temelli bir problemim var benim, akıl. Ben çoğundan çok fazla akıllıyım. Onlar

akıllarını geliştirmemek için görmemelerini bahane ederek hayatlarını sürdürüyorlar. İşte bu çizgide biz çok ayrılıyoruz. Ben bunun önemli bir şeyi değiştirmediğini düşünüyorum. Benim önümde iki tane televizyon var. Biri dsmart biri digitürk. İstediğim kanalı izleyebiliyorum ama o ya kimi zaman ne izlediğini zaten anlamayacağını düşünüyor ya da izlerken birine ihtiyaç duyuyor. Bir kere burada zaten kopuyor. Ben her izlediğimi anlıyorum ama. Bir örnek verdim sana. Ben dışarı çıkıp bir kafeye oturuyorum. Siparişimi de veriyorum. Üstüme de bazen döküyorum ama lavaboya da gidip üstümü peçeteyle de silebiliyorum ama o ya hiç gitmemeyi ya da biriyle gitmeyi tercih ediyorum.

16. Ender: Kalem fabrikasına girdiğim dönemlerde falan kör olmanın dezavantajlarını yaşadım. Çünkü bakışlar belliydi. Ondan sonra üniversitede…
17. Uğur: Tabi ki kör olmaktan kimse mutlu olmaz, kimsenin mutlu olacağına ve hoşlanacağı bir durum da değil bu. Getirdiği sıkıntılar da çok fazla yani yalan yok şimdi biz yapılamayacak bir şeyin sadece şu an mümkün olmadığını ama temel olarak yapılamayacak bir şeyin olmadığı görüşündeyim. Ama onlara ulaşana kadar da gerçekten çok sıkıntı çekiyoruz yani, bu da hayatın bir gerçeği. Diğer insanların bir birim çabayla ulaşacağı yere sen gerekirse 5-10 birim, ölçüye vurmak gerekirse, çaba harcamak zorunda kalıyorsun. Ama diğer taraftan da yani körlükle ilgili şeye baktığında ben psikolojik olarak kendimi güçlü hissediyorum, hayatın başka konularıyla ilgili de öyle. Tabi bir uzman ne değerlendirir bilmiyorum ama kendime baktığım zaman psikolojik olarak bir kırılgan yapımın olmadığını, bir zayıflığımın olmadığını düşünüyorum. Onun için körlüğün benim üzerimde öyle yıkıcı bir etki

yarattığını düşünmüyorum yani öyle bir şey olmuyor. Hani mesela bazı arkadaşlarda böyle aşırı derecede bir karamsarlık, ne olursa olsun mutlaka biz bir adım gerideyiz, bu iş ne olacak, şunu da yapsaydık yapamıyoruz, bunu da yapsaydık yapamıyoruz falan diye, yani öyle bir şey oluşturmuyor bende.

18. Münire: Körlük, yani şey var benim için çok klasik olacak ama uygun imkanlar sağlandığında aşılabilecek rahat bir engel gurubu olarak görüyorum ben körlüğü. Ama şey var ben hani içinde bulunduğum toplumsal koşullar ve aile ortamında hani bana çok güzel imkanlar sağlanmakla birlikte çok az teşvik ve takdir gördüğüm için çoğu şeylerde eksik görüyorum kendimi. Mesela ben sizleri falan gördüğümde kendimi çok yetersiz yeteneksiz görüyorum. Çok az şey yaptığımı düşünüyorum ya da benden daha eski olanları gördüğümde mesela Gültekin Yazganları falan onlar benden daha çok imkansızlıklar içinde neler başarmış o yönde de kendimi çok eksik görüyorum. Şey demeye çalışıyorum hani körlük benim için aslında yetersizliği değil yeterliliği ifade ediyor. Ama işte uygun imkan sağlandığı takdirde… Yani ben annemin yüzünü hiç güldüremedim. Mesela ben 13 yıl çalıştım kazandığımda onlara ait oldu bütün kardeşlerimden önce ben üniversiteyi bitirdim, sigortalı bir işe ben başladım, kardeşlerime hayatlarındaki ilk tatili ben yaptırdım, ne biliyim buna benzer pek çok şeyi benimle yaşadılar. Ama annemin yüzü hep görmediğimden yana gülmedi. Çok güzel kız ama çok güzel şeyler yapıyor ama… Bu amalar hep oldu yapabilirsin ama ama ama ama. Bu amalar hep geldi. Bu şey var yani eşimin ailesinde de bunu gözlemliyorum zaman zaman. Etrafımdaki pek çok insanda da görme engelli arkadaşımda da zannederim bu var. Bu amaların sonu gelmiyor bir türlü maalesef.

19. Levent: Şöyle bir şey var: hayatta en zor şey cahillik. İnsan engelli olduğunda kendini geliştirdiği zaman her şeyi başarır diye düşünüyorum. Bir de engellilerin şartları daha ağır, bu erişim sağlanırsa bir engelli sıkıntı yaşamaz. Bu benim görüşüm. Ben en çok caddede karşıdan karşıya geçerken, otobüs beklediğimde otobüs geldiğinde kaç numara olduğunu insanlara soruyorsun, bazen onlar da okuryazar olmuyor. Yani otobüse bindikten sonra ben kolay kolay sormam nereye gittiğini. Oralarda sıkıntı yok. Şimdi ben belki görseydim, belki bu kadar aktif olamazdım. Mecburen eve ekmek getirmek zorundasın, çalışmak zorundasın diye düşünüyorum yani. (…) Şeyi özlüyorum. Pazar günleri eşim kahvaltıyı hazırladığında ben gidip ekmeği alıp, gazetemi alıp, gazete okuyordum onu özlüyorum. Sahili çok özledim. Ben yayla hayatını, dağ hayatını çok severim. Yaylaları çok özledim. Yani oralarda gezmeyiş çok özledim. Ya gidiyorum ben her sene gidiyorum Konya'da. Misafirlerim geliyor, onlara yaylaları gezdiriyorum. Yaylalarda bile toprak yol olmasına rağmen patikada onları bir yerden bir yere çok rahat götürebilirim. O bütün taşlar bile benim kafamda kolay kolay kaybolacak şeyler değil. Tabi çok özlediğim şeyler var ama elden gelen bu eldeki bu yani durum.
20. Polat: Körlük benim için aslında hiçbir anlam ifade etmiyor. Çünkü ben kör olduğumu da bilmiyorum doğuştan kör olduğum için yani karanlık ve aydınlık kavramım olmadığı için körlük aslında görmenin zıttıdır ve görenler bunu söyler. Yani ben bir şeyimi düşürüp bulamadığımda kör olduğumu anlıyorum ama dikiş dikemiyorum desem onu bizim Çetin abi de dikemiyor iş yerinde? Yumurta pişiremiyor. Adam görüyor. Ben çay demliyorum. O çay demleyemiyor mesela. Dolayısıyla aslında benim körlük algım yok aslında.

Benim için yaşam bu. Çünkü ben doğuştan böyleyim. Ben yürüdüğümde böyleydim. Ben daha 3-4 yaşımda terslik dediğimiz hayvan gübrelerinin atıldığı 2 metrelik çukurlara düşüyordum. Sonra onlara düşmemeyi öğrendim. O tarafa doğru gitmemeyi öğrendim. Yani hayatı bu şekilde öğrendim. Dolayısıyla körlük algısı diye bir şey yok. Ben gerçekten bir şey bilmiyorum. Bu benim için bir şey ifade etmiyor.

21. Deniz: Ben o yüzden şunu düşünüyorum; her şey körlere anlatılabilir ama rengi asla anlatamazsın, rengin verdiği haz değil de mutlaka başka hazlar vardır duyuyoruz yani şu anda ama o rengin verdiği haz, o denizim mas maviliği benim gözümün önünde şu anda, onu nasıl anlatabilirsin ki. O yüzden bazı körlerin, yazar körlerin betimleme yetenekleri zayıftır yani. En iyi yazar dediğimiz yazarların betimleme yeteneği zayıftır.
22. Deniz: Yaa hiç onu düşünmedim. Bazen bana sokaktaki insanlar ya da çevremden birileri ulan bir doktora git kardeşim değişiyor teknoloji belki bir şey olmuştur falan ben gideriz diye geçiştirmekten başka bir şey yapmıyorum. En son ne zaman gittim, belki lisede. Gözümün açılması ya da keşke kör olmasaydım gibi bir şey yok yani, o hiç görmediğim zaman herhalde bu geçici bir şey diye düşündüm 7-8 yaşlarında, (gülerek) ya köye gidene kadar düzelir herhalde diye, sonra düzelmedi. Yok, yani ben öyle bir şey düşünmedim, gözümün açılması gibi bir beklentim de yok umudum da yok, bir düşüncem de yok olursa ne olur bilmiyorum yani.
23. Engin: Son bir soru. Bir hap olsaydı, gözlerinin açılacağını bilseydin ne düşünürdün?

Çiler: Zor bir soru. Yani buna “Hayır, istemiyorum.” diyebilecek insan sayısının çok az olduğunu düşünüyorum. En çok bunu içselleştirdim, kabullendim diyen insanın bile vardır yani bir merakı.

Engin: Senin merakların ne mesela? Ne yapmak isterdin? Görseydin neler yapmak isterdin? Nelere özlem duyarsın?

Çiler: Bu soruya şunu görmek istiyorum diye değil de merak ettiğim şeyler var. Güneşin doğduğu zamanı çok merak ediyorum mesela. Çünkü ben sabahlara kadar oturan bir insanım. Uyku düzenim biraz bozuk. O vakitleri çok merak ederim acaba nasıl bir görüntü ortaya çıkar diye. “Çok merak ediyorum, ayy nasıl!” diye değil de aklıma takılır arada. İnsanların o bakışma duygusunu merak ediyorum. Göz göze gelme anları, bakışma duyguları… Öyle çok fazla da renkleri merak ediyorum, şunu merak ediyorum, bunu merak ediyorum diyemem çünkü bu şekilde başladım ben hayatıma. Bir yerden bir yere gitmekten, çay doldurmaya varana kadar hayatımı bu şekilde yönlendirdim. Yani bir farklılık bilmediğim için, nasıl bir şey olduğunu bilmediğim için evet istiyorum diyemem. Ama olsaydı düşünürdüm herhalde ya. Pat diye de “haydi görelim” demek bana o kadar da kolay gelmiyor. Ben çok fazla bir şeylerden vazgeçebilen bir insan değilim ama yine de hayır demezdim herhalde. Böyle de memnunum hayatımdan. Sıkıntı yok yani.

24. Rıza: Yani hocam siz bunu sorduktan sonra, yani nasıl diyeyim, beynimdeki karanlıkların ortasına kocaman bir çizgi çektim böyle diklemesine. Sol tarafına artıları sağ tarafına eksileri yazdım. Nasıl diyeyim, çok arada ya. Çok arada... Çünkü bazı şeyler var hani gördüğüm dönemlerden hatırlıyorum, bazı şeyler var görmemek daha iyi sanki ama beni engellilikle ilgili yoran tek husus şu hocam: Başka insanlara bağımlı olmak. Bazı hususlarda beni tek

yoran şey o. O da şey hani, şahsi bir hırstan kaynaklanan bir şey değil yani. Ben kendi ayaklarım üzerine dururum, kimseye ihtiyacım yok falan, kimseye muhtaç kalmam falan değil de; biraz daha empatik düşünerek yani, neden insanların sırtına yük olayım? Tamam, insanlar bundan şikâyetçi değil ama…

25. Rüya: Benim için körlük gözlerinin görmemesi demekti yani beyin görüyor ama gözler görmüyor diyebilirim yani. Sadece objeleri göremiyorsun ama beynin her şeyi algılayabiliyor, bir uzvun çalışmaması diye bu kadar basitleştirebilirim körlük durumunu çünkü bence kör olmak önemli değil kör olarak yaşayabilmek önemli bence, körlüğü engel olarak görmeden ya da engelleri aşarak normal insan gibi yaşayabilmek önemli bence. (…) Evet, düşündüm çünkü ben daha özgür bir yaşam isterdim kör olmasaydım ne bilim arabama atlayıp şu anda istediğim yere gitmek isterdim yani çok böyle her zaman olarak görmeyelim ama görenlerin hayatı birazcık daha kolay bizim için. Biz biraz hayatı daha pahalı yaşıyoruz hem maddi hem manevi anlamda daha pahalı yaşıyoruz ama görenler her şeye daha başka ulaşabiliyorlar. (…) Görseydim bulunduğum meslek hayatımda en iyi yerde olurdum, ne bilim en yüksek kademelere ulaşabilirdim yani hayatım daha kaliteli olabilirdi. Her istediğime daha rahat ulaşabilirdim, hayatım birazcık daha renkli olabilirdi diye düşünüyorum.
26. Engin: Şöyle söyleyeyim, mesela kör olduğun için yapamadığını düşündüğün şeyler var mı mesela ve yapmak istediğin?

    Zetin: (Gülümseyerek) Kaldırımlarda yürüyememek, ya rahatça yürümek isterdim, koşabilmek isterdim. Araba kullanmak, haa bisiklete binmek çok isterdim mesela ama tek başıma, partnerle değil.

27. Güven: Kör kimliğim var ve bu hayatımın çok büyük bir kısmına yansıyor zaten. Elimdeki bastondan, telefonu kullanış biçimimden, seçeceğim alanlardan bunun beni yönlendirişinden yani hayatımın her alanında var ama bunu ne üst kimlik haline ne de bir kompleks haline getirmiyorum şu an. Ama alt kimliğimi de inkar etmiyorum ve hayatımda bulunması gereken yerlerde bulunuyor bu kimlik.
28. Engin: Hep sorarım, tedavi olacağını bilsen, gözlerinin açılma olasılığı olduğunu veya bir anda açılacak olsa bunu nasıl karşılarsın?

    Güven: Olumlu karşılarım, görmeyi isterim bunu hiçbir zaman inkar etmedim. Güzel olur, yapmak istediklerimi yaparım. Hayatımda gerçekleştiremediğim bir takım şeyleri gerçekleştiririm. Bunu isterim yani olursa yaparım.
29. Çağla: Tamamen görmek değil ama biraz görmek isterdim. O da şundan kendimi de geçtim de ne bileyim ileride çocuğum olduğunda onlara daha verimli olabilmek için isterdim.
30. Lütfü: Valla çok fazla etki ediyor, görüyor olsaydım örneğin belki şu anda maddi olarak desek çok iyi durumda olabilirdim ya da çok kötü durumda da olabilirdim çünkü 2 seçenek de benim için mümkündü. Benim abim bir medikal işiyle uğraşıyordu, işi baya da iyiydi işi bilmediği için batırdı o yüzden her 2 seçenek de mümkündü. Şu anda normal hayatta da örneğin otobüslere falan binerken bile baya sıkıntı yaratıyor.

    Engin: Ama herhalde görüyor olsaydınız hayatımda çok daha başka şeyler yapardım diyorsunuz yani?

    Lütfü: Kendi işimde çalışırdım ki çok da iyi yerlere getirebileceğimi de düşünüyordum ama maalesef işte bu görmemenin verdiği sıkıntı işte bu şeylerden alıkoydu. Örneğin ben abimle birlikte alışırken işimiz baya iyiydi, ben bir şey yapamıyordum aktif olarak ama fikirsel yönden, dinlediği zamanlarda en azından, baya iyiydi. İşe girdikten sonra, İstanbul'a geldikten sonra o da evlenmişti zaten, çoluk çocuğu karışmıştı artık arayıp sorma gereğini hissetmedi ya da ben yaparım ederim dedi, şu anda da baya bir durum vahim yani.

31. Engin: O zaman bir hap olsa gözünüzün açılacağını bilseniz?

    Lütfü: Olsa, bundan sonra bilmiyorum yani nasıl bir tepki göstereceğimi de bilmiyorum. Yani, verimli bölüm gitti artık.

32. Dursun: Ben çocukken biraz futbola meraklıydım. Futbolcu olmayı çok isterdim. Onu da çok dert etmedim kendime. Şu anda mesela görseydim şunu yapabilirdim dediğim hiçbir şeyim yok şu anda. Mesela bazı şeylerin karşılıyorum. Bir yere gidebilmek zor da olsa, deneye yanıla gidiyorsunuz sonuçta bir yere. Çünkü şöyle bir şey var, hakikaten ben bunu denedim. Bir şeylerde çok hayıflanmak size mutsuzluk getiriyor. Mesela desem ki ben keşke görseydim araba kullanabilirdim. Bunu deseydim, her araba kullanan kişinin yanında mutsuz olurdum. Ben kendimi biliyorum, kendi psikolojimi. Ya da her araba sürmeyi denemek istediğimde ve süremediğimde veyahut istediğim kadar süremediğimde çok hayal kırıklığına uğrar ve mutsuz olurdum. Yani iyi ki de demiyorum. Çünkü öyle çok hayıflanırsak hocam mutsuz olurum, ben biliyorum.

33. Oya: Körlük hayatta diğer insanların çok normal olarak belki de sıradan – araba sürmek nasıl otomatikleşir- olarak yaptıkları şeyleri her zaman düşünmek anlamına geliyor benim için. Bir yere gittiğin zaman acaba burada merdiven var mı, yok mu? Mesela bir yere geç kaldın normal bir insan olarak.

Çok hızlı hareket edip koşarsın. Bir şekilde yetişirsin ama sen eğer bilmiyorsan gittiğin yeri edemezsin yani. Düşünmek zorundasın.

34. Oya: Kör olmasaydım kesinlikle müzik öğretmeni olmazdım birincisi. Kör olmasaydım ve şu anki bilişsel kapasitem aynı olsaydı, çok daha farklı bir meslekte olabilir büyük ihtimalle doktor olurdum yani. Kör olmasaydım çok fazla şeye katılırdım. Mesela halk oyunu oynamayı çok isterim. Ata binmek mesela… Mesela kendi başıma alıp başımı gitmemişimdir, kimsenin bilmediği bir yere. Mesela tutup İstanbul'a gidip deniz kenarında kendi başıma düşünüp gelmek, ya da başka bir yer, hiç bilmediğim bir yer… Kendi kendime alışveriş yapmak… Bunlar çok küçük şeyler tabi.

35. Zeliha: Böyle çok şey bir durum olacak ama bunu ara ara da konuşuruz. Neden rahatsız oldum; insanların işte ayy, yaa gibi durumlara falan girmeleri, hiçbir şey değil ama. Şöyle söyleyeyim kör olmasaydım araba kullanırdım. Araba kullanamamak benim çok canımı sıkıyor. Evet, yani Zeliha ve arabası gibi bir şey söylerim yani etrafımdakilere. Ne bilim arabayla ilgili şeyleri falan hep düşünürüm yani, arabam, bu da arabada kalmıştır. Arabam olmadığı için çok sinirim bozuluyor. (güler) Başka şeyler de var tabi ki belki daha hareketli bir yaşamım olurdu. Daha hızlı hani daha hareketli bir yaşamım olurdu şu an birçok şeyde sıkıntı tabi ama bu araba mevzusu benim en canımı sıkandır. Olumlu tarafları da yani bir olumlu tarafı var mıdır bilmiyorum yani yoktur herhalde.

36. Burhan: Benim için körlük bir işlevin kaybedilmesi olarak bir anlam ifade ediyor. İnsani anlamda bir kayıp ifade etmiyor. Hayatta insanın başına çeşitli olaylar geliyor bu sağlıkla ilgili olabilir başka türlü olabilir şanslı olduğu konular olabilir şanssız olduğu noktalar olabilir bu da bir nevi şanssızlık.

Üstesinden gelinemeyecek veya korkulacak, korkutucu bir şey değil, öyle gelmiyor hiçbir zaman. Ama nelerin kaybedileceğini nelerin hayatından eksileceğini biliyorum yani bunun bir eksiklik olduğunu düşünüyorum. Bu kolunu kaybetmek gibi bir şey örneğin, sen de görmeni kaybediyorsun, görmenin %90'ını, %99'unu veya %100'ünü kaybediyorsun. Şu anda tabi o yönden farklıyız, eksiklik olarak kaybettiğimiz pek çok şeyi bu sayede kapatabiliyoruz ama ne olursa olsun öbürü görerek bir şey yapacak görerek koşacak, görerek gidecek. Biz de bir yere gideceğiz ama işte görmeden, farklı yöntemlerle biraz daha yavaş biraz daha zor. O yönlerde hayatın pek çok alanında rekabet şansımızı kısıtlayan bir faktör. Ama insanın insan olma yönüne, kimliğine, kimliğine şekillendiren noktalara ilişkin yani herhangi bir özellikten farklı değil benim açımda. Hani bu insan olmak açısından seni ne daha iyi insan yapar ne daha eksik yapar. Yani sen yine aynı insansın, insanlık açısından eksik değilsin yani. Ama işlevsel açıdan; hayat, dış dünya, iç dünya ne bilim işte evin içindeki yaşantına varana kadar görme denen şeyden yoksun kalıyorsun. Kitap okumak, ulaşım şu bu, bunlar yerine konabilir, ne bileyim işte kasarsan belki uçak da kullanabilirsin (gülerek), o tartışmaları hatırlarsın (ikisi de güler) ama yani hiçbir zaman sevdiğin insanın yüzünü göremezsin. Elinle dokunarak hissedebilirsin ama bu farklı bir şey.

37. Burhan: Mesela biz her şeyi yaparız, bizim hiçbir farkımız yok ya da niye bize o gözle bakıyorsunuz gibi. Belki alıngan, belki örtülü bir kompleksle hareket eden insanlar olduğunu düşünüyorum, kötü niyetle yapmıyorlar belki bunu ama biraz şeye bağlıyorum. Mesela ben şöyle bir şansa sahibim; biraz görerek yaşadım ve artık iyice göremiyorum yani artık iyice görmeyen biri olarak bir süre de o sınırda yürüdüm şimdi o sınırdan öbür tarafa da geçmiş

gibiyim yani dolayısıyla sağ, sol orta her tarafta bulundum yani bunun için. O yüzden o insanların bakış açısını biliyorum zaten bir zamanlar ben öyle bakıyordum çünkü. Şimdiki hadisenin iç yüzünü de biliyorum, böyle olmak nasıl bir şey onu da biliyorum. Yapılabilecek şeyleri de biliyorum yapılamayacak şeyleri de biliyorum. Ama hiç görmeden yaşamış insanlar bu kadar rahat anlamıyor, yani böyle bir şansı yakalayamıyorsun şöyle dışardan çıkıp bakamıyor bu işe. Gören insanlar da içine girip bakamıyor ve böyle bir iletişim kopukluğu aslında var toplumla bu kesim arasında. Onun için ne yapılabilir onu da bilemiyorum ama toplumdan çok fazla da bir şey istemeye bizim hakkımızı görmüyorum. Tabi, insani olarak, herkes eşit algılanmalı, bunda hiçbir şey yok, bunun bir mazereti de olamaz ama her yeri ekonomik hale getirmek deyince bunun içine imkanlar giriyor, ekonomi giriyor o zaman aç yaşayan insanlar da var onun da yaşamaya hakkı var yemek verilsin falan. İmkanlarla sınırlandığın andan itibaren; tabi ideal de bu, şöyle olsun, böyle olsun, öyle olursa körler de şunu yapabilir, bunu da yapabilir. Aslında siz yapmıyorsunuz da o yüzden biz engelleniyoruz, o yüzden biz aslında engelli değiliz de siz bizi engelliyorsunuz. Hayır, (ironik gülüş?) sen bir eksiklik bir şanssızlık yaşamışsın, göremiyorsun ve o yüzden farklılaşmışsın normal kesimden o yüzden bunu daha zor ya da yapamaz, edemez hale gelmişsin. Evet, bir takım çözümler bulunabilir, bulunmalıdır da, her türlü imkan zorlanarak ama hani bu bulunamadı diye de her şey için yani artık detay sayılabilecek şeyler için toplumu suçlamak gerçekçi değil. Yani ütopik olarak tabi böyle bir hayal kurulabilir; her şeyin erişilebilir hale getirilebildiği dünya, güzel de olur saçma bir şey de olmaz ama bu realist değil. Hiç bir yerde değil yani zengin bir ülkede de değil, hiç bir zaman her şeyi erişilebilir hale getiremezsin.

38. Faruk: Baba mesleği ya da köye gidip, hala çok büyük hayalim. 30-40 tane tavuğum, ineğim, kazım olsun. 10-15 tane ineğim olsun. Bir tane yeni traktörleri sevmiyorum, eski bir tane traktörüm olsun mesela mf165 böyle hır hır ses çıkaran. Öyle bir hayalim var yani onu düşünüyorum. Yani okumazdım ben açıkçası. Çünkü kör olunca yapılabilecek meslek sayısı bunu kabullenelim ya da kabullenmeyelim azalıyor. Şu an ben gidip şoför olamam mesela.

    Engin: Mecburen okuyorum diyorsun yani.

    Faruk: Evet, ama bölümümü de seviyorum ama gözüm görse okumazdım.

39. Faruk: Evet. Çünkü ben körlüğe alışmışım zaten. Yürürken, evet o bastonu bazen sevmiyorum, elimde ne işi var ben elimi kolumu sallayarak yürüyeyim, tek elimi sallamayayım da sadece iki elimi de özgürce sallayabileyim bastonu önümde sürerek değil de. Ama sonuçta ona bağımlı mıyız? Bağımlıyız başka bir teknoloji başka bir yöntem keşfedilmemiş. Kör olmaya alışmışım yani. Ama kör olmaya alışmanın yanında işte o tabelaları okuyamamak. Ya da geçen işte okula gidiyorum, bir arkadaşımla aynı otobüsteymişiz ama biz bunun xxx noktasına kadar farkında değildik.
40. Oya: Eminim daha iyi, daha geniş bir çevrem olurdu diye düşünüyorum. En azından eşimi mecburiyetten değil de kendi tercihime göre seçebilirdim.
41. Lütfü: Valla çok fazla etki ediyor, görüyor olsaydım örneğin belki şu anda maddi olarak desek çok iyi durumda olabilirdim ya da çok kötü durumda da olabilirdim çünkü 2 seçenek de benim için mümkündü. Benim abim bir medikal işiyle uğraşıyordu, işi baya da iyiydi işi bilmediği için batırdı o

yüzden her 2 seçenek de mümkündü. Şu anda normal hayatta da örneğin otobüslere falan binerken bile baya sıkıntı yaratıyor. (...) Kendi işimde çalışırdım ki çok da iyi yerlere getirebileceğimi de düşünüyordum ama maalesef işte bu görmemenin verdiği sıkıntı işte bu şeylerden alıkoydu.

42. Rıza: Ama beni engellilikle ilgili yoran tek husus şudur hocam: Başka insanlara bağımlı olmak. Bazı hususlarda beni tek yoran şey o. O da şey hani, şahsi bir hırstan kaynaklanan bir şey değil yani. Ben kendi ayaklarım üzerine dururum, kimseye ihtiyacım yok falan, kimseye muhtaç kalmam falan değil de; biraz daha empatik düşünerek yani, neden insanların sırtına yük olayım? Tamam, insanlar bundan şikayetçi değil ama…
43. Rıza: Yaşadığım şehirde ben bilmiyorum da çok çok zor durumda kalmadığım sürece kendi bastonumu açıp kendi başıma bir yere gidebileceğimi düşünmüyorum.
44. Dursun: Yani özgürlük hakikaten engin bey öyle bir şey ki bize özgürlük demek ki insanın yaratılışında var yani. Bu özgürlükçü, kim olsun istemem diyen kişi yalan söyler yani. Özgür olunca insanın içine ayrı bir ferahlık geliyor.
45. Dursun: Şu anda mesela görseydim şunu yapabilirdim dediğim hiçbir şeyim yok şu anda. Mesela bazı şeylerin karşılıyorum. Bir yere gidebilmek zor da olsa, deneye yanıla gidiyorsunuz sonuçta bir yere. Çünkü şöyle bir şey var, hakikaten ben bunu denedim. Bir şeylerde çok hayıflanmak size mutsuzluk getiriyor. Mesela desem ki ben keşke görseydim araba kullanabilirdim. Bunu deseydim, her araba kullanan kişinin yanında mutsuz olurdum. Ben kendimi biliyorum, kendi psikolojimi. Ya da her araba sürmeyi denemek istediğimde ve süremediğimde veyahut istediğim kadar süremediğimde çok hayal

kırıklığına uğrar ve mutsuz olurdum. Yani iyi ki de demiyorum. Çünkü öyle çok hayıflanırsak hocam mutsuz olurum, ben biliyorum.

46. Rüya: Evet, düşündüm çünkü ben daha özgür bir yaşam isterdim, kör olmasaydım ne bilim arabama atlayıp şu anda istediğim yere gitmek isterdim yani, çok böyle her zaman olarak görmeyelim ama görenlerin hayatı birazcık daha kolay bizim için. Biz biraz hayatı daha pahalı yaşıyoruz hem maddi hem manevi anlamda daha pahalı yaşıyoruz ama görenler her şeye daha başka ulaşabiliyorlar.

47. Damla: Evet, yani koskoca 15 yaşıma gelmişim ben, kendi kendimi koruyamayacaksam, kendim bir yeri bulamayacaksam, o çubuk beni nasıl götürecek oraya ya da işte bunun gibi şeyim vardı, düşüncem vardı ta ki üniversiteye başlayıncaya kadar. Aslında ben lisedeyken de yatılı okumayı istemiştim. İstanbul'da bir okul kazanmıştım. Parasız yatılı sınavıyla ama göndermediler tabii yatılı olduğu için o okula kendileri de İstanbul'a taşınamayacakları için göndermediler. O zamandan beri zaten daha çocukluğumdan beri bağımsız olmayı istemişimdir ama işin içine bir sürü şey giriyor. İşte baston kullanmanın kaygısı, babam falan bir sürü bir şeyler giriyor. Üniversitedeyken XXX Lisesi olmamıştı ama şimdi olmak zorunda diye düşünmeye başladım. Sonra yurda çıktım önce e tabi doğrudan eve nasıl çıkacağım yurda çıktım önce. İlk sene şeydi biz psikoloji bölümünde okuyan 6 kişiyi bir odaya koymuşlar bu bizim iyi oldu tabi ki bir tane arkadaşım sabahçı öğlenci diye bir ayrım vardı XXX Üniversitesi'nde bir tane arkadaşım öğlenci benimle birlikte öğlenci gidiyoruz. Birlikte gidiyoruz ama şeyden değil zaten oda arkadaşıyız birlikte okula gidiyoruz. Ya da birlikte gidiyoruz ben sonra odama dönüyorum falan. Sonra onun bir gün işi çıktı.

Gelmedi birkaç ay geçmişti herhalde çok hatırlamıyorum tarihleri ama bir gün işte o geç gidecek okula o gün şey hissettim bugün okula gitmeyebilirim aslında ne olacak falan sonra dedim ki Damla bunu nasıl kendine yediriyorsun? Nasıl olur falan akşam geldiklerinde soracaklar sana ne yaptın bugün okula gitmediğini anlayacaklar ve anlayacaklar yani arkadaşın olmadığı için gitmedin bunu nasıl kendine yedireceksin diye. Yediremedim hakikaten de yediremediğim için bunun zamanı geldi bunun için buraya geldin diye. Aldım bastonu elime çıktım yani biriyle gitmek hiç öğretici olmamış alında yolu çok az öğrenmişim haliyle yolda giderken herkese şey diye sordum. Şuraya gidiyorum doğru yolda mıyım diye sordum. (güler) Bazen evet dediler bazen şuraya dön dediler gidinceye kadar sonra yolda üç tane oğlanla karşılaştım onlar da yabancı diller bölümüne gidiyorlarmış. Dediler beraber gidelim istersen kolumuza gir dediler. Reddettim iyi ki de öyle yapmışım. Hayır, şimdi sizin kolunuza girersem yolu öğrenemem diye. Oraya gidinceye kadar sohbet ettiler benimle yani ben de onlarla sohbet ettim. Hem oraya gittim hem sohbet ettiğimizde çok şey oldu rahatlatıcı olmuştu. Yolun yarısına kadar sora sora gittim sonra onlar bana yardımcı oldular falan. Sonra şey evet ya bu iş olur dedim ilk defa yurttan okula gitmiş olmak. Sonra hemen evet ya ben giderim artık demedim yani her fırsatta başka birileriyle gitmeyi tercih ettim ama kendime sürekli şeyi de hatırlattım galiba Damla bunu yapmazsan bu iş olmaz. En çok da kendime yedirememekle ilgili yani ben oraya Damla oraya gidemiyor o zaman yardım edelim. Bu yardım alma. Yapamadığı için yardım alma kendime yediremediğim için çok baston kullanmayı öğrendim.

48. Figen: Şöyle bir sıkıntı oldu. Şimdi ben hiç İngilizce ekran okuyucu kullanmamıştım. Türkçe kullanıyordum. Onun sıkıntısını ilk sene hazırlık dışında çok yaşadım. Hazırlıkta küçük çalışma belgelerimiz olduğu için yine çok ihtiyaç duymuyordum ama birinci sınıfta çok asistan odaklı çalıştım. Birinci dönem XX idi asistanım, sürekli onunla ders çalışıyoruz. İkinci dönem YYY oldu, sürekli onunla ders çalışıyoruz. Ondan sonra yazın ders almıştım. Sürekli asistanımla ders çalışıyordum. İkinci sınıf ilk dönemi ben bir tane ders aldım. Ortalamam 3 falandı, başkasıyla çalışıp ne olabilir ki. Bu dersi bir başkasıyla çalışmak imkansız çünkü haftada 80 90 sayfalık okuma var okumaya geri bildirim yazıyorsun. Ne yapacağım şimdi? Yavaş yavaş kendim okumaya başladım. Önceden mesela ortak asistanla almadığım dersleri bile asistanla çalışırken, bu dönem mesela, yalnızca bir dersi asistanla çalıştım. Çünkü o ders biraz görseldi birinin anlatması iyi oluyordu örnekleri. Ama o zamanlar çok asistanlara bağlıydım ve ikinci sınıfta bu biraz kırılmaya başladı. İkinci sınıfta şeyi hatırlıyorum, ben ödevlerimi yazıyordum illa bir arkadaşa göndereceğim kontrol ettireceğim ya anlamamışsam diye. Yani o kadar stresli bir dönendi ki, şu an o kadar rahatım ki, o dönem çok çileliydi. O ikinci sınıfta başladı, ikinci sınıfın ikinci dönemi daha iyi oldu. O sene aldığım yaz okulunu kendi kendime haletim. Kendime güvenim gelmeye başladı, artık üçüncü sınıfta iyice bağımsızlığımı ilan etim gibi oldu. Sonra bu dönem, sadece bir iki dersi asistanla çalışıyordum. Ama ikinci sınıf çok sıkıntılıydı gerçekten.
49. Lemi: Kerim Bey' in anlatımını dinledim, o arada biraz bilgisayar aşinalığı gelişti, Jaws'ı kurdu, ben Jawsla başladım, o arada sizin şey geldi Braille teknikteki xxx var ya, Türkçe çevirmeler geldi. Türkçe çevirmeler, gelince de

yabancı dilim yok benim en çok eksikliğini hissettiğim ama hiç de öğrenemediğim bir şey. Ya kendim şartlandırdım ya da gerçekten hani bazı insanlarda oluyormuş, yabancı dile karşı öğrenme xxx var beni onlardan birisi olarak kabul edelim. Böylelikle devam ettik işte o gün bugündür bilgisayarla gidiyoruz. (….) XXX grubuna üye oldum, mesela ben yyy kişisini tanıyorum, ikimizin de ortak yönü var o da sonradan olmuş. İşte herkesi fırçalarken bir gün beni de fırçaladı falan derken konuştuk ve arkadaş olduk biz arada bir telefonlaşırdık zaman zaman da birbirimize mail atıp dertleşirdik. O da şöyle oldu; ben eskilerdenim mektup yazmayı çok iyi bilirim falan dedim ben o da bana mektup yazdı öylelikle bir dostluğumuz olduydu. Daha çok, şöyle diyelim Tanzimat'tan bu yana Cumhuriyet tarihi ve Osmanlı tarihi, Atatürk'le ilgili hemen hemen tüm kaynakları okudum ben bu 13 yılda.

50. Güven: Şu an kendime soruyorum ya 12 sene ben nasıl o koridorlarda bastonsuz tek başıma yürümüşüm yani, burada bir parantez açmak isterim baston falan yoktu elimde. Hazırlığın ilk dönemlerinde ben körlükle alakalı önyargılarımı aşmış, bastonla bilgisayarı elime almaya başlamıştım. Bundaki en temel sebep de buradaki diğer arkadaşlarımın işte baston kullanan, hiç görmeyen, jaws kullanan arkadaşlarımın hayatlarındaki işleyişi benimkinden daha yolunda olmasıydı. Yani aklın yolu bir, bunu yapmak zorundaydım yoksa bunu reddederek aynı şekilde özgüvenimi daha çok düşüreceğim, gece dışarı çıkamayacağım bu daha mı iyi yani elimde baston olması mı daha kötü gece dışarı çıkamamak, oraya buraya çarpmak mı daha kötü. Zaten daha sonra özgüven eksiltici bir şey olmadığını da deneyimleyerek gördüm.

51. Asuman: Evet, o yıllarla ilgili. Hani iki ay geldi sonra annem göndermedi demiştim. Ondan önceki hafta bir hafta kaldım ben okulda. Sonra annem

geldi babamla birlikte beni almak için okuldan. Sonra pazartesi günü tekrar götürüyorlar. Aslında annem hala götürmem diyor da kaydımı sildirmek için götürüyorlar. Sonra Onlar geldiler rehber öğretmeni falan beni oyalamaya çalışıyor işte ben o zaman çok resim yapıyordum, çok seviyordum resim yapmayı bana işte boya kalemleri falan almışlar, kağıtlar almışlar onları gösteriyorlar. Beni oyalamaya çalışıyorlar. Babam da bir tarafta kaçmak istiyor yani bana göstermeden gitmek istiyorlar. Ben de bırakmıyorum. Annemi bir kere göreyim öyle gidin diyorum. Babam yok diyor ama aslında annem orda. Annem ses çıkaramıyor babamın baskısından dolayı bir taraftan ağlıyor zaten bir taraftan ben kendimi yırtıyorum annemi göreceğim diye diye. Yani bir kere olsun annemi göreceğim öyle gidin diye. Babam da yok diyor. Sonra ben dediğim gibi o zamanlar biraz görmem vardı arabayı gördüm. Arabaya koştum. Kendi arabamızı tanıdım bahçede koştum. Sarılıyorum. Kapılarını o kilitliyor bir taraftan ben açmaya çalışıyorum. Annem geldi annem aslında arkamdaymış yanımdaymış ama ben göremiyorum. Onu hiç unutamıyorum. Yani şimdi anlatırken bile duygulandım. Onu hiç unutamıyorum o günü. Belki de hayatımda geçirdiğim en kötü günlerden biriydi. En kötü diyebilirim.

52. Çağla: Okula gittiğimi bilmiyordum hani eşyalarımı falan aldım, valizimi hazırladık. Evet. Ondan sonra, ben çikolatayı çok severim, hala çok severim. (güler) O zaman da bana çikolata falan almışlardı. Neyse gittim babam şey dedi: Bak şimdi okulun merdivenlerinden çıkıyoruz dedi. Ama ben hiç yani orada kalacağımızı bilmiyordum. Geri döneceğiz falan sanıyordum. Sonra müdür beyin odasına gittik. Kaydımı falan yaptırdık herhalde tam hatırlamıyorum. Sonra babam şey dedi bana ben hatta valizle eşyalarımla

falan oynuyordum. Şey demişti: Kızım biz çarşıda bir tane daha çantamızı unutmuşuz onu almaya gideyim falan demişti. Tabi aslında benden ayrılmak için. Ben de tabi baba tamam tamam ama geri gel demiştim. O da tabi geri döneceğim saat 4’te falan demişti. O zaman tabi gitti bana bir sürü çikolata yiyecek falan almıştı. Eşyalarımı dolaba koymuşuz, ne ara koymuşuz hala hatırlamıyorum.

53. Polat: Tabi babam bir şekilde beni bıraktı. Odamın oraya bıraktı. Beni aşağılara bırakmadı. Beni getirdi, odamın oraya bıraktı ve gitti ve ben o gün, ilk gün kahvaltıyı kaçırdım. Odamdan çıkıyorum, biraz gidiyorum, geri geliyorum. Bir ara odamı bulamamışım. Sonra odamı buldum.

Engin: Başka kimse yok mu peki odada?

Polat: Var ama insanlar az. Olanlar aşağıda. Kimseye soramıyorum. İlk defa bir çelik dolap görmüşüm. Böyle tak diye kapatıyorsun. Kilidi yok ama tak diye kapatıyorsun, tak diye çekiyorsun açıyorsun. Valizin var. Valiz görmüşsün. Dolabın içi var falan. Valizindekileri falan boşaltmamışsın, öyle valiz dolabın içinde duruyor. Askıya asmışsın bir şeyleri koymuşsun ama… Dolabı açıyorum, kapatıyorum. Açıyorum, kapatıyorum. Sadece onu yapıyorum. Gazap Üzümlerinde çocuklar klozeti görüyor da onu çamaşır yıkanan yer zannediyorlar. Kadınlar çamaşır yıkarken sonra birileri başka bir iş yaptığını görünce sifona basıyorlar. Sonra çocuklar defalarca sifona basıyorlar ya… Gazap Üzümlerinde öyle bir sahne var. Tıpkı onun gibi. Ben sadece dolabı açıp kapatıyorum, dolabı açıp kapatıyorum. Sonra bir yanlış odaya girmişim. Ya diyorum bu dolap niye açılmıyor. Dolaba ip mi bağlamışlar, kilit mi var? Burası benim odam değil. O arada bir baktım kahvaltı kaçmış. Babam tabi bir daha geldi sonra. Tekrar gitti ve bir daha gelmedi. Babam artık gitmiş. Babam bir daha gelmez. Gitti mi, kaldı mı ben onu bile bilmiyorum. Babam gidebildi mi? Telefon yok, bir şey yok. Baban nereye gitti? Okulun dışına çıktı. Oradan gidebildi mi? Bunları bilmiyoruz. Bunları sonra mektupla öğreneceğiz haftalar sonra. Köyde telefon yok. Ben tabi nasıl olduysa aşağıya indim. Babam bana para da vermemiş. Paranı idareye verdim dedi. Herkes çay içiyor. Canım çay çekiyor. Cebimde bir lira yok. Çay kaç lira diyorum. İki buçuk lira diyorlar. Para yok. Acıkmışım, kahvaltı edememişim. Öğlen yemeğini iple çektim. Öyle bir koştum ki böyle öğlen yemeğini yemekhanenin önünde bekledim. Nasıl olduysa? Birilerine sordum herhalde. Bu arada tuvalete gidemiyorum. Tuvaletim geldikçe birilerine soruyorum. Bazen sormuyorum, gidiyorum dışarıda sessiz bir yer buluyorum. Köyde pantolonumuzu indirip dışarıya tuvalet yapıyorduk. Şimdi dışarıda bir yer buluyorum, oraya yapıyorum. Tabi sağdan soldan görecekler mi?

54. Şahin: Eşyalarımı dolaba yerleştirirken ben heyecanlandım çünkü o poşetin içinde ne olduğunu biliyorum, benim bir defterim vardı harfleri falan yazdığım, yazılar yazdığım, böyle bir sürü kurşun kalemim vardı. O günden beri benim hep böyle kalemlere karşı bir ilgim vardır. XXX hoca baktı bunlar ne dedi, kalem dedi babam defter kalem kullanmayacak mı T. dedi. Yoo dedi ben böyle bir kaldım, durdum nasıl yani dedim ben burada okumayacak mıyım, okuyacaksın ama dedi sen bu kalemlerle okumayacaksın dedi. Bunlar senin kalemlerin değil artık, bunları bırakacağız dedi, hissettim o an babamın da üzüldüğünü hissettim ben de çok üzülmüştüm. Yani okul o anlamda bir hayal kırıklığıyla başladı. Onun ardından gelen 2.hayal kırıklığı o günün akşamı oldu. Evet, ben yatılı okula gideceğimi biliyordum ama ya

bilmiyorum sanırım çocuk aklımla yatılı okula gideceğim de sanki babam ya da annem de benle gelecek benle kalacaklar falan gibi bir hisle gittim. O gün akşam babamlar beni bıraktığında sınıfın önündeyiz, babam biz gideceğiz diyor ben babamın bacaklarına sarıldım baba beni bırakma diye bir ağlıyorum bir ağlıyorum, o gün saatlerce ağladım. O gün gerçekten hayatım boyunca genellikle yalnız kalacağımı, tek başıma mücadele etmem gerektiğini anladım galiba sanırım. Yani kimseye çok fazla bağlanmamam gerektiğini hissettim çünkü kafamı yorganın altına gömüp ağladığım o yatak bende böyle bir his uyandırdı.

55. Kadir: Öylelikle 20 Haziran'da okul için hazırlıklar yaptık filan. Biz bavulu filan hazırladık fakat annem babam bir türlü yerinden kıpırdamıyor. Komşu bir nine vardı orda oturuyoruz, ya dedi siz Kadir'i okula götürmeyecek misiniz? Götüreceğiz eee niye gitmiyorsunuz. Annem gideriz bakalım falan dedi derken kadıncağız dedi ki sizin paranız mı yok yoksa (güler). Tabi belli bir tecrübe biliyor anlıyor falan, annem de yok ama buluruz dedi komşudan falan isteyeceğiz dedi, isteyecek adam da yok, çünkü herkes parasız orda. 1500-2000 lira olsa ki babam en azından beni bırakıp gelebilsin geriye. Dedi ki ben 3 aylık yaşlılık maaşı, han, var ya ondan 65'lik maaşı, ondan aldım dedi ben onu getireyim dedi size siz bana sonra verirsiniz dedi. Gitti kadıncağız getirdi bize, 4200 lira maaşı almış, 4000'ini bize verdi. Hemen aldık hızlıca koşarak otobüse binip Ankara'ya gittik. Torsan bir radyom vardı o zaman, hatta Torsan marka, kime sorsan isteği Torsan diye bir reklamı vardı (gülerler). Onu şöyle hatırlıyorum; onu unutmuşum yengem koşarak arkamızdan getirmişti (gülerler). Çok radyo düşkünü birisiydim ya o yüzden öylelikle Ankara'ya doğru yola çıkmış olduk koçum. Konu komşuda tabi bir

hayranlık oldu, tekrar okula başlayacağımı öğrenmeleri müthiş bir şey oldu. Oranın algılaması olarak şöyle düşün; ya ne yapıyorsun, Ankara'da okuyor benim oğlum. Ankara'da okumak çok önemli bir şey, çünkü mahallede kimsenin çocuğu yok Ankara'da. Ama devamında körler okulunu çok fazla söylemiyoruz (gülerler).

56. Kadir: Balkon diye bir yer var ya şeyden çıkınca, orda Atilla hoca çıktı. Fahriye hoca da geldi arabaya bindiler, basıp gittiler babamın çok hoşuna gitti. Bizim o taraflarda araba falan yok bir de hocanın hanımı kullanıyor. Zaten otorite falan çok etkilenmiş, babam böyle elini omzuma koyuyor ve diyor ki oğlum sen oku diyor. Okuduktan sonra da İngilizce öğretmeni ol diyor. (…) Mesela orda, ben geldiğimde çok memnun olduğumu hatırlıyorum yani buraya gelmiş olmaktan. Çünkü referansım köy şartları ya, orda yatağım var, dolabım var ondan sonra güzel yemekler var hatta ilk gün makarna patates vardı. Bizde tek çeşit yemek olur evde, burada makarna var patates var birde karpuz var, 3 çeşit yemeği aynı anda yiyorsun ondan sonra çay var falan. Bir de değişik insanlar var, öğretmenler var saygın bir ortam yani benim açımdan. Gayet iyi bir arkadaş var hatırlıyorum; ağlıyor, niye ben buraya geldim falan, lan dedim sen manyak mısın falan hatta o benimkinden daha kötü şartlarla köyde yaşıyor, gerçek köyde yaşıyor yani (güler).
57. Şahin: Diğer yandan şöyle bir şeyi vardı okula gitmenin benim için; köy dışında okuyacak tek insandım yani bu bana üstünlük veriyordu. Şimdi buradan baktığımda, o zaman o üstünlüğün bende yarattığı bende varım size galip geleceğim beni kabul etmeyenler, yani o savaşımın aslında ilk kurşunuydu belki de o üstünlük duygusu.

58. Polat: İstiyordum çünkü şehirde olacağız. Zaman zaman şehre gittiğim zaman, beton asfaltlarda yürüdüğüm zaman ya da akrabalarımızın evine gittiğim zaman falan "Biz şehirde yaşayacağız. Şehir ekmeği yiyeceğiz. Fındık fıstık yiyeceğiz." Diye düşündüğüm için istiyordum. Orda ne yapılacağını, ne öğreneceğimi çok bilmiyordum zaten. Daha çok bizi ilgilendiren bir köy çocuğu olarak günde bir kere otobüsün gelip gittiği, düşün su motorunun sesinden bile mutluluk duyan, onu saatlerce dinleyen biri olarak şehre gitmek! Okula gitmekten daha çok şehre gitmek bana mutluluk veriyordu. (..) Birinci haftanın sonunda mektup yazdırdı cuma günü hepimize, ailelerimize. İşte derslerime çalışıyorum. Ben iyiyim. Okula başladım. Tanıdıklarıma selam ederim. Bunları yazdırdı. Bizim öğretmenimizin bakkal dükkanı varmış. Bize bazı ihtiyaçlarımızı almıştı. Mesela benim hayatımda ilk ambalajlı yediğim ürün çubuk krakerdi. Ben hayatımda hiç ambalajlı bir ürün –bisküvi dahi- o güne kadar görmemiştim. Köyde bakkalda bisküvi vardı ama bisküvi kutusunda satılırdı. Teraziye koyarlardı, tartıp gazete kağıdına sarıp verirlerdi bize.
59. Zeliha: Benim için alışma durumu ilkinden sonuna kadar çok çetin çok çetrefilli oldu. Ben aslında okula başladıktan sonra böyle deyimi yerindeyse eşekten düşmüş karpuza döndüm. (güler). (…) Çok güzel bir yaşantım vardı. Neden ben evimde olamıyorum, herkes gibi çocuklar gibi çünkü benim akranlarım vardı yine aynı zamanda okula başladığımız. Kardeşim zaten benden çok az farkımız olduğu için aynı zamanda okula başladık. Neden bana böyle bir şey yapıldı diye. İlk başta ailemi çok suçladım. Benim için taşınsalardı keşke gibi bir şeye girdim. Sonra okulda uyum sorunum oldu. Mesela anlayamadığım, anlam veremediğim bir sürü şey oluyordu. Kendi

kendine bir şeyler yapan insanlar, kendi kendine konuşan insanlar. Küçükken ben de mesela kendi kendime konuşarak çok oyun oynardım ama ben konuşmaya başladığım zaman annem, kardeşim biri hemen benim oyunuma eşlik ederdi. Özellikle yalnız vakit geçirmememe dikkat edildiğini düşünüyorum şimdilerde baktığım zaman. Ama böyle etrafımda tuhaf tuhaf davranan insanlar görünce. Akşamları çok zor geçiyordu, suçladım bizimkileri beni bıraktılar burada falan diye. O yüzden hep bir şey oluştu. Rahat böyle istediğin gibi, istediğin zaman istediğin şeyi yapamıyorsun yani okulda. Alışkın olduğum şeyler vardı evimdeyken yaptığım yani ne bileyim hep seyrettiğim şeyleri bile kaydettiriyordum. Evde mesele çıkartıyordum. Sıkıntılar yaşadık. Okula uyum durumum hiçbir zaman tam anlamıyla olmadı yani.

60. Zeliha: Evet. Aynen öyle. Biz ne yapıyoruz yani. Başka türlü olsaydı, başka türlü de olabilirdi falan gibi şeyimiz oluyordu. Hatta bu yaşıma geldim, yatılı okulun insanlarda travmatik bir durum oluşturduğu şeyi bende hiçbir zaman gitmemiştir.(...) Bugüne baktığımda bugün beni gerileten ne varsa hep yatılı okula dayıyorum temelini. Yanlış da olabilir bilmiyorum ama hep yatılı okula bağladım ben.
61. Uğur: Özellikle XXX şehrinde okuduğum dönemler çok zalim sayılabilecek öğretmenler, yani çok acımasızca davranırlardı çocuklara, özellikle bir müdür vardı okul müdürü bir de müdür yardımcısı vardı. Çok şiddet uygularlardı öğrencilere. Onların eğitimden anladıkları buydu muhtemelen yani mesela çocuğun birisi vardı bir somut olay anlatmak gerekir. Bu insanın üzerinde baya bir his bırakıyor. Yani çocuk yaşta böyle bir şeye tanık olduğun zaman, mesela bir arkadaş vardı bazen altına kaçırırdı bu çocuk böyle oynarken altına

kaçırmıştı o zaman müdür yardımcısı kışın soğuğunda bu çocuğun üzerine hortumla soğuk su tutup yıkadı. Ve o lastik hortumla o çocuğu dövmüştü mesela herkesin gözünün önünde, herkese ibret olsun diye böyle bir şey yapmıştı çok dehşet verici bir şey bu. Gözünün önünde, sana yapılsa belki bu kadar kötü olmaz hani başkasının böyle bir şeye maruz kalmasını görmek baya dehşet verici, lastik hortumla.

62. Dursun: Öyle bir şey ki Engin Hocam anlatılamaz yani, ben şu an da bile anlatırken değişik oluyorum. O nasıl reva görülürdü o çocuklara? Büyüklerin ve biraz gözü görenlerin avantajlı olduğunu anlıyorsunuz orada. Biz mesela banyomuzu herkesle, kızlar erkekler, ortak yaptırılırdık. Çay ocağı denilen bir ocak vardı. Çay ocağına gider, hoca o gün kaç bardak çay öngörmüşse size onu içerdiniz ve çaycının insiyatifi doğrultusunda şeker atabilirdiniz çayınıza. 1'se 1, 2'yse 2 fazla atamazsınız. Balkona çıkmak gören ve büyüklerin göreviydi orada bir balkon vardı ayrıcalıklı. Bahçeye çıkamazdık, şöyle çıkamazdık tutulurduk kapı açıktı mesela kapı önünde herkes çık denmeyi beklerdi mesela. Çık denilmesini beklerdik ve çık denmezdi büyük çoğunlukla. Bir ikincisi yemekler çok kısıtlıydı, doymadım demek yoktu orada, açsanız açsınızdır, toksanız toksunuzdur orada. Mesela çorba verilirdi çorba verildikten sonra hemen o çorbayı bitirmeniz lazım, yoksa yemek geçerdi servis arabası geçer, geri dönüp yemek vermezlerdi size o anda bitirmeniz lazımdı yani. Böyle ilginç bir durum vardı aklıma geldikçe dehşet oluyor.

63. Duygu: Körler Okulu tamamıyla Darwin kurallarına göre işleyen bir şey. (..) Her zaman az görenden bir şey istenir. Mesela ben her zaman şunu düşünmüştüm; hocalar neden görmeyen birisinden "Yahu E. Şu suyu kaldır,

doldur” ya da “Yahu bilmem kim git de bunu yap” gibisinden istekte bulunup onların gelişmelerini sağlamazlar? Neden az görüyor gibi davranmak zorunda kalayım? İnsanlar birine beceriksiz demeye o kadar hazırlar ki… Bu niye yapmıyor yahu? Bu insan zeki bir insan aslında falan demiyorlar. Ya da bir insanın yapması için daha ne yapabiliriz? Bu insanın nasıl daha iyi yapmasını sağlayabiliriz? Hiçbir hırs yok adamda. Ya da daha iyi yapabilme isteği yok öğretmenlerde.

64. Abidin: Bakın biz kaldık XXX Şehrinde 4 öğrenci iyi çok güzel kaldık, sağ olsun okulumuzda iyi ağırlanıyoruz. Çıkan şuydu; nohut, pilav ve çok severim ama yemin ederim o pilav pişmemiş ve peki şimdi nereden nereye geleceğim. Direk o öğretmenin ismini de vereceğim keşke şimdi bulabilsem XXX YYY benim ilk öğretmenimdi, sonra sınıf atladım ZZZ MMM öğretmene geçtik biz. X Hoca aynen şunu soruyor; Y Hanım bugün köfte yaptın değil mi? Evet X Bey köfte yaptım dedi. Ben de sevinmiştim, herhalde dedim ya, oh dedim bugün köfte yiyeceğiz. Meğerse o akşam o nöbetçi olduğu için kendine köfte yaptırmış. Hiç unutmam o benim beynimde kaldı. Biz iki, üç gün o pişmemiş pirinç pilavını yedik.
65. Uğur: Yatılı okul aslında herkes için, hatta Ahmet Çakar bir ara öyle söylemişti, o da yatılı okumuştu liseyi, demişti ki yatılı okul insanda çok büyük hasar bırakır psikolojik olarak onun etkisini kolay değildir fakat etkisini atlatırsan güçlü çıkabilirsen de hayatta çok sağlam durursun çok güçlü olursun demişti. Yani gerçekten de öyle, yatılı okulda çok küçük yaşta çok ileri düzeyde şeyler öğreniyorsun. Birçok insanın belki gören insanların yani ailesinin yanında kalan insanların belki 25-30 yaşlarında öğrenemediği şeyleri öğreniyorsun o yaşlarda. Yani insanlarla bir arada olmayı, büyüklere

kendini ezdirmemeyi küçükleri ezmemeyi kendi haklarını kendini koruyabilmeyi ama başkasına da zulmetmemeyi kötü davranmamayı yani bunların hepsini öğreniyorsun yatılı okulda.

66. Kadir: Mesela, diyelim ki başarma duygusunu yaşayamıyorsun evde ama okulda bir başarı var bir karşılık görüyorsun yani anlatabiliyor muyum, olumlu veya olumsuz bir karşılık görüyorsun ve bu karşılıkları olumlu almak için sürekli olumlu şeyler yapınca sürekli alıyorsun mesela. Ben çabucak ezber yapıyorum çabucak öğreniyorum filan, onların karşılığını gördükçe kendimi değerli hissetmeye başlıyorum. Yani XXX de, kimseyle karşılaştıramıyorum ki kendimi. Yani kendimi değerli hissettirecek hiçbir şey yok. Orda var yani, hiçbir şey olmasa bile şu kişiden daha çok öğrendim, daha çabuk öğrendim filan diyebiliyorsun. Sınıfta iyi puan almak kötü puan almak onlar nedir, ne değildir, o şeyler henüz gelişmemişti ama insanlar senin olumlu davranışlarına çok çabuk cevap verebiliyordu. O anlamda beni çabuk bağladı oraya; kendimi değerli bulmak, kendimi anlamlı hissetmek. Bir de körlerin arasında olduğun için kendini doğal da bulmaya başlıyorsun, absürt biri olmadığını, bunun sadece yapısal bir şey olduğunu anlıyorsun. XXX'de anormal birisin ama körler okulunda doğal biriydim.

67. Dursun: Baktığım zaman hocam, çok şey kazandığımı gördüm açıkçası yani bir takım yeteneklerimin bende olan yeteneklerimin o dönemde öğrendim. Tek başımıza kalabilmeyi, dolabımızı düzenleyip kıyafetlerimizin dolaptan alınıp giyilmesi hangi kıyafetin nasıl giyileceğini deneme yanılmayla da olsa işte yatak düzeltmenin püf noktalarını öğrendiğimizi fark ettim. Ortaokulun sonunda hakikaten bu okuldan ayrılmak çok zor gelmişti bana.

68. Polat: Ya bir kere her şeyden önce ben şehirli oldum. Köylüydüm şehirli oldum, bu bir. Medeniyet gördüm. İnsanlığın ürettiği medeniyeti gördüm. Şehirli konuşmayı öğrendim. İşte kendi kendime banyo yapmayı öğrendim. Elbise giymeyi çıkarmayı öğrendim. Ayakkabı bağlamayı öğrendim. Dikiş dikmeyi öğrenemedim belki ama becerim biraz şeydi. Ne bileyim. Okumayı yazmayı öğrendim. Kompozisyon yazmayı öğrendim her şeyden önce. Duygularımı anlatmayı öğrendim. Keman çalmayı öğrendim ama dediğim gibi her şeyden önce köylülükten çıktım. Köylü olduğum için utandığımdan değil.
69. Ender: Yalnız bu arada aklıma gelen bir şey var onu ekleyim. Şimdi körler okuluna başladık ilk defasında. İşte temizlik problemleri var. Diş fırçalamayı falan bir ölçüde biliyorum ama o güne bir çorap falan yıkamamışım. Çorap yıkamayı kendi temizliğini kendin yapmayı, banyoyu kendin yapman falan… Özellikle banyo yapmak bana çok büyük keyif veriyordu. Yani bir anlamda kendimi -bugünkü sözcüklerle ifade etmek gerekirse- daha özgür hissediyordum. Yani istediğim gibi su dökünüyorum. İstediğim gibi suyla oynama şansım var. Çamaşır yıkamayı bana öğreten ilkokul öğretmenimdir. XXX Hanım. Ortaokulda. O zamana kadar ben çamaşır yıkamayı bilmiyormuşum. Kişisel idare diye bir dersimiz vardı. Seçmeli ders. Bence zorunlu olması gereken bir dersmiş o aslında. Ben o dersi seçtim. Yemek yapmayı, bulaşık yıkamayı, ütü yapmayı, çamaşır yıkamayı falan o dönemlerde öğrendim. O derslerde öğrendim. Yalnız vücudumdaki buluğ çağına girdiğim dönemlerdeki beni ürküten değişikliklerinde, aslında ürkülecek şeyler olmadığını o dönemlerde öğrendim. Öğretmenimin, XXX öğretmenin özellikle, o konudaki katkılarını hiç unutamam. İlk hayat dersini,

Buluğ çağına girdikten sonraki öğrenmem gereken şeyleri bana o anlattı. O açıdan ben şanslıyım. Çamaşır yıkamayı o şekilde öğrendim. Yani tarihi belki 14-15 yaşı.

70. Şahin: Yaşamı bir nehir yatağı kendimi de o yatakta akan bir su kütlesi olarak kabul edersem körler okulu o nehir yatağında beni belli bir yöne akmaya zorlayan bir virajdı sanırım. Çünkü ben orda körleri gördüm onları tanıdım ve toplumda körlerin kabul görmediğini gördüm diğer yandan orda gören öğretmenlerin körlere biçtiği misyonu gördüm. (..) Kör işte yani, öğretmen olur başka bir şey olmaz körden, o da gider bir yerlerde ders verilirse girer ders verilmezse girmez gibi bir, yani işte kendine yetecek kadar bir şeyler kazanır yeter. Ben liseye geçtiğimde 1.sınıfta alan seçimleri gelmişti TM mi seçeceğim sosyal alanlar mı seçeceğim karmaşasına girdiğimde körler okulu rehber öğretmeniyle görüştüm. Bana dediği şey şuydu; sen yapamazsın evet biliyoruz biz seni tanıyoruz, sen burada matematikte çok iyi anlaşan ve çok iyi bilen bir öğrencimizdin ve çok başarılı bir öğrencimizdin biz seni okul 1.si olarak mezun ettik ama eyvallah burayla ora bir değil dedi bana. O zaman inanıyordum bu fikre ve bunu kabul ettim ve ben sosyal alanları seçtim, sonra da işte edebiyata meyil ettim ve edebiyat öğretmenliğini seçtim. Yani mücadelemde öğretmenliği seçmemde ve sosyal alanların bir dalı olan edebiyatı seçmemde körler okulundaki bu yönlendirmenin ciddi bir etkisi oldu kanımca.
71. Faruk: Birçok şeyi öğrenebildiğimi düşünmüyorum. Mesela Türkçe dersi için, fen bilgisi, matematik dersi için çok fazla şey öğrendiğimi düşünmüyorum. Ama İngilizcede gerçekten dört dörtlük, müfredatın üzerinde bir İngilizce eğitimiyle mezun olduğumu düşünüyorum.

72. Çağla: Ben avukat olmak istiyordum. Herkes de sende zaten öyle bir çene var diyordu. (güler) Ben çok istiyordum. Ama sınavda, biz çok eğitim olarak başarılı değildik. Yani başarılı olduğumuzu düşünüyorduk ama sınavlarda pek öyle olmuyordu. Ben kaç 310, yok 305 falan mı ne aldım ama Anadolu lisesine yetmedi puanım, o zaman Anadolu liselerinin puanları yüksekti, bir de matematik yapamıyorduk. Hiçbirimiz matematik yapamadık. Test çözmediğin için soruları bitiremiyorsun zamanında yetiştiremiyorsun. O zaman işte OKS soruları onları bilmiyorduk zaten. Girdik işte çıktık.
73. Deniz: İlkokuldaki eğitim fena değildi bence. Öyle diyebilirim her ne kadar öğretmen çok değiştirmiş de olsak aldığımız eğitimin fena olmadığını düşünüyorum ama ortaokula geçince işler değişti açıkçası. Özellikle sayısal alanda ben matematik konusunda fena değildim yani ama nasıl oldu ne şekilde oldu. Matematik öğretmenimizin bir ayrımcı tutumu vardı yani, gerçekten ayrımcıydı yani bunu belirtmekten çekinmem.
74. Deniz: Bir de farkında olmadan iyi şeyler de yaptılar bozarken. Mesela sanat eğitimini on saate çıkardılar. Öyle ki haftanın üç günü dokuz saat rehberlik saatiyle beraber -3 saat rehberlik saati vardı- iki günü sekiz saat, biz günlük ders görüyorduk. Düşün! Yirmi yedi saat, on altı daha; kırk üç saat ders görüyorduk biz okulda. O yüzden altın dönemdi diyorum.
75. Asuman: Müzik anlamında çok şey kazandırdı bana. Ben çok donanımlı gittim. Güzel Sanatlar Lisesine gittim ben. Liseyi, XXX güzel sanatlarda okudum. Çok donanımlı bir şekilde gittim ve üniversitede de bunun şeyini hissettim. Bunun temel birikimlerini hissettim yani. İyi ki de o okuldaymışım diyorum yani.

76. Münire: Bir de ben okula gitmek istiyordum. Okul yaşım gelmişti. Kardeşlerim okula gidiyor evimde hemen yanımda okul var. Ben gidiyorum okula almıyorlar diğer çocukların dikkatini dağıtıyorum diye. Şeyler çocuklar dersteyken ben bahçeden böle dersleri dinliyorum öyle bir halim var. Bir süre sonra okula aldılar ama götürüp sınıfın en arkasına oturttular. Önüme bir defter verdiler hadi buna çiz dediler. E bunu yapamıyorum en arka sıradan zaten tahtayı görmek hani yazısını boş ver kendisini göremiyorsun. Ondan sonra hiç verimli olmadı. Hani ailem de okula gitme eğilimimi isteğimi görüyorlar ama bir şey yapamıyorlardı. İşte o akrabamızdan böle bir teklif gelince babam da devlet memuruydu hani bu konulara duyarsız bir adam değildi. Gitti hemen evraklarımı hazırladı başvurumuzu yaptık ve kısa bir sürede kabul edildik. 1981'dir okula başlama tarihi o dönemi.
77. Kadir: Mesela XX şehrinde beni hiçbir liseye almadılar, YY ilçesinde de, sonra XXX şehrindeki bir liseye başvurdum. Ondan önce normal karşılıyordum; ya tabi ki olur, kör adamı alacak ne yapacak adam. Karşı çıkmayı da öğrenmeye başladım yani eşit davranılmaması olayından rahatsız olmaya başladım. XXX şehrindeki bir liseye gittik orda da almadılar ama orda bahanede kayıt dolu dediler, boş kontenjan yok dediler. Ticaret Lisesine başvurduk almadılar falan orda da bir kör ticareti nasıl yapacak diye, öyle bir bahaneyle almadılar. XXX Lisesi için gittik valiliğe dilekçe verdik, yani almıyorlarsa ne yapalım yani almadılar deyip oturma yapmadım.
78. Polat: Lisede müdürüm beni kaydetmek istemedi. Böyle bir gel git bakalım araştıralım dedi. Çünkü MEB Rehberlik Daire Başkanlığı'nın verdiği yazıyı yeterli görmedi ama MEB'in 1967 yılında yayınladığı genelgeden de kimsenin haberi yokmuş. Bize de o genelgeyi vermediler okuldan. O konuda

okulun eksikliği vardı. Onu sonradan yolladılar. Müdür de sonra onu gitmiş Niğde'den bulmuş ama ben bir ayda kendimi ispatladım.

Engin: O seni almadı ama sen gittin.

Polat: Evet almadı. Dedi ki bir gel git bakalım. Ben derslere girdim. Bir ay sonunda artık yazılılar başlayacak. Gittim müdüre dedim ki hocam bu hafta sonuna kadar aldınız aldınız, artık yazılılar başlıyor. Ben okula gelmeyeceğim dedim, tamam Polat bir dur dedi. O güne kadar gördü derste. Diğer hocalarda gördüler az çok. Tanık oldular ve gitmiş o şeyi bulmuş ve beni kaydetti. Yoksa ben gelmiyordum yani. Beni kaybedemedi artık. Benim bir öğrenci olabileceğimi, benim lisede bu kendisi geçecek nasıl olsa, bunu biz geçireceğiz deyip benim gerçekten bir öğrenci olabileceğimi gördü.

79. Zeytin: Hatırlıyorum. Beni okula almak istememişlerdi sonra biz annemle Milli Eğitim Müdürüne gittik, şikayet ettik o okulu (gülerek) sonra beni o okula aldılar. 2007 falan herhalde. Jaws 7 falan vardı o zaman. O yüzden aslında araştırıyordum. Okula kabul etmediler falan deyince ben milli eğitim müdürüne falan gidelim dedim almak zorundalar falan dedim, annem baya korktu falan. Sonra gittik aldılar.
80. Damla: Sonra annemlerin beni kaydettirdiği lisenin müdürü, diploma notuma bakınca, beni süper liseye kaydetmek istemiş, annemin, benim kör olduğumu açıklaması üzerine tabii ki, işin içine "efendim, proje ödevlerini yaparken çok zorlanırlar, "bizim ders programımız ağır oluyor, arkadaşlarına ayak uyduramaz, üzülürler devreye girmiş ve annem de, yani benimle bir sürü kere ders çalışmış ve zekamı her yerde öven, öğretmen annem de inanmış. Sonuç, ben normal liseye kaydettirilmişim.

81. Remziye: Lise ortamında da işte yüksek puanla liseye girmenin çok avantajı oldu. 7.olarak girdim, arkadaş ortamını kurmamda, vavv o puanla mı geldin demek ki sen zekisin falan oldular, ben bir çaba sarf etmeden arkadaş ortamım oluştu yani. Hani puanı duyuyorlardı gelip konuşmaya falan başlıyorlardı sonra bir baktım yakın arkadaş olmuşuz. Lise ortamına, o yüzden, adapte olmak belki de ilkokuldan daha kolay oldu.
82. Raşit: Körler okulundan sonra kolay alıştım ortama. Benim grupla direk iletişimim hiç bir zaman pek olmadı, grupsal anlamda insanlarla iletişimim pekiyi olmadı üniversite hayatımda da daha önceki yıllarda da. İnsanlarla daha çok bireysel olarak iletişimim iyiydi. Değer verdiğin insanlarla da çok sıkı muhabbet etmek isterdim. Bir tek lisede grupla iletişimim daha iyiydi. Çünkü bütün okul bilincindeydi benim durumumun ve başka bir gözle bakıyordu, hani kör diye değil, bu her şeyi biliyor. Ders konusunda da iyiydim çünkü kitap da okuyordum sürekli. Onun getirdiği lise döneminde, liseye başlarken kitap okumanın avantajı vardı, derslerde herkesten çok konuşuyordum. Hatta hiç unutmuyorum lise 2'de ya da lise 3'te, yok lise 3'te değil lise 1'de tarih hocam bir konuyu anlatıyordu hikayede bir yeri atladı, hani bir şey anlatırken bir yeri atladı başka bir yere geçti, benim önemli gördüğüm bir yerdi kendimce. Dedim hoca şu konuda böyle bir durum var bununla ilgili ne diyorsun, hoca dedi Allah aşkına sen sus ben sana ne not istiyorsan veriyorum (gülerler). O yüzden bana potansiyel çok iyi bir üniversiteye yerleşecek çok iyi bir derece yapacak gözüyle bakıyorlardı ve sürekli teşvik ederlerdi hocalar olsun arkadaşlarım olsun, bir şey yapmak konusunda sürekli beni teşvik ederlerdi.

83. Polat: Lisedeki başarımın büyük oranda körler okulunun alt yapısına bağlıyorum çünkü bizim lise zaten köy lisesiydi. İngilizcede falan çok gerideydiler. Ben matematik hariç her şeyden on alıyordum. Okul birincimiz vardı ama o kimyadan, fizikten iyi puanlar alıyordu. Ben onda biraz ondan geriydim. Ben okul ikincisi oldum mesela lisede. Okulun bana sağladığı çok özgüven var. Mesela ben lise 2-3'te okul korosunu çalıştırdım.
84. Şahin: Körler okulundan çıktığım için hem bir özgüven yapabileceğime dair bir özgüven hem de ben bir farklı olarak bu ortamda nasıl var olabilirimin korkusuyla liseye geçtim. Acaba arkadaşlarım beni kabullenecek mi kabullenmeyecekler mi ne olacak korkusu bende hep oldu. Zaman zaman kabullenmediler zaman zaman mesafeli durdular zaman zaman çok yakın davranan arkadaşlarım oldu ama insanlar hep şunu dediler; ya sınıfımızın en başarılı öğrencisi. Ben sanırım akademik başarımla kabul ettirdim insanlara kendimi.
85. Faruk: Lise başlangıcında hala süper lisedeyim daha ilk günler. Dersler daha yok. Herkes kendi aralarında konuşuyor ama benimle kimse konuşmuyor. Neden konuşmuyor bilmiyorum. XXX arkadaşım da yok yanımda, o aşağıda ben yukarda böyle boş boş oturuyorum böyle. Allah'ım ne yapayım ne yapayım derken tablet kalemi çıkardım yazı yazacağım. Bilerek kalemi yere attım. Çünkü birisi verecek kalemi ve orada sohbet edeceğim. İşte birisi verdi kalemi bu nedir diye sordu. İşte anlattım. Sonra yazı yazmaya başladım millet başıma toplanmaya başladı. Biz de yazalım biz de yazalım biz de deneyelim dediler. Yazdılar. İşte yazdıklarını okumaya çalışıyorum. Böyle saçma sapan şeyler çıkıyor falan. Gülüyorlar sen şunu yazmışsın ben bunu yazdım diye.

Ondan sonra ertesi gün sınıfa girdiğimde 20 öğrenci varsa en az 10 tanesi günaydın Faruk dedi.

86. Çağla: Bir de şey arkadaşlar geliyor kabartma yazıya bakıyorlar falan, ben arkadaş edinmemi en çok Braille yazıya borçluyum.
87. Remziye: Okula gittim, ilk başta bir teneffüs yalnız kaldım, ahh dedim korktuğum başıma geldi. Sonra her neyse diğer teneffüs hiç tanımıyorum kızları gittim yanlarına kızlar hadi gelin bahçeye çıkalım, tanışırız hem falan (gülerek) diyorum. Onlar da aa evet dedi, konuşmak istiyorlarmış ama çekiniyorlarmış galiba. Sonra öğle yemeğine çıkacağız, ben kantine giderim diye planlıyordum ama okulda dışarı çıkmak da serbestti. 3-4 tane farklı grup birden geldi, bizimle yemeğe çıkmak ister misin, ben kaldım böyle iyi o zaman her gün birinizle çıkayım ben falan oldum (güler). Öyle ilk 2 hafta sınıfımdaki bütün arkadaş gruplarıyla ve farklı sınıftan da arkadaşları oluyor ya insanların hani 9.sınıftan kalma arkadaşlıklar, bir sürü arkadaş edindim. Sonra kendime bir arkadaş ortamı belirledim, 5 kişilik bir grubumuz vardı, ama diğerleriyle de iyiydim artım. En çok görüştüğüm o 5 kişilik ortamdı ama ilk 2 haftanın etkisiyle diğer insanlarla da baya iyi muhabbetim vardı. 10.sınıfta falan da hiç yalnız kalmadım.
88. Zeytin: Bana çok garip gelmişti, işte öğrenciler ne bilim magazin dergilerinden, makyaj malzemelerinden bahsediyorlardı ve bunlar benim hiçbir şekilde ilgi alanıma girmiyordu ve onlarla ders dışında iletişim kuramıyordum, iletişim kurduğum insanlar da zaten (gülerek) sınıfın inek insanlarıydı. Arkadaşlarımla gezmeye falan da çıktım, lise 2-3-4 çok verimliydi benim için o açıdan. Sınıftaki birçok kişiyle iletişimim vardı, tabi Aşık Veysel'de sürekli laf sokmalara, aşağılamalara mağruz kaldığım için

benim de konuşmalarım biraz kırıcıydı o zamanlar, daha böyle sert, daha sinirli. Tabi aile ortamında kavga-gürültü yetiştim sonuçta. Üslubum hiç güzel değildi o zamanlar, o açıdan arkadaşlarımla çok sorunlar yaşadım.

89. Asuman: Lise ortamım, şimdi bizim sınıf 11 kişiydi. Fazla öğrenci yoktu bizim güzel sanatlarda. Aslında 24 kişiydi kontenjan ama güzel sanatlar olduğu için azdı. Çok değişiklerdi yani kaynaşamadık. Sadece bir arkadaşımla kaynaşmaya başladık. O da sessiz sakin bir kızdı. Onunla da görüşemiyoruz bu aralar. Aslında görüşüyorduk ama. Onunla arkadaş olmaya başlamıştık. Onunla her yere gidiyorduk. Uyum sağlayamadım. Bir kere arkadaşlarım benden çok geriydi. Her anlamda yani dedim ya ben çok donanımlı gittim oraya müzik anlamında birçok şeyi öğrenerek gittim ben oraya yani, arkadaşlarım çok geriydi. Aynı zamanda görüşlerimiz uyuşmuyordu. Görüşlerimiz derken arkadaşlık anlamında yani çok farklılardı, çok hareketlilerdi. Yani nasıl söyleyeyim. Ben sanki onlardan 10-15 yaş büyük gibi hissediyordum kendimi. Çok çocuksu geliyorlardı bana. Bu yüzden bir arkadaşlık kuramadım çok fazla çok yüzeysellerdi her konuda.
90. Yaren: Şimdi 2 boyutu var; birincisi körler okulundan getirdiğim fazla alışkanlık olmadı ama tabi uyum problemleri yaşadım. Mesela en sevmediğim, hayatımın en kafamdan çıkarmaya çalıştığım veya umursamadığım herhangi bana iyi anı bırakmamış yılları, ilkokulumun son 4 yılıdır. Pek çok yönü var, şimdi aklımda kalın şeyleri söyleyeyim. Birincisi arkadaşlarla olan ilişkilerim şöyle oldu; öğretmen derdi arkadaşınızla ilgilenin onunla beraber olun, ilk günler benimle kantine gittiler, benimle bir şeyler yaptılar, özellikle her zaman fırlamaları olur, onlar daha fazla öne çıkarlar, seninle arkadaşlık kurmaya çalışıyorlar. Her şey normaldi, üzücü bir

şey yoktu onda. İkinci aklımda kalan şuydu; mesela beden dersleri olurdu, arkadaşlar dışarda bir oyun oynarlardı, mesela kendi sokağımda olduğu gibi ortama da alışamadığımdan veya dışarı falan çıkmak istemezdim. Ya kenarda otururdum ya sınıfta beklerdim, böyle kendi kendime kalma fırsatı doğardı bana, ben de hiç sıkılmadan beklerdim. Oyun oynarlardı mesela onlar, üzülmezdim ben, bunlarla niye oynayamıyorum falan diye. Zaten akşam olacak eve gideceğim, kendi sokağımda, belki arkadaşlarımla gene oynayacağım, önemli de değildi. Her gün mü ağlanır ya, gerçekten her gün ağlardım, bir de sorumsuz bir çocuk değilim.

91. Yaren: Çok zorlandım yani çoğu zaman bununla ilgili sorun yaşadım ben. Başka bir yerde olmalıydım yani, ama sonra genelde kendim oturup mantığını geliştirerek zaten çoğu şeyi öğrendim. 6.sınıftan itibaren artık yeni konular girdikçe, tahtada öğretmen anlatıyor ben takip edemiyorum, işte kafamda duyarak öğrendiklerimde sınavlarda bir şeyler yapıyordum veya eskiden kalan konuların üzerine yeni şeyler konulduğu zaman ben onu hallediyordum. Ama yeni konu geldiği zaman bir sınavda yüksek alıp öbüründe düşük alıp, zaten bilirsin 4 alsan 5 almışsındır ilkokulda, o şekilde hallettim. Mesela 7.sınıfa geldim, işte duyuyorsunuz sağda solda, o zamanlar adı LGS mi ne, lise sınavına girecektim ya işte çalışmam lazım, yani matematiği halletmem lazım, öyle ya şimdi dershanede sınavlara giriyorum matematikte zorlanıyorum, daha az soruyu matematikte yapıyorum.
92. Damla: Yani lise 1e giderken çok heyecanlıydım yani nasıl olacak diye biraz tabi kaygılıydım. Ama ilk gittiğim gün bir annem o okuldan mezun, annemin okuluna gittiğim zamanlarda, ara tatillerde falan onun okuluna giderdim oradan bir kızla karşılaştım o şey gibi gelmişti o zaman. Hatırlamıyorum ama

bir çocuk daha vardı. Onu da nerden tanıyorum ne şekilde bir yakınlık oldu da hatırlamıyorum ama daha önceden tanımış olduğum yani bir kere karşılaşmış bile olsam o tanıdıklık etkisi insanı çok rahatlatan bir şey olmuştu o yüzden lise birin daha ilk gününden itibaren bu iyi geçecek mesajını duygusunu almıştım. Ama kaygılıydım tabi ilk gittiğim zaman nasıl olacak bir kere baston kullanmıyordum ve o kadar geniş bir ortamda nasıl hareket edeceğim fikri de rahatsız edici bir şeydi. Lise birçok daha sanırım daha arkadaşla daha mutlu geçti ama sonra biz İzmir'e taşındık. Lise iki lise üçte görmeyenler vardı. XXXX lisesi kızların genellikle yatılı, pansiyon olduğu için kız görmeyenlerin İzmir' de okuduğu okul orası tesadüfen bizim eve en yakın okul orasıydı. Benim dışımda beş tane daha görme engelli kız vardı orda. Daha rahat olmam beklenirken aslında daha karanlık geçtiğini söyleyebilirim lise iki, lise sonun. (…) Görmeyenlerin beni mutsuz ettiğini söyleyemem ama şunu söyleyebilirim. Görmeyenlerle ilgili kesin kalıp yargıları olan insan sayısı artıyor. Çünkü yıllardır oraya her dönem işte her sene iki-üç tane bir-iki tane mutlaka görmeyen gelmiş ve bir fiilleri var. Seni sen olarak değil de yani bütün insanlar böyle kabul ediyor ama onların bir de deneyimleri var üstelik kıyas noktaları var. Bu biraz daha insanı kalıba sokuyor galiba. Hele de ergenlik döneminde ben hep şey olmayı istedim o dönemde hani, ya ben farklıyım ya neyim ben bu değilim bunu çok belirgin yaşadım galiba. Bu yüzden bu edinilmiş şeyler, fikirler ya beni sınırladı mı diyebilirim. Orda da arkadaşlarım vardı ama gittiğim ilk gün ben böyle babam götürmüştü okula. Ben böyle çocuklarla akşamki maçtan falan bahsetmeye çalışıyordum. O zaman bir futbol taraftarıydım. Onlar konuşurken hemen muhabbete girmek istedim. Ne haddimeyse yani, (gülerek) dışardan geliyorsun daha hiç tanışmadan. Onlar da sonra sınıftan biri geldi. Damla bak Emine senin en iyi arkadaşın dediler bana. Ya o çok rahatsız olmuştum bu durumdan. Yani en iyi arkadaş olarak kabul etmeyeceğimden değil ama neden beni sadece bu kişiyle tanıştırıyorsun sen de benim arkadaşım olabilirsin ama niye Emine? Diye böyle bir şey rahatsızlık dönemi geçirdim tabi.

93. Rüya: Daha sonra da yine lise 1'de, aynı yıl, bir tane matematik hocamız vardı, 2 görme engelliydik biz sınıfta, işte kadın yaşlı bir hoca yani emeklisi gelmiş bir hocaydı, kim dedi görmeyenler, biz 2 kişi parmak kaldırdık. Bütün sınıfın ortasında bize dedi ki, sizi aileniz nasıl böyle günlere getirdi, siz nasıl kör oldunuz, siz ne biçim akrabanız, aileniz var sizi bu duruma getirdi, sizi burada bıraktı, siz burada nasıl okuyacaksınız diye bizi o kadar rencide etti. Ondan sonra artık ben çok üzüldüm, nasıl okuyacağız, ne yapacağız falan diye çünkü hoca da bizi bütün sınıfın önünde rezil edince.
94. Münire: Evet, mesela İngilizce öğretmenimiz altı ve yedinci sınıfta da aynı öğretmen girmişti. Bizi hiç yok saydı, sınıfta var mıyız yok muyuz? İlk başta Braille alfabesiyle yazı yazıyoruz diye çok ilgisini çekti ama o kadar onunla kaldı ben İngilizceyi onun ağzından çıktığı kadarıyla onun telaffuzlarıyla kağıda yazıyordum yanlış doğru neyse hiç bize sınav yapmadı yıl boyunca ama dönem sonu geldiğinde bütün sınıfın ortasında kızım ben size kafadan bir beş veriyorum beş beş deyip bizi böyle geçirdi bütün sınıfın ortasında da bunu ifşa etmişti.
95. Deniz: Şöyle bir geriye doğru baktım izole oluyorduk gibi geliyor bana. Çevremiz çok yalnız değildi ve zaman geçtikçe de onlar bizi biz onları tanıyorduk. Ama yine bir izolasyon süreci de yok değildi ve şöyle bir şey; boş

derslerde herkes bir tarafa dağılırdı bizim de evimiz yakındı. Şimdi üniversiteyi kazandığımda da eskiden çalıştığımız bir arkadaşla da aynı sınıftaydık ama onla da yine 1-2 aylık bir izolasyon sürecinden sonra onun çevresiyle benim çevrem farklılaştı. Benim çevrem sınıftan değildi zaten, ben sosyal kulüplere falan giriyordum, TOG'a falan. Hayatımda TOG'un önemli bir yeri vardır yani. Hem bu topluma adapte olma bağlamında hem de farkındalık, farklı alanlara farkındalık kazanma alanında. O ve onun dışındaki diğer seminerler, konferanslar. Kör çevremiz kendi arkadaşlarımızdan ibaretti, yaşıtlarımızdan ibaretti. Üniversitede çok böyle körlerle takılmadım hatta nerdeyse hiç takılmadım. Zaten bizim zamanımızda üst sınıflarda vardı körler ve nadir iletişim kurardık. Bizden sonra bizim jenerasyonun bir kısmı Gazi'ye geldi ama onlarla da öyle bir gruplaşmadık. Galiba bizim jenerasyon hiç gruplaşmadı bir düşünüyorum da. Tabi ki oturup da bir şeyler yapmışlardır ama öyle. Msn listemde kör nerdeyse yoktu benim.

96. Münire: Bir öğretmenimiz vardı, müzik dersi çok önemsenmeyen bir ders ama adam işini çok ciddiye alırdı. Tahtaya notaları yazardı. Sonra bizim sıramıza gelir o notaları bize teker teker yazdırırdı. Bu aslında ilk bakışta özverili bir davranış gibi gözükse de değil. Olması gerekeni yapıyordu. Adamı ben çok taktır ediyordum. Adamın o davranışını ben onunla birlikte öğrendiğim notaları hala unutmadım mesela müzik hayatımda çok yer işgal etmese de o dersten tamamen bileğimin hakkıyla ve gayretim sonucu başarılı olduğumu biliyorum bu da beni tatmin ediyor mutlu ediyor bu yönü de vardı yani böyle öğretmenlerimiz de vardı.

97. Asuman: Öbür öğretmenim gelince evet. O beni çok motive ediyordu. O ilk defa hayatında bir görme engelliyle karşılaşmış daha önce hiç görme engelli

görmemiş, ama sanki hiç öyle değildi. Çok farklıydı. Yani nasıl söyleyeyim, çok üstüme düşüyordu. Notaları yazdırırdı. Siz de bilirsiniz varsa çevrenizde müzikle ilgilenen. Bizim nota sorunumuz var kimse yazdırmak istemiyor. Bu konuda çok problem yaşıyoruz. O yazdırıyordu bana öğle aralarını ayırıp, öğretiyordu, çok vakit ayırıyordu. Ben de eve gelmeden çok çalışıyordum.

98. Burhan: Mesela bir ders vardı ders kitabı yoktu ders notları da sadece el yazıları vardı, ben o dersi çalışamadım hukuk 1'deyken ve hiç sınava falan girmedim öyle kaldım o dersten. Erişilebilirlik sorunları ciddi yaşıyorduk yani.

99. Oya: Hayatımı çok etkiledi. Mesela o zaman OKS vardı; Anadolu Liseleri Sınavı yani. Orada mesela okuyucuyla girebilecekken, öyle bir hakkım varken bunu ne ailem araştırdı, ne okul idaresi sordu. Yazmıyor mu? Kılavuzda yazıyordur değil mi? Böyle bir çocuğun böyle bir şekilde girmesi gerek diye ama hiç kimse bana bundan bahsetmedi. Ben o sınavdan da çok yüksek bir şey yapıp daha farklı bir meslekte olabilirdim yani. Ben aslında diyorum ya mecburiyetlerim konusunda hep kendimle çelişiyorum ya bugünlerde, bu da bir mecburiyetti benim için. Tabi. Görmediğim için, yavaş okuduğum için yapamadım. Görseydim o sınavdan çok iyi bir şey alırdım dedim. Bu benim suçum değil kendini rahatlatmak açısından ama şunu demedim. Benim acaba okuyucuyla girsem ne olurdu? Çünkü okuyucu diye bir şey olduğunu bilmiyorum ki. Bilmediğim için de… O zaman kardeşim olacak, ben sekizinci sınıfa başladığım için. O zaman daha küçük. Okula bile başlamamış oluyor. Üçümüz dışında hiç körle alakam yok yani.

100. Osman: Ya içten içe görme beni çok şey yapıyordu yani. Gerçekten de acıtıyordu. Çünkü yani aslında belki de çok… Ya o kadar çok etkiliyordu ki.

Yine orta 2 de bir fen dersi. Bildiğim bir konuda çünkü şeyden bahsediyor, işte hani kaynama, buharlaşma, şu, bu falan. Artık televizyondan mı duydum, kitaptan mı okudum bir şekilde o konuyu biliyordum. Parmak kaldırıp cevap vereceğim hocanın sorusuna ama parmak kaldırdığında sana mı diyor, arkandakine mi diyor, yandakine mi diyor bilmiyorsun ki. Hoca ismini bilmiyor. Sen diyor. Sen, sen, sen, ama o 'Senler' kim bilmiyorsun yani. Bir kere kalktım. Hatta bana hoca şey dedi.'Ya kalktın mı, oturdun mu, konuştun mu, sustun mu? Anlamadım.' Dedi.

101. Oya: Şöyle, ortaokula giderken mesela eve tek başıma dönerdim. Sabahçı-öğlenciydi o zaman mesela. Şunu hatırlıyorum. Arkadaşlarım bana küsmüştü bir kere, aynı mahallede oturduğumuz arkadaşlarım ve beni bırakmışlardı. Şu yüzden bırakmışlardı. Bırakalım da kendi gidemesin. Bize muhtaç olduğunu hissettirmek için. O gün çok üzülmüştüm bu duruma. Küsme nedenleri benim 4 almam, onların da daha düşük almasıydı mesela ama bunu yüzüme vurmak istemişlerdi mesela. O gün bunu anlamıştım ve ya ne bileyim şimdi çocukluğumdan mutlaka bir takım şeylere katılamadığım için ya da diğer kızlar gibi olamadığım için. Mesela o dönemlerde erkekler tarafından beğenilmek de çok önemlidir mesela. Neden böyle olmuyor? Neden kimse beni beğenmiyor? O anlamlarda da üzüldüğümü hatırlıyorum. Buna bağladığımı hatırlıyorum yani ama Gerçekten insan arada kalıyor. Hiç görmesem diyeceksin ki ben körüm ama diğer türlü sürekli diğer insanlara uyum sağlayabileceğini, bir şekilde onlar gibi olabileceğini bilinçaltı sürekli bunu söylüyor sanki.

102. Ayşe: Benim için önemli olan sıcaklık, ortak konuların olmasıydı. Topluluğun içinde farklı olduğumu düşünüp onlar gibi bakamıyorum, el

hareketlerim onlar gibi değil. Onlarla konuşurken bir sessizlik olurdu. Bu sessizlik onlarla arkadaşlık kurarken öz güvenimi çok sarsardı. Benden farklıydılar ve sanki bir adım önden gidiyorlarmış hissi vardı. Olması gerektiği gibi gitmiyordu bende işler.

103. Güven: Yani şöyle söylem, direkt olarak göremediğim için çok büyük sıkıntı yaşadığımı hatırlamıyorum ama daha ziyade etrafımdaki insanların özellikle küçük çocukların açık bir dışlamasına ve aşağılamasına maruz kaldığım için yine çok büyük boyutlarda olmamakla beraber beni olumsuz etkilediğini söyleyebilirim. Yani böyle dalga geçerlerdi falan, işte kör derlerdi falan. Böyle yanımdan geçerken laf atarlardı. Bundan kaynaklı bir zayıflığım olduğunu bilenler döverlerdi falan böyle. Yani birazcık böyleydi. Öyle sıkıntılarım vardı. Çok fazla arkadaşım yoktu. Bu da bende bir takım bunalımlara yol açıyordu hatta bunun için babam beni farklı bir okula aldı. O okulda da, daha sonra öğrendiğim kadarıyla, öğretmenim beni istememiş. Kendi tabiriyle benim yıprandığımı düşünmüş. Orda da zaten oturmuş bir arkadaşlık vardı. Ben, ilkokulumda ilk dört sene aynı arkadaşlarla devam ettim ve hep tanıdığım insanlardı ama diğerinde böyle olmamıştı.”

104. Güven: İlk dönemlerde yaa yaşadığım mahallenin arkadaş edinme çevresi hani arkadaş edinme durumu falan filan birazcık farklı hani orda işler farklı yürüyordu. İşte iyi top oynarsan, işte sevilirsin falan. Bende böyle bir şey olmadığı için, insanlar anlayamadığım bir şekilde bana daha ziyade sanki saygı duyuyorlardı. Sınıfın en başarılı öğrencisiydim; açık ara. Ya şey falan oyun falan oynamamı onlarla beraber çok fazla istemezlerdi hani işte iyi top oynayamıyorum mesela ama böyle ne bilim işte yanımda küfretmezlerdi, biri benim yanımda küfrettiğinde diğeri uyarırdı; lan küfretme onun yanında falan

hani sanki öğretmenmişim gibi. Öyle durumlarda bende kendimi gruptan çok fazla dışlanmış hissediyordum. Bunun körlükle direk bağlantısını kurabilir miyiz bilmiyorum ama… Derslerim iyiydi ve çok da keyif alırdım.

105. Oya: Şöyle bir tavır oldu. Şimdi ben oradaki kişilere göre bilişsel anlamda çok üst düzeydeydim. Mesela 24 saat İngilizce vardı o zaman. Hazırlık diye vardı benim zamanımda. O yüzden 4 alan, tek iyi yapan bir tek bendim. Kendimi kabullendirmenin tek yolu bu oldu. Mesela bu anlamda da çok yetersiz bir insan olsaydım, öğretmenler açısından da bu böyle, hiç kimse benim yüzüme bakmazdı. Buna eminim yani. Bilişsel anlamda baktılar ki bu o kadar da şey bir insan değil. Tamam, belki iyi giyinmiyor, bir takım şeyleri bilmiyor. Onlar gibi değil ama hiç de değil. O zaman ne oluyor? Size yaklaşmaya başlıyorlar.

106. Ayşe: Ben çalışkan bir kızdım. Denemelerde sınıf birincisiydim. Yarıştığımız kızın ailesi bak o görmediği halde senden daha başarılı diyormuş. O nedenle onunla git-gelli bir ilişkimiz vardı.

107. Güven: Ondan ziyade, açıkçası öğretmenlerim yani ilkokuldaki ilk öğretmenim beni okula isteyerek almıştı. Hani sanırım babam gidip söylemiş o da ben bu öğrenciyi alırım demiş. Biz o zamanlar hani benim görebileceğim şartlar yaratmayı hani benim eğitim hayatımın en temel şeyi olarak görüyorduk. Yani hani benim görebileceğim şartlar yaratılıyordu ve ben görüyordum. Tahta göremiyordum ama yani bir şekilde bunun üstesinden gelebiliyordum. Yani işte, pencere kenarına oturtulmam. Yanıma tahtadakileri bana aktaracak bir arkadaş verilmesi, bu arkadaşın işte başarılı bir arkadaş olması, eğer sınıfımız güneş girmeyen bir taraftaysa işte idareyle konuşulup sınıfın diğer tarafa taşınması. Ama hani 12 yıllık ilk ve

ortaöğretim hayatımda bu bağlamda elinden geleni yapmayan tek bir öğretmene ya da tek bir idareciye rastlamadım.

108. Baki: Özellikle eğitim hayatımda yaşadım zaten. Belli sorunlarımız oldu okullarda özelikle bazı konuları idareye anlatmakta. Bazı ihtiyaçlarımı onlara talep ediyorum, onlar seni kale almıyorlar, onlarla uğraşıyorsunuz, onlarla uğraşırken eğitim hayatınız aksıyor falan. Ama bunları bir şekilde öğretmenlerinizle, arkadaşlarınızla, ailenizle atlatıyorsunuz. Birlikte hareket ederek falan atlatıyorsunuz. Şimdi ne istiyorsunuz. Ben az gören bir öğrenciyim az gören bir bireyim. Şimdi en başta ışık isteğiniz oluyor. Bu ışığa duyarlı bir problemim. Işık talep ediyorsunuz, buna bağlı ekipmanlar talep ediyorsunuz. İşte fotokopilere ihtiyaç duyuyorsunuz. Onun dışında mesela beyaz tahta kullandık okulda. Gidiyorsunuz, konuşuyorsunuz, aslında istediğiniz şeyler ufak tefek şeyler. Bu okulu yıkın yeniden yapın gibi şeyler demiyorum ki mesela, kara tahta yerine beyaz tahta diyorum beyaz tahta yaygınlaşıyor okulda. Çünkü niye, renk kontrastları bana yardım ediyordu. Gerçi son dönemlerde onu da göremiyorum da. Mesela tahtanın üzerine floresan istiyordum tahtayı biraz daha aydınlatsın diye. Bu arada yeri gelmişken, benim şöyle bir özelliğim var. Ben emek veren insanları unutmam. Aslında idarelerden çok çektim. Ama lise hayatımda bir müdürüm vardı benim, Allah rahmet eylesin, kanser hastasıydı vefat etti, çok iyi bir insandı. Öğrenci odaklıydı. Bir sorunum olduğu zaman, hemen gittiğim anda o sorun çözülürdü yani. Yani bu benimle ilgili değil herkes için öyleydi. Zaten adamın cenazesindeki yığınları gördüğünüz zaman anlıyorsunuz ne kadar iyi bir insan olduğunu. Yani o konuda lise hayatımda çok sorun yaşamadım. Çünkü en üsten hallediyordum işimi genelde. Öğretmenlere yine

gidiyordum da böyle tahta meselesidir, ışık meselesidir direk müdüre gidiyordum. Zaten bunları müdürün çözmesi gerekiyor. Yani koridorda bir sorun var diyelim veya sınıfın içinde bir ekipman gerekiyor, direk müdürle çözüyorsunuz. Veya önce sınıf öğretmenime gidiyordum, o da beni müdüre yönlendiriyordu.

109. Ayşe: Ama lisede fizikçimiz vardı mesela millet tahtaya çizdiği şeyi deftere çizerken gelir bana sıramın üzerinde kalemlerle falan anlatırdı, çok uğraşırdı. Bunu bilmene gerek yok Ayşe, bunu üniversite sınavında yapmayacaksın ama öğrenmelisin, bunu da öğren bak diyordu ve beni çalıştırıyordu. Müthiş bir şeydi ki geometride de aynısını yaptılar hocalar bana öğretmek için ellerinden geleni yaptılar.

110. Şahin: Babam anlamaya çalışırdı beni özellikle kuzenlerimin benle oynamadıkları zamanlarda işten arta kalan zamanlarda benle oynardı, oyun hamurları almıştı bana o oyun hamurlarıyla bana alfabeyi öğretti ve okuyup yazabileceğim mesajını veren ilk insan bana babamdır. Bana kağıt keserek resim yapmayı öğretti, boya yapamıyordum çünkü boya yapıyordum ama kendimce bir şeyler oluyordu, boyaları karıştırıyordum boyalardan yeni renkler elde etmeye bayılıyordum ben. Çünkü ben o dönem daha fazla gören biriydim, şu anda ışık algım var renk algım var artık cisim algım yavaş yavaş kayboluyor o zaman daha belirgindi bu algı. Babam benimle çok ilgileniyordu bir de kardeşimi kaybettikten sonra özellikle daha fazla ilgilenme gibi bir tavır geliştirdi.

111. Duygu: Annemle muhteşemdi. Hatta annemle o zamanlar itfaiyeye gitmiştik, hapishaneye gitmiştik. Çok fazla yere gidiyorduk. Hatta insanlar bizimle alay ediyorlardı çünkü benim annem hızlı yürür. Ben de küçüğüm ya

adımlarım küçük. Annem çekiştiriyormuş gibi olurdu. Hadi oraya gidelim, hadi buraya gidelim diye. Ben de hevesliydim ama koşamıyordum. Hâlbuki ikimizde birbirimizden hevesliydik ve hala da biz annemle arkadaş gibiyiz. Hep derler tehlikeliymiş annenizle arkadaş olmayın falan. Şu ana kadar bir tehlikesini görmedim. Bilmiyorum. Gayet de rahatım ama babamla çok samimi bir ilişkimiz olmamıştır doğrusunu söylemek gerekirse. Bozuşurduk. Çok pis bozuşurduk.

112. Asuman: Bir şeyi belirtmek istiyorum. Babam çok ilgilenirdi. Hatta normal yazıyı öğretmişti ben kabartma yazıyı öğrenmeden önce normal yazıyı yazıp okuyabiliyordum. Büyük büyük yazıları okuyabiliyordum, öğretmişti bana. Küçük küçük kare kâğıtları makasla kesip kare kağıtlar yapıyordu, onların üzerine harfleri yazıp o şekilde oyun yapıp harfleri öğretiyordu bana. Onu da kendi kendine geliştirmişti kimse söylememişti ona şöyle yap diye. Bir gün oyuncak org almıştı bana o orgla ben şarkı söylüyordum istediğim şarkıyı ben kulaktan çıkarıyordum. Her istediğimi alıyordu. Yani ben şunu yapamam demedi bana. Her yere götürüyordu, istediğim her şeyi alıyordu yani. Annem de destekleyiciydi ama annem biraz daha korumacı davranıyor, önümü kesiyordu.

113. Baki: Genel anlamda ailelerin bakış açısına bakarsanız, önce korumacı olurlar. Benim aile fertlerimin bazılarında var. Bu algıyı aşmış insanlar da var ailemde, özellikle halam örneğini verebilirim veya babam örneğini verebilirim. Şimdi geçmişten günümüze inşanların özel bir ilgisi oluyor. Mesela bir başarınızda olsun, başarısızlığınızda, sevincinizde, üzüntünüzde, illaki siz odak noktası olabiliyorsunuz. Çünkü engelli olma kimliğiniz bilinçaltına yerleşmiş. Benim üzerimde ayrıyeten çocuk görme engelli onun

üzerine titreyelim değil de, daha çok bir algı meselesi diye düşünüyorum ben ailemizdeki durumu. Şu ana kadar ben memnunum. Ben ailemden yeteri desteği aldım. Her zaman arkamda oldular. Hatta ben biliyorum ki, artık karar mekanizması benim ve benim yaptığım her şeyin iyi ya da kötü, bir şekilde arkasındalar. İmzalarını atıyorlar yani. Hareketlerimin destekçisiler.

114. Deniz: Bizimkilerin hayalinde XXX şehrine gelmek vardı zaten hem tabi benim gözümle de alakalı olabilir belki de istek de olabilir. XX şehrine tayin istemek istiyordu babam herhalde beni mazeret göstererek tayini gerçekleştirdi. Ama bu tayin 1-2 ay gecikebilir sen bu sürede yatılı kalabilirsin dediler. Bende o zaman ben okumam yani, siz buraya gelin öyle başlayacağım dediğimi hatırlıyorum yani. O da bir şekilde gerçekleşti XXX şehrinde YY civarında bir ev tutuldu, ben servisle gidip geliyordum.

115. Deniz: Hatta bizim o kabartma yazıları falan babam da öğreniyordu ve ben onla akşam çalışabiliyordum yani. (..) Bizim hocamızda şöyle bir şey vardı; yeni bir hocaydı belki onun idealizmiyle ilgisi olsa gerek gerçi sert de bir hocaydı ama defterimiz vardı bizim. Hoca o deftere yazılar yazardı ailemize verilmek üzere. Herhalde ailelerimize verilecek olan ders programında da onlarla nasıl ders çalışabileceğimiz yazılıydı yani bilmiyorum ama öyle olsa gerek yani. Ve o defterdeki programa göre galiba biz çalışıyorduk yani.

116. Ayşe: Annem çok üzülüyordu, babam çok da kabul etmek istemiyordu ve genellikle görmeyi gerektirecek ve benim yapabileceğim şeyleri görerek yapmamı istiyorlardı; renkleri bulmak, ayırt etmek işte bir şeyi gözle bulmak mesela sofrada bir şeyi elimle bulmama izin verilmezdi. Bende de onu elimle bulmaya çalışmak işte o izin olmadığı için bir problem haline gelmişti yani

yanlış bir şey yapıyormuş hissine kapılıyordum. Bu yüzden bunu kabullenmiş ve gerçeklerle yaşayalım havasında değillerdi ve tedavi olmasını çok istiyorlardı. Bir yol olur mu diye çok düşünüyorlardı ama zaten 9 aylıktan itibaren gittiğim hâlihazırda bir göz doktorum olduğu için ona soruyorlardı hani bir şey var mı, kızımı bir yere götürebilir miyiz falan gibisinden ama öyle ameliyatlık bir süreç olmadı.

117. Osman: Mesela üniversitenin ilk bir iki yılında kabullenmeye başlıyorsun sen. En azından ben kabullendim. Ama aile kabullenmiyor. Ben körüm dediğim zaman ya da görme engelliyim değince. Babamın hayır değilsin demesi. Bir gün şeyi hatırlıyorum. Bu biraz daha öncesine dayanıyor ama. Nüfus memuru geldi. Son sayımdaydı. Hani evde oturuyorsun ya. Dedi, engelli var mı? Hayır dedi, yok. Hâlbuki 4 kişi var yani. Nasıl yok. Onlara göre de kabullenmeme olayı var. Çevremde de var. Yani en yakın arkadaşlarım var. Diyorum ki, körüm deyince ya estağfurullah diyorlar. Ya ne estağfurullah, ben körüm işte. Yani hani hakaret etmiyorlar ki.

118. Uğur: Evet, geçirdim hatta o dönemde babam bu olayı duyduktan sonra tabi her ana baba üzülür ve babam ses felci geçirmiş yani birkaç ay konuşamamış.

119. Münire: Alıştım okula derslere falan gayet iyi oldu birinci sınıf sınıfın sınıf düzeyinin üstünde bile olduğumu söyleyebilirim. Ama o yaz işte ilk başladığımda çok ağladığım için beni XXX şehrine göndermediler. Dayımlar teyzemler alıkoydu giderim de gelmek istemem diye aslında çok büyük bir hata işlediler bence. Bu benim için ikinci sınıfta çok büyük bir gerilemeye sebep oldu bence. Şey oldu birinci sınıftaki başarı düzeyim ikinci sınıfta aynı şekilde gelmedi. Bir de ikinci sınıf çok hasta olduğum bir dönemdi. Pek çok

çocuk hastalığını bir arada geçirdim okula devamsızlığım da oldu. Bundan kaynaklı bir de ailem o süre beni hiç gelip arayıp soramadılar. O bana sanırım çok büyük olumsuzluklar olarak yansıdı. (..) Ben koşa koşa gittim buradan dayım götürdü beni XXX şehrine otogardan karşılamaya babam da annem de gelmedi teyzem geldi. XXX'deki diğer teyzem o akşam teyzemde misafir olduk babam ertesi gün geldi, beni teyzemin evinden aldı. Ablamla birlikte geldi aldı. Ablam bana şey dedi dedi sana çok kötü davrandım dedi ama artık hiç böle kötü davranmayacağım hep iyi davranacağım dedi. Beni gördüğünde ilk tepkisi o olmuştu. Sonra eve gittik ben koşa koşa anne dedim ben geldim neredesin dedim. Annem gene ahırda inek sağıyordu, gittim ahırın kapısına onun sağmasını bekledim. Annem süt bakracını aldı benim yanımdan geçti gitti. Dayıma sarıldı, kardeşim dedi. Hoş geldin falan filan. Ondan sonra beni çok öptü kucakladı etti falan ama o ilk benim beklentimi karşılayamadı. Ben çok hevesle ümitlerle kafamda bir sürü planlar kurarak ne söyleyeceğimi hesaplayarak gitmiştim hiç birini gerçekleştiremedim.

120. Çağla: Yok, babam mesela, şöyleydi eylülden diyelim, ramazan bayramları da kışa denk geliyordu o zaman. Babam gelirdi yani 15 tatiline kadar olan süreçte babam gelirdi. Ailem derken sadece babam, okumam yönünde sadece babam benim yanımda oldu. Yani şöyle annem istiyordu ama bizde şöyle bir şey vardı. Benim büyükbabam falan vardı biz hep birlikte kalıyorduk. Babam benim yanıma gelirken bile büyük babam çok bağırıyormuş ediyormuş falan. Babam hep gizli geliyordu benim yanıma.

121. Uğur: Lisede memleketteydim o dönem dediğim gibi koşullar nedeniyle Açık Öğretim Lisesine devam ettim ben. Yok, almadılar değil, orda biraz ailenin güvensizliği oldu. Yani bulunduğumuz yer ilçe merkezine

uzaktı, ailem o zaman benim nasıl gidip geleceğime bir türlü inanıp da karar verip de beni göndermediler. Gitsen nasıl gidersin, geri gelemezsin sana kitaplarını kim okur falan diye. Hatta biR arkadaşım vardı aynı dönemde lisede olacaktık, o çok ısrar etti beraber gidip geliriz diye.

122. Abildin: Ama şu var rahmetli babam artık ben bunun peşinde dönmem getirip götürmem falan deyince haliyle dedim ya 2001'lere kadar ben bu özgüvenimi kazanamamıştım daha. Tabi biraz kendime geldim ama ailevi baskı, rahmetli babamın sert tavırları vs. derken zaten gidemedim nitekim 96'da da rahmetli babamın felç oldu bir tarafı sonra da 2001'de diğer tarafı felç oldu o zaman tamamen yatağa mahkûm kaldı. Tabi ilgilenecek kimse de yoktu.

123. Rüştü: Ben Güzel Sanatlar Lisesini birincilikle kazandım ama beni göndermediler. Annemin parası yoktu. Babam da parayı bulmadı bence. Çünkü on iki buçuk lira bir paraydı ve bulunamayacak bir para değildi. 95 yılının on iki buçuk lirası çok da bulunmayacak bir para değil. Şimdi için belki yedi yüz, sekiz yüz lira. O yüzden orası benim okulla olan ilişkimi zaten kopardı çünkü ben orta ikiden itibaren Güzel Sanatlar Lisesine girecek olarak yetiştim. Müzik öğretmenimde beni hep öyle yetiştirdi ve ben de zaten oraya girdim yani. Bugün baktığımda onu okusaydım bir şey olur muymuş? Yok, çok da bir şey olmazmış ama o gün girseymişim bugün çok şey değişirmiş. Onu biliyorum. O yüzden işte ben bir daha okulu sevmedim. O düz lise denen yer benim için gereksiz bir yerdi yani. Sınıfın en yaramaz öğrencilerinden biri oldum ben. Okula en ön sırada başlayıp en arka sağda bitirdim, askının yanında. O yüzden okulla ilgili çok bir şey anlatmadım. Benim için çok bir anlamı yok yani okulun. Hep kayıp ve hayal kırıklıkları dolu şeyler onlar.

124. Ayşe: Abim çok hareketli bir çocuktu, her şeye girip çıkan, kafasını gözünü yaran, klasik bir haylaz çocuktu işte ve biz yaramazlık yaptığımızda genelde abimin başında patlardı. Bu yüzden abimle ilişkilerim sıcak kardeşlik ilişkilerinden çok daha farklıydı, oynardık ama belli bir zaman sonra ben bütün suçları abime atmaya başlar, kendim yapsam bile biliyordum ki abim cezalandırılacaktı ya da.. O da beni çok seviyordu ama o yüzden ben oyun oynarken falan istediğim kadar hırçın olabileceğimi bilerek istediğim kadar hırçın oluyordum ve kavgayla bitiyordu bütün oyunlarımız.

125. Güven: Şimdi, onun aslında şey bir süreci oldu hani çalkantılı bir süreci oldu. Benim daha ileriki dönemlerde ilköğretimin ilk üç-dört yıl döneminde yaşadığım derin psikolojik sıkıntıların kardeşlerime yansıması, işte kardeşimin beni pek sevmemesi bu bağlamda hani buna bağlı olarak bizim aramızda bir takım sıkıntılara yol açıyordu en nihayetinde. Yani ben psikolojik sıkıntılarımı kardeşimden çıkartıyordum, o da işte bu tarz şeyleri benim başıma kakıyordu. Yani işte ben sana şöyle yardım ettim bir daha etmeyeceğim, işte seni şuraya götürdüm bir daha götürmeyeceğim.

126. Baki: Şimdi en önemlisi benim bir 6 aylık bir sürecim var. Bizim xxx ilçesindeki okula servisle giderdim otobüsle gelirdim. Bizim okulumuzda etütler oluyordu 2 saat süren. Servis de ayarlayamamıştık. Ben yaklaşık 6 ay, yanlış hatırlamıyorsam otobüsle giderdim. Benim gözümde görmediğimi belli eden fiziksel bir belirti de yok. Bastonsuz olduğum için, iletişim problemi yaşıyorduk otobüslerde. Ben de belirli noktalarda hassas duyarlı bir insanım. Mesela, düşünün 14 yaşındayım o zaman, kalabalık bir otobüste oturma ihtiyacınız olabiliyor zaman zaman. Çünkü kargaşa var ve o kalabalığın hareketini engellememek için zaman zaman oturma ihtiyacı hissediyorsunuz.

Ben karşı tarafı göremediğim için, hep bir strese girip baskı altında hissediyordum kendimi. O çok etkili oldu. Çünkü ben dedim ki, bunun 6 ayı değil, 20 30 yılı olacak. Ben her gün sokağa çıkacağım belki. Her gün okula işe gideceğim. Bu şekilde bu talebi sundum. Yani benim hiç unutmadığım taleptir bu.

127. Figen: Dedim ya ben kalabalık bir ailedeyim. Normalde ailemle aram çok iyidir çok az problem yaşamışımdır, yaşadığım en büyük sorun, bu tek başıma gitmek isteyip de bu kadar kalabalığız gidip elin adamından mı yardım isteyeceksin yolda fikriydi. O yüzden mesela hep şöyleydi. Mesela iki tane arkadaşım vardı liseden. Sabah biriyle buluşup okula gidiyordum. O zaman dershaneye gidiyordu çocuk. Akşam bir başkasıyla eve dönüyordum. Ama karşıdan karşıya geçmeme rağmen baston kullanmıyordum. Ondan sonra dedim ya ben bir daha hatırlıyorum. Yine şansıma mahalleden bir arkadaşıma aynı dershaneye düştük dershanemi değiştirmeme rağmen. Sabahları onlarla gidiyorum, akşamları onlarla dönüyorum. Ama bu sefer YYY ilçesine gidiyorum. Lise XXX ilçesindeydi mesela ama YYY ilçesi daha uzak. Kafanın karışma ihtimali çok daha yüksek. Bir gün benim dersim erken bitti. Yani istemedim beklemek. O gün minibüse bindim ama yine baston kullanmadım. Baston kullanmıyordum ama lisede de benim çantamda hep baston olurdu. Minibüsten ineceğim, anneme de haber vermedim ben geliyorum diye. İnip de karşıya geçeceğim yol gerçekten çok tehlikeli. Rampa gibi ve minibüsler basıp gidiyor. E ne yapacağım şimdi hani. İnmeme kadar o minibüsü bastonu açacak mıyım açmayacak mıyım düşüncesiyle geçirdim. Açmamaya karar verdim. İnerken elim çantama gitti bastonu açtım tak, o gün bugündür o baston kapanmadı yalnızken.

128. Deniz: Şöyle bir durum oldu bende; annem ameliyat olmuştu ve herkes onun yanına gitmek durumundaydı ve ben o süreçte okula kendim gidip gelmeye karar vermiştim yani onu da biraz fırsata dönüştürmüştüm. Öyle bir bağımsız hareket sürecimiz oldu ama lise sonlara doğru daha hareketlendik ve üniversiteye hazırlık süreçleri falan filan derken.

129. Deniz: Bir de sunu söyleyeceğim; yatılı lisesine gidenlerin bağımsız hareket konusunda kazanımı çok oluyor. Para kazanmak için seyyar satıcılık yapan arkadaşlar vardı, bu bence önemli bir özgüven, 16 yaşındasın.

130. Deniz: Yine ayaklarının üstündesin körler okulundan tek farkı da sana karışan yok ya da daha az. Herkese ne kadar karışıyorlarsa sana da o kadar karışıyorlar. Yani bir korumacılık yok.

131. Levent: Bir de şöyle bir şey var Engin Bey, bazı olaylar insanın direncini arttırıyor. Biz hayatta, bir gün çalışmasak aç kalacak durumda olan insanlar var. Tam öyle değil de arkamızda ana baba desteği yoktu, biz ayakta kalmak zorundaydık. Yani benim şuram ağrıyor, buram ağrıyor gibisinden çok fazla sorun etmedim. Doktorlara gidip geldim. O ayrı mesele ama çok fazla da kendimize sorun etmedim. (..) Ondan sonraki süreçte yine oturup ağlayamadık, o lüksümüz bile yoktu. Çocuklarım var. Oturup ağlamaya bile vaktimiz olmadı çünkü ev sahibimiz kirayı veremeyecekler sıkıntı yaşanacak diye bizi evden çıkarmaya çalıştı. Ve çıkardı da. Başka bir yere taşındım. Bir oğlumun o zaman kalp ameliyatı olması gerekti. Onun kalp ameliyatı için koşturdum. Ameliyatını yaptırdım.

132. Osman: Ben körlerle nasıl tanıştım; üniversite 3'teydi galiba, bir gün arkadaşla o bahsettim köylü çocuğuyla dolaşırken, aaa dedi bak ilerde körler derneği var, iyi dedim birkaç defa daha denk geldi. İşte bir gün denk geldim

orda bağış topluyorlar, işte dergimizi almaz mısınız, derneğimize yardım eder misiniz, ama elemanları değil böyle 2 üniversite öğrencisi böyle birkaç tane kız, XXX şehri şartlarında çok yaygın değildir ama muhtemelen gönüllülük amacıyla, para toplattılar. Bir gün nasıl olduysa baya bir cesaretimi toplayıp arkadaşıma dedim gel gidelim dedim, gelir misin benimle, gelirim dedi. Girdik abi içeri, ilk defa körlerle bir noktada iletişimim oldu. Ben dedim böyle böyle, burada okuyorum kimseyi de tanımıyorum gelip tanışmak istedim, oo hoş geldin falan oturduk. Ama çok kötüydü yani adamlar soruyorum ya devlet memuru ama işe doğru dürüst gidip gelmiyor veya gidiyorsa geri kalan bütün gün oturuyor. Çok küçük bir oda, GETEM'deki çalışma odandan daha küçüktü diye hatırlıyorum. Küçük bir oda 4 tarafında sandalye var bir masa var o kadar. İnsanlar böyle yaptıkları hiçbir şey yok sadece oturuyorlar, dedim ya bana mezar gibi geldi sanki ölü de gömülmek bekliyorlarmış gibi gelmişti bana. Görmek istediğim şey o değildi, yani tamam orda bir yarım saat oturdum ama öldüm öldüm dirildim. Dedim yok, ben…

133. Asuman: Mesela bizim XXX şehrindeki dernekte hiç bir şey yapmıyorlar. Sabahtan akşama kadar oyun oynuyorlar. Bayan yok, herhalde benim dışımda 2-3 tane bayan gitmiştir derneğe, ben de birkaç kez gittim bilmiyorum hiçbir şey yapmıyorlar. Hiçbir faaliyetleri yok, ben gidip ne yapacağım orda ancak gidip zaman geçireceğim diye düşünüyorum.

134. Osman: Ben XXX şehrine gittiğimde, o atamam iptal edildi yüksek lisansa başladım falan, o ara burada 2 tane körler derneğine gittim özellikle bir tanesini çok sevdim o dönemde. YYY şehrindeki tecrübelerden sonra gençlerin takıldığı başında çok da genç olmayan bir avukat, biri var, eğitimli,

aktivist ruhu olan, ufku var yani o adamı görünce ya burası iyiymiş falan dedim. Oraya gidip gelmeye başladım hiçbir şey yapmasam bile oturup çay içmeye gidiyordum sohbet ediyorduk havadan sudan, şuradan buradan. Sonra bir defa oradan birkaç tane genç, görme engelli arkadaşlar beraber yemeğe başladığımız, işte birbirimizin evine gidip çay içtiğimiz, domino oynadığımız bana ilk defa dominoyu orda öğrettiler. Yani ilk defa kör arkadaşım orda vardı. Bir de bulunduğum şehirde çok fazla okumam gerektiği için, kabartma bilmiyorum. Teknolojik desteğim yok, daha o zaman kadar Jaws kullanmaya başlamamıştım, 2007. Ondan sonra nasıl yapacağım. Nasıl edeceğim, gittim artık rastgele kapıyı çalıp ya ben şurada master yapıyorum, okumam gereken bir sürü şey var bana şunları okuyabilir misiniz diye insanlardan gönüllü olarak destek isteyip telefonları da kaydedip sonra bana şunla bunla attıkları, evde ben dinleyip ders çalıştığım. Derneğe gittim işte gönüllü olan var mı varsa bana verebilir misiniz dediğim beni başka bir kadına yönlendirdiler o kadın bana okuma yaptı falan sağ olsun baya bir okuma yaptı falan yüksek lisans dersleri için. Dediğim gibi körlerle ben ilk defa burada tanıştım. Bir de orada güzel bir grup vardı 1-2 tane gören arkadaş da vardı. Pikniğe gidelim dediğimiz 8 kişi otobüse binip sonra belli bir yerde inip oradan oraya yürüyüp mangal yapıp yemek yediğimiz yani ilk defa kör grubuyla orda tanıştım. Ve kör grubu beni dediğim gibi arkadaşım dediğim ki şu anda çoğuyla hala görüşüyorum, GEÖP'le 'e onların birinin sayesinde tanıştım ve öyle üye oldum. O ve GEÖP arasında yani benim körlükle haşir neşir olmam, genel bir şey sevmem ama bu 2 şekilde olmuştur.

135. Lütfü: Şehre geldik mecbur Türkçe öğrenmek zorunda olduğumuzu fark ettik. Ondan sonra bir iyileştirme serüveni oldu işte. (…) XXX derneği

YYY şehrinde şube açmıştı o sıralarda, o şubenin aracılığıyla öğrenmiştim işte. Orda bir görme engelliyle tanışmıştım, işte o şekilde. Bir sürü görme engelli, hiç görmeyenleri falan gördüm biraz hani özgüven mi ne dersin bilmem artık bir tanım yapamıyorum hani bir şeyler yapabileceğim kanısına vardım, o nedenle biraz daha asıldım hayata diyebilirim (güler).

136. Levent: Görmeyenlerle XXX Büyükşehir Belediyesi'nin bir kampı vardı. İlk oraya gittim ilk kampıydı orada tanıştım. Orada güzel dostluklar kurdum. Hala da oradaki dostluklarım orada arkadaşlarla devam ediyor. 17 yıl oldu. Yani o dostluklarımız hala devam ediyor ilk o zaman tanıştım.(…) Şimdi bu xxx noktasında eğitim verilmeye başlanınca biz oraya gitmeye başladık. Hafta sonları eşim götürüyordu. Büyük oğlum biraz büyümüştü, bazen oğlumla gidiyordum. Sonra baston eğitimi aldım ama en son baston eğitimi aldığımız gün YYY ilçesine gidip, çay içmiştik. O zaman ilk kez evime kendim geldim.

137. Levent: Ne gibi katkıları oldu. Bir insanları tanıdım. İki, çalışma yapma imkânım oldu. Üç, kafamdaki projeleri hayata geçirme imkânınız oluyor. Mesela ben ilk gezi düzenlediğim zaman arkadaşlara dedim ki yönetim kurulunda bile değildim. Arkadaşlar dedim gelin biz Çanakkale'ye gidelim engelliler olarak, şehitlerimizi ziyaret edelim dedim. Bana çok kişi karşı çıkmıştı. Yönetim bana güvendiği için, hatta beni o zaman beni yönetime almak istemişlerdi. Ama ben kimseyi tanımadığım için yönetime giremem hoş olmaz dedim. O zaman planladım, kişi başı parayı da topladım ve Çanakkale'ye gittik. O zaman 45 kişiydik, zor oldu tabii 2-3 kişi de gelmemişti. İnanın ki ondan sonraki yapmış olduğumuz gezilerde 2 otobüs 3 otobüs yetmez hale geldi. Çünkü insanların önünü açmış oldum. Benim de

özgüvenim yerine gelmiş oldu. Demek ki ben bir şeyleri yapabiliyorum diye. Arkadaşlara şeyi de vermiş oluyorsun, adını sen söyle fikir veriyorsun. Ama ben evde olsaydım şu anki Levent Rüştü olmazdım.

138. Emrah: Daha önce XXX şehrinde kütüphane açıldı, oraya benim ilkokulda benim bir öğretmenim vardı, ??? ??? o rehabilitasyonu önerdi bana yani kütüphaneye gittiğimde filan ve onlar yazdı okuldan yazdılar, İstanbul Altı Nokta Rehabilitasyon merkezi de 85 yılında çıktı bana ve geldim oraya, 5 buçuk ay orda kaldım ve o dönemden sonra biraz daha sürdü ama gene dışarıya çıktım ben falan, kendim çıktım. Gelir gelmez hemen, 5 buçuk aydan sonra, içeriye girmek daha kötü oldu yani keşke gitmeseydim oldu. (…) Bastonu elime aldım çünkü bazı insanlar geldikten sonra hiç bir işe yaramıyor çünkü çıkmıyorlar. Ben o olmak istemedim ben bunu bırakırsam dedim ben batarım, hep bunu bırakmayacağım dedim ve bırakmadım.

139. Rüya: Ve körlerden korkuyordum ya birisi bana dokunmasın, benle konuşmasın yani bir ürperti vardı içimde. İlk körlerle tanışmamı da rehabilitasyon merkezinde gerçekleştirdim. Hatta ilk gittiğimde oraya herkes derste olduğu için korular bomboştu ay çok güzel demiştim hiç kimseyle karşılaşmadım çok iyi yani böyle olsun istedim. Ertesi gün tabi başlamak için gittiğimde ise tören varmış, tören bitmesin bir an önce, tören bitmesin yanıma kimse gelmesin diye düşünüyordum (güler) yanıma bir abi geldi, sen dedi buraya mı başlayacaksın falan. Aldı beni kantine götürdü gel seni arkadaşlarınla tanıştırayım dedi kantinde genç kızlar genç erkekler oturuyorlar sigara içip normal konuşuyorlar. Ayy dedim bunlar normal konuşuyormuş, ben körüm ama başka bir körü farklı düşünüyordum demek ki. O zaman insanların bir şeyler yapabileceğini işte görmeyen bir insanın da

diğer insanlar gibi olduğunu mesela ben normalde kantinde öyle insanlarla tanıştım, kantindeki insanlar da oturmuşlar sigaralarını çaylarını içiyorlar sohbetlerini ediyorlardı bu bile bana pek çok şey anlattı. Bir görmeyen insan da oturup muhabbet edebiliyor, işte hayatını idame ettirebiliyor, sohbetini edebiliyor sigarasını içebiliyor, bunlar da her şeyi yapabilir. Bu şablon bana görmeyenlerin de hayatta var olabileceğini anlattı bence. Çünkü bu tabloyu unutmuyorum, o anları unutmuyorum.

140. Güven: Hazırlığın ilk dönemlerine denk gelir ki bu dönemde ben körlükle alakalı önyargılarımı aşmış, bastonla bilgisayarı elime almaya başlamıştım. Bundaki en temel sebep de buradaki diğer arkadaşlarımın işte baston kullanan, hiç görmeyen, jaws kullanan arkadaşlarımın hayatlarındaki işleyişi benimkinden daha yolunda olmasıydı. Yani aklın yolu bir, bunu yapmak zorundaydım yoksa bunu reddederek aynı şekilde özgüvenimi daha çok düşüreceğim, gece dışarı çıkamayacağım bu daha mı iyi yani elimde baston olması mı daha kötü gece dışarı çıkamamak, oraya buraya çarpmak mı daha kötü. Zaten daha sonra özgüven eksiltici bir şey olmadığını da deneyimleyerek gördüm.

141. Yaren: Çok karşıladı, çok karşıladı ya. Üniversite benim hayatımın dönüm noktasıydı, hayatım kurtuldu ya Engin abi ya öyle söyleyeyim sana (güler). (…) Valla hiç kaygım yoktu desem yeridir ya, o kadar rahattım ki, ya tamam ben her şeyi yaparım ya önümde duracak bir şey yok artık yani. Yaptığım da benim yapamadığım da benim çünkü geldim ben buraya zaten. Şöyle oldu; önce yurtta kalınacak zaten İstanbul pahalı hiç evde kalmayı aklımdan geçirmedim. Hazırlıklar Kiloysa falan gidiyorlar diye o arada yurt araştırırken işte başvuru zamanını beklerken babam internetten bakıyor, şudur

budur, o ara sen aradın zaten ondan sonra hayatımızı kolaylaştırdın yani. İşte ne yapalım kayıt zamanı gelin bize uğrayın. Geldik işte bütün yolu çiziyorsun, biliyorsun işte, çizdin yani, rotamız belirlenmişti kalacağın yurt belli. Ondan sonra hazırlıkta okuyacaksın şunları kullanacaksın materyalin bu olacak, bu verilecek, bunları da sen alacaksın filan gibi. Tamam ya her şey dört dörtlük, baksana ne kadar…

142. Naci: 2009'da tanıştık biz, kasımda. 2010'da daha sık görüşmeye başladık. Yüz yüze de görüşmeye başladık. Bunun iyi bir ortam olmadığını bana sürekli psikolojik olarak anlattı. Ailenin yapmış olduğu bazı şeylerin senin üzerinde tahribat yarattığını söylüyorum sana dedi. Özgüven olarak eksiklik yarattığını, yapamazsın fikrinin, ortamının beni zorladığını söyledi ve kesinlikle bir şeyleri kanıtlamak zorunda olduğumu, şu an şu noktada bir şeyleri kendime asıl kanıtlamak zorunda olduğumu ve kendi hayatımı kazanmak zorunda olduğumu söyledi. Sonrasında şöyle oldu. İşte ev değiştirmeyi denedim. Sonra bunun işle ancak mümkün olabileceğine kanaat ettim. Bu kararı verdikten sonra onların tüm gelgitli, daha önce anlatmış olduğum iftira, itibarsızlaştırma, sopa gösterme, her türlü tepkisini bir şekilde absorbe edip savuşturup başka şeyler denemeye başladım. Kız arkadaşımla yalnız görüştüm. Sürekli aldatmaya gittim. Şehir dışına çıktım sürekli. Başka yerlere gittiğimi söyledim falan. Her türlü şeyi denedim. (…) Zaten biliyordum derken kastettiğim yapılabilirmiş. Hiç yapmamıştım ama eve gelince yemek falan yapınca çok hoşuma gitti. Ne güzelmiş falan oldum. Kendi evim vardı. Kendi televizyonum, kendi bilgisayarım, kendi ortamım vardı. İstediğim zaman girip çıkabiliyordum tabi işi saymazsak. İstediğin şeyi yapma durumun söz konusuydu. İstediğin insanları çağırabilir ve istediğin

şeyi yapabilirdin. Onları ağırlayabilir, onlara yardımcı olabilir ya da kendi evimin temizliğini yapabilirdim. Alıştım onlara yani. Yemek yapmak güzeldi. Yemek yapmak hoşuma gitmişti. İlginçti. Güzeldi.

143. Münire: Hayatımda neleri değiştirdi ben mesela yaz tatillerinde şubat tatillerinde Bu şehre gelirdim gezme amaçlı hep yanımda birileri olurdu. Beni bir yerlere gezmeye götürürdü. Şimdi bu şehre geldikten sonra yalnız başıma sokağa çıkıp bir yerlere gitme yeteneğim gelişti. XXX şehrinde olduğu gibi burada da okula yalnız başıma gidip geliyorum, kardeşlerim karşıda oturuyorlar onlara yalnız başıma gidip gelebiliyorum. İhtiyaç duyduğum her yere şu anda gidebileceğim yeteneği kazandım diye düşünüyorum. Buraya gelmeden önce bir korku vardı: evet ben bunu XXX şehrinde yaparım ama başka yerde yapamam, XXX nispeten küçüktür rahattır orda yaparım başka yerde yapamam düşüncesi vardı. Ama burada da yapabildiğimi gördüm. Evet, kolay değil, sıkıntı yaşıyorum, ama hiç yapamıyorum değil. Yani yapıyorum. Bu anlamda çok büyük bir yenilik kattı. Yani beni bugüne kadar hiç takdir etmemiş insanlar bugün beni eşimle birlikte kabullenip bir birey olduğumu kabullenip benimle ilişki kuruyorlar. Yani benim o dayım okumamda çok emeği olan ama beni çok kösteklemiş olan dayım bugün benden ve eşimden akıl danışır pozisyonda. Yani bu çok önemli bir kazanım diye düşünüyorum.

144. Ender: Şimdi üniversite sonrasında hedefim aslında eğitim aldığım alanda çalışmaktı. Bunun için çaba harcamadığımı da söyleyemem. Ama yeterli çabayı da harcadım diyemem. Yalnız içimde ukde olarak kalan bir şey vardı. O zaman, bugün, herhalde XXX üniversitesinde Profesör Doktor YYY bizim dekanımızdı. Ben okulu bitirmişim. Kendisine veda etmek için gittim. Oturduk çay içtik odasında falan sohbet ettik. Ben Allaha ısmarladık

dediğimde hocaya, “Evlat bana Allaha ısmarladık deme, gel burada araştırma görevlisi olarak kal.” dedi. “Seni hocalarda seviyor, istediğin hocaya asistan olarak vereyim, onların yanında çalış, yüksek lisansı da burada yap, biz yardımcı olalım, akademik kariyer yap.” dedi. Ama ben korktum. Neden korktuğuma gelince, bugünkü teknoloji olsaydı havada karada kapardım bu işi. Korkmamda şu; her ne kadar başarılı bir öğrenci olsam da yaşadığım bir takım sıkıntılar vardı. İşte kitaplarım zamanında gelmiyor. Ondan sonra…

145. Uğur: Tabi ki, yani mesela hep işin akademik boyutu benim hoşuma gitmiştir, tabi benim dönemimde bu kadar yani şimdi olsa işler farklı olurdu yani bu kadar bilgisayar teknolojisini kullanabilseydik o dönemde yine farklı olurdu. O zaman biz kasete okutulan kitaplarla, şunla bunla ancak okul hayatımızı tamamlayabildik. Mesela orda düşünüyorum hani görseydim akademik alanda devam etmek isterdim.

146. Lemi: Kerim Bey’ in anlatımını dinledim o arada biraz bilgisayar aşinalığı gelişti, Jaws’ı kurdu ben Jaws’la başladım, o arada sizin şey geldi Braille teknikteki Türkçe çevirmeler geldi. Türkçe çevirmeler, gelince de yabancı dilim yok benim en çok eksikliğini hissettiğim ama hiç de öğrenemediğim bir şey. Ya kendim şartlandırdım ya da gerçekten hani bazı insanlarda oluyormuş, yabancı dile karşı öğrenme sıkıntısı var, beni onlardan birisi olarak kabul edelim. Böylelikle devam ettik işte o gün bugündür bilgisayarla gidiyoruz. Daha çok, şöyle diyelim Tanzimat’tan bu yana Cumhuriyet tarihi ve Osmanlı tarihi, Atatürk’le ilgili hemen hemen tüm kaynakları okudum ben bu 13 yılda.

147. Rıza: Şimdi 2012’de ÖMSS yapılacağı zaman bana dediler ki sınava gir dedim ki sınava girip ne olacak, işte memur olursun. Dedim ki işte hani

memur olsam ne iş yaptıracaklar ki bana. Arkadaşlar ısrar ettiler falan filan ben kesinlikle sınava girmeyi falan da düşünmüyordum. Sonrasında sınava aşağı yukarı bir ay kala yani kaydımı yaptırdım ama biraz da annemin de gönlü olsun diye sınava bir ay kala XXX şehrinde görme engelliler kütüphanesi sorumlusu bir abimiz var YYY abimiz. Onla tanıştım. Onla tanıştıktan sonra benim için hayat baya farklılaştı. Şöyle söyleyeyim görme engelliler kütüphanesine gidip gelmeye başladıktan sonra bu kitapların seslendirilmesi bilgisayarların programlandırılması telefonla ilgili bilgisayarla ilgili teknolojik gelişmeler… Bunları gördükten sonra bir o birimlerde o dönemde mesela açık öğretim şey sistem değişikliğine gittiğini için yeni kitaplar sadece yazma olarak çıktı sesli kitap çıkmadı. Yani o dönemde bir bakıyorum Erzurum'dan bir tanesi arıyor abi benim şu şu kitaplarım var halledebilir misin? Bir bakıyorum hemen sesli kitaba çeviriyorlar, şey yapıyorlar ta oraya kadar gönderiyorlar. Oradaki çalışmaları aktiviteleri gördüm sonra dedim ki hakikaten paha biçilmez yani ve şey çok uzun zaman da orda gönüllü olarak çalıştım ben yani o abinin yanında. Günlük gidiyordum dosyaları iş bölümü yapıyordum işte paylaşıyorduk falan. Bilgisayarı onun yanında öğrendim telefon daha önce Nokia'yı kullanıyordum. Nokia'yla ilgili programlar olduğunu söylediler Talks diye bir program var dediler ben işte şey nasıl yapılır, nasıl kurulur, nasıl edilir öğrenecek kadar bir buçuk ay geçti ondan sonra kendi başıma çözmüş oldum yani programı. Ya o şekilde teknolojiyle de boğuşunca aklıma tek şey yani bir görme engellinin bir görenden sadece zaman olarak geride olduğunu Onun dışında hiçbir hususta geri kalmayacağımızı gördüm orada.

148. Rüya: Bence bilgisayar görmeyenler için çok önemli bir makine diyebilirim çünkü görmeyenlerin gözü. Ne bileyim bir gazete okumak, internet kullanabilmek yani bilgisayar demek internet demek şimdi. İnternette günlük gazeteleri takip edebilmek, ben gazeteleri dinlemeyi çok severdim. Ama kim okuyacak her gün herkes bana gazete okur mu? Gazeteleri takip edebilmek tüm olayları internetten takip edebilmek bir şeyleri kendin yazabilmek kendin çıktı alabilmek bence bunlar çok güzel şeyler ve bilgisayarla normal insanların yapabileceği şeyleri hemen hemen görmeyenler de yapıyor yani bence bu konuda pek fark kalmadı. Fark var tabi ki daha var bazı şeylere erişemiyoruz ama bunlar da kullandıkça yapılacak olan şeyler bence. (…) Mesela işyerinde herhangi bir işi yapabilmek, bir işlemi yapabilmek, bir belgeyi yazabilmek bilgisayarda yani yanındaki masa arkadaşına ses etsen de o gibi yazabiliyorsun yani bir şeyleri yapabildiğimi, bir şeyleri ortaya koyabildiğimi gösterdi. Ne bilim çeşitli sınavlarda çeşitli kaynaklara erişebilmeme, çeşitli kaynak sıkıntısının azaldığını, birçok kitabı artık bilgisayar sayesinde okuyabiliyoruz, birçok dokümanı bilgisayar sayesinde okuyabiliyoruz. Bence en önemli etken şu; kitaplarla buluşmamı sağladı çünkü diğer zamanlarda kabartma kitaplar var onlara da erişemiyorsunuz kabartma kitaplar okumak da zor, basmak da zor ama bilgisayarda artık kitaplarla çeşitli kütüphanelerle buluşmak, çeşitli kütüphanenin açılması bilgisayar aracılığıyla bu kitaplara ulaşmak, bu kitapları okuyabilmek çok avantajlıydı benin için. Yani benim için dünyaya açılan pencere diyebilirim.

149. Rüya: Bardak artık taştı diyebilirim ben. Çünkü ben yılarca mücadele ettim, sürekli altyapının sağlanması için kitap okuma makinesini alınması için

sürekli kurumuma taleplerde bulundum, artık bunları yazılı verdim kurumum yanımda oldu hep. En sonunda işte 2 yıldan beri mücadele etmiyordum artık göndermiyorlar diye, geçen sene yine bir dilekçe yazdım o dilekçenin sonucunda, hatta artık bakanlık gelir dairesi başkanlığı beni aradı ödenek talep etmişsiniz tekrarlayın diye. Ben dedim ki neden tekrarlayayım yıllardır göndermiyorlar dediler ve geçenler tekrarladık okuma makinesi ve bilgisayar ödeneği istedik, 7 bin liralık bir tutardı, o tutarı ödenek olarak bizim ekranlarımıza düştü. Ama bazı şeyler bireysel mücadeleyle olmuyor işte mesela benim gibi maliyede çalışan yüzlerce engelli personel var işte hepimiz birlikte hareket etsek daha iyi sonuçlar alacağız ama maalesef bireysel mücadeleler çok kolay sonuçlar vermiyor. Ben 2005ten beri mücadele ediyorum şimdi 9 yılı geçmiş daha yeni bir şeyler kazanabildim.

150. Münire: Şimdi ben, şey var, bu bilgisayar teknolojisi kitap internet kitabı teknolojisi hayatımıza girdikten sonra ben yutarcasına çok kitap okuyan bir kişi oldum. Çünkü bu baştan beri bende bir açlıktı hala o açlığımı dindirebilmiş değilim. Bunu XXX şehrindeyken de çok yapıyordum ve bu okuduğum kitapların benim ufkumun gelişmesinde çok katkısı oldu. Bu erkânın katkısı değil ben okumalarımın katkısı aslında.

151. Abidin: Ne oldu, interneti aldım ama bir arkadaşımdan duymuştum; ya ne oldu, bak böyle sohbet odaları var. Tabi bende de Allah versin konuşmaya meyilli olduğumuz için, o sohbet odalarını araştırma eğilimi oluştu. Aradım birilerini, bunu niye anlatıyorum; o insanlar bana geri dönmeyince, en sonunda Google’a biz bize yazdım. Biz bize sohbet, çünkü gören arkadaşlar okumuştu, var böyle bir şey dediler. Biz bize sohbet işte tim talk mim talk yazdım. Körlere Eğitim Destek Derneği bir kişinin numarası

çıktı karşıma. Ben direk onu aradım, dedim böyleyken böyle, ben daha hiçbir şey bilmiyorum odalarla ilgili. Dedi bizim odamız var, böyle böyle, bizi başka birine yönlendirdiler. Ondan sonra başka bir arkadaşa ilk teknik desteği ben bu arkadaştan almışımdır. Odanın ayarlanması vs. ya demişti sen yeni bir ses kartı al. Ya diyordum, bu ses kartı ne, ne yapacağım ben diyordum, korkuyordum ben anlamam öyle şeylerden. Ondan sonra bilgisayarı kapadık, açtık tabi çalışır oldu. Artık ben ha bire gece-gündüz giriyorum, millete şunu soruyorum bunu soruyorum, Jaws nasıl, şunun kısa yolu ne bilmem ne, teknik destek ala ala ala ala… Ne öğrendiysek, Allah razı olsun ki Engin Albayrak'la tanıştık sohbet odalarında onların çok çok çok büyük etkileri oldu. Zaten Engin Albayrak' kendi odasında kurs veriyor. Zaten her hafta Allah versin ben 5-10 tane soru sormazsam olmaz (güler). (…) Hocam bakın, köy yerinde ben kimi bulacağım da, kör olarak, körcül olarak bileni ben nerden bulayım, bu çok büyük bir nimet. İnternet bir nimet, Engin Albayrak bir nimet, hep böyle oldu hocam ben böyle öğrendim programlar da böyle oldu.

152. Oya: Bir de ben raporu götürüyorum. %65 raporum var benim. Yazmıyor doktor. Müzik öğretmenliği ya da öğretmenlik yapabilir yazmıyor. Yapamaz da yazmıyor. Bana diyor ki git %65 görme engellisin. Git bu raporu ver. Veriyorum raporu Milli Eğitim kabul etmiyor. Hastanedeki doktorun karar vermesini istiyor. Doktor da diyor ki kimler öğretmen olabilir. Ben nasıl karar vereyim. O zaman yapamazsın derim diyor. Onu mu istiyorsun, benim kriterim yok diyor. Götürüyorum Milli Eğitim'e. Oradaki memur diyor ki; belki lise mezunudur bilemiyorum. Kim bunu öğretmen yapsın zaten ya! Yüzüme karşı diyor ve ben hiçbir şey diyemiyorum. Diyorum ki gerçekten

mi? Acaba kimse beni öğretmen yapmaz mı? Sonra düşüncem şu; ben nasıl öğretmenlik yapacağım ki? Çocuklara bir şey olsa göremem. Şu olsa şunu yapamam. Kendimde ona beyin olarak onaylıyorum. Adam aslında bana hakaret ediyor ama ben kafamda adamı haklı çıkartıyorum. Çevremdekiler de çünkü öyle diyor. O dönem hayatımın ondan sonraki 5 yılını o kadar çok etkiledi ki, bana verdiği zararları anlatamam bile. Çok kötü şeyler verdi o olaylar. 30 gün atanana kadar içimde yaşadığım olaylar…

153. Oya: Burada sıkıntılar ilk başta çok oldu. Geldim. Nasıl diyeyim size. Burası da XXX şehrinin en elit okulu. Her anlamda en özel okullardan sonra gelen bir okuldur. Zaten iki tane özel okul var. Farklı bir camia var. Hani körler camiası var ya. Bu da 50. Yıl camiası. Camia olmuşlar artık. Öyle bir şey olmuşlar. Beni bu okula yakıştıramadılar tabi. Beni bu okula resmen yakıştıramadılar bir öğretmen olarak. Bunu o kadar çok hissettim ki hala da hissediyorum üç buçuk yıl olmasına rağmen. Yakıştıramadılar beni ya. Geldim. Bizim okulda bir müzik öğretmeni daha var benim çalıştığım. Şey demiş, benim eski okulumda bir veliyle aynı günde aynı yerde karşılaşmışlar. Demiş ki o nasıl biri? Yeni geldi. Daha tanıma fırsatı bulamadım. O da benim en iyi arkadaşım yani. Şu anda bile hala görüşürüz. Eşi de benim şu anki okulumda. O da demiş ki çok iyi bir insandır. Çok çalışkandır. İşini en düzgün şekilde yapmaya çalışır. Hiçbir şeyden kaçınmaz. En sonuna kadar yapmaya çalışır. Çok iyi bir insandır demiş, anlatmış beni böyle. O da demiş ki öyle de demiş keşke daha kıyıda bucakta bir okul tercih etseydi. O burada yapamaz demiş. Burası onun için hiç uygun değil demiş.

154. Oya: Kimsesiz kaldım diyebilirim yani. Hiç arkadaşım olmadı. Okulda mesela sınıfa gidip kimseyle konuşmadan geldiğimi biliyorum yani.

Sadece dersine giriyorsun çıkıyorsun ve hiç kimse seninle konuşmuyor. Biraz önce bahsettim ya. O grubun içine katılmak istiyorsun aslında ama ona da görmemenden kaynaklı bir takım şeylerden dolayı onlarla da bazen irtibata geçemiyorsun. Hala mesela benim bir grubum yok, beni benimsemiş. Dışarı çıkalım çay içmeye. Ne yaparsın kendine yakın 4-5 kişiyi çağırırsın. Benim öyle bir grubum yoktur. Kimse demez ki Oya Nerede? Sadece ben ordaysam onlar da az çok beni seven insanlarsa sen de gelir misin derler ama kesinlikle ben başka bir yerdeysem o da gelir miydi diyen bir kişi bile yoktur. Belki de bu benim ayıbım. Bilemiyorum. Bunların hepsi birbirine bağlantılı, körlüğü çok sonradan fark etmek, altyapı oluşturamamak, insanlara kendini doğru ifade edememek…

155. Damla: Evet, psikolog kadrosuyla atandım ve daha iş yerine evrakları teslim etmeye gittiğim ilk gün hastanede, hastanemize kör bir psikolog geldi biz şimdi ne yapacağız şeklinde bir komisyon toplandı. Başhekim, başhekim yardımcıları, hastane müdürü, hastanenin psikiyatristi sanırım başhekim de orda ama sanırım o sırada yurt dışındaymış bulunamadı toplantıda. Beni çağırdılar sen şimdi buraya nasıl geleceksin? Nerde oturuyorsun? Ben XXX merkezde oturuyorum. E nasıl geleceksin dediler. Yani bu ben işte sorunum dedim. Ya işte becayiş hakkınız var biliyor musunuz? Dedim ki ben burayı tercih ettim. Burayı kazandım. Becayiş hakkımı biliyorum ama becayiş için insanları bulabilecek şeyim yok yani kimi bulabilirim. İkincisi becayiş için iki günüm var ve ben iki gün içinde kimseyi bulamam benim böyle bir talebim yok. Sonra psikiyatrist dedi ki en çok ben istemiştim bir psikolog dedi. Adını bile söylememişti işte, çıkarken ben sordum yalnız ben hala adınızı bilmiyorum diye. Dedi ki ben burada psikolog istemiştim ama test

uygulayabilecek bir psikolog istemiştim dedi. Ondan sonra ben de dedim ki biz lisanstan mezun olurken test sertifikalarıyla mezun olmuyoruz. Bunun için ayrı kurslar alıyoruz zaten her bir test için ayrı bir kurs almamız gerekiyor. Eğer hastane beni bu eğitimlere gönderirse neden ben test uygulayamamayayım ki, benim test uygulamak için bir engelim yok, eğer benim dışımda biri gelseydi de muhtemelen onun da sertifikası olmayacaktı zaten elinizdekinin en iyisi bu olacaktı dedim. Ama çok moralim bozuldu eve dönerken falan baya bir ağlamıştım vapurda ama şimdi düşünüyorum da her şeyi kabullenmiş olan, az talep kâr olan benim iyi bir tavır gösterdiğimi düşünüyorum.

156. Çağla: Sonra ben santralde başladım, orada da bir diş teknikeri abla çalışıyormuş, ben gelince onu oradan aldılar. Çünkü diğer arkadaş memurdu ben de memur olunca onu oradan aldılar. Onlar da partiden adamları araya sokmaya çalıştılar işte gitmek istemediği için işte şudur budur. Sonra bunlar beni orada beni istemediler hep. Sonra, yanımdaki kadın da çok fettan bir kadındı zaten öbürü de çıktı yukarıya falan. Ben iş yerine adapte oldum ama hatta ilk başta göstermiyorlardı bana. Sen başhekime söylesene seni röntgene versinler röntgen çek sen onu daha iyi yaparsın. Şey dediler işte, bir insanı hemen en üst basamağa çıkarırlar mı işte santral merdivenin en üst basamağı en alttan başlatırlar sen masa başı falan istesene dediler. Ben de dedim ki ben nasıl röntgen çekeceğim. Neyse başladım işte, öyle gel zaman git zaman diğer klinikteki arkadaş da öğle aralarında benim yanıma geliyordu falan. Mesela telefon geldiği zaman telefonları diğer abla bana bağlattırmıyordu. Sen bana ver ben bağlarım onları diyordu. O da şundan tabi işte bu yapamıyor öbürünü geri getirin gibisinde. Yani aynen ve şey ya dolap yok işte bana eşyalarımı

koymak için dolap vermiyorlar. Mesela yemek çıkmıyordu o zaman evden kendimiz yemeğimizi getiriyorduk bana koyacak yer bırakmıyorlardı. O yukarıya giden ablanın da eşyaları bizim odadaydı geri geleceğini düşündüğü için nasıl olsa ben yapamam falan gibisinden. Ben bu getirdiğim yiyeceklerimi koymak için, onlar kendilerine yer yapmışlar hani böyle elbise dolapları olur ya yukarıda askıları olan, aşağıda rafı falan olan. En aşağıya terliklerini falan koymuşlar bana diyorlar ki sen buraya koy yiyeceklerini. O terliklerin üstüne koyacakmışım. Dedim oraya koyulur mu yani. Sen buraya koy falan dediler.

157. Ender: Özellikle işyerinde çalışırken benden sürekli şikâyet gidiyordu. İşte yemeğini alamıyor, bilmem ne yapıyor falan filan. Ondan sonra burası Hilal-i Ahmer değil falan diye. O zaman da beni işe yerleştiren infaz savcılarından bir tanesiydi. Akrabalarımız. Patronlar kaçakçılıktan dolayı içeride yatmışlar o dönemde. Oradan tanıyor. Bu da tabi elinin tersiyle itiyor. Hiç şey yapmıyor. Çalıştıracaksınız diyor. O şekilde devam ettim ben. Yoksa beni hem işe almazlardı. Alsalar bile en kısa zamanda atarlardı.

158. Rüya: Bardak artık taştı diyebilirim ben. Çünkü ben yılarca mücadele ettim, sürekli altyapının sağlanması için, kitap okuma makinesini alınması için sürekli kurumuma taleplerde bulundum, artık bunları yazılı verdim kurumum yanımda oldu hep. En sonunda işte 2 yıldan beri mücadele etmiyordum artık göndermiyorlar diye, geçen sene yine bir dilekçe yazdım o dilekçenin sonucunda, hatta artık bakanlık gelir dairesi başkanlığı beni aradı ödenek talep etmişsiniz tekrarlayın diye. Ben dedim ki neden tekrarlıyayım yıllardır göndermiyorlar dediler ve geçenler tekrarladık okuma makinesi ve

bilgisayar ödeneği istedik, 7 bin liralık bir tutardı, o tutarı ödenek olarak bizim ekranlarımıza düştü.

159. Zeliha: Evet, evet çok. Çağrı merkezinde çok kalabalık içinde oturduk telefon dinledik uzun süre. Ondan çok sıkıldık. Çok kalabalık bir yerdi zaten. Bizim ne yapacağımızı bilmediğimiz insanlar ne yapacaklarını bilmedikleri bir yerdi. Bocaladık yani baya sıkıntı yaşadık o zaman. Oturduk telefon dinledik. Hep böyle mi olacak diye bir durum oluştu. Böyle olacaksa bizi neden buraya çağırdılar dedik. Yani sıkıntılı bir süreç oldu evet. Call center biraz sıkıntılıydı evet.

160. Damla: Sosyal hizmetlerden sorumlu arkadaşımız sağ olsun hiç yardımı dokunmadı. Her şeyi kendim öğrendim sürekli telefon ettim, hastanenin her yerine her gelen hastada bir yerleri aramak zorunda kaldım, birden fazla yerleri aramak zorunda kaldım. Sonra orda aranan bir kişi oldum. Çünkü sakin biri olmuşumdur hep ve insanlar gergin gelir karşılarında öfkelenmeyen birini gördüklerinde daha rahat olurlar. Hem yardım etmeye çalışan birini hem de onlar gibi öfkelenmeyen birini gördüklerinde daha çok rahatlıyorlardı. Sosyal hizmetlerden sorumlu arkadaş pek öyle biri değildi, baştan savan biriydi. Aranan biri oldum orda.

161. Berat: İlk dönemler sanırım bir buçuk sene, İK ile ortak çalışılan bir proje vardı. İnsan kaynakları eleman alıyordu. Onlarla ilgili falan çalışıyorduk. İşte arıyorduk o insanları telefonda konuşuyorsun. İşte onların sesleri nasıl, panik mi çıkıyor, bu işe uygun mu? Hem biz de biraz derler ya görme engelliler sesten iyi anlar falan diye. Öyle bir şey vardır. Onu kullandık orada oraya bayağı eleman seçtik. Ben çok yapıyordum yani onu günde 100 kişi falan aradığımı hatırlıyorum yani. Excel tablosu falan vardı

basit böyle. Excel zaten bildiğimiz için çok öyle sıkıntı yaşamadık onunla ilgili.

162. Berat: Orda da sonradan çok başarılı oldum. Çok sevilen oldum. Çok aranan oldum. Şu an belirleyici konumdayım. İki defa görevde yükselme sınavına girip teknisyen yardımcısı gibi abuk sabuk bir kadro aldığım halde – çünkü torpille girdik, sınavla girmedik- şu an hem kadrom şef kadrosu hem de onun ötesinde kişiliğiyle, karakteriyle güvenilen, sevilen ve gece nöbeti tutulduğunda herkesin nöbet tutabileceği bir kişi konumdayım. Kişi benimle kavga etse bile küsmez yani uzun süre. Küsmez kolay kolay. Öyle bir şeyimiz var.

163. Damla: Sonra da beni MMPI öğrenmem için bir kursa gönderdiler. Daha doğrusu ben MMPI kursu açılıyor, eğitimi açılıyor hastane bunu ödeyecekse ben bu kursa gitmek istiyorum dedim. Ve sonra bir gün psikiyatristim beni aradı ve şey dedi iyi bir şey mi kötü bir şey mi söylemeye çalıştığından da çok emin değilim ama ben sizin şu anda bir raporunuzu okuyorum da dedi. Siz şununla neyi kasettiniz merak ettim dedi. İşte anlattım. Bu arada dedi ben sizin bu kadar iyi rapor yazabileceğinizi beklemiyordum. Çok iyi raporlar yazıyorsunuz dedi bana. Yani kendince özür diledi galiba.

164. Uğur: İş hayatı benim için çok iyiydi, şöyle iyiydi; ilk vergi dairelerin atamam yapılacağı zaman, o zamanın defterdarı, o zaman vergi daireleri defterdara bağlıydı, o zamanın defterdarını abimin bir arkadaşı tanıyormuş, defterdarla konuşmuş söylemiş yani bir arkadaşımın kardeşi sizde başlayacak böyle uygun, iyi bir daireye ver diye. Beni o zaman bir vergi dairesinde görevlendirdiler ve gerçekten iyi bir daireydi orası. Beni göreve başlatan müdür çok iyi bir adam, çoğu memura ters gelir ama adam çok farklı bir

bakış açısı vardı böyle hayata olaylara falan çok farklı bakıyordu bu adam. Onun için ben sıkıntı çekmedim, o zaman tabi avukatlık ruhsatım falan da vardı hemen kadro değiştirecek durumdaydım stajımı falan tamamlamıştım. Mesela şimdi hala da öyle vergi dairesinde bir körün yapabileceği çok fazla bir şey yok açıkçası çünkü gerek vergi dairelerindeki işin yapısı gerek oradaki sistemleri falan pek köre uygun bir altyapısı yok oranın. Ben gittim o zaman müdürle konuştum. Müdür bana dedi ki seni nerede görevlendirelim, dedi. Ben de takdir sizin dairenin müdürü sizsiniz ama vergi dairesinin yapısına bakılacak olursa körün yapacağı çok fazla bir şey yok. Ya santralde görevlendiriliyoruz ya da avukatlığımızdan kaynaklı İhtilaflı işler diye bir servis vardı vergi davalarına bakan, bir de dedim orası kalıyor. Müdür dedi ki santralı yapacak çok adam var dedi, sen zaten kadro değiştirirsin yani burada kalmazsın ama burada kaldığın sürece bizim şu vergi davalarına yardımcı olursan biz de seviniriz dedi, oraya görevlendirdi beni ihtilaflı işler servisine.

165. Berat: Sonrasında işte normal, profesyonel aramalara geçtim ben. İşte kredi kartı oluşturma, adres yönlendirme, satış yapma falan gibi. Hatta satış yaptım. Bir keresinde çeyrek altın kazandım ekipte birinci oldum. (…) Evet, bir aylık satış kotası vardı. Onu geçmiştim ben. Mesela o zaman birinci oldum ekipte falan. Bayağı son zamanlarda bir sene geçtikten sonra falan iyice ekipten biri olmuştum artık. Artık kimse görme engelli olduğum için şunu yapma, bunu yapmamalısın falan demiyordu alışmıştı artık herkes.

166. Ender: … Ve iş yerinin şöyle bir avantajı da vardı. Yani ailemin her ne kadar ortaokulu bitirmiş olsam da; üretemez, çalışamaz düşüncesini yıkmış oldum. En önemlisi de buydu. Ondan sonra ailem de kabullendi tabi. Bu arada bir şey söyleyeyim iş hayatına başlayana kadar birçok konuda fazla

beni dikkate almazlardı. Ama para getirdikten sonra, aile bütçesine katkıda bulunmaya başladıktan sonra fikirlerim değerli olmaya başladı. Ya bu çok önemli bir ayrıntı benim açımdan. O da bir anlamda benim otoritemi de güçlendirdi aile üzerinde ki halen öyledir. Evli kardeşlerim üzerinde bile bir otoritem vardır. Onlar bana danışmadan bir şey yapmazlar en azından. Böyle bir şey vardır. Yani hiç bilmeyen konumundan çok bilen konumuna geldim.

167. Çağla: Evet, bir sürü yerden. Bütün mahalledeki diğer akrabalar Çağla işte senin büyükbabana gidip, büyükbaba maaş kartımı sen al, beni bu güne kadar okuttunuz ettiniz bu parayı çekmek senin hakkın demen lazım diyorlardı.

168. Baki: Diğer STK'lerle bir ilişkim var. Bir dergi var XXX dergisi. O dergide kendimi geliştirmeye çalışıyorum, okumalar yapıyoruz. Kendimi geliştirmeye çalışıyorum. Bunun dışında okulda panel olur, başka bir etkinlik olur kendime uygunsa giderim falan. (…) 3 4 senedir iki elim kanda olsa bile 1 Mayıslara giderim. Bir tek Amerika'dayken gitmedim. Çeşitli aktivitelere gidebiliyorsun sadece yürüyüşlere değil. Konserlere falan.

169. Baki: Bence bütünlüklü bakmak lazım olaya. Yani bir engelli STK'yi düşündüğümüzde, engelli sorunlarını merkeze alıp, aynı zamanda dışarıyla ülkemizde azınlık sorunu var, Kürt sorunu var, alevi sorunu var LGBT hakları var, bunlar devam eden sorunlar. Benim şahsi görüşüm, belli bir sorunu ele aldığınız zaman, o sorunu o sorunun muhatabıyla değil de o sorunu başka sorunların sahipleriyle beraber ele aldığınızda, karşı tarafı yani bahsetmeye çalıştığım otoriteyi, kapitalist sistemden alabilecekleriniz artıyor. Yani siz diyaloğu kurmak zorundasınız diyaloğa açık olmak zorundasınız.

170. Ender: 1979 yılında ben yine ailemle çatıştım. Ailemle şöyle çatıştım. O dönemin atmosferi gereği ben siyasi olaylara çok katıldım. 18-19 yaşındayım ben. Siyasi olaylara çok katıldım. Olayların içerisinde yer aldım, grup olarak arkadaşlarla. Babam çekingen davrandı, beni okula vermek istemedi. Bir akrabamız vardı. Onun sayesinde ben bir fabrikaya işe girdim. Para kazanmaya başladım bir anda. Bu arada ilk işimden de atıldım.

Engin**:** Niye?

Ender**:** Sendikal faaliyetlerim yüzünden. Orada da rahat durmadım.

171. Deniz: Çok genelden özele gidelim; gençliğin verdiği enerji, gazla solcu kitapları okuduk işte Deniz Gezmişleri okuduk benzeri jenerasyonun hayat hikâyelerini okuduk, haksızlıkları gördük, o bilgimizle bugünün siyasi olaylarını gördük, sonra ülkeyi kurtaracaktık yani dünyayı biz kurtaracaktık. O kadar heyecanlıydık, girişkendik, cesaret ruhumuz vardı ama bir yerden başlamalıydık yani. Ama nerden başlayabilirdik bu forumlarda yazdım, dedim ya bir ara. Bir köşe yazarlık sitesi vardı, belki hala vardır yazar port diye bir şey ve burada her görüşten insan yazardı, her gün bir tane yazma hakkın vardı, bildiğin köşe yazarlığı sitesiydi. Burada herkes yazardı, sağcısı da solcusu da, herkes de yorumlardı ama belli bir sınırı vardı, sadece üye olanlar yorum yapabiliyordu o da beni rahatsız etti yani ben keşke herkes yorum yapsa okuyan herkesin yorum yapma hakkı olsa derdim. Misafir bir kişi de yorum yapsa, şimdi oralarda kendimizi, sözümüzü duyuracağız işte, aydın fikirlerimiz var, herkes düşünmüyor bunu, biz düşünüyoruz falan, yani böyle bir noktayla başladım. Yani bir şekilde bir şeyin ucundan tutup, bir şeyi değiştirmemiz lazımdı, bu muhtemelen lisenin 2.döneminde başlayan bir süreçti, 15-16 yaşlarından itibaren belki, hatta geriye bile götürmek de

olabilir çünkü ortaokulda da eski sınıf arkadaşlarımın yaptığı bir takım şeyler bana çok haksızca gelirdi özellikle erkek-kız ilişkilerinde. Erkeklerin baskın rolde olması, kızları ezmesi falan ben hiç bu işlere bulaşmazdım ve kendi arkadaşlarımca da eleştirilirdim yani savunmaya kalktığımda da sert tepkilerle karşılaşırdım falan. Doğasında var galiba insanların, ya da yetiştirilme biçimleri de olabilir belki, bilmiyorum. Tabi tabi yani eğer engellilikle ilgili bir şeye girmeseydim mutlaka hakla alakalı bir platformda olurdum. Engellilikle ilgili olması doğrudan kendimizi ilgilendiriyor olmasından kaynaklanıyor olsa gerek.

172. Polat: İstanbul Altı Nokta Dernek' i üniversitede değil, o daha sonra. Okulda kulüpler vardı. Uluslararası İlişkiler Kulübü, Atatürkçü Düşünce Kulübü, Halkbilim Kulübü gibi kulüplere üye olduk. (…) Tabi. Ben aktif olarak dokuz yıldır sendika iş yeri temsilciliği yapıyorum. Sonuçta biz 657'ye tabi memuruz ve memurların iş kollarında sendikalar var. Eğitim iş kolunda, sağlık iş kolunda, büro iş kolunda…

173. EY: Hiç eyleme katıldın mı?

Figen: ÖSYM konusunda çok şey olduğum için katılmıştım.

Engin: ÖSYM'de seni rahatsız eden neydi mesela eyleme katılma gereği duydun.

Figen: Ben 2007'de XXX üniversitesini kazanamadıysam benden kaynaklanan şeyler yüzünden değil, tamamen ÖSYM yüzünden oldu. O sene çok zor bir seneydi benim için ve bunun sorumlusu ÖSYM idi. Bu çok bireysel biliyorum ama benim yaşadığımı hakikaten başkasının yaşamasını hiç istemem. Muaf tutulduğum sorularla muaf tutulmadığım soruları karşılaştırıldığımda, çok kolay yani maksimum 20 saniyemi alacak sorulardan muaf tutulduğum halde, çok zor türev integral sorularından muaf tutulmadım. Zaten tutulmayım da, diğerlerini de sor ki bana, ben türevi yanlış yapma ihtimalim çok daha yüksek, hani yanlış yaparsam kurtarmış olayım. Mat 1 ile mat 2 arasında acayip bir dengesizlik var. Mat 1 de sorduğu bir soru tarzını mat 2 de sormuyor. Mesela ikisi de çarpanlara ayırma, çok saçmaydı. Bir de okuyucum. Normalde benim Türkçeyi çözmem maksimum 45 dakikaydı 70 dakikada bitiremedik Türkçeyi. Ben kardeşimle 30 soruluk edebiyat sosyal bölümünü 9 dakikada bitirdiğimi bilirim 50 dakikada bitiremedim. Yani hiç benle ilgili şeyler değildi bunlar.

174. Ender**:** Bize işte yardımcı veriyorlar falan. Hatta matematikten o zaman bize gelen tarih öğretmeniydi. Ben itiraz ettim. Çünkü tarih öğretmeni matematiği okuyamıyor. Dedim ki dersin hocasının gelmesi lazım. Elimi tutuyor üçgeni çizdiriyor bana tarih öğretmeni. İyi niyetli ama o parantezi içi ve parantez dışı işlemleri tam olarak okuyamıyor. Okuyamadığı için de ben ilk sene çaktım matematikten. Verebileceğim bir dersi veremedim. 2. sene itiraz ettik buna. Dedik ki “Bize yardımcı veriyorsanız-ha okul dışından gelsin ama nerden gelirse biz matematik öğretmeni istiyoruz ve fizikte fizik öğretmeni istiyoruz.” Yine okul bunu idareye sordu XXX Lisesi. Milli Eğitim’e sordu ve kabul edildi. O şekilde biz matematikten geçtik. Çünkü matematik hocasının okumasıyla soruyu branşı olmayan birinin okuması arasında dağlar kadar fark var.

175. Deniz: Biz ilk gittiğimizde bizi akademisyenler sınav yaptılar, araştırma görevlileri. Biz dedik herhalde bu iş böyle yürüyor, ertesi günde gittik. Hoca geldi, ya sizin okuyucularınız yok muydu ya, burada gelenek böyle herkes kendileri buluyor dedi yani (alaycı gülerler). 2.unutamadığım

cümle de budur, 1.o müdürün şeyi, 2.de bu yani, burada gelenek böyledir, Allah Allah ya nasıl bir gelenek bu. (gülerler). Bu hakikaten özgüven artırıcı bir şey olsa gerek, talep ediyorsun, tamam mı, çok saçma bir talep ama talep etme yeteneğimi de geliştirdi belki. Kantinden kafelerden okuyucu buluyorduk yani, bu bir sınıf, bir dönem belki bir sınıf böyle geçti.

176. Uğur: Bunun aslında birkaç nedeni var; birincisi genel neden yani şu anda ülkemizde birçok STK böyle biliyorsun hani insanların artık nerdeyse uç gözüyle baktığı birkaç örgüt dışında çok fazla dernekler ve STK'lar bir hak mücadelesi yürütemiyor. Çünkü şu anda zaten bunların bir şey elde etme imkânı da yok açıkçası. Şurası bir gerçek, şu eleştiriler büyük ölçüde doğru, yani şu anda bir tek adam şeyine gidiliyor memlekette ve bir şekilde başbakana ulaşıp da derdini anlatmadığın sürece bakanlarla, şunlarla bunlarla bir iş çözemiyorsun hele eylemlerle falan hiçbir şey yapma şansın yok, dolayısıyla kör dernekleri de bundan etkileniyor, birinci mesele bu. İkincisi, derneklerin içini boşalttılar, şöyle boşalttılar, bu körler özelinde baktığın zaman bu işin önde gelen adamları bir süre sonra kendi hesaplarının peşinde koşmaya başladılar. Bu adamlar derneğin, o çok mücadele yürüttüğü 80lerin sonu 90ların ortaları falan o dönemlerde kendi ceplerinden para koyarlardı bu işe. Mesela biz o zaman öğrenciydik, bir yerlere gidilecek gezilecek falan, çoğunlukla parayı falan masrafları bunlar karşılarlardı bunlar yaparlardı. Sonra biraz para elde edilmeye başlayınca işler farklı olmaya başlayınca ya biz yeterince yaptık dernek bize ne yapıyor, artık bize yapsın demeye başladılar ve o iş gide gide dernek işini iyice yolundan çıkardı. Mesela biz, XXX ve ben şube yönetimindeydik, Ankara şubenin yönetimindeydik hatta bana sonradan söylediler mesela bu Turan İşliler falan seni geleceğin genel

başkan adayı olarak görüyorlardı, öyle yetiştirmeyi düşünüyorlardı falan diyorlardı benim için. Ondan sonra mesela XXX derneğin genel sekreteriydi genel merkezde, biz o pozisyonları bıraktık sırf bu işler yüzünden. Yani temel uzlaşmazlık konularından biriydi bizim için bu, temel ayrılıklarımız oldu ve bu hareketler olmasın diye de zaten derneklerin içini boşalttılar. Ee gençlerdi, ondan sonra baktılar olmuyor herkes kendi yolunu tutturdu.

177. Kadir: Orda şunu görüyorsun; yapılacak bir şeyler, fırsatlar var, hakikaten faydalı olunacak bir şey var. Mesela, şu anda çok komik olacak belki ama o dönemki dernekler bir çıkmazdaydı, bir çıkmaz içerisindeydiler. Mesela derneklerin ortak gündeme getirdiği; körlerin problemi neydi biliyor musun; kabartma kitabımız yok, kütüphanemiz yok filandı sorun. Yani öyle erişilebilirlik falan filan derdi yoktu kimsenin, bir yere gideyim, baston şu bu. Yaa Türkiye'de baston üretilmiyordu o zaman, sene 88-90 yılları yani. O yüzden insanların bir şey beklentisi, talebi yoktu. Hatta Necati Adıbelli sağ olsun bir hizmet başlatmıştı 90lı yıllarda; gazeteleri okutuyordu kasete, 2 gün gecikmeli de olsa dinleyebiliyordun yani. Biz baktık aslında çok fırsat var, mesela bilgisayar müthiş bir şey. Bir sürü adam okumak iyi bir şey, dışardan okuyor falan filan, burs alıyor. Bitirme kursları gibi böyle garip kurslar açtık falan, üniversite hazırlık kursları falan. Yani bunları gördükçe bir de karşılığı da oluyor; vatandaşlar seviyor böyle hizmetlere destek olmak istiyorlar falan filan. Biz normal dernek olmaktan kopmaya başladık; mesela normal dernekler ya müzik grubu işletiyordu ya da onlara karşı çıkıyordu falan. Siyasi, ideolojik yapılanma çok yüksekti yani derneklerde, hala da vardır. Bir bu şeylerden eğitim aldıktan sonra baya bir sıyrıldık ve o işleri yapmak için önünde imkanları görüyorsun, yapabileceklerini görüyorsun, bir de 92de

Amerika'ya da gittim, orada ki ilişkiler, dostluklar falan çok güzel şeyler oldu.

178. Deniz: Ben üniversite hazırlıkta bulunduğum dernekte de bir takım görevlerde bulundum ama orda da ben ciddiye alınmadım yani çünkü belli bir kalıplaşmış şeyler vardı o yüzden yenilikçi bir çözüm önerisi götürsen bile baştan ikna etmen gerekiyordu. Olmadı yani, ben web sitesi bile kurduramadım yani. Baya bir çalışmalar yaptık, dokümanları bile hazırladık, adamdan bir şifreyi bile alamadım yani. Ve oradaki yanlışları da görüyorsun, çok da zaten bir şeyler de öğrenmeye başlamışsın üniversitede değil diğer yerlerde de. Sence yanlış giden şeyler var ama anlatamıyorsun bir türlü, senin gibi yanlış giden şeyler olduğunu düşünen de bir kitle var yani yalnız değilsin o konuda, bir arada değil sadece ama yalnız değilsin. Biz kurarken şey düşündük; sosyal kategori var ya sosyolojide farklı yerlerde aynı düşünen insan topluluğu, ben açıkçası bunu temel aldım. Sosyal kategori artık çok daha rahat bir araya gelebilir çünkü internet diye bir şey var bu nasıl sağlanır, körler mail grubu kuralım. Ben ilk başta forum açmayı önerdim ama XXX arkadaşım itiraz etti, yani, forum olmaz dedi. Haklıydı da, belki, çünkü zaten tanınmıyoruz bir de forum açarsak kim girerdi. Hal böyle olunca bir şekilde kendini orda buluyorsun. Ve şu ana kadar nerdeyse çok az olan kör kitlen bir anda fazlalaşıyor. Yani şuandaki Facebook'daki kişilerin yarısından fazlası belki körlerden oluşuyor, bir kısmını hiç tanımıyorum. Bir defa gençsin, farkındalığa açıksın, sorun görüyorsun, kendi sorununu görüyorsun, gençlerin sorununu fark ediyorsun, engellilikten öte engelli gençlerin sorununu fark ediyorsun. Tabi bazen yanılıyorsun, yani her şeyi bildiğimi söyleyemem. Mesela o grubun arşivi bizim gelişim sürecimizdir aslında. Orda 2010-

2011de yazılan mailleri de okumak lazım bir de şimdi yazdıklarımızı okumak lazım, yani çok değişmişizdir. Yani hepimiz birçok üye, gençler özellikle. Belki o gün savunduğumuz şeyi bugün şiddetle eleştiriyoruz ya da o gün şiddetle eleştirdiğimiz şeyi bugün savunuyoruz. Ama bu hep gelişimle oldu, herkes birbirini eğitti burada hala da öyle.

179. Faruk: Hayalimiz vardı, grup büyürse bir şeyler yapsak diye. Hani bir şeylerden kastımız üniversitede mesela erişilebilirlikle alakalı sıkıntılarımız olurdu. Hocalarla alakalı problemler yaşardık. 2004 senesinde milli eğitim öğretmen atadı ve bu atamalarla alakalı zaman zaman medyaya da yansıyan sıkıntılar çıktı. Biz ne yapabiliriz bunlarla alakalı neler yapabiliriz acaba? Biz büyüyebiliriz aslında falan diye zaman zaman beyin fırtınası yapıyorduk. Hani Hz. Osman'ın da hadisi var ya; rabbim hayal kurdurduğu her şeyi nasip eder diye. Biz hayal kurduk ve nasip oldu.

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