SCHOOL VIOLENCE IN TURKEY
MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES IN MULTIPLE SETTINGS

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The purpose of this study was to explore views of teachers and parents regarding school violence in Turkey. The primary research question was What do teachers and parents know about school violence in Turkey? Secondary questions were as follows: What do teachers and parents say about school violence in Turkey? How do they describe it? What factors do teachers and parents identify as the primary causes of school violence in Turkey? Data were generated through semi-structured interviews and analyzed for emerging themes.

Findings revealed the following: (a) Although teachers and parents cited violence in schools as a problem, they trivialized it as innocent joking resulting from immaturity. (b) Participants identified families other than their own as the major cause of school violence, followed by media and environment. Cultural change and conflict were identified less frequently; neither has been addressed in the literature on violence in Turkish schools. (c) Participants stated that sexual violence had become a problem that is at least discussed in their schools, ending the unfortunate silence and shame previously endured by female victims. (d) Teachers and parents asserted that girl-on-girl psychological violence in Turkish schools causes harm more destructive than boy-on-boy physical fighting. No previous studies have focused on violence among Turkish females. (e) Teachers and parents described types of school violence differently, depending on the socioeconomic status (SES) of the school.
Implications for future research emerged from this study. (a) Because familial problems and parenting styles were identified as major factors in preventing or condoning school violence, future research should include families as participants. (b) Future researchers should also consider the role of cultural conflict in school violence. (c) They should examine the role of cultural change and degeneration. (d) Future researchers should address the frequency and level of sexual violence among students in Turkish schools. (e) Policy restrictions precluded students’ perspectives; however, their inclusion would enhance future studies. (f) In general, Turkish education literature would benefit from additional qualitative and quantitative studies to amass baseline data and develop theory to inform the development of policy on school violence in Turkey.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The concept of youth is not absolute. In fact, the definition of youth can differ from one society to the next, yet one truth remains constant: Youth are the future of any society. Parents, teachers, and other adult figures as well as the government often ignore members of the younger generation and their problems, especially in settings such as Turkey, where the society is rapidly developing (Burcu, 2003).

The Turkish people, for instance, must deal with rapid social change and the migration from rural to urban areas because of rural unemployment, lack of universal education, and specific economic problems, which may cause deviant behavior in youth, resulting in social problems for the whole community. An increase in deviant behavior among young people may negatively affect social relations, community, and the lives of young people themselves.

Social problems exist in every setting—urban, suburban, exurban, rural, or small town—and present deep complications for youth as they attempt to deal with the developmental tasks of childhood and adolescence (Phillips & Straussner, 1997). Some social problems, such as homelessness, poverty, unemployment, crime, drug abuse, language barriers, and discrimination, may be most common in urban and poor environments (Phillips & Straussner, 1997).

Other social problems, such as school violence, street violence, gang activity, disturbing the peace, and overcrowding in schools and homes, may increase with population density. The opportunities and obstacles that youth experience can be
understood within the context of migration, urbanization, discrimination, education, and employment.

Violence profoundly impacts all individuals, its impact on children particularly destructive (Phillips & Strausser, 1997). Garbarino (1978) states that all over the world, millions of children and adolescents grow up surrounded by violence, including shootings and stabbings on the street. Moreover, violence does not cease at the doors of schools or homes. Even when children try to relax in front of the television, they are exposed to images of violence. Thus, violence is everywhere and impossible to escape. The pervasiveness of violence creates an environment in which many young people feel the need to carry weapons for self-protection, thereby increasing the likelihood of involvement in further violence as victims or perpetrators.

Need for the Study

The issue of school violence is hardly a new phenomenon. In “Discipline in the Public Schools: A Problem of Perception?,” Williams (1979) traced the problem in the US to the 1950s, stating that during this decade “there seemed to be a marked increase in both the serious and less serious antisocial behavior on the part of our youth” (p. 385).

Many researchers and specialists around the world regard school violence as a major problem and have provided psychological, social, and educational explanations for it, including community violence, family composition, ethnicity, peer groups, and student age (Akiba, 2002; Coleman, 1966; Elliot, Hamburg, & Williams, 1998; Flannery, 2006). These explanations vary from one nation or community to another or even from one school to another within the same community. Because violence continues to escalate
among students worldwide and because it is a global problem, new studies on violence in different communities and cultures are especially important. Many studies have been done in America; however, outside the US very few cross-national studies and nation-specific studies exist. In particular, very few studies have been conducted on school violence in Turkey.

Furthermore, most studies on school violence around the world have been quantitative studies, which cannot effectively supply the details and nuances of the problem necessary for accurate understanding. In qualitative studies, thoughts, examples, and experiences can be interpreted to provide rich understanding.

In studying school violence, teachers and parents are perhaps the most important informants. According to Fisher and Kettle (2003), teachers have more experience and insight than anyone else in terms of what happens in school and how school systems function in a larger context; however, teachers often blame parents for school violence. Casella (2002) found that many school faculty and staff members see families and communities as the root sources of violence in schools. He claimed that the effects of poverty, “latch-key kids,” single-parent families, gangs, drugs, and dangerous neighborhoods spill over into schools. In a similar way, parents tend to blame teachers; therefore, it is necessary to look at both parents’ and teachers’ ideas to gain the complete view. Only Yerin-Güneri and Çakır (2003) and Hatipoğlu-Sümer and Çetinkaya (2004) have conducted studies in Turkey that included the interpretations of teachers and parents.
Regarding school violence in Turkey, fewer than 20 studies have been done in Turkish schools. More interesting is that many of the studies done in Turkey focused primarily on specific types of school violence. For example, Eke and Ögel (2006) and Alikasifoglu, Erginoz, Ercan, Uysal, & Albayrak-Kaymak (2007) reported the rates of school violence in Turkish schools, whereas Atamer-Akdaş (1998) and Alikasifoglu et al. (2006) studied sexual violence in Turkish schools. In addition, Batmaz and Aksoy (1995) and Ozmert (2002) investigated media violence and school violence.

Even though scholars and professionals have recently grown concerned with school violence as a major problem in Turkey, a developing country facing mounting problems, very few studies about it have been completed. The aim of this study was, therefore, to fill this relative void in the literature and fulfill the considerable need for further investigation into school violence.

First, a nation-specific study on school violence in Turkey is sorely needed. Second, few studies on school violence in Turkey have been conducted from a comprehensive perspective; previous studies focused on specific types of school violence. Third, qualitative studies are needed to develop a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. Fourth, a need exists to consider the thoughts and perspectives of teachers and parents in additional studies on school violence; therefore, the qualitative method and comprehensive perspective were used in this study of school violence in Turkey to zero in on teachers’ and parents’ knowledge of and attitude toward school violence.
The Purpose of the Study

Most of the international literature on school violence has focused directly on prevention programs and ways to reduce school violence (Akiba, 2002; Casella, 2002; Elliot et al., 1998; Flannery, 2006); however, knowing how teachers and parents define and approach the problem of school violence is essential in developing an effective prevention program, something that has been overlooked.

This study offered teachers’ and parents’ opportunities to express themselves on school violence, contributing first-hand perspectives that could assist in the development of successful prevention programs. The researcher examined how teacher and parent interviewees identified the prevalence and types of school violence that they witnessed or heard about. In addition, the researcher aimed to determine what parent and teacher informants saw as the underlying causes of school violence.

The current study was not intended to discover statistical realities and facts about school violence in Turkey. Instead, the goal was to identify and describe what teachers and parents thought, understood, and said about school violence as well as their interpretations and experiences. The researcher attempted to identify and describe school violence indirectly to gain insight from the multiple perspectives of teachers and parents and thereby to shed a more comprehensive light on school violence.

Research Questions

The primary research question was: What do teachers and parents know about school violence in Turkey? The following research questions were also posed: What do teachers and parents say about school violence in Turkey? How do they describe it? What
factors do teachers and parents identify as the primary causes of school violence in Turkey?

**Significance of the Study**

Because school violence is a recently recognized phenomenon in Turkey, it is not fully understood. Both qualitative and quantitative studies are needed to improve understanding of the problem before effective prevention programs can be designed. Unlike most previous investigators, this researcher opted to conduct a qualitative study on school violence, especially important and necessary because qualitative methods provide means whereby social contexts can be systematically examined as a whole, without breaking them into isolated, incomplete, and disconnected variables” (Hatch, 2002, p. 121).

Benefiting from the advantages of qualitative studies, this researcher generated data through semi-structured interviews, observational field notes, and document analysis. By analyzing the large amount of qualitative data, hopes are that study findings will improve both academicians’ and practitioners’ understanding of school violence as well as its contributing factors.

Furthermore, the researcher interviewed both teachers and parents as two important stakeholder groups in the field of school violence; they know the students better than anyone else. Teachers have valuable input about the violent school events that they have encountered in their careers; however, violence is a highly sensitive issue for many, making it a difficult issue to discuss. School administrators and teachers are likely to want to avoid the topic of violence in their schools because they worry about
their developing reputations for violence. They are often unwilling to cooperate with researchers studying this issue; therefore, to circumvent this problem, parents were also interviewed as the second target group of informants in this study. Interviewing both teachers and parents for this study revealed broadly what they know and think about violence in and around schools.

Including participants from the schools of different SES environments in the country is also important. Thus, this study was conducted in three different settings and environments. The three schools represent varying levels of public schools: a wealthy district, a district with a medium SES, and a poor district. The target group of the study was teachers and parents of sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students. Continued research beyond this study will be necessary to deliver a more in-depth understanding of the complexities of school violence; however, this study has at least contributed to the effort of providing policy makers with improved information to develop effective inquiries into school violence in specific settings.

**Limitations of the Study**

This dissertation is not without limitations. Although it has helped identify the impressions, ideas, and interpretations of teachers and parents at three schools in Ankara, it does not reflect an overall representation of school violence throughout Turkey. This study was a qualitative study and as such does not allow generalization of the results as do many quantitative studies. Because the study is based on qualitative findings, the results are limited by the interpretations of the researcher and her understanding of the
relevant literature or theoretical framework. Thus, the findings and results of the study depend on the quality of the researcher’s reading and interpreting of the data.

Moreover, qualitative studies allow data to be gathered from a small number of target groups. Thus, each participant in the study is very important for the researcher, who should encourage each one to participate in the study effectively. If the researcher cannot gather enough information from selected participants, the findings and results of the study are limited and unsatisfactory.

Furthermore, it was difficult to conduct a study in schools in Turkey. Most private schools do not allow researchers to conduct studies in their schools. In public schools, the process of receiving approval to study school violence is complicated. Although a student survey would be desirable, restrictions on data collection prohibit their inclusion.

Another limitation is the reluctance of interviewees to participate in and answer questions on school violence. Teachers in Turkey who participated in this study were unwilling to accept the reality of violence in their schools; likewise, parents were hesitant to speak at length about school administrators and teachers. Parents seemed to think that the researcher, a professional educator herself, may have been working with or may have planned to share findings with school administrators; so they did not speak openly about the realities of their school.

**Definitions of School Violence**

*Violence* was defined by Elliot et al. (1998) as “the threat or use of physical force with the intention of causing physical injury, damage, or intimidation of another person”
This study focused specifically on interpersonal forms of violence among students. Elliot et al. said that violence “includes shoving, punching, hitting, and throwing objects when the intent is to harm or intimidate another human being” (p. 29).

Hoang (2001) defined school violence as unacceptable social behavior ranging from aggression to violence that threatens or harms others; it surpasses highly publicized incidents of mass bloodshed to include acts such as bullying, threats, and extortion. Thus, school violence spans a broad range of antisocial behaviors that law enforcement officials must address.

School violence is a subset of youth violence, a broader public health problem. Youth violence refers to harmful behaviors that may start early and continue into young adulthood. It includes a variety of behaviors, such as bullying, slapping, punching, weapon use, and rape (Understanding, 2008). In this study the interviews covered all forms of violence mentioned, excluding unintentional injuries received as a result of hitting, slapping, and pushing, which are common among children and friends.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter opens with an assessment of school violence and its impact on students and schools. Focus then shifts to the causes and types of school violence and an examination of international literature on school violence. Furthermore, the chapter addresses the social context of Turkey to capture the broad view of school violence and closes with a review of the literature on violence in Turkish schools.

School Violence

Violence is a problem based in society, community, and school as well as a personal and interpersonal concern (Hoffman, 1996). In fact, violence is a term that refers to both a subset of behaviors (i.e., the act produces injuries) and the outcomes of those behaviors (i.e., the injuries themselves) (D. S. Elliot, Hamburg, & Williams, 1998). School violence refers to verbal or physical abuse (including the threat of or the actual use of guns, knives, and other weapons) perpetrated against school staff members, students, or others. It also includes vandalism and property crimes: taking someone’s belongings without their permission or by force (Hoffman, 1996).

School violence is committed against teachers, administrators, other staff members, or fellow classmates by students enrolled in the school. That violence is also committed by teachers and other staff is a fact; however, violence committed against students by teachers or school staff surpasses the limitations of this study but is not insignificant.
Students’ acts of violence may include stealing or extorting valuables or money, verbal abuse, intimidation, and physical assaults (Hoffman, 1996). Some examples of interpersonal violence in schools are verbal insults, threats to students and teachers, pushing, shoving, grabbing, slapping, kicking, biting or hitting someone with a fist, threatening someone with a knife or gun, using knives or firing guns, and stealing (Hoffman, 1996). Laub and Lauritsen (1998) stated, “Conventional wisdom holds that school violence is a reflection of violence in the broader social context; that is, violence is imported into a school by the students and by intruders from the neighborhood surrounding the school” (p. 127). Students carrying weapons to school, weapon-associated threats and assaults, robberies, and fights are occurring at high levels in U.S. schools (Elliot et al., 1998; Kingery, Coggeshall, & Alford, 1998).

The school is the typical setting for violent acts of victimization among younger adolescents (ages 12–15) and the second most common setting for violent acts among older teens (ages 16–19) (Simon, Crosby, & Dahlberg, 1999). School violence disrupts the school environment and results in the debilitation of personal development, which may lead to hopelessness and helplessness.

School should be a place where students, teachers, other staff members, and parents can feel safely dedicated to teaching and learning; however, school violence has become an important problem that needs to be addressed in many countries (Akiba, 2002). The increasing seriousness of school violence around the world has undermined both the reality and the perception of school as a safe place. Children fear for their
safety, and teachers and administrators have increasingly accepted the belief that they can
and should help children develop coping skills to deal with the pain and suffering of
violent environments (Hoffman, 1996).

Wessler and Preble (2003) identified the impact of school violence in terms of
fear, anger, loss of education, and loss of spirit. First, school violence can result in fear.
One common shortcoming that law enforcement officials, health care professionals, and
educators naturally share when working with victims of bias, prejudice, and harassment is
the failure to understand how the use of mere words can cause a variety of emotions,
ranging from mild anxiety to paralyzing terror. Most people have experience with words
that annoy, anger, embarrass, and shame them, but seldom can they fully understand the
intense fear that words of hatred generate; but girls, homosexuals, bisexuals and
transgender students, those with disabilities, and others understand this impact with
crystal clarity.

Second, school violence can result in anger. A tragic anger-based attack that
occurred in a San Diego-area school resulted in the killing of two and the wounding of
13. After this tragic attack, area residents learned from friends of Andy, the perpetrator
of the fatal attack, that he had been persistently picked on, teased, and verbally harassed.
Andy’s anxiety and fear eventually turned to anger (Wessler & Preble, 2003). Revenge
and further violence can result from verbal harassment.

Third, school violence can result in loss of education. Students targeted for
harassment, anxious and scared, angry and having lost their sense of spirit and joy, often
find themselves incapable of focusing on schoolwork. These students become less able to focus and pay attention, leading to lower grades and declining satisfaction with their academic experiences. Sadly, those who are the victims of harassment often drop out of school and lose the benefits of education entirely.

Finally, some harassed students suffer more than fear, anger, and denial; some lose their spirit, their sense of hope, and faith in the goodness of others. Such losses have long-lasting effects. Most of the students feel that the only way to end the harassment is to change into someone other than themselves. Many, however, cannot change and instead experience a deadening of their spirit (Wessler & Preble, 2003). It may also end with the loss of their lives. Some boys and girls and young men and women who are constantly harassed in their middle and high schools take their own lives. Even though the number of these suicides isn’t many, just one teenager who dies because he or she sees no escape from unremitting and unrelenting harassment is too many. In short, hate has the ability to grow from words to threats and finally to physical assault. Thus, words are part of the process of escalation from language to violence.

**Causes of School Violence**

Because the level of violence in schools has increased dramatically, a great deal of research has been dedicated to understanding the factors that contribute to the development of antisocial behavior in children (Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 1985). To provide substantive explanations for the causes and prevention of the problem, studies of school violence have generally focused on the mental health of youth who commit acts of
violence (Furlong & Morrison, 2000), the role of the family structure (Leone et al., 2000), the role of counselors or teachers (Riley, 2000), and the high level of exposure to violence (Flannery, Singer, & Wester, 2001).

According to Simon et al. (1999), school violence is associated with both individual and school-related characteristics, which have connections with the larger community. In other words, school violence has roots within the community (Furlong & Morrison, 2000) and is linked to changes within culture and society (Leone, Mayer, Malmgren, & Meisel, 2000).

The causes of violence are complicated and deeply rooted. The daily routines of child and adolescent development occur primarily within the specific contexts of neighborhood, family, school, and peer groups (Fagan & Wilkinson, 1998). The complex interaction among poverty, racism, drugs, alcohol, the loss of jobs and living wages, gangs, unrestricted supplies of guns, lack of personal opportunity and responsibility, family violence, and disinvestment in communities, schools, and after-school activities are believed to play a critical role in sustaining the culture of violence. Some children are, therefore, more at risk from violence than others.

Most of the studies done on school violence explain the strong link between neighborhood and family characteristics and violence. The factors influencing school violence are said to be related to the individual, family, and school, community, and the environment (Hatipoglu-Sumer & Cetinkaya, 2004; Yerin-Guner & Cakir, 2003).
Therefore, the following section of the study examines the contributing factors of school violence categorized as individual, school, family, and community factors.

**Individual Factors**

In the past, researchers of violence have been highly concerned with reasons that certain individuals are more inclined toward violence than others. Felson and Tedeschi (1995) described the decision-making process of the individual inclined toward violence, emphasizing four elements of the decision: (a) the expected value of the outcome, (b) the expectations for success in reaching goals, (c) the anticipated costs of the act (e.g., arrest, injury), and (d) the likelihood of the costs.

According to a recent U.S. survey, male students were more likely to engage in violence than female students. Tolan and Guerra (1994) addressed a concern about (a) violence caused by problems in psychological processes (i.e., emotional, behavioral, and cognitive dysfunction); (b) violence because of poor life skills, social competence, and conflict resolution capacity; and (c) psychopathological forms of violent behavior.

Hamburg (1998) argued that adolescence is a time of stressful development, marked by changes in both physical and social status. A developmental period characterized by physical stress, poor coping skills, and high vulnerability, it is an extended period, beginning with hormonal changes and ending with the transition to adult social roles or work (Fagan & Wilkinson, 1998). Thus, this is the time when young people feel overwhelmed and tense, leading them to argue and fight at the slightest provocation. Thus, adolescence is one factor influencing the occurrence of violence.
School Context

Researchers have suggested that much school-related violence is linked to competition for status and status-related confrontations among peers. The peers with whom a child associates may determine what behaviors he or she will model in the future. Other researchers have suggested that grouping students who are academically deficient with those who exhibit behavioral problems may promote delinquent peer groups. The choice of friends is often influenced by early exposure to violence, problematic family and internal controls, and aggressive behavior patterns developed earlier in childhood (D. S. Elliott, 1994). Association with gangs—a type of peer group that provides the functions of a more formal identity and feelings of membership for youth in disorganized neighborhoods—may also contribute strongly to interpersonal violence as gang activity models, encourages, and rewards violent, peer-influenced antisocial behavior (Hamburg, 1998).

D. S. Elliott et al. (1998) described the escalating violence in schools in terms of unfortunate teacher behaviors; lack of communication between students, school staff, and families; poor school organizational structures; lack of an atmosphere conducive to student and parent involvement; and lack of programs to meet the needs of students.

The school context itself exhibits a great deal of variation. Schools can be public or private or organized by grade and age of students (elementary vs. middle school, junior high vs. high school). Schools can also vary in mission (college preparatory vs. vocational) as well as location (urban vs. suburban vs. rural). One would expect these
school differences to be relevant to an understanding of school violence. For example, conflicting data have arisen about whether big city high schools have more serious problems with violence than big city junior high schools (D. S. Elliot et al., 1998). Although controversial, some have suggested that private city schools, particularly Catholic schools, are safer than public schools (Coleman & Hoffer, 1987). Gottfredson and Gottfredson (1985) also found that school resources, governance, and administration have independent influences on school violence as does community disorganization (Garbarino, 1978; Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, & Ousten, 1979).

Moreover, the school is itself a small community with its own norms and social structure, a complete social environment that affects children and youth similar to the family and local neighborhood. A significant portion of children’s lives is spent at school. In some instances, the school creates a normative climate that supports violence or contributes to its use as a means for resolving conflict. Much of what is learned and reinforced about violence and nonviolence at school does not come directly from the formal curriculum. It is learned, instead, through the informal social messages that reflect the organization of the school and the values and behavior of teachers, principals, staff, and students. Like any other learning in life, it occurs through observation and social experience. The social environment of the school can significantly affect the rates of violent behavior in the classroom, on school grounds, and even in the neighborhoods surrounding the school (D. S. Elliott et al., 1998).
Finally, the question of how the school context might influence an individual student’s involvement in interpersonal violence was investigated in a sophisticated multilevel analysis by Felson (1993). First, he related peer group culture to academic achievement and found that if students felt academic success to be very important in school, then they opposed the use of violence. Second, various dimensions of a school’s culture affected each student’s risk of violence, which was over and above the risk associated with the student’s own values about violence.

**Family Influence**

Family factors include the ability and availability of families to help their children deal with issues of violence. Poverty, multiple jobs, parental drug use, and limited emotional support and attention from parents sometimes lead young people to fill the void with attention from their peers (Corvo & Williams, 2000). Maguire and Pastore (1995) argued that lack of parental discipline and control and the breakdown in family structure as well as dysfunctional lifestyles exert major impact on child behavior. Parental supervision and involvement in school are very strong influences upon school children (Price & Everett, 1997).

Over the past two decades, reports of violence in both schools and homes have increased dramatically. The increase in both forms of violence has led to questions about their association. Particular interest has been placed upon whether being abused at home or witnessing violence in the home increases the likelihood that a child will be aggressive at school (Hoffman, 1996). Previous researchers have reported relatively convincing
evidence of greater aggression in physically abused children than in those not abused (Hoffman, 1996). A variety of psychological theorists have also predicted that witnessing violence between parents may increase children’s aggressiveness. Being raised in violent homes has been linked to various interpersonal, emotional, and cognitive deficits (Hoffman, 1996).

Hoffman (1996) argued that being raised in an environment of violence and abuse (emotional, sexual, and physical) has two consequences: (a) It can perpetuate a “cycle of violence,” and (b) it can lead to social psychological problems that can cause aggressive, antisocial, or violent behavior. Family violence creates a cycle of violence in which children raised in violent or abusive families become violent or abusive adults themselves.

Leone et al. (2000) argued that even though establishing a causal relationship between school violence and changes in family structure is difficult, the structural changes in both families and the social status of children are factors contributing to school violence (Leone et al., 2000). Dwyer, Osher, and Warger (1998) examined how families are involved in the education of children, noting that “effective schools need to include families and the entire community in the education of children and actively involve them in the planning, implementing and evaluating of violence prevention initiatives” (p. 14). According to Randolph, Kolbinsky, and Roberts (1996), a need exists for comprehensive examination of family functioning variables that may protect children and contribute to greater resilience in violent environments. Such variables include
maternal nurturance, informal and formal social support, positive maternal mental health, the presence of family rituals and routines, and the absence of conflictual partner relationships.

**Community Influences**

As the level of violence in society in general has risen sharply, the levels of violence in and around schools have also increased. The problem of violence in schools is known to reflect the violence occurring in the surrounding community. Evidence suggests that violence in schools derives mainly from factors external to schools but may be precipitated or aggravated by the school environment (D. S. Elliott et al., 1998).

In 1985, Gottfredson and Gottfredson's important analysis of data from the Safe School Study confirmed that neighborhood social disorganization in America correlates with the level of disorder and violence in schools. Specifically, they found that neighborhood and school characteristics correlate strongly with teacher self-reports of victimization but did not correlate strongly with students’ self-report of victimization.

Poverty and socioeconomic factors are especially important external contributors to crime and violence in American schools. Statistics indicate that most of the individuals committing crime and violence are from lower socioeconomic groups. Individuals from such communities are not in the mainstream of economic or social life in America and tend to be alienated from the American mainstream. In a community, members of opposing cultures may feel alienated from the larger mainstream culture. The feeling that the larger society does not respect members of their community and that
the lives of members of their community are viewed as shameful contributes to this sense of alienation (Hoffman, 1996).

In fact, Laub and Lauritsen (1998) drew two broad conclusions from studies that examined the causes of school violence. First, neighborhood conditions, such as high population turnover and loss, heterogeneity, poverty, and family structure are strong indicators of a neighborhood’s violent crime and general crime rates. The evidence suggested that disadvantaged communities are more likely to lack the social resources and informal networks for developing and maintaining local institutions and helping parents obtain the social capital essential to keep their children from violence and delinquency. Second, the strongest indicators of school violence rates are local neighborhood crime rates and direct measures of community disorganization. Students attending school bring the problems of the family and residential community with them. By this logic, school violence reflects the neighborhood context and the composition of the student body.

Moreover, members of gangs are more likely than those not in gangs to participate in acts of crime and violence. Gangs tend to operate as important socializing agents in their communities, recruiting from among young members of the community (Hoffman, 1996). The following subsections amplify additional community factors, including the influence of drugs, the availability of guns, and the role of media and television on school violence.
**Drugs and school shootings.** A strong relationship is believed to exist between increasing levels of violence and the acquisition and use of drugs and alcohol (Hamburg, 1998). Alcohol and drugs as well as gangs also contribute to school violence (D. S. Elliott et al, 1998). Nearly 6 million children between the ages of 6 and 18 in the United States take mind-alerting drugs prescribed for alleged mental illnesses, but few in the mental health community have been willing to talk about the possibility that the heavily prescribed drugs may be linked to violence (Hoffman, 1996). The following examples that show the connection between drugs and violence were drawn from the highly publicized shootings of 1998 and 1999. The first example is Shawn Cooper, a 15-year-old student taking Ritalin, who fired two shotgun rounds, barely missing students and school staff in 1999. Also in 1999, Eric Harris, an 18-year-old senior at Columbine High School in Boulder, Colorado, killed a dozen students and a teacher before taking his own life, while he was under the influence of Luvox.

**Availability of guns.** School violence is unquestionably linked to the easy availability of guns. Popular culture in many developed nations, such as Japan, is much more violent than that of the United States, but because Japan’s citizens have no easy access to guns, unlike in the United States, their murder rate is lower. The nature, extent, and devastation of violence are directly linked to the availability of weapons (Wenner, 2000): “Every man, woman, and child in the United States has easy access, day or night, to combat weapons and handguns” (Wenner, 2000, p. 71). Achieving a safer society is highly unlikely with the wide range of available guns, yet social disorder, not culture
itself, leads to shootings (Hoffman, 1996). In 1996, handguns were used to murder two people in New Zealand, 15 in Japan, 30 in Great Britain, 106 in Canada, 213 in Germany, and 9,390 in the United States (Hoffman, 1996, p. 71). By 2000 about 192 million firearms were privately owned in the United States, of which 7.5 million were handguns (Wenner, 2000, p. 73).

Media and TV. Although parents play a central role in influencing the lives of their children, television has a powerful effect on the development of unhealthy activities, negative attitudes, and antisocial behaviors. Television plays a dominant role, and television, music videos, movies, and video games can be particularly violent. Many children view hundreds of violent acts on television every day, which may facilitate the learning of aggressive and antisocial behavior. Although entertainment industry leaders have claimed that images portrayed in movies and television are not real, children believe that they are. Most of the research showing that exposure to media violence increases aggressive behavior in young people (Hoffman, 1996, p. 62).

Former U.S. Secretary of Education William J. Bennett argued the irrefutable link between violence in the media and violent behavior in children as countless studies have already determined. Television exposes children to more than 14,000 sexual situations per year (Hoffman, 1996, p. 69). Grapes (2000) asserted that society must not ignore the connection of violence in the media and violent behavior in young people.

Aggression, antisocial behavior, and violent activities are learned behaviors; therefore, studies have consistently linked television violence with aggressive behavior in
children. This negative effect is particularly evident in children from single-parent households and low socioeconomic groups; and young children are particularly vulnerable. Even though behaviors may not become problematic until adolescence or adulthood, they are often first manifested in school (Hoffman, 1996).

Also, television decreases participation in outdoor activities, community events, and sports, replacing leisure time activities with decreased creativity. For example, previous research showed that students in communities without television scored lower in aggressiveness than those in areas with television but quickly caught up to their peers within two years of the introduction of television (Hoffman, 1996).

Violence in the media has also been linked to the increase in school and community violence among young people. Constant exposure to media violence has been demonstrated to increase the aggressive attitudes and behavior of children and adolescents (Centerwall, 1994; Huston et al., 1992; National Institute of Mental Health, 1982). Frequent television watching “actively disturbs the process of superego formation” (Centerwall, 1994, p. 192) and increases the likelihood of a weak and poorly organized superego as well as greater susceptibility to acts and introjections of the violence on the screen. Moreover, heavy exposure to violence in the news increases children’s fears of being harmed, which increases the likelihood of carrying weapons for self-protection. And this, as discussed above, contributes to their further involvement in violence (National Institute of Mental Health, 1982).
Types of School Violence

Over the past 30 years, many physically and psychologically harmful behaviors have been considered as examples of school violence; but the concept of school violence has expanded to include physical and psychological harm and sexual harassment. At the time of this writing, the term included the following behaviors in varying degrees of severity and frequency: bullying, verbal threats, and intimidation (Batsche & Knoff, 1994; Olweus, 1993; Olweus, Limber, & Mihalic, 1999); relational victimization (Baldry & Winkel, 2003; Crick & Grotpeter, 1996); vandalism (Goldstein, 1996); school fighting (Kingery et al., 1998; Schafer & Smith, 1996); corporal punishment by staff (Benbenishty, Zeira, & Astor, 2002; Youssef, Attia, & Kamel, 1998); sexual harassment (Stein, 1995; Stein, Marshall, & Tropp, 1993); violence directed at school staff (Benbenishty et al., 2002); rape (Page, 1997); hate crimes directed toward students from specific ethnic or religious groups or gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender students (Berrill, 1990); and murder (Anderson et al., 2001; Hays, 1998).

In summary, physical violence, psychological violence, bullying, sexual violence, and gender violence are types of school violence. This study further addressed these issues at the international level to understand types of violence occurring in Turkish schools.

Physical Violence

Physical violence includes students’ physically harming other students or staff members. This consists of purposely grabbing or shoving, involvement in fistfights or
serious beating, kicking, punching, using weapons, and taking possessions from others by force, among others.

The Metropolitan Life Insurance Company sponsored research that indicated most students cited stealing, pushing, shoving, grabbing, slapping, kicking, biting, hitting someone with a fist, threatening others with a knife, firing guns, and using knives as major problems in their schools; others identified verbal insults and threats as major problems in their schools (Harris & Associates, 1993). Asked about types of school violence, the largest group of respondents said that physical violence is a major problem in schools. Perhaps because its impact is more visible, physical violence appears to be more significant and more prevalent than nonphysical violence; however, research has indicated that the more subtle nonphysical violence, including name-calling, threats, and harassment, has as much or sometimes more impact on the victim as physical violence in that it damages the victim’s self-esteem (Sonkin, 2003).

Fighting, kicking, and slapping among students appear to be fairly common. Studies by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suggest that about one half of all high school students have been involved in a physical fight with a much smaller proportion reporting fighting on school property. Thus, studies that show low rates of physical violence in schools may not provide accurate rates of physical fights or attacks within schools. For example, the Principal/ School Disciplinarian Survey on School Violence conducted by the U.S. Department of Education (1997) indicated that the percentage of physical attacks or fights in which no weapon was used during 1996–1997
reported by students was lower than vandalism and theft. In short, students may not report physical violence, such as fights, hitting, and slapping, simply because they are involved in these kinds of attacks most frequently. Even though physical violence without weapons, such as small fights, hitting, and slapping, among students is common and does not result in serious harm, these may lead to more harmful violent events.

Rates of physical violence change according to ages of students. Krumm and his colleagues (1997) as cited by Smith (2003) claimed that prevalence rates of physical violence differed depending on a pupil’s age. As a result of the study, students 12 to 14 were shown to be more involved in physical violence than students 17 to 18.

**Psychological Violence**

Psychological violence is divided into two categories: threats and verbal–social. Threats usually include harmful coercion, intimidating looks, and blackmail for money, valuables, or food. Verbal–social violence includes cursing, mocking, insulting, humiliating, and ostracizing.

Wessler and Preble (2003) stated that the emotional impact of both misdemeanor assaults and threats and noncriminal verbal harassment can be devastating to children as shown by the impact of serious violent crimes that have occurred in U.S. schools. Prejudicial language, degrading comments, slurs, and unkind and offensive jokes have the power to create even more damage. Some children cannot envision living in a world without the oppressive weight of verbal harassment.
Disparaging words are destructive for two reasons: They create a climate where words can escalate to violence, and they create debilitating emotional trauma for the boys and girls who are targeted (Wessler & Preble, 2003). Widespread, slurs and put-downs are a powerful force for creating incivility, disrespect, and violence. Verbal harassment leads to stronger and more focused harassment, which leads to threats and possibly violence. Verbal harassment based on physical appearance, sexual orientation, academic ability, physical and mental disability, socioeconomic status, gender, religion, race, and ethnicity are pervasive (Wessler & Preble, 2003).

Although many students do not use degrading language and slurs, every student in the US hears these words many times a day on the school bus, in the hallways, in the cafeteria, in locker rooms, and on the front steps of the school itself. The most frequent use of slurs, put-downs, and degrading language comes from students who have no intent to hurt or wound anyone else. A small number of students use denigrating language in a purposeful way to hurt or wound a particular target. Preble’s (1984) work in a New Hampshire school showed that the vast majority of students there experienced or observed routine verbal harassment for the ways they or other students looked and dressed.

Wessler and Preble (2003) claimed that students learn degrading words and slurs from at least three sources: their parents, popular culture, and other young people. Students are bombarded with what eventually becomes background noise of degradation and put-downs, which occurs in school or on the school bus. For children who cannot
face constant harassment, the emotional and physical impact is intense and damaging. Indeed, some children are so seriously affected by verbal harassment that they lose their ability to play, learn, and enjoy life. Generally, the victims of violent hate crimes—people who continue to suffer from significant physical ailments days, weeks, and even months after a violent attack—do not want to talk about their broken bones; they want to talk only about the words that were used against them (Wessler & Preble, 2003).

Sexual Violence

Sexual violence includes sending obscene letters, touching, trying to touch, pinching in a sexual way without someone’s approval, making sexual comments, kissing someone without consent, writing sexually insulting things about someone on walls, spreading sexual rumors about someone, trying to take off someone’s clothes for sexual reasons, and voyeurism while someone is in the bathroom or locker room (Leach & Mitchell, 2006) and in the cyber realm, such as on social network pages.

In Turkey, a community-based study investigating childhood sexual abuse among university students was done by Atamer-Akdas in 1998. Alikasifoglu et al. (2006) studied sexual abuse in Istanbul, Turkey; however, these studies are insufficient to understand sexual violence.

Thus, researchers have little empirical data regarding cultural or cross-cultural occurrence rates of sexual harassment in schools; however, the general types of sexual harassment in the literature (Alikasifoglu et al., 2006; Atamer-Akdas, 1998; Leach & Mitchell, 2006) are often described as having a set of common goals, which include
humiliating, intimidating, establishing dominance and hierarchy, and victimizing students based on their gender and by sexual means on both psychological and physical levels. Sexual harassment can vary in severity from name-calling and teasing to sexual assault. Experts have generally agreed that excessively constant and inappropriate attempts by perpetrators to engage in sexual experiences with other students should be labeled as sexual harassment.

According to Leach and Mitchell (2006), school-based gender violence is a global issue that has remained largely unexplored despite several international commitments to promote education for girls. Failing to bridge the gap between development priorities and human rights’ principles and ignoring the costs and results of school-based gender violence indicate the global failure of achieving gender equality in education.

Some researchers have reported extremely high levels of sexual harassment and abuse. One study by Rosetti (2001) showed that over 50% of students reported being sexually harassed by teachers in Botswana. Other studies report much lower figures; for example, in Ghana, over 15% of students said they had been a victim of sexual abuse at school, according to Brown (2002).

Sexual harassment is gendered violence perpetrated against both girls and boys. It is useful to distinguish the explicit and implicit forms of gender violence in schools:

Explicit gender violence is overtly sexual in nature and may involve aggressive or unsolicited sexual advances, other forms of sexual harassment, which include touching, pinching, groping, and verbal abuse—such as in English “prostitute,” “slag,” “gay”—and
acts of intimidation, assault, forced sex, and rape. Implicit or symbolic gender violence covers actions which are less visibly and directly gendered, and emanate from everyday school practices which reinforce gender differentiation. These practices may be in themselves violent, like corporal punishment, or they may indirectly encourage violent acts. (Leach & Mitchell, 2006, pp. 25–26)

**Gender Violence**

The subdivisions of gender violence include homophobic harassment, heterosexual harassment, and girl-on-girl violence, bullying, and cyber-bullying. These types of gender violence are discussed in the next section.

**Homophobic harassment.** Any sort of behavior that reinforces negative attitudes towards gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people can be considered harassment. The most common form is verbal, and it includes the use of antigay language, for example, “That’s so gay,” (in Turkish “Cok homoseksuel’’); “Don’t be such a fag” (in Turkish “Oyle nonos gibi davranma”); and antigay jokes and behaviors that make fun of gays and lesbians, such as imitating the speech and walk of a stereotypically effeminate gay man to get a laugh (Leach & Mitchell, 2006).

**Heterosexual harassment.** Verbal harassment is the most common form of sexual harassment reported by students. Male students often assert their masculinity by degrading their female peers with terms such as *bitch, baby, chick,* and *broad* (Larkin, 1994). Males also attempt to enhance their masculinity by sexually objectifying their female peers and discussing the sexual acts they would like to engage in or have already
engaged in with them (Duncan, 1999; Larkin, 1994). Acknowledging that men can be
victims of sexual harassment, too, is very important. It comes mostly from other men and
frequently from homophobic men. Sexual harassment describes how patriarchy works,
how men continue to assert their power over women (Leach & Mitchell, 2006).

**Girl-on-girl violence.** Recent research by feminists from outside the field of
bullying has shown that females have a long history of violence against one another
(Chesney-Lind & Shelden, 2004). Two distinct categories of targets for girl-on-girl
violence have been noted. The first is depicted as what a popular girl should not be (fat,
lesbian, disabled, unattractive, unfashionable, and friendless). One victim was Laura
Rhodes (“The Loneliness,” 2004) in England, who was tormented for supposedly being a
lesbian and who eventually carried out a suicide pact with a friend. The second category
is the traitor, a popular or potentially popular girl who has somehow transgressed the
controlling clique’s codes, perhaps by becoming too popular herself as did Hayley
Yarwood, who was “humiliated and beaten by two other girls” for being beautiful and

**Bullying.** Over the last 20 years awareness of school bullying has grown in many
countries. Olweus (1993), Banks (1997), and Fitzgerald (1999) suggested that bullying
in schools is a worldwide problem that can have negative effects on the general school
climate and the rights students have to learn in a safe environment without fear. In
Johnson, Munn, and Edwards’ study (cited in M. Elliot, 1997), bullying is described as
involving the conscious desire to hurt, threaten, or frighten someone else or involving the
use of aggression with the intent to hurt another person. The primary characteristic of bullies is the need to feel powerful and in control. They seem to derive satisfaction from imposing injury and suffering upon others (Banks, 1997; M. Elliot, 1998), have little sympathy for their victims (Fitzgerald, 1999; Olweus et al., 1999), and defend their actions by saying that their victims provoked them in some way (Banks, 1997; M. Elliot, 1998). Stephenson and Smith (1989) pointed out that bullies and victims are the least popular in their peer groups, are easily provoked, and provoke others. Studies also indicate that victims rarely defend themselves or react when confronted by bullies. Victims tend to be close to their parents, are quiet, and may have parents who can be described as overprotective (Olweus, 1993; M. Elliot, 1997).

Clearly, many lifelong negative consequences result from bullying, which has been defined in a number of ways. Olweus et al. (1999) stated that “a student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed repeatedly and over time to negative actions on the part of one or more other students” (p. 245). In addition, M. Elliot (1998) pointed out that bullying makes victims miserable, threatens them, and causes them to feel frightened and unhappy, especially if they have no way to combat the bully.

Some studies have shown that bullying is a common problem worldwide. Salmivalli, Lagerspetz, Björkqvist, Kaukiainen, and Osterman (1996) studied bullying in Europe and found that in cases of general bullying, 30% of bystanders supported perpetrators and that bystander participation increased as the bullying persists. Another study done in America by Chu (2005) showed that over 15% of school students confessed
to online bullying. A well-known survey in Russia, conducted in 2000–2001 in schools of the Murmansk Region (D’yachenko, 2002), clearly revealed that the number of girls bullied by boys was two to three times higher than the proportion of boys bullied by boys. These studies have shown that bullying is prevalent in schools around the world.

Cyber-bullying. Cyber-bullying is a dangerous and covert form of rising social cruelty among adolescents. Cyber-space has magnified the harmful psychological effects of bullying among classmates to include an infinite audience that preys on victims through online harassment and abuse. Its weapons include electronic mediums, such as cell phones, blogs, websites, online chat rooms, MUD rooms (multiuser domains), where individuals take on different personas; furthermore, Xangas are online personal profiles, where adolescents create lists of people they dislike (Leach & Mitchell, 2006).

According to Leach and Mitchell (2006), cyber-bullying is one form of cyber-violence, a term used to define a range of unacceptable and violent online behaviors. Other forms of cyber-bullying include but are not limited to flaming (angry, rude, and vulgar messages about a person sent to an online group via email or text messaging); online harassment (repeated offensive messages via email, chat rooms, or blogs); websites designed to harass specific students; defamation (harmful, untrue, or cruel statements or photos about a person, or people, sent or posted online); cyber-stalking (harassment that includes threats of harm or excessive intimidation); masquerading (pretending to be someone else online and sending or posting material that that casts
individual in a bad light); and exclusion (cruelly excluding, ostracizing, shunning, barring, or ignoring someone from an online group).

At the same time, Barack (2005) identified online sexual harassment as offensive nicknames and online remarks, gender-humiliating comments, offensive nicknames and online identities, unwanted pornographic content and pop-up windows, uninvited communication of sexual desires or intentions, and sexual coercion. The psychological effects of cyber-bullying on victims are very real. Glaser and Kahn (2005) observed that online misogynistic comments, unwanted sexual harassment, and coercion were rated as more threatening than face-to-face threats or harassment.

**School Violence on an International Scale**

School violence is a problem in many nations. Worries about school violence appear to increase throughout the world each day. This issue is not limited only to the US and Europe but can be seen in other nations as well. Although many people, Americans and non-Americans alike, perceive U.S. schools as the most violent in the world, many other nations face very similar problems. Akiba (2002) reported the example of Japan, where increasing incidents of school violence followed by a student murder in Kobe in the late 1990s shocked the Japanese. Thus, school violence is also a major concern for Japanese parents, teachers, and students.

School violence worldwide is a major problem for many nations and one to which policymakers around the globe pay serious attention. Little is known about school
violence on an international scale because most of the literature reviews and studies on school violence have been done in the United States.

In one rare cross-national study, Akiba (2002) examined school violence in 37 nations. According to the study, among the 37 nations large percentages of students either worried about being victims of violence or perceived that peers were the victims of violence. In more than half of the nations, more than one in four students reported fears of violence in school. Akiba (2002) also looked at school violence from the perspective of teachers. The study showed that in most nations more than four in 10 teachers thought that their teaching was quite limited by disruption. Thus, both teachers and students, the world over, see school violence affecting their lives. Akiba (2002) found that school violence is widely prevalent among the 37 nations studied. In sum, school violence is a major problem affecting the learning environments of students worldwide; however, not only are the students greatly affected by school violence, but a significant number of teachers are as well.

Few studies have addressed the possibility that school violence may vary in different societies and educational systems. A need exists for both cross-national and country-specific studies to improve understanding of school violence in particular countries. Cross-national and country-specific studies should be informed and shaped by the social context of and local studies in that country.
Social Context of Turkey

Teachers and parents cannot be removed from the social context of Turkey; thus, their identification of school violence is assumed to be highly affected by social context. Any analysis or comment without considering this would be limited or inadequate. In addition, four dimensions (gender, income, education, and ethnicity) of social context constitute the causes of school violence as the literature has suggested. Thus, this part of the study focuses on social conditions of Turkey as a conceptual framework, addressing inequalities in gender, ethnicity, income, gecekondu (squatter settlements), education, and school violence in Turkey.

Gender

Society not only requires conformity of its fundamental values and norms, but it also assigns specific roles to each of its members. Socialization is forceful with regard to gender roles, which are ideas about the ways boys and girls and men and women are “supposed” to behave. These socialization norms create discrimination and inequality between men and women and thus are an indicator of aggression, hate, and violence. Gender inequality results in fights, aggression, and envy. In this respect, gender conditions and inequalities in Turkey should be discussed before studying school violence in Turkish schools.

In Kagitcibasi’s (1986) study on cross-cultural issues, the lowest values of women’s decision making and interspousal communications were obtained in Turkey as was the lowest degree of role sharing. Turkish women have the lowest scores regarding
efficacy, whereas American women have the highest; but women’s professional
participation in Turkey is notably high. For example, in 1970, the percentage of women
physicians among all the physicians was 14% in Turkey as compared to 10% in the
United States (Kagitcibasi, 1986, p. 15).

**Ethnicity**

In addition to gender inequalities, ethnic issues also exist in Turkey as they do in
many societies. Disagreements, fights, and violence occur because of inequalities and
discrimination resulting from ethnic differences. Vast differences and inequalities exist
between the western and eastern regions of Turkey. Southeastern Turkey is home
primarily to Kurds but also to ethnic Arabs and Turks. Mosques and a smaller number of
Syrian Orthodox Christian churches are interspersed throughout the region, the latter
prevalent around Mardin and Midyat. Estimates of the total number of Kurds in Turkey,
based on mother tongue, range between 12 and 20% of the total Turkish population
(Bruinessen, 1998; Gunduz-Hosgor & Smits, 2002; Mutlu, 1996).

Traveling from western Turkey to the eastern provinces is like going to a different
country that is poorer, where social contradictions are starker. Bruinessen (1984) noted
that many subsistence farmers in the eastern provinces still live in semifeudal bondage,
and tribal loyalties remain strong. In addition, traditional concepts of honor find
expression in violent conflicts. Thus, this part of the current study focuses on Kurdish
ethnicity in Turkey and the related conflicts, which cause much violence in the society.
The Kurdish conflict in Turkey primarily involves the Turkish state and Kurdish nationalists and entails significant regional and socioeconomic dimensions (Gunes-Ayata & Ayata, 2002). Kurds are quite assertive in terms of their Kurdish identity. M. J. Patton (2003) claimed that Kurds support policies to promote the cultural dimensions of that identity. They hope to be integrated into the Turkish body politic while preserving their Kurdish cultural identity. Kurds in Turkey have been granted rights on paper but not in practice; these include the right to broadcast in Kurdish and to offer private language courses in Kurdish; however, the Turkish government opposes the establishment of anything akin to the independent Kurdish state in northern Iraq.

The Turkish government first and foremost has focused on Kurdish resistance and terrorism. Possibly, the Kurdish situation has become the main source of political and economic instability in Turkey and poses the most troubling challenge to its very future. The Turkish economy has been significantly affected by terrorism because a good portion of its budget has been spent combating terrorism; therefore, socioeconomic problems such as violence in schools have not been a priority for the Turkish government.

**Income**

Inequalities in income in Turkey constitute the third dimension in the causes of violence and aggression. When people talk about inequality, they include the unequal distributions of opportunities, talents, earnings, income, wealth, consumption, leisure, bequests, luck, and so on. Díaz-Giménez, Quadrini, and Rios-Rull (1997) argued that
the dimensions of inequality, which are perhaps the most studied but the most easily confused, are earnings, income, and wealth.

Turkey has faced severe problems of social inequality along with positive growth rates; therefore, dealing with rising concerns about more people living without jobs has become increasingly difficult politically while wealthier classes acquire a larger portion of the national income. Income differences among social classes have grown in Turkey as well as worldwide. In 2005, Turkey’s richest families made 10,500 TL in monthly income (approximately $6,360), while the poorest families survived on 150 TL (approximately $80) (Cekic, 2006). Almost half of Turkey’s population belongs to the low-income category ($200 to $350 per month), but their share of the national income is only 32.5%.

Looking at different regions reveals an enormous gap between the income levels of the west-coastal and east-inland regions (Cekic, 2006). This substantial regional gap is a persistent problem in the Turkish economy. Several studies that addressed this issue showed no union between the regions in Turkey (Dogruel & Dogruel, 2003; Senesen, 2003), especially between east and west (Gezici & Hewings, 2004).

**Gecekondu (Squatter Settlements)**

Since the 1950s, a growing birth rate and declining death rate have rapidly increased the population of many countries (Lightfood & Tas, 2005). Coinciding with these population changes has been the migration of rural inhabitants to the cities of developing countries in Asia, Africa, and South America. Lightfood and Tas (2005)
suggested that rural migrants in developing countries have typically settled in the outskirts of large city centers in houses illegally built on private or public municipal land around most cities.

These uncontrolled settlements, called squatter or shanty towns (or in Turkey’s case, “gecekondu”), have increased noticeably since the 1950s. Karpat (1976) enumerated the more negative features of gecekondu, citing them as a source of poverty, rundown housing, crowded constriction of lower-class people, high rate of crime and divorce, violence and alienation, isolation, strife with the conventional world, detachment from the city people, literacy, family disintegration, loss of identity, child neglect, sexual indecency, racial discrimination, gangsterism, hatred of police, and later, urban guerillas. (p. 110)

Lightfood and Tas (2005) cited pull factors influencing migration: the social and physical attraction of the cities, industrialization of the urban areas, employment and higher income opportunities, educational, cultural and health services provided in urban areas, and occupational opportunities for migrants and their children. Push factors were economic, social, political, and educational in nature. People have departed rural areas because of economic hardship, poverty, and sometimes the poor condition of arable land and because of seasonal unemployment, low income, and the lack of cultural and educational facilities. These developments eliminated marginal farms and reduced the motivation for people to stay in villages (Dicle, 1983; Karpat, 1976).
Gecekondu settlements are crowded and retain strong ties with the village. In many ways, the cultural values inherited from the village clash with modern city life. City people generally think that gecekondu migrants do not obey traffic rules nor do they care about environmental degradation.

Poverty and social inequality is a persistent problem worldwide because all countries experience levels of poverty and social inequality. When inequality exists in a society, people who are treated unequally often carry anger against others who are rich or in good situations. With inequality, disorganization and conflict may occur, which result in anger and violence.

Furthermore, differences in cultural values may cause misunderstandings and disagreements that may create aggression and violence. Thus, in gecekondu settlements people who came from different settings and cultures may not get along, and violence may erupt. Eventually, violence in a community spreads to area schools.

**Education**

Seeking to gain a competitive edge in the global economy, countries everywhere have turned to education. Educational inequality in a society means that children have unequal access to primary, secondary, and even postsecondary education. If children cannot obtain adequate education, they may cause problems for their society. Lewis (2007) asserted, “Investment in human capital as a connection of economic development is a well-grounded idea” (p. 76). Societies must invest in their children; otherwise, problematic members may cause conflict and violence. Thus, schools can contribute to
constructing a well-organized and safe society. In this respect, I will provide a description of the education system in Turkey to create a better understanding of the school violence issue.

The establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923 transformed the Turkish political regime from a monarchy to a republic. In 1924, the Ministry of National Education took control of all schools and was given the task of implementing a contemporary mode of educational training for Turkish citizens by opening primary and secondary schools and other institutions and arranging courses within the framework of educational policies. In accordance with the National Education Principle Law No. 1739, the Turkish National Education System consists of two main parts: formal education and nonformal education. Formal education is provided by the government and is free in public schools, but private schools exist at all levels. Primary schools provide five years of training; middle schools, three years. Until 1997, primary school had been the only compulsory education. In August 1997, with the addition of compulsory middle school, education was extended from five to eight years. Nonformal education covers the education training system that provides occupational opportunities to citizens with no formal education, any level of formal education, including incomplete formal education.

During the first decade of the Republic, enrollment increased 43% in primary schools, 359% in junior high schools, 360% in high schools, and 44% in higher education institutions. Since then, systematically improving and modernizing Turkey’s educational system has been a formal policy of the state. By the end of the 1990s, enrollment in all
educational institutions had noticeably improved compared to earlier periods (Sari & Soytas, 2006). Despite compulsory primary schooling, however, Turkey has a high rate of youth illiteracy. In 1990, illiteracy among 15- to 19-year-olds was 9.4% in Turkey, compared to 0.7% in Portugal and 1% in Spain (UNESCO, 1991).

Tansel (2002) argued that although high enrollment levels have been achieved at the primary level for both boys and girls in much of Turkey, significant regional differences remain. This is because most families do not send kids to middle school in spite of the law. Furthermore, enrollment rates at the middle and high school levels continue to be low, and significant gender differences are an issue.

Tansel (2002) claimed that various factors affecting school attainment, the most constant of which are parents’ education and household income. The strong effect of parents’ education may indicate less intergenerational and socioeconomic mobility. Fathers’ self-employment had the predictable negative effect on the probability of schooling at the middle and high school levels, suggesting that work at the family farm or family business was an alternative to schooling. Schooling attainment of both boys and girls was higher in urban locations in 1900s.

Most children in poverty have limited opportunities for education. Approximately 10% of primary school-aged children were excluded from the primary education system in 2005. Still, the gender gap in primary to secondary education was 7% in Turkey, and fewer girls than boys enrolled in the education system in both primary and secondary
schools. A significant gender gap persists in both attendance and enrollment (Cekic, 2006).

Children not attending school may cause problems for schools and other children. Some children may have trouble adapting to the culture of school and school order because their parents did not go to school and do not know the culture and order of school. First-generation students may have problems with attendance and rules. This literature review has shown that inequalities in school attainment and other aspects of the educational system may cause violence and problems in schools. Thus, the Turkish people should make every effort to ensure that all children attend school.

Students who drop out of school or who do not attend school regularly may be involved in fights, violence, and drug use more frequently because they are not disciplined and monitored. These students are the most at risk. Thus, alternative learning approaches that provide employment opportunities, particularly vocational education, should be offered to students to prevent them from dropping out of primary education.

In addition, Tansel (2002) suggested that income growth, increased parents’ education, and urbanization with the accompanying improvement in the availability of schools and industrialization will contribute to increased schooling for children (possibly more girls than boys). These factors must be considered when planning to meet the demands for educating the youth of the country, who constitute about one third of 70 million people in Turkey.
School Violence in Turkey

This section reviews the literature that addresses the social context of Turkey and its relationship to school violence there. School violence is not a new phenomenon, but it is newly recognized; thus, few studies have been conducted on school violence in Turkey, and the ones that have been carried out were completed within the past 10 years. Some have focused on bullying and the impact of media violence on school violence, but little has been written on the definitions and causes of school violence. In only one were teachers and parents interviewed to understand what they know and how they approach the problem of violence in and around schools. In addition, most researchers used quantitative rather than qualitative methods. Nevertheless, school violence is now recognized and on the agenda of media.

School violence or violence among youth has been recently discussed in the media often, creating a new discussion as school violence has reached a worrisome level. In fact, teachers have reported that they do not feel safe in their schools. Increases in school violence have necessitated research to define school violence and identify reasons for and rates of school violence in Turkey, yet few studies on school violence are adequate in terms of explaining why school violence has rapidly increased or what has caused schools to be unsafe so quickly.

What are the rates of school violence in Turkey? Why is violence among youth growing so rapidly in Turkey? What has been done about this problem and what remains to be done? With regard to child victimization rates in Turkey, on December 31, 2006,
youth detention facilities housed 2,115 children under 18. Three months later, on March 31, 2007, this number reached 2,637; in other words in a three-month period, an increase of over 500 occurred, a rapid increase of almost 200% in some provinces, such as Izmir, Aydin, Balikesir, Bursa, Manisa, and Antalya (Bahar, 2006).

In a 2006 study of 3,483 high school students, Eke and Ögel found that 26% reported having injured someone in a fight; 15.4% had themselves been injured in a fight; 9.8% reported having carried a gun at least once in their lives; and 22.4% reported carrying a knife. In a study of 1,720 inner-city public high school students, Alikasifoglu et al. (2007), found that 42% reported having been in a physical fight within the last 12 months; 8% of female and 28% of male students had been in a fight with a friend; 7.5% had been bullied with a weapon on school grounds; and 8% had carried a weapon to school. These statistics show that school violence is prevalent in Turkish schools.

Yerin-Güneri and Cakir (2003) examined the perceptions of middle school and high school counselors in low-income areas in Ankara and found that counselors defined violence mostly in physical terms but also in terms of damage to school property. According to the same study, factors contributing to school violence perceived by participants were individual-, family-, school-, or community-based. In a study by Yerin-Güneri et al. (2006), students defined school violence as “physical violence, such as hitting, fighting, beating, threatening with a knife, grabbing, pushing, punching and shoving, as well as cruel teasing, using harsh language, verbal intimidation, verbal threats and intimidating looks” (p. 12). In this study, teachers and school counselors also pointed
out the existence of both physical and verbal violence at school. Teachers defined physical violence as “an act performed in order to physically hurt another person,” and verbal violence as “behavior conducted in order to intentionally hurt another person emotionally” (Yerin-Güneri et al., 2006, p. 15).

In a qualitative study Hatipoglu-Sumer and Cetinkaya (2004) found that high school students, teachers, and parents categorized school violence as verbal, physical, or emotional and factors of school violence as individual-, family-, school- or community-related. Factors contributing to school violence, according to Yerin-Güneri et al. (2006), on the individual level included gender, lack of effective problem-solving and communication skills, low self-esteem and lack of self-confidence, unpopularity, physical strength, depression, lack of purpose in life, inability to transfer energy to other activities, and impulsiveness. On the family level, contributing factors included violence at home, parental apathy, negligence, and parental support of aggressive behavior. At the community level, factors included increased violence and aggression in society and desensitization to violence in the community. Contributing factors at the school level comprised vague, unfairly applied, and inconsistent disciplinary rules and low achievement. And, finally, at the media level, factors included Internet and video and computer games.

Both vandalism and bullying have been a part of an informal conversation about school violence in Turkey (Ogulmus, 1995). The discussion of school bullying has been generally considered within the broader framework of student violence. According to
Kepenekci and Cinkir (2006), the phenomenon of bullying has not been treated as a major issue in Turkish schools, and no studies prior to theirs examined this phenomenon. In recent years, growing attention has been given by the Ministry of National Education (MONE) and media to school-based crimes like bullying and others, such as carrying guns and knives, shooting teachers, and attacking and threatening other students both inside and outside the schools.

In a symposium on the prevention of violence against children and youth held in Istanbul in 2006, Bahar stated that bullying and vandalism are common in Turkish schools. Bullies frighten other students and threaten their safety and freedom. Bullying and vandalism are words that denote physical attacks, derision, name-calling, and sending unwanted messages (Piskin, 2002). Ogulmus (1995) suggested that vandalism denotes attacks on public property, buildings, and other people’s belongings.

As a result of Kepenekci and Cinkir’s (2006) study, all respondents had faced one or more of the common types of bullying, including pushing, name-calling, humiliating, and sexual assault. The study showed that the majority of bullies were boys. Generally, students are bullied verbally and physically. According to the findings of the study, students are bullied mostly in classrooms, school corridors, and playgrounds. Another important finding is that students tend to protect themselves instead of telling a teacher or anyone at home about being bullied. Similarly, with regard to sexual harassment in Turkey, girls have difficulty telling their parents what happened to them. Sexual
harassment problems are usually unreported to school administration or parents because of shame and fear of punishment.

Although the prevalence of sexual abuse has been studied in many countries, in Turkey a scarcity of both hospital- and community-based studies in this field remains an issue. Various pediatric, forensic, psychiatric, and clinical case studies and only one community-based study have been carried out in recent years (Tirtil-Taskiranoglu, 2001; Tutkun et al., 1998). The majority of sexual abuse cases are unreported to child protective services because of the culture of Turkey: Reporting is believed to ruin the victim’s reputation, especially if the victim is female. Thus, victims, especially females, do not talk about incidents and prefer to keep the abuse secret. In some parts of the country, sexual abuse can even lead to homicide; the victim or the perpetrator or both may be killed. Forensic data does not reflect the prevalence of childhood sexual abuse accurately.

A few studies like the one noted above have been conducted in Turkey. According to a community-based study investigating childhood sexual abuse among university students, 44.5% of 302 female subjects reported at least one sexual abuse experience before the age of 18; 93% of the girls were abused before age 12, and 98% of the girls were abused between 13 and 18, reporting a male as the perpetrator. Girls abused before the age of 12 reported the perpetrator to be a stranger in 41% of cases and a family member (including relatives) in 32%. For girls abused between the ages of 13 and 18, the corresponding figures for strangers and family members were 61% and 2%,
respectively (Atamer-Akdas, 1998). Alikasifoglu et al. (2006) studied sexual abuse in schools of Istanbul, Turkey. They included 4,153 high school students, of whom 1,955 were female, and of those 13.4% reported sexual abuse. Most of the perpetrators were males, and 50% of them were strangers.

For years, researchers have studied the effects of television viewing, with the effects of television violence of primary concern. Television violence is as prevalent in Turkish programming as in countries all over the world (Batmaz & Aksoy, 1995). Although some studies reported the opposite, most researchers have agreed that television violence causes aggressive behavior. It is not easy to perform a study that explains the causal relationship between television violence and aggression, but the evidence gathered thus far suggests that a relationship exists in some way (Paik & Comstock, 1994).

Ozmert (2002) studied the association between time spent watching television and child behavior. Two primary schools were selected randomly: one in a district with a low SES and the other in a district with a high SES. Subjects were in the second and third grades (472 from the district with a low SES and 414 from the district with a high SES). In the study, children who watched television the most were found to have higher scores in delinquent behavior and on aggressive behavior subscales as compared to students who watched little television.

Summary of the Literature

This literature review was conducted using various empirical and theoretical searches throughout multiple databases, journals, and books. Copious amounts of
literature, developed over a period of years and including the experiences of stakeholders, were available on school violence; however, only a few focused on the problem of school violence cross-nationally and were nation-specific. Studies covering countries like Turkey were not so prevalent as those covering the United States. Nevertheless, this chapter contained a review of related studies and presented useful information about the social context of Turkey, which is important as a base for those interested in school violence.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter opens with a summary of method and findings derived from the pilot study, which have informed and shaped the current study. Next, this chapter covers the research design and the site of the current study by explaining the selection of the sample, data collection procedures, and data analysis techniques and processes. Trustworthiness, ethical, and validity issues close this chapter.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted on school violence in the US before the dissertation study. The data for the pilot study were derived from three 45-minute interviews with participants from three different schools. The experiences gained by conducting the pilot study directed and shaped the current study. The actual study did not duplicate the pilot, but it was informed by the methodology and findings of the pilot. This section summarizes the lessons taken from the pilot study.

Lessons Taken from the Pilot Study Methodology

The research question for the pilot study was: What do urban and rural teachers think about school violence? During the dissertation study, however, I interviewed both parents and teachers, who represented multiple settings: schools in areas of low, medium, and high SES. Regarding the differences between the pilot and dissertation, the research question was reshaped as: What do teachers and parents say about school violence in Turkey?
As a researcher in the pilot study I was an outsider, so nonparticipant observations were not helpful. I was a stranger in the school, unable to draw much information from these observations. Thus, I did not include this type of observation in the current study.

Collecting and compiling data from the interviews required five weeks because of the availability of the interviewees. The length of interviews, approximately 45 minutes, was enough to obtain a good understanding of what the interviewees thought; therefore, I planned to do interviews of 45 minutes for the current study.

Data analysis was done using the grounded theory model developed by Emerson et al. (1995). I performed open coding of data first while I was reading my field notes. Then, I determined focused codes, which became the emerging findings of the study. Having done a pilot study and being familiar with data analysis helped me in other steps. Because I had practiced the process of data analysis during the pilot study, I had no difficulty analyzing the data in the dissertation study.

Findings Relevant to the Dissertation Study

To acquire a general understanding of teachers’ thoughts on school violence in the pilot study, I first asked interviewees what they thought when they heard the words school violence. Urban and rural teachers especially looked at the issue from opposite sides. An urban district teacher saw violence happening in the school among students. Because she witnessed many fights in her school, she thought of violence as students fighting with one another. In rural districts, however, teachers saw few fights in their schools. Thus, they saw school violence in terms of intruders coming in and shooting
teachers or students. Notably, urban and rural school teachers’ ideas differed based on the social context of their schools. In rural areas little fighting occurred among students, but in urban areas, some fighting occurred. Urban teachers saw school violence as produced in school, but rural teachers saw violence as produced outside the school and brought into it.

Another question I asked during the interview in the pilot study was Can teachers prevent violence, and if yes, how? Teachers’ answers and thoughts on this issue were different, again, according to their school setting and environment. Rural teachers were very certain that teachers can and should prevent violence by respecting students; however, urban teachers were reluctant to become involved in preventive measures. They argued that if teachers humiliated students in front of their peers, this might cause anger in students toward teachers. As the pilot study suggested, anger can be an important cause of violence. Since the goal of the current study was not to design prevention or intervention programs, no questions on prevention were asked of the interviewees in the current study.

Summary of Pilot Study that Informed the Current Study

Conducting a pilot study was helpful to identify the weaknesses of the research design and data collection procedures before proceeding into the field for the actual study. While conducting the pilot study, I practiced with free-coding, focused coding, and emerging categories. Since I was familiar with these procedures and the process of data analysis, I was able to repeat the similar steps.
The interview questions of the pilot study also shaped those in the actual study, for which new questions were added and some that were used in the pilot study were deleted. The duration of interviews is also important in qualitative studies to acquire detailed information from participants. Thus, 45-minute interviews with the participants were planned. In short, conducting a pilot study before the current study was useful for effective data collection and analysis.

**Current Study**

In the current study I was interested in gathering understandings and thoughts of teachers and parents on school violence. I was also interested in determining how teachers and parents see the causes and types of school violence. To obtain a deep understanding of the feelings of teachers and parents on the subject of school violence, I conducted the study at three different sited in environments with low, medium, and high SES.

**Research Design**

For the purpose of this study, qualitative interviewing was the most appropriate method for answering the research questions raised in this study because through qualitative interviews the researcher can come to understand experiences and reconstruct unfamiliar events. Qualitative interviewing has been described as a means of finding out what others feel and think about their world (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). Thus, from the family of qualitative research approaches, qualitative interviewing matched the needs and goals of this research because it allowed me to share the world of others, to find out what
was going on, why people did what they did, and how people understood their worlds (Rubin & Rubin, 1995).

Furthermore, qualitative interviewers listen to people as they describe how they understand the world in which they live and work (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). Weiss (1994) suggested that

We can learn, through interviewing, about people’s interior experiences.
We can learn what people perceived and how they interpreted their perceptions. We can learn how events affected their thoughts and feelings. We can learn the meanings to them of their relationships, their families, their work, and their selves. We can learn from all the experiences and from joy through grief which together constitutes the human condition. (p. 1)

The research questions of this study were, therefore, investigated through a qualitative research design that consisted of semistructured interviews and documents. To fulfill the goals of the study, I used an interpretive approach, which was the most appropriate. In the interpretive approach meaning emerges through interaction and is not standardized from place to place or person to person. What is important to interpretive scientists is how people understand their worlds and how they create and share meanings about their lives (Rubin & Rubin, 1995).

By using an interpretive approach, I tried to elicit the interviewees’ views of their worlds, their work, and the events they had experienced or observed in school. To obtain
teachers’ and parents’ understandings of their worlds and to find the meaning of the influences of school violence as an interpretive researcher, I sought thick and rich descriptions of the cultural and topical fields under study and tried to develop empathetic understandings of the worlds of participants.

**Research Sites**

The site for this study was Ankara, the capital city of Turkey. Ankara was chosen because it is the second largest city in Turkey, and it has experienced phenomenal growth since it was made Turkey’s capital. It was “a small town of no importance” until it became the capital city. In 1924, the year after the government moved there, Ankara had about 35,000 residents. By 1927 it had 44,553 residents, and by 1950 the population had grown to 286,781. As of 2007, central Ankara had a population of 3,763,591, of which 1,870,831 were men and 1,892,760 were women. The metropolitan municipality, containing the central part of the city as well as the eight districts under its jurisdiction, had a total population of 3,901,201 the same year as stated on the official website of the Turkish Statistical Institute (2007).

Along with the large population, many different races, ethnicities, social classes, age groups, and levels of wealth are represented in the city. For a researcher to develop a deep understanding, obtaining ideas from different perspectives is important. Rubin and Rubin (1995) stated that “getting only one side of an argument is not sufficient, you have to go for balance in your choice of interviews to represent all the divisions within the arena of study” (p. 69); therefore, I decided on three different settings for this study. To
acquire voices and ideas from different perspectives, I decided that three different neighborhoods would be useful for the study and thus settled on one area each with high, average, and low SES. Later, I consulted people living in those areas to select a typical school in each one. In each setting I chose a typical school instead of an “exemplary” school because environment usually affects the thinking and behaviors of people. In making my choices, I talked to approximately 10 people about school selection and settled on three schools, assigning each one a pseudonym for confidentiality.

My three selections were as follows: Gundogdu Primary School was a public school in a wealthy district; Bahceli Primary School was a public school from a district with medium SES; and Park Primary School was located in a poor district. These schools were secondary schools, but because eight-year education is compulsory in Turkey, secondary schools are also called primary schools. The current study investigated secondary school students’ engagement with school violence. The target group of the study comprised the teachers and parents of sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade students. Brief information about each school follows.

**Gundogdu Primary School**

Gundogdu Primary School is located in a central and wealthy district, actually an old settlement. Houses typically cost approximately $200,000 and have two or three floors. People living there earn an income of around $4,000 to $5,000 monthly according to the Cankaya Municipality online bulletin (2010). Many well-known and expensive shops are located in this district, and the school is located on the main street of the
district. According to the principal, the school is crowded with almost 1,400 students enrolled; and some students are bused in from other districts. The school, which consists of two buildings, is also known for its discipline; very well-known in Ankara, it has earned numerous awards from the Ministry of National Education in basketball, football, and tennis.

**Bahceli Primary School**

Bahceli Primary School is located on a main road in Bahceli, which consists mostly of middle-class working people, whose income is $1,000 and $2,000 monthly. Both parents typically work, and homes in this area cost around $75,000 according to the Yenimahalle Municipality online bulletin (2010). The school, which is not particularly crowded, is known as an average school with regard to educational quality and success around Ankara.

**Park Primary School**

Park Primary School is located in a very poor section of Ankara. Houses in this area are typically old and run-down. People in this area are poor and less educated. The school is crowded with 1,300 students. Before 2005, many violent events occurred there, and two student gangs operated in the school; furthermore, drug trafficking was common in the surrounding neighborhood. In 2005, the Ankara Police Department paid special attention to the school and its environment, initiating patrols around the school. Police and school administration have also organized many projects to reduce violence in school. Even though violence has decreased, the school and neighboring environment
was still seen as violent. Many people have told me that the neighborhood surrounding Park Primary School is not safe, fights are common in the area, and intoxicated individuals loiter around the school.

**Sample Selection**

The term *sampling* is problematic in qualitative research because it implies representing a particular population by choosing a small segment of it (Maxwell, 2005). Selecting samples in qualitative studies is difficult because “you are not only sampling people, but also settings, events, and processes” (Maxwell, 2005). Miles and Huberman (1994) asked, “Knowing, then, that one cannot study everyone everywhere doing everything, even within a single case, how does one limit the parameters of a study?” (p. 36).

School violence is an issue that cannot be separated from its environment or the events occurring in that environment. While deciding on sample selection, I thought about it extensively because “the settings, events, or processes that come rapidly to mind at the start of the study may not be the most pertinent or data-rich ones. A systematic review can sharpen early and later choices” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 41).

In this study I attempted to select a sample from which I could learn most. In this respect, the best selection for the study included both teachers and parents. Moreover, parents are also the ones with whom students spend their early years. The restrictions of the Ministry of National Education on data collection prohibited the inclusion of students, but their perspectives would have been invaluable. Thus, teachers and parents, the people
closest to students, were chosen for the sample of this study. The target group of the study comprised teachers and parents of sixth-, seventh- and eighth-grade students.

At the beginning of the study, I visited each school to consult and speak to the principal about the current study. Because participation was to be voluntary, I had to secure the voluntary consent of teachers and parents to become involved in the study with the help of principals. Valuing the permission given by the Ministry of National Education, they agreed to participate in the study and helped me with data collection. After I entered the schools, each principal gave me permission to organize the interviews and assigned one teacher to help me locate participants. Those assigned teachers helped me to introduce myself and my study to the participants.

For teacher participants, I chose teachers who had worked in the particular school for at least five years to be sure they had sufficient information to contribute. Teacher participants were chosen based on their availability and willingness. Assigned teachers introduced me to other teachers and asked them whether they would be willing to participate in the study. I made appointments with those who were willing to participate and went to the schools for the interviews. I conducted interviews in different settings in the schools, including faculty rooms and conference rooms.

For parent participants, I interviewed parents who came to school to pick up their children or attend teacher–parent conferences. Thus, parent participants were those who showed up in the schools. I couldn’t go into parent participants’ homes because my permission was valid only in the school. The assigned teachers introduced me to parents
and asked them if they would be willing to participate. I then interviewed parents who agreed to participate in the study and did so mostly in conference rooms and sometimes in empty classrooms.

In this study, purposeful sampling was used to discover, understand, and gain insight into the phenomenon under consideration (M. Q. Patton, 1990). Maxwell (2005) stated four possible goals of purposeful selection. The first is to achieve representativeness or typicality of the settings, individuals, or activities selected. This goal applies to this study because I chose the participants who would represent each school; thus, random sampling was not used, and participants were selected by the researcher, considering who was available.

The second goal is to adequately capture the heterogeneity of the population. The purpose here is to ensure that the conclusions adequately represent the entire range of variation. A particular selection problem exists in qualitative studies; it has been called “key informant bias” (Pelto & Pelto, 1975, p. 7). Most of the time, qualitative researchers rely on a small number of informants for a major part of their data, and even when these informants are purposefully selected and the data itself seems valid, the researcher has no guarantee that the views of these informants are typical. One way to eliminate this problem is to use a large number of informants; thus, I made an effort to select as many participants as possible and include participants from three different settings of schools to eliminate “key informant bias.”
The third goal is to establish particular comparisons to illuminate the reasons for
differences between settings or individuals. In this study, I had the opportunity to
compare participants and settings to shed light on the reasons for differences because I
selected three environments with different SES. Gundogdu Primary School is a public
school from a wealthy district, Bahceli Primary School is a public school from a district
with a medium SES, and Park Primary School is from a poor district.

The fourth goal, which does not apply to this study, is to deliberately examine
cases that are crucial to the theories with which the researcher began the study or that
have subsequently developed. This study does not test or develop a theory but explores
what teachers and parents know about school violence.

Furthermore, this study followed three criteria that Rubin and Rubin (1995)
suggested for a study: Participants should (a) be knowledgeable about the cultural arena
or the situation or experience being studied, (b) be willing to talk when people in the
arena have different perspectives, and (c) represent a range of perspectives. Therefore, I
was careful to select participants from among those who had experience with school
violence and who were willing to talk about the issue and represent a variety of
perspectives. In short, sampling in this study included teachers and parents from schools
in Ankara. Twenty participants (10 teachers and 10 parents) were chosen from each
school. In total, the study had 60 participants; their characteristics appear in Tables 1–4.

In Gundogdu Primary School four male and six female teachers participated in
the study. They taught technology, math, social sciences, science, Turkish, and history;
and one was a counselor. All worked with students in Grades 6, 7, and 8. Their ages ranged from 33 to 50 (See Table 1).

Table 1

*Characteristics of Teachers in Gundogdu Primary School*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Subject/ Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emel</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>7 and 8</td>
<td>Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esra</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>6 and 7</td>
<td>Technology</td>
</tr>
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<td>43</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mehmet</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>6, 7, and 8</td>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ali</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>7 and 8</td>
<td>Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ozgur</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>6,7, and 8</td>
<td>Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nese</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>6,7, and 8</td>
<td>Counselor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ayla</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>6,7, and 8</td>
<td>Turkish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melek</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>6,7, and 8</td>
<td>Counselor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hilal</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>History</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2

*Characteristics of Teachers in Bahceli Primary School*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Subject/ Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nilay</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>6 and 7</td>
<td>Turkish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esin</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>6,7, and 8</td>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hasan</td>
<td>Male</td>
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<td>6, 7, and 8</td>
<td>Gymnastics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selda</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>6 and 7</td>
<td>Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ozkan</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>6, 7, and 8</td>
<td>Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Servet</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>6 and 7</td>
<td>Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hacer</td>
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<td>6,7, and 8</td>
<td>Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yusuf</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gulnaz</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>6,7, and 8</td>
<td>Counselor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Bahceli Primary School four male and six female teachers participated in the study. They taught gymnastics, art, technology, math, social sciences, science, Turkish,
and history; one was a counselor. All worked with students in Grades 6, 7, and 8. Their ages ranged from 31 to 55 (See Table 2).

At Park Primary School six male and four female teachers participated in the study. Their subjects were religion and ethics, art, English, technology, math, social sciences, science, Turkish, and history; one was a counselor. All worked with students in Grades 6, 7, and 8. Their ages ranged from 25 to 49 (See Table 3).

Table 3

**Characteristics of Teachers in Park Primary School**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Subject/Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>6, 7, and 8</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Female</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Turkish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omer</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>6, 7, and 8</td>
<td>Counselor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arda</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuat</td>
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<td>35</td>
<td>6 and 8</td>
<td>Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nilufer</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oyku</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>6 and 7</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Turkish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osman</td>
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<td>43</td>
<td>6 and 8</td>
<td>Religion and Ethics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selin</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Social Science</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 shows that parent participants at the three schools were predominantly female (26 females, four males) because fathers of students were at work and mothers generally were expected to concern themselves with the children’s education.
Table 4

*Characteristics of Parents in Gundogdu, Bahceli, and Park Primary Schools*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Grade Level of their Children</th>
<th>Gender of Student</th>
<th>School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inci</td>
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<td>Male</td>
<td>Gundogdu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ozgun</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Gundogdu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ayse</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Gundogdu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canan</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Gundogdu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sule</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Gundogdu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nazmiye</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Gundogdu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatma</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Gundogdu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naci</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Gundogdu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niyazi</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Gundogdu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuray</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Gundogdu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harun</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Bahceli</td>
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<td>Female</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Bahceli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gulnur</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Bahceli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derya</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Bahceli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emel</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Bahceli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kevser</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Bahceli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birsen</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Bahceli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurten</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Bahceli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emine</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Bahceli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkan</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>Ummu</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurgul</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melike</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mehtap</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Munevver</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cemil</td>
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<td>Serap</td>
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<td>Park</td>
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<tr>
<td>Naciye</td>
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<td>Female</td>
<td>Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ozgul</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feride</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Park</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data Collection

My process for this research project extended over two years. It began with the basis of all research—the proposal. During the research and the writing of the proposal, I investigated data collection procedures in Turkey, where a researcher must gain permission from the Ministry of National Education to collect data on schools. (For approval form, see Appendix B.) After I prepared the required documents, I applied to the Ministry of National Education to get permission, which is not readily granted when the topic of the research is school violence and its results may negatively affect the policies of state government. Having received the necessary permission, I collected data between April 10, 2010, and June 15, 2010.

I collected data through semistructured interviews, observational field notes, and document analysis. Erickson (2004) suggested that data in qualitative research does not merely appear to the researcher; instead, it must be found, identified, and defined in a process of repeatedly searching through a set of information resources. Data were gathered for the study through semistructured interviews, observations of the social context of the schools selected for the study, and relevant documents. The following section explains the procedures and process of interviewing, the use of additional data like field notes, and document collection.

Procedures

Qualitative interviewing is an enormously flexible approach to doing research. “It is a principal research tool for the sociologist, educator, political scientist,
criminologist, public administrator, social worker, anthropologist, and historian” (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 3). Researchers using qualitative interviewing listen to people as they explain how they understand the worlds where they live and work. Qualitative interviewers explore how and why culture is created, evolves, and is maintained. They also explain specific events, topics, or happenings as Rubin and Rubin (1995) stated.

Qualitative interviewing is both an academic and practical tool for researchers, allowing them to find out and share the world of others to learn what is going on, why people do what they do, and how they understand their worlds. Thus, researchers use in-depth and semistructured interviews in qualitative interviewing. They put together the information they acquire during the qualitative interviews to form explanations and theories. With such knowledge people can help to find solutions to any problem (Rubin & Rubin, 1995).

In qualitative interviewing, M. Q. Patton (1990) stated, “the quality of the information obtained during an interview is largely dependent on the interviewer” (p. 279). In my case I chose interviews as a means of gaining the participants’ perspectives on school violence. The data were not comprehensive and generalizable, but generalization was not the intent of this study. Denzin (1983) contended, “The interpretivist rejects generalization as a goal and never aims to draw randomly selected samples of human experience” (p. 133). Furthermore, Guba and Lincoln (1982) argued that “generalizations in qualitative study are not only undesired, but also they are impossible since phenomena are neither time nor context-free” (p. 238). Data collected
in this study provided a strong basis for an analysis of the thoughts of teachers and parents on the definition, causes, and types of violence. With semistructured interviews and document analysis, data became well endowed with good description and dialogue relevant to what occurred in the setting and its meaning for participants (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006, p. 122). The goal here was “to produce a coherent and illuminating description of and perspective on a situation that is based on and consistent with detailed study of that situation” (Schofield, 2001, p. 330).

**Process**

The qualitative researcher normally has considerable theoretical knowledge but very little idea of what will happen in the field. For this reason, researchers tend to use theory, common sense, and any resources at hand in collecting data (M. Q. Patton, 1990). In the process of collecting data, the researcher generally makes several decisions based on some assumptions about the nature of social reality that may or may not be held in common with those who are to be investigated (Murphy, 1983).

Each school in the current research was distinct from the others. The security guard in front of Gundogdu Primary School asked no questions of anyone entering the school and merely let them in; thus, anyone could simply enter the school. The student greeters on duty should have written down visitors’ names, but they did not even ask who I was and why I was there; whereas in other two schools students asked questions of visitors. I, therefore, concluded that at Gundogdu Primary School no violent events had originated from the outside. Bahceli Primary School had no guard, but the student
greeter on duty who welcomes visitors was inside the building and asked my name and took me to the principal. He was helpful and introduced me to the teachers present at school. Bahceli was quieter than Gundogdu. One interviewee at Bahceli Primary School hesitated at first about audio-taping. After I told him that I was going to just listen to these tapes and not identify the names of the interviewees in the study, he allowed me to audio-tape.

Park Primary School was surrounded by high fences, the outside door to the school yard was locked, and a student was on duty in the schoolyard to unlock the door when someone entered. Before I went to Park Primary School, because I had heard it might be unsafe, I first called the principal and checked whether it was okay if I spent time in the school to do research on school violence. He told me that they had had several violent events before and still had some, but that it would not be problem to spend some time and do interviews with teachers and parents.

When I entered, I saw children fighting with each other, and students shouted at one another in the hallway. While I was in principal’s office, a student came and said that he was beaten by another student. It was the first and most immediate example of school violence I saw in that school. I was shocked and tried to understand what was happening. At first I felt somewhat frightened, but remembering my researcher role, I was able to bracket my bias about the violent environment of the school. The vice-principal and teachers were very kind and helpful during my stay at the school for the interviews. In addition, parents were also very welcoming to me and interested in their
kids. Thus, my bias about the environment of the school and violence in and around the school didn’t negatively affect my perception of the parents and teachers.

I started my interviews at Park Primary on my first visit. The principal took me to the faculty room and introduced me to teachers, who were helpful. I sat in the faculty room and asked teachers one by one whether they were willing to participate in the study. I interviewed each teacher in faculty room at different times when they were available and had free time. For the parent interviews I went to the teacher–parent conferences for eighth graders. At the end of the conference, the teacher introduced me to parents and asked them if they were willing to participate. Those who were willing stayed after the conference, and I interviewed them one by one in the conference room.

At Park Primary School, before starting the interviews, some parents seemed anxious and curious about what I was going to ask them. First, they asked me what I was doing. I told them about the study and interviews. They appeared to be willing to cooperate. They seemed hesitant because this kind of study was unfamiliar to them. Perhaps, this was the first time they were involved in any scientific research. When I asked semistructured interview questions, some of them didn’t understand what I was asking. Thus, I changed and simplified my questions for them. Interviews were shaped according to their answers, but this does not mean that they said nothing or that data were missing or lost. They were less voluble than the other parents but answered all interview questions.
After I completed all interviews in three schools, I took notes on my impressions and thoughts after each interview. I kept a reflective journal to document my decision-making and any biases or conclusions I made from my “tacit knowledge” (M. Q. Patton, 1990). Each interview was immediately transcribed and carefully analyzed.

A bilingual transcriber assisted me in transcribing the interviews. At first, I listened to all the recordings to proofread and then annotate the transcripts. After confirming and annotating the recordings, I translated all the interviews. The relevant parts of the interviews were selected and were also translated by a bilingual transcriber. When the transcriber finished translations, we looked at both translations together and selected the best translations for the interviews. Later, I sent the translations to a professional editor for editing and proofreading.

Two participants asked to review the transcriptions. Some changes or revisions were made at the request of those participants and the finished copies of the transcriptions were then sent to them.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) outlined how to determine when sufficient data has been collected. Glesne and Peshkin (1992) also suggested that the researcher stop collecting data once theoretical saturation or redundancy in the data has been reached. I terminated data collection when I heard the same or similar examples from the participants in each school. This occurred at each school before I had reached my predetermined sample size of 10 teachers and parents. Therefore, 10 teachers and 10 parents from each school constituted an adequate sample size for this study.
Interviewing

M. Q. Patton (1990) stated that the most common form of qualitative research is interviewing, an important research tool because “if the researcher’s goal is to understand the meaning people involved in education make of their experience, then interviewing people provides a necessary, if not always completely sufficient, avenue of inquiry” (Seidman, 1991). Because the goal of this study was to understand the thoughts and experiences of teachers and parents, the data were collected through interviews, which in this research were more conversational with semistructured questions than in directional interviews as Rubin and Rubin (1995) suggested. Conversational interviews were helpful for this study because qualitative interviews are designed to elicit understanding, knowledge, and insights of the interviewees instead of categorizing people or events in terms of academic theories.

Although qualitative interviews resemble ordinary conversations, they differ in the intensity of listening to what is being said (Rubin & Rubin, 1995); therefore, I listened intently to pick up on key words and phrases and ideas to obtain the important points with participants’ emotional tones and nonverbal cues. The questions and answers followed one after the other as the participants and I took turns talking.

In this study I used a semistructured interview guide in which a set of issues were outlined (Merton, Fiske, & Kendall, 1990). I referred to this guide before interviewing each participant. The issues included the meaning and definition of school violence, level, causes, most common places at school that violence occurs, and an example of
previous experience with school violence. The issues were not in any order; however, I added a topic to the interviews—sexual violence among students. I found much information about sexual violence in the literature, but the participants didn’t mention sexual violence during interviews until I raised the issue. Following my introduction of the issue of sexual violence, the issue of violence among girls was raised by the participants. I brought up sexual violence but not the issues of ethnicity and racism during interviews because these issues are very sensitive among Turkish people. Most of them do not want to discuss ethnicity and racism in Turkey because they do not want to acknowledge that these problems exist there.

Nevertheless, conducting a semistructured interview required me to prepare some general and specific questions. In case participants talked about irrelevant things during the interviews, I asked some questions to lead the participants back to the topic at hand. The interview questions appear in Appendix A.

**Teacher and Parent Interviews**

Semistructured, individual, face-to-face interviews with teachers and parents from three different schools in Ankara were conducted to explore participants’ understanding and interpretations of school violence. The interviews were conducted in Turkish; they were recorded, and their transcripts were then translated into English.

Participation in the interview was voluntary. Participants were asked whether they were willing to become involved. This was the general procedure used at all three schools to identify participants and set up interviews. Although I asked each participant
the semistructured interview questions (see Appendix A), some interview questions were also shaped by the participants’ answers. Most interviews lasted about 30 minutes, but some lasted up to 45 minutes and others as little as 15 minutes.

Interviews were conducted in an empty classroom, faculty room, or a meeting room to guarantee the promised confidentiality. All interviews were audio-taped and conducted by me; however, a few participants refused to be tape-recorded, and I had to take notes instead. Collecting the data was difficult because of the time and energy needed for note-taking, but I was able to reduce the complexity of the material and the possibility of data collection differences among interviewers; therefore, the quality of the interviews was not affected.

Because I used purposeful sampling to discover, understand, and gain insight into the issue, I used purposeful sampling with parent participants as well. To achieve representativeness or typicality of the individuals, participants were selected from among the parents of students in Grades 6, 7, and 8. Random sampling was not used and participants were selected by me, considering from whom I could obtain the most adequate information.

Using Additional Data, Reflective Journal, and Field Notes

I also kept observational data and a reflective journal was also kept to help in analyzing the setting, people, and meanings. M. Q. Patton (1990) asserted that observational data and reflective journal provide a description of what has been observed and what the observer sees, interprets, and reflects. During the study, I made covert
observation notes before and after interviews in order to reflect on my tacit expectations and impressions of the interview sites.

Bogdan and Biklen (2003) encouraged the use of field notes because they aid the researcher in collecting and reflecting upon the data, help the researcher monitor the progress of the study, supplement additional data collection methods, and “can improve the quality and speed of writing” because field notes “will come from the top of their head and represent their particular style” (p. 112).

Field notes were helpful for me in reflecting upon the data and monitoring the progress of the study following the interviews. While doing data analysis, I used them to remember the settings, participants, and behaviors of participants during interviews. It was difficult to remember all the details after the interviews, but the field notes and memos I took during school visits and interviews helped me to remember the details.

Maxwell (2005) encouraged the use of memo writing because “memos are one of the most important techniques researchers have for developing their own ideas” (p. 12), helping them to analyze the data, reflect on tensions and ideas, assess the study, and understand the data better (Maxwell, 2005; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). My field notes were both descriptive and reflective; below I refer to descriptive accounts as field notes, and reflections as memos. I used both field notes and memos during data analysis and identifying categories. In addition, some participants continued to talk after I ended the conversations and stopped the cassette; thus, after they left, I took memos about what
they said because some of that information was useful for the study, and it had not been recorded.

**Document Collection**

The term *documents* has been used as an umbrella term to refer to a wide range of written, visual, and physical material or artifacts (Merriam, 1998). Bogdan and Biklen (2006) categorized documents into three groups: personal, official, and popular culture (p.133). In this study, I used official documents, that is, those produced by organizations, institutions, and companies, and in this case, documents produced by school administrators.

I collected some documents related to violence that had occurred in these schools because qualitative researchers generally expand their data collection by gathering and analyzing documents in addition to interviewing. These documents generally included brochures about harassment, violence, and suspension papers. At Gundogdu Primary School, I asked why school officials had prepared and handed out the brochures in the school. I was told that they had not had much of a problem with school violence, but to prevent it, they distributed the brochures to the students and held seminars once or twice a school year with their students.

In Park Primary School, the vice principal showed me some suspension papers for students. These were given out because of fights and verbal violence among students. In the other two schools, no suspension papers were available for me to obtain detailed information about their thinking about violence and suspension in these schools.
Data Analysis Techniques and Procedures

Data analysis is meant to organize data, establish order, and decipher data (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Because it is viewed as “a messy, ambiguous, time-consuming, creative, and fascinating process” (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 150), ongoing data analysis took place throughout the duration of the study.

Data Analysis Process

Data analysis is the process that aims to extract meanings and implications, to reveal patterns or to stitch together descriptions of events into a coherent narrative that is comprehensible to readers (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 201). I continuously analyzed the data collected in interviews and documents because data analysis begins while the interviewing is still underway (Hatch, 2002).

In this study, data analysis was conducted in three phases. In the first phase, data analysis started with writing analytical memos and annotations on field notes while I was in the field. I wrote reflective journals about a variety of ideas, issues, insights, and concerns. Graue and Walsh (1998) stated that “memos are written notes to yourself about the thoughts you have about the data and your understanding of them” (p. 166).

The second phase consisted of analyzing hundreds of interview words. I listened to audio-tapes and read the transcriptions of interviews, paragraph by paragraph, and word by word, marking off particular ideas or concepts and indicated in code the subject of each paragraph; this part of the process is treated in the next section. The third and final stage dealt with analyzing relevant documents collected on school violence.
**Analytical Coding and Topics**

Data were fully transcribed from audio-tapes. Including all 60 participants’ transcriptions in this dissertation would be unnecessary for the reader, so I selected one participant’s transcription; it appears in Appendix F. Following the recognition, definition, and polishing of the concepts and categories, I used “free coding” (Rubin & Rubin, 1995) as shown in Tables 5, 6, and 7.

Coding is the process of grouping interviewees’ responses into categories that bring together similar ideas, concepts, or categories that the researcher discovered or steps or stages in a process of discovery (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). I began the coding process by rereading the interviews, so that I could have the general content clearly in mind. While coding the data, I also thought about the categories, concepts, and ideas I was trying to explore in each interview. Coding was used because it encourages hearing the meaning in the data (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). The purpose of coding data is to engage the researcher in an analytic process, in which he or she moves beyond the particular study to a more general theoretical dimension or issue (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995).

I constructed free coding tables (Tables 5–7) school by school to have a clear understanding of what participants of each school said about school violence. Later I went back to the original interview transcripts that were free coded and pulled the material with the same codes together as focused coding to arrange data in categories (Tables 8–14). This allowed me to compare what various people said, what categories were discussed, and how concepts were understood. For each interview question, I
constructed a table consisting of the answers of the two types of participants from the
three schools, which helped me to see the ideas of participants school by school. Also, in
the focused coding tables I divided focused codes for teachers and for parents, allowing
me to see whether any commonalities or differences appeared among teachers and
parents of the same school. The text in each cell of the tables represents the answers of
the participants to interview questions in main categories constructed according to each
question. I grouped the data into categories by photocopying the interview transcripts,
cutting them into pieces, and putting each designated coding unit in the proper pile.

The final interpretive act was for me to match the topics with the original
interview questions (Table 15). Thus, when free and focused coding was completed, I
grouped data under “topics” to compare what different people said, what topics were
discussed, and how concepts were understood (Rubin & Rubin, 1995).

Once I had all material gathered in the same place, I analyzed the focused coding
within and across categories to create larger units called topics. I organized the data in
ways that helped me formulate topics, refine concepts, and link them to create a clear
description or explanation of the interview questions. Like interpretive social
researchers, I let ideas emerge from the interviews, from the lives and examples of the
interviewees, instead of categorizing answers initially according to preexisting categories
from academic literature (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). This section ended when I found
overarching topics and put them in the context of a broader theory by answering “So
what?”
Glesne and Peshkin (1992) indicated that “data analysis involves organizing what you have seen, heard, and read so that you can make sense of what you have learned” (p. 127). Finally, writing the report is part of the analytic process because the researcher chooses the words to reflect the data. Again, the researcher is engaged in an interpretive act.

Tables 5 to 15, which appear in Chapter 4, were used in the organization of the presentation of the findings of the study.

**Ethical Issues**

Any qualitative researcher must pay attention to ethical issues in his or her study; therefore, I took into account some precautions on ethical issues. First, I pursued some procedures to protect participants’ confidentiality before starting an interview. Each participant was asked to read and sign an approved consent form and audio-visual consent form both in English and Turkish (See Appendices C and D for Turkish and English audio-visual consent forms). Each participant was informed that her or his participation in this study would be voluntary, and during the interview each was free to stop the interview at any time. Second, I ensured anonymity of the research results to protect teachers’ and parents’ involvement in the study.

**Trustworthiness**

No research is done without some degree of subjectivity. Similarly, no data analysis can be done without the researcher’s subjectivity; Mickunas (1983) stated, “There is no purely objective social data, only data which are interpreted within a specific
Thus, alertness to one’s own biases and subjectivity can assist in producing more trustworthy interpretations of data. As a researcher, I had some biases toward the Gundogdu and Park Primary Schools during the data collection process. These biases surfaced because of my previous experiences with school violence and the pilot study I did before the actual study. In the pilot study, I learned that in schools in areas with high SES, families often use verbal violence and pressure to impress students with various ideas. I thought that because Gundogdu Primary school is in a high SES environment, it may have had similar problems. Maxwell (2005) stated that qualitative research is not concerned with eliminating all values and expectations a researcher brings to the study but instead avoiding the negative consequences. Therefore, I tried to avoid the negative consequences of values and expectations I brought to the study.

Park Primary School is located in a very poor section of Ankara, where houses are generally old and run-down. People in this area are poor and less educated. The school is crowded with 1,300 students. Before 2005, many violent events occurred, and two student gangs operated in the school and engaged in drug trafficking, which was common in the surrounding neighborhood. Even though violence has been reduced, the school and neighboring environment are still perceived as violent. I heard from many people that the neighborhood surrounding Park Primary School was not safe because many fights occur there and drunken people loiter in the area. Because I had a negative belief about the school environment, I called and talked to the vice principal about the things I
heard and obtained some updated information on what I would possibly face. The vice principal’s welcoming talk and his remarks about safety in school alleviated some of my concerns. Maxwell (2005) claimed that some validity threats like biases are unavoidable; thus, my background knowledge and thinking wouldn’t be all cleaned up during the data collection period. I maintained an awareness of these biases and tried not to talk about or ask participants questions about them.

Guba and Lincoln (1989) considered member checks as “the most critical techniques for establishing credibility” (p. 341). In member checks, researchers solicit participants’ views regarding the accuracy of the findings and interpretations (Creswell, 2007). They allow for mistakes and recoveries and generate tremendous excitement because the researcher must, almost always, do much thinking on the spot to discover something new (Rubin & Rubin, 1995).

To enhance the trustworthiness of this study, at the end of the audio-tape transcriptions, member checking with 10 participants was used to address the possibility of misinterpreting the meaning of what participants said and the thoughts they had on school violence. Thus, for instance, I returned the interview transcripts and the rough draft of the study to the participants and asked 10 participants whether I captured the true meaning of what they said or whether their understandings had changed over the course of this study. I randomly chose four from Gundogdu, three from Bahceli and three from Park Primary after I completed all interviews. I gave them the interview transcript and asked them to read it. After they read, I asked them whether they wanted to change or
add anything. One of the participants I chose for member checking from Park Primary School was illiterate, so I read the interview transcription to her.

The member checking method was helpful to identify any misunderstandings I may have had of what I observed or interpreted, if any. Overall, no misunderstanding occurred, and participants approved the transcriptions. They said that they had not changed their thinking over the time.

**Validity Issues**

Maxwell (2005) referred to validity as “the correctness or credibility of a description, conclusion, explanation, interpretation, or other sort of account” (p. 106). Validity entails strategies to locate and rule out alternative explanations referred to as threats (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Maxwell, 2005). To ensure validity, I (a) obtained rich data, (b) triangulated data, (c) was aware of my researcher role, (d) knew my own biases, and (e) revealed limitations.

Bogdan and Biklen (2003) stated that “rich data [are] filled with pieces of evidence, with the clues that [researchers] begin to put together to make analytical sense out of what [they study]” (p. 114). Rich data are diverse and thorough enough so as to provide a “full and revealing picture of what is going on” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 110). I obtained rich data by collecting a variety of data (interviews, transcripts, field notes, and memos). I collected multiple forms of data and systematically recorded evidence in an effort to provide a reliable description and analysis of the study.
Maxwell (2005) stated that triangulation is “collecting information from a diverse range of individuals and settings, using a variety of methods” to reduce “the risk of chance associations and of systematic biases due to a specific method, and allows a better assessment of the generality of the explanation that one develops” (p. 12). Using numerous sources of data is advantageous because several sources can guide the researcher to a more comprehensive understanding of the event being studied (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Creswell, 1994; Maxwell, 2005). I gathered data from 60 different individuals in three different school settings and in a variety of methods (reflective journals, field notes, and interviews) in an effort to understand the research from multiple perspectives and means.

By making careful choices, I attempted to increase trustworthiness and minimize common threats to validity. First, I remained conscious of my researcher role as a qualitative investigator. I used a postpositivist paradigm in which “researchers see themselves as data collection instruments” (Hatch, 2002, p. 115). To that extent, schools where neither students nor teachers knew me were selected to minimize the threats to validity arising from personal biases toward participants or individuals.

I was and am aware of my possible “biases” before and during the study. One cannot escape his or her preconceptions but can reduce their effects by being aware of them. At the beginning of the study and before I started to collect data, I discussed the possible influences of my own life experiences or beliefs. For example, as a teacher I believe families and communities are responsible for children’s behavior, and this belief
had the potential to affect my understanding of what participants said. However, throughout the interviews, I remained aware of my own bias and tried to avoid this idea during interviews.

**Language and Translation**

Interviews with teachers and parents were held in their native language (Turkish) because they do not know English, but it was not a problem for me because I am bilingual. I experienced no language or dialect problems with parent interviews. When they didn’t understand my interview questions, I asked the questions in a simpler way, making questions clearer for them.

The bilingual transcriber who helped me also assisted me in checking the accuracy of both direct quotations and translations. First, I translated the interviews; later the outside translator translated the parts related to the study and repeated twice or three times in participant interviews. Ultimately, we compared both translations and determined the best translations of interview transcripts. After I finished free coding, focused coding, and finding overarching categories, I sent translations for editing and proofreading to a professional editor.

**Limitations of the Study**

According to Creswell (1994), limitations should be disclosed to identify “a potential weakness in the design of the study” (p. 110). First, this study is a qualitative study, which does not allow researchers to generalize results as can be done with many quantitative studies. Thus, this study helps us identify feelings and thoughts of teachers
and parents at three schools in Ankara. This study does not reflect an overall understanding of school violence throughout Turkey. Because the study was qualitative, findings are limited to the interpretations of the researcher. Thus, the findings and results of the study depend on the quality of the researcher’s reading and interpreting the data. In addition, qualitative studies allow gathering data from only a small target group or small number of target groups, making each and every participant very important to the researcher. In such cases researchers must be very encouraging; voluntary participation facilitated encouragement in this study.

Second, although including students in this study would have been desirable, the restrictions of the Ministry of National Education for data collection in public schools prevented doing so. Teachers and parents were interviewed, but interviewing students would have been more helpful to identify school violence in Turkey.

Limitations Encountered in Data Collection

Some teachers and parents did not want to speak openly about one of the interview questions: “What is the level of school violence in your school?” They appeared unwilling to accept the reality of violence in their schools. They told me that they did not have violence in their schools. This might have occurred for two reasons: One is that they might not want to see the reality of violence in their schools, and another is that no institution or organization protects the rights of teachers and administrators in public schools in Turkey. The latter may have hesitated to talk about problems because
they had some concerns about their career. Thus, I changed the question to “What is the level of school violence in Turkey?” to avoid a validity problem in the study.

Parents hesitated to talk about issues related to school administrators and teachers. Some of the parent participants asked if I were going to provide the results to the school administrator. Because they thought that I might be working with and on behalf of the school administrator, they were reluctant to talk about the problems they had seen in person at the school; however, I reassured them that what they talked about would remain between us and nobody would know their names or what they said.

**Summary of Methodology**

The purpose of this chapter was to provide some transparency to the study by explaining how the site and participants were selected, how data were collected and analyzed, and what procedures were taken to ensure the trustworthiness or authenticity of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The data were collected through semistructured interviews, observations of the social context of schools selected for the study, and relevant documents. Purposeful sampling for the study included teachers and parents from three schools in Ankara: a public school from a wealthy district, a public school from a district with a medium SES, and one from a poor district. Twenty participants (10 teachers and 10 parents) were chosen from each school. In total, 60 participants were involved in this study.

Analyzing the qualitative data, I took the necessary steps, free-coding, focused-coding, and developing topics, categorizing them, and describing what teachers and
parents thought about school violence in Turkey. The next chapter introduces the findings of this study
CHAPTER IV
FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Given that data can be efficiently presented through examples, preparing the findings of a qualitative study offers a unique opportunity for a researcher. Determining the precise language necessary to present data and communicate categories, patterns, and processes can be challenging, especially when one bears in mind that data are open to an individual researcher’s interpretation. Indeed, the researcher occasionally functions as a “translator of culture,” a situation that highlights the need to reflect continuously upon his or her own subjectivity (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). When writing up the data, the researcher should select excerpts that most accurately convey the “story” of the participants (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Moreover, as Lincoln and Guba (1985) have suggested, the researcher should provide the reader with as much information and raw data as possible, thereby giving her or him an opportunity to establish a connection with the data.

This study was designed to shed light on the thoughts and feelings of teachers and parents on the issue of school violence in Turkey. During the course of the research, interviews were conducted with 60 individuals from three different schools (from districts with wealthy, medium, and low SES). The following research questions guided the study: What do teachers and parents say about school violence in Turkey? How do they describe it? What do teachers and parents think about the primary causes of school violence in Turkey?
In this chapter, which focuses on the results of data analysis, findings have been outlined with an emphasis on those excerpts that most effectively relate the stories of the participants. Apart from those excerpts, the researcher has included as much information and raw data as possible. The researcher’s conclusions on the results of the study appear in Chapter 5.

**Free Coding Categories**

Discussing the findings presented in the free coding categories, showing differences and commonalities among teachers and parents school by school, is useful (see Tables 5–7) before laying out the findings based on the interview questions addressed in the focused coding categories (Tables 8–15).

Each table consists of free codes based on the answers to interview questions given by participants in a particular school. Text in each cell of the table was located and coded twice or three times in participant interviews. The column headings were derived by grouping interviewees’ responses into categories, which ultimately resembled larger categories derived from the interview questions. The row headings separate teacher and parent participants’ responses to interview questions. Each table represents one school (Tables 5–7). In interpreting free coding tables, I used shorthand free coding terms to show findings by school.

**Gundogdu Primary School**

In Gundogdu, teachers used and mentioned more concepts associated with school violence than parents for all seven questions asked during their interviews. In terms of
determining the meaning of violence, teachers talked about “causing damage to environment, physical violence, kicking, shoving, beating, banter, glaring, coercion, snub, profanity, teasing, enforce, causing pain, and intentional harm”; but parents talked about “physical violence, vulgar display of power, coercion, teasing, unconscious, and causing pain.” Both teachers and parents identified and used “physical violence, beating, coercion, causing pain, and teasing” to determine the meaning of violence (Table 5).

With regard to the causes of school violence, teachers acknowledged “lack of available places to play, peers, psychological disorder, and lack of love”; but parents identified “too much freedom given children by parents, loss of traditions, loss of values, and lack of empathy” as possible causes of school violence. Beside those concepts and issues as causes of school violence, both teachers and parents agreed on some causes and identified “family problems, media effect, intense school atmosphere, adolescence, egoism, stress resulting from courses, and envy among students.”

Teachers talked about “obscenities, psychological violence, games with violent content, damaging school property, shoving, boys beating up girls, and bombardment with SMS or emails” to define the types of school violence. In addition to what teachers said, parents identified “physical violence, kicking, ridicule, name-calling, and verbal harassment to girls” as types of school violence they witnessed in schools.

Some teachers stated that where children are neglected and people come from different statuses or levels of a society, school violence is visible; however, some parents thought that school violence may also exist in areas of high SES. In other words, the
level of SES in a particular area does not necessarily affect the frequency or occurrence of school violence; yet both teachers and parents agreed on “areas of low SES, outskirts, and places with nonintellectual or less educated people” as places school violence typically occurs.

In terms of the level of school violence, teachers stated that the level might be the same. They believed that perhaps violence had not increased but that the nature of the violence had changed: “formerly physical violence, but now more psychological, existed before but heard about more nowadays.” Parents said that it is “increasing.”

Regarding violence among girls, teachers stated the following: “girls are behaving like boys, girls’ violence is more dangerous than boys, and psychological violence exists among girls.” By contrast, parents said nothing about girls’ fighting or arguing among one another.

Finally, teachers and parents identified solutions to school violence in different ways. Teachers cited the following: “good staff in schools like teachers’ being willing to help children, involving parents in education of children, parental education on school violence and children’s violent behavior in school, increasing family care (low levels of which are caused by family issues), and providing after-school social activities”; parents cited “showing love to children, parents’ consciousness of children’s education, and the need for authority,” as solutions to school violence (Table 5).
Table 5

Free Coding List 1: Reported by Teachers and Parents in Gundogdu Primary School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is violence?</th>
<th>Causes</th>
<th>Types</th>
<th>Where</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Violence among Girls</th>
<th>Solution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers (Causing damage to environment, physical violence, kicking, shoving, beating, banter, glaring, coercion, snubbing, profanity, teasing, force, causing pain, intentional harm)</td>
<td>Family problems, no tolerance, family profile, domestic violence, weakened family ties, fragmented family, lack of communi-cation among family members, parental pressure, lack of available places to play, environmental conditions, media, violence in media, TV, computer games, intense atmosphere, cultural differences, cultural degeneration, importance of peers, lack of success, adolescence/egoism, psychological disorder, dissatisfaction, inability to burn energy, stress, envy of success, lack of love, lack of anger management, imitating inappropriate models</td>
<td>Shoving, damaging school property, using swear words, ridiculing, name-calling, psychological violence, verbal violence as jokes, verbal harassment to girls by boys, boys beating up girls, games with violent content, bombardment with SMS or emails</td>
<td>Slums, areas with low SES, economic situation, outskirts, where children are neglected, where people’s backgrounds are different, places with different SES levels, where the level of education is low</td>
<td>Increasing, increased, heard more than before, formerly physical violence, now psychological and more, existed before but heard more nowadays</td>
<td>Behaving like a boy, more dangerous, existence of psychological violence</td>
<td>A good staff, family care, parental education, involving parents into education, activities dispatching to think</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>Physical violence, vulgar display of power, beating, bullying coercion, teasing, unconsciously causing pain</td>
<td>Giving children too much freedom, raising a “prince,” not spending time with children, family problems, media, TV series, intense atmosphere, loss of traditions, loss of values, adolescence/egoism, lack of empathy, stress, envy of success, frustration turning into hate</td>
<td>Physical violence, kicking, ridiculing, name-calling, verbal harassment of girls</td>
<td>Area of low SES, outskirts, family environment is important, places where nonintellectual people live, areas of high SES</td>
<td>Increasing</td>
<td>Showing love, parental awareness, need for authority</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Bahceli Primary School**

At Bahceli Primary School, teachers defined school violence in terms of “shoving, profanity, repression, hostile attitude, interpersonal conflict, and extortion.” Parents defined school violence in terms of “fighting, bullying, beating, arguing with one another, pressuring others, name-calling, and talking out in class. In defining school violence participants used varied definitions, but teachers were able to cite more examples than parents (Table 6).

In terms of the causes of school violence, both teachers and parents agreed that “family structure or culture, TV series, lack of self-confidence, and adolescence,” concepts used most frequently by participants, may cause violence at schools. In addition to these shorthand concepts I created, teachers added that “domestic violence, family neglect, environment, peer groups, and hormonal changes caused by adolescence” may cause violence at school. Parents added that “parental pressure about children’s success,
Table 6

Free Coding List 2: Reported by Teachers and Parents in Bahceli Primary School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is violence?</th>
<th>Causes</th>
<th>Types</th>
<th>Where</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Violence among Girls</th>
<th>Solution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>Family structure, lack of education, family culture, mother–father, domestic violence, family neglect, disregard, living space, environment, environment is secondary issue, media-TV series, media–imitating characters, media–ethics, imitating what s/he saw in the media, traditions lost their essence, peer groups, economic stress, pretension, lack of self-expression, lack of self-confidence, nature of human, hormonal changes, adolescence, acting foolishly as a child</td>
<td>Cruelty, discussion, obscene language, giggling to disrupt the lesson</td>
<td>Ghetto, low-income family, outskirts, rurals, slums, financial problems, cultural difference, crowded areas, cultural structure, low level of education</td>
<td>Increased, happening in 80s, decreased and increased again, increasing</td>
<td>Conflict, existing but small, not very serious</td>
<td>Family care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shoving, fighting tooth and nail, fighting, vulgar display of power, beating, banter, baiting, extortion, arm-twisting, brute force, ill treatment, pressure, repression, argument, profanity, name-calling, talking out in class, clash, hostile attitudes, interpersonal conflict</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
parents’ spoiling children, and pretension among children” may also cause school violence.

Regarding the types of school violence, teachers listed “bullying, arguing, using obscene language, giggling to disrupt the lesson”; parents limited themselves to “argument” when listing types of school violence.

With regard to places where school violence is likely to occur, teachers cited “ghettos, rural areas, outskirts, areas having financial problems and low level of education, areas with people from different cultures and crowded settlements,” indicating they believed that school violence occurs more frequently in such places than in areas with high SES and with better-educated residents. In addition, parents said “areas with fragmented families and dispersed settlements” might be places where school violence occurs. Both teachers and parents thought that violence at schools might occur in places with “low income families and slums.”
In terms of the level of school violence, teachers said it had “increased; it had occurred in the 80s; later it decreased and nowadays increased again.” Parents said that the level of school violence was “increasing”; hence, both parents and teachers agreed that violence had lately increased.

Both teachers and parents thought that school violence among girls “exists”; teachers thought that it exists but is not very serious.

In Bahceli Primary School, teachers pointed out that “parental care of children” is very important in solving school violence in Turkish schools because children need love and concern particularly during adolescence; however, parents did not suggest any solutions to school violence because they hadn’t witnesses much violence in their school (Table 6).

**Park Primary School**

At Park Primary School, teachers appeared to have observed more violence than parents and seemed more disturbed than parents by how much they saw. Thus, teachers identified “shoving, throwing things, beating others, physical violence, gang groups, threats to one another and teachers, shouting in school, argument, anxiety, and intentional harm” while parents used only “fighting and profanity” to define school violence (Table 7).

In terms of causes, teachers pointed out several factors that might cause school violence, but parents stated only a few. In this respect, teachers talked about “crowded classes in schools, fragmented families and disregard by the family, multicultural
environment, antagonism, frustration, lack of anger management, and lack of communication”; whereas parents stated only “family, Internet cafes, and showing themselves as powerful” as causes of school violence (Table 7).

With regard to the types of school violence, teachers said “control over others, beating up teachers, fights among children, threatening others with a knife or gun, drug possession, derision, psychological coercion, using profanity, sexual abuse, and verbal harassment of girls by boys.” Parents cited “fights and arguments and beating up teachers” as some types of violence they witnessed in the school. In short, both teachers and parents identified fights among students and beating up teachers as the most frequent types of school violence seen in the school. In addition, teachers noted more serious transgressions when they noted weapons and drugs; however, parents did not mention these at all.

Teachers at Park thought that “immigrant neighborhoods with people from different regions, schools in undeveloped regions, areas with low SES, and places with mixed groups” were the places school violence occurs. Likewise, parents stated that school violence can be seen “in here,” referring to Park Primary School.

Participants at Park Primary School held varied opinions about the level of school violence in their school, caused perhaps by the level of violence some had witnessed before. Many of the participants were long-time area residents and witnessed more violence in previous years than at the time of this study. These people stated that
Table 7

*Free Coding List 3: Reported by Teachers and Parents in Park Primary School*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is violence?</th>
<th>Causes</th>
<th>Types</th>
<th>Where</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Violence among Girls</th>
<th>Solution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>Disregard for others, antagonism and economic recession, fragmented family, violence against a child, multicultural environment, drugs (marijuana, heroin), violence everywhere, desire to become a part of society, lack of recreation centers, violence is normal, media, TV, profanity, concept of “I” not “we,” bad friends, involvement in a group, problem solution methods, needing attention, frustration, showing off, anger, lack of communication, lack of anger management, proving oneself, gaining a reputation, crowded classes</td>
<td>Pressure, beating up teachers, physical, fist fights, fighting, threatening with a knife or gun, bringing a gun to school, drug possession, derision, oral defamation of a teacher, psychological coercion, using swear words, sexual abuse, verbal harassment of girls by boys</td>
<td>Immigrants moving into the neighborhoods from different regions, schools in undeveloped regions, areas with low SES, places with mixed groups</td>
<td>Decreased, did not increase</td>
<td>Exists, quarrel</td>
<td>Volunteer-ism, dialog without violence, love, educating families, presenting alternative method</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
violence had increased over time. By contrast, participants new to the area believed that school violence was increasing because they witnessed more violence now. Hence, most of the teachers and parents stated that the level of school violence either “did not increase” or “decreased.” In answer to the question about violence among girls, parents said nothing, but teachers believed that it existed in the form of quarrels.

Finally, teachers of Park Primary School suggested more solutions to school violence than parent participants. Teachers believed that “volunteerism, dialogue without violence, love, educating families, and presenting alternative methods” might solve the problem of school violence in Turkish public schools, but parents said only “talking” to children might prevent school violence (Table 7).

**Focused Coding Categories**

After interpreting free coding tables (Tables 5–7), looking at focused coding tables is necessary to understand the data better.

Topics emerging from the data were those most relevant to teacher and parent participants, given that they surfaced repeatedly during the interviews. The topics paralleled the interview questions. The closing section of this chapter features data not directly related to the research and interview questions. The interview questions and the topics that emerged most frequently from the interviews were as follows: the definition of
school violence, types of school violence, causes of school violence, levels of school violence, location of school violence, and violence among girls.

It should be noted that this study does not focus on solutions to school violence or on the development of intervention and prevention programs; hence, the topic of solutions to school violence was not featured in the research for this study or the interview questions. Nevertheless, most participants brought up what they regarded as potential solutions to the problem of violence in Turkish classrooms; and some of their recommendations have been included as supplementary findings at the end of this chapter.

With these major and supplementary topics, the findings outlined in this chapter reflect what the teachers and parents were willing to say on the topic of school violence. In each section, however, findings from teacher and parent participants of Gundogdu, Bahceli, and Park Primary Schools were cross-referenced to demonstrate their commonalities, and their differences. Data from each of the participants were examined separately and then analyzed together in an effort to develop each of the findings (See Tables 8–15).

The interview questions of the study were as follows:

1. What is school violence?
2. What are the causes of school violence?
3. What are the types of school violence?
4. Where is school violence primarily found (district or area)?
5. What is the level of school violence in Turkey?

6. What is the level of school violence among girls?

The findings are presented in the order of the interview questions, not in order of importance.

What is School Violence?

In Gundogdu Primary School, both teachers and parents defined school violence using a variety of physical terms. Teachers used terms like “causing damage to environment, physical violence, kicking, shoving, beating, and banter”; whereas parents used “physical violence, vulgar display of power, beating, and bullying” (Table 8). Nese, a teacher, stated, “I think mostly shoving or kicking due to using swear words. When I ask them why they are kicking they say, ‘She or he swore at my mother,’ or ‘She or he swore at me.’” Teachers also defined school violence as psychological with “glaring, coercion, and snubbing”; whereas parents identified it with only “coercion.” Nese continued, “It appears as verbal arguments among girls.” Both teachers and parents identified teasing as an important indicator of verbal violence at the school. Thinking of the psychological effects of verbal violence on children, Ahmet, another teacher, said, “I believe that verbal violence is more effective and leaves many traces on children and people, especially those in the development period. People can forget the pain of physical violence, but the effects on the brain might linger forever.” Sule, a parent, noted that students often target peers with unusual names, complexions, or other qualities that somehow set them apart.
Table 8

*Focused Coding 1: What Is School Violence Reported by School and Teachers/Parents?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gundogdu</th>
<th>Bahceli</th>
<th>Park</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teachers</strong></td>
<td>Causing damage to environment, physical violence, kicking, shoving, beating, banter</td>
<td>Physical violence, vulgar display of power, beating, bullying</td>
<td>Fighting, bullying, beating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical violence, vulgar display of power, beating, bullying</td>
<td>Fighting, fighting tooth and nail, fighting, vulgar display of power, beating, banter, baiting, extortion, arm-twisting, brute force, ill treatment</td>
<td>Throwing objects, shoving, fighting, beating, physical violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parents</strong></td>
<td>Coercion</td>
<td>Coercion</td>
<td>Argument, pressure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Glaring, coercion, snubbing</td>
<td>Pressure, repression, argument</td>
<td>Gang, causing pain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Verbal</strong></td>
<td>Profanity, teasing</td>
<td>Teasing</td>
<td>Threatening, shouting, argument, profanity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Profanity, name-calling, talking out in class</td>
<td>Name-calling, talking out in class</td>
<td>Profanity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Bahceli Primary School, only teachers used a variety of physical terms in defining school violence, such as “shoving, fighting tooth and nail, fighting, and vulgar display of power, beating, banter, baiting, extortion, arm-twisting, brute force, and ill treatment.” Nilay, a teacher, defined school violence as a “hostile attitude” and “strong language.” She added, “It means not only physical [violence] but also aggressive behaviors and language that can hurt.”
These views were echoed by Esin, another teacher, who defined school violence as follows: “Speaking very harshly, name-calling, teasing, raising one’s voice, . . . and speaking to friends harshly.”

“It is not only beating others, but it also means pressuring others psychologically,” Selda, a teacher, said, giving an example: “If one student cannot answer a question in front of classmates, they laugh altogether.”

Parents of Bahceli Primary School defined school violence in physical terms, including “fighting, bullying, and beating.” Birsen, a parent, described it as a “show of force” that often involves “beating.” In terms of defining school violence as psychological or verbal, parents used the same terms as teachers, such as “argument and pressure” for psychological and “name-calling and shouting” for verbal.

At Park Primary School, parents said nothing about psychological violence. They defined school violence as physical with terms like “fighting” and as verbal with “profanity”; however, teachers defined school violence as physical, verbal, and also psychological.

Psychological violence was most often characterized as name-calling and ridicule at Park. Nurcan, a teacher, observed that over the past two years, she had noticed a trend in which many students ridiculed and marginalized peers without parents. “Derision is the root of violence,” Nurcan said. She added, “If one student does what the teacher asks, others call him weak. Slamming the door and leaving class without the teacher’s permission will gain a student prestige among his or her peers.” Another teacher, Fuat,
complained of “swear words” that were used inside and outside the classroom. He said that “verbal violence is common among the students, and it is noticeable during recess. Verbal threats can occur; sometimes this can be profanity.” Seref observed, “When I hear the word violence, I think of it as using bad words among students.”

Talha, another teacher at the Park Primary School, recalled difficulties he had with a student of abusive parents. Talha explained, “I talked to him and said he cannot learn, but he also prevents his friends from learning. I suggested to him that I would give individual assignments for him to do in class. But he didn’t change.” Finally, Talha informed the student that he planned to speak to the school’s administrators, and he added that he also wished to speak to the student’s parents. When Talha requested the phone number of the boy’s parents, however, he immediately panicked. “He asked me why I was going to talk to his parents, and he also said they would beat him if I were to talk to them. After we left the class, he came to me and told me that if I talked to them, bad things could also happen to me.” Talha interpreted this comment as a physical threat. “It is obvious that they are afraid of their parents and the reason for their fear is battering and violence,” he said.

Oyku, a Park Primary School teacher, defined school violence as follows: “Beating, especially within the classroom, consciously or unconsciously. The most common occurrence is for students to hit one another’s heads or legs intentionally.” She noted that this behavior often resulted in injuries, given that students, who fall frequently, hit their heads (or other body parts) on heaters or the corners of desks. Talha concurred
with this definition. “Shoving occurs all of the time in our school,” he said. “Shoving is a normal thing here.”

Nurcan, a teacher at Park Primary School, described school violence as the use of physical force against teachers. “I conceive of it as violence to teachers from sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade students over the past two years. There are teachers who have been slapped by their students in the classrooms and have been manhandled outside the school,” she said.

To sum up, Gundogdu and Bahceli Primary School teacher and parent participants defined school violence with physical terms, but Park Primary School participants also emphasized threats as a verbal violence. However, some parent participants in Gundogdu Primay School stated that teasing is common among students but not at very harsh levels. Moreover, Park Primary School teacher participants defined violence against teachers; whereas none of the other two school participants talked about verbal or physical violence against teachers in their school. Finally, school violence defined by Park participants is more serious than definitions offered by participants at the other two schools (Table 8).

**What Are the Causes of School Violence?**

The following section shows the findings and includes examples selected to represent the potential causes of school violence identified by teacher and parent participants during the course of interviews (Table 9).
Family. Both teachers and parents in Gundogdu Primary School emphasized the role of family regarding the causes of school violence; however, teachers were somewhat inconsistent with parents on this subject. On one hand, both saw “family problems,” “weakened family ties,” and “not spending time with children” as the major causes of school violence. On the other hand, teachers thought that “intolerance of families” and “parental pressure” were the causes; whereas parents considered “giving children too much freedom” and “raising a prince” as causes of school violence. Teachers generally believed that parents pressure their children to be successful in school and the best among other students. By contrast, some parent participants stated that parents often give their children too much freedom without asking anything in return or exerting authority over them. Thus, students, who have endless freedom and receive whatever they want, ask for endless compromise from everyone. If they find no compromise at school, problems ensue. At Gundogdu Primary School, Fatma, a parent, indicated that parents rarely insist that their children take responsibility for misconduct at school; however, parents do not accept the guilt of their children and hence the latter do as they please. She added that many parents are inclined to defend their children instead of teach them about personal responsibility, insisting that their children are right. She said, “If kids don’t take responsibility at school, where will they ever take responsibility? Because of this parents pressure their kids to be successful in class and the best among all other students. That’s when violence occurs in the schools.”
Some parent participants at Gundogdu Primary School indicated that students resort to violence because they do not receive enough love and affection from their parents. Nazmiye, a parent, said,

No one spends time with the children. We don’t talk to our children. When we buy something for our children, we think that we give them love. As a parent, we should directly give love to them, talk to them.

At Bahceli Primary School, teachers thought that “family structure, family neglect, lack of education, and domestic violence” may cause school violence. Nilay, a teacher, argued that uneducated and inexperienced parents were in no position to raise children properly. She claimed that some of their students’ parents are uneducated and inexperienced and the children of these kinds of parents cause problems at school. “These parents have no knowledge of education, good manners, and behavior,” she stated. Similarly, Esin, a teacher, contended that students generally reflect the families in which they were raised: “As they say, children are the mirror of their families. They reflect the behaviors [at home]. So behaviors within the family are important.”

Ozkan, another teacher at Bahceli, identified other factors in student households that appear to contribute to violent behavior. These included familial pressures to excel, parents’ tendency to indulge their children, and a general lack of affection within the household. In Ozkan’s view, such parents are usually well educated and often hold good positions. Indeed, they expect much from their children and place a great deal of pressure upon them. “The only thing they have in their minds is that their children
should study and become ‘number one.’ Parents treat the kids like race horses, and this affects the kids,” Ozkan said. He went on to speculate that familial pressures to excel are the main cause of arguments that erupt between parents and children. “Thus, this is reflected at school. If children cannot do what their parents wish, they mainly keep to themselves or reflect these feelings to their friends,” Ozkan added.

From the perspectives of parents in Bahceli, “raising children like race horses, parental pressure, and spoiling children” are the causes of school violence to some extent. Harun, a parent, agreed but also pointed to disharmony in the neighborhood: “If parents are litigiously fighting their neighbors, this affects children,” Harun said.

At Park Primary School teachers said that “disregard of parents, antagonism, the economic recession, and fragmented families” cause school violence. Some teacher participants identified the family structure as a major factor. For example, Osman, a teacher, said, “Also many parents are divorced, and the child is lacking a mother or father. Thus, children are in need of love.”

Meanwhile, some teacher participants at Park Primary School criticized parents for failing to spend time with their children. Talha, a teacher, for example, speculated that children who do not receive their parents’ attention tend to resort to violent behaviors in the classroom. He stated “one reason [for school violence] can be to attract attention. For example, if children cannot see any interest from their parents, they think they can at least capture the attention of the teacher.” He also added “the first (and most constructive) way to accomplish gaining attention is to excel academically, but many
students find this option challenging; and they tend to use violence instead.” Nurcan, another teacher from Park, concurred, noting that students crave any kind of attention even if it is largely negative. “You know, because they do not receive any attention at home, one word or request of yours, like ‘Can you throw out the trash?’ is very important for them, and they think, ‘The teacher has selected me,’” Nurcan said.

Unsurprisingly, some teacher participants at Park assumed that students tend to imitate their parents. Omer, a teacher, argued, “Students learn violence by imitating. You know, children learn most things by imitating.” Omer indicated that when school authorities contact parents about violent students, it often does little good. “They behave the same, trying to beat, accuse, or pressure their kids,” Omer continued. These views were affirmed by Selin, another teacher, who said that students were adversely affected by violence in the home. “Normally, mothers and fathers understand discipline or education as beating,” Selin said. “They think that they can discipline by beating. Thus, these kids also use violence at school. As the solution to a problem, children directly use beating and kicking.”

Park Primary parents did not specify anything other than highlighting family as a cause of school violence at Park. Naciye, a parent, observed: “There is the family effect. If a child isn’t being raised well and parents use swear words at home, the child will use the same language.” Likewise, Ummu, another parent, speculated that school violence “arises from situations in the home.”
In summary, three school participants identified family as the most important cause of school violence; however, parents’ impressions of the role of the family as a cause of school violence differed from school to school. Gundogdu Primary School participants claimed that parents pressure their children to be successful and the best among other students. Gundogdu participants also believed that parents give their students whatever they ask and fail to exert authority over their kids. By contrast, Bahceli Primary School participants noted parents’ lack of education and experience raising children as causes of problems with children. Finally, Park Primary School participants believed that fragmented families and the domestic violence students witness at home are the causes of school violence in their areas.

**Community environment.** At Gundogdu Primary School, teachers talked about “lack of available places for children to play and environmental conditions” as causes of school violence, yet parents identified no environmental causes.

According to some parent participants at Gundogdu Primary School, students use violence because they have no other outlet for burning their energy. This was expressed by some parent participants; for example, Inci said, “Kids live in apartments and have no place to run, play, and burn their energy. Thus, when they come to school, they run wild and use violence on each other.”

Neither parents nor teachers at Bahceli Primary School gave priority to the role of environment in causing school violence. Parents said nothing about environment, but a few teachers mentioned it as a “secondary issue.”
Moreover, some Bahceli Primary School parent participants stated that lack of self-expression is one of the causes of school violence. Turkan, a parent, stated,

If they cannot express themselves and cannot share their problems by talking, they express themselves through violence. They go home, but nobody listens to them. In school, they cannot express themselves easily and become cranky. And the level of unruliness rises each day.

At Park Primary School, both parent and teacher participants tended to identify students’ environment as a primary cause of school violence. Nilufer, a teacher, stated: “Children are learning, seeing, and applying. If a child sees violence, he or she will engage in it. The child has been affected by the environment in which she or he lives.” Nurcan, another teacher, for example, pointed out the high levels of criminal activity in the surrounding neighborhood. “There are too many paint-thinner addicts,” Nurcan stated. “Drug trafficking is too high. Students are being affected by these because they have become inured it.” The teacher contended that the impact of local violence “is embedded in their subconscious. We have too many students here who have witnessed a murder,” Nurcan added.

Significantly, this view was repeated by most of the parents interviewed at Park Primary School. “There isn’t any problem at the school,” said Ummu, a parent of a student enrolled at Park. “As far as environment and setting are concerned, I am happy with the school. Our neighborhood isn’t good. With respect to the environment of the school, however, the school is very good,” she continued.
This observation was echoed by Naciye, another parent who expressed serious reservations about even allowing the children outside the home. “They learn violence from their environment,” she said. “We send our kids to street or a neighbor with great hesitation. We are fearful all the time.”

**Media.** Media was viewed as a major cause of school violence by most participants. None of them thought that media is good or educational for the children. They also claimed that media is very destructive, not only for children but also for adults. When media is used in this section, it means TV series, the Internet, and the news.

In Gundogdu Primary School, for example, Ozgur, a teacher, stated,

Men who fight or use guns on TVs are shown as heroes. It shouldn’t be like that.

This is very wrong. Children imitate and want to be a hero. And to be a hero means for them to fight or kill or beat.

Furthermore, Sule, a parent, said, “Yes, they apply whatever they see on television. Recently, one boy’s leg was broken playing Smackdown, a fight game where heroes beat others until they get hurt. Another one broke his arm while he was playing Smackdown.”

Naci, another parent, stated,

Media is [the] director. For example, Tarkan, a megastar singer in Turkey, has been accused of using drugs; however, a group of fans on television tells him “Turkey is proud of you,” and [the] media shows this. Can you comprehend this devastation?
Hasan, a teacher at Bahceli Primary School, said,

There were good examples on television before. We have traditions, but these are not shown now. Since media has shown violent images on television, children want to be the wrong kind of heroes. This is not good. To show every issue or event is not right.

Esin, another teacher, argued,

Some of the cartoons prohibited in Europe are sold to our country, and there is violence in these cartoons. We have to return to ourselves. We have *Nasreddin Hoca* and other good cartoons. Some limits can be applied to cartoons or children series.

Kevser, a parent, gave an example of a children’s series and said, “It [violence] is caused by the things they see on television. For example, in a film called *Selena* the word *loser* was used too much. Now, students use that word to each other.”

At Park Primary School, both teacher and parent participants claimed that TV series and the Internet are harmful for children. Some teacher participants stated that children imitate negative characters from TV series and behave like them at school. For example, Talha, a teacher, said,

Imitating is occurring in any case. It is pretending? Children say ‘I am Polat’ [a hero in a series called *Kurtlar Vadisi*, who kills criminals but is also in the Mafia] and behave like Polat. There are some kids who want to apply everything they see from television.
Nurcan, a teacher, also claimed that children want to be heroes like these characters on TV and said,

TV series have too much effect on children. Once, when I asked third graders what they wanted to be when they grow up, most of them said they want to be Polat Alemdar. They were inspired by the heroes of the Kurtlar Vadisi series. Series in our childhood may have been silly; however, they featured neither rape nor murder.

Ummu, a parent, said, “Children are being affected [by] violent images on TV series, for example, Kurtlar Vadisi and Tek Türkiye [a TV series that takes place in southeast Turkey and is about the problems of terrorism in the southeast].”

**Cultural change.** Cultural change was also identified as a secondary cause of school violence. At Gundogdu Primary School, teacher participants discussed the influence of cultural changes and cultural degeneration on school violence. Mehmet, a teacher, said, “Our culture has degenerated mostly because of TV series and other programs in the mass media. Many things on Turkish television do not belong to our culture.”

In addition, Melek, a teacher at Gundogdu, stated:

[The] structure of the family has changed. In the past, feelings like sharing and mercy were exemplified in families without any effort; they spontaneously grew within children. However, these things started to disappear slowly. Everything started to become individualistic. People
think that what happens to others isn’t important; [what’s] important is bailing out themselves. Before, if there was someone who was in need, people were willing to help. Now, we are afraid of helping others. Maybe this was caused by the media showing terrible things too much. People started to fear everything and look at everything with doubt. When your security is threatened, you behave like that. Values are changing within society, and I believe violence is rising because of these changes.

Similarly, parent participants at Gundogdu Primary School cited loss of traditions and values as a cause of school violence. Parent participants said that their culture had degenerated and people had become individualistic. For example, Sule, a parent, said, I don’t have any time to devote to myself. Everyone is like that, and then spouses tangle with each other. Did we go to the movies? No. Did we go to the theatre? No. Did we visit any friends or neighbors? No. I went to shopping centers and did some shopping. What happened to our children? Do they visit their elders? Where are we during holidays? [We go to the pool] because your brain is overloaded. What is this? It is society.

Bahceli Primary School teachers cited “tradition and the loss of its essence” as a cause of school violence, believing that people have lost their traditions. Parents saw “showing force” as a cultural cause of school violence. In addition, teacher and parent participants at Bahceli stated that media has changed, affecting the culture of students. For example, Esin, a teacher, stated, “We have to return to ourselves [in the media]. We
had *Nasreddin Hoca* and other good cartoons before. Some limits must be applied to
cartoons or children’s series today.”

At Park Primary School participants also stated that TV series and cartoons had
changed and children were exposed to video images, including rape, murder, or other
violence. Previously, these events had not been shown on TV. As a parent Ummu said,
“Children are affected [by] violent images on TV series, for example, *Kurtlar Vadisi* and
*Tek Türkiye* [a TV series that takes place in southeast Turkey and is about the problem of
terrorism in the southeast].”

**Cultural conflict.** Gundogdu and Bahceli Primary School participants
disregarded cultural conflict; however, Park Primary School participants identified
cultural conflict as a cause of school violence because they live in a neighborhood
bearing the effects of domestic migration, that is, people from different parts of Turkey
live at the same place. Teacher participants at Park Primary School identified “the
concept of I instead of We as a cause of school violence. For example, Nilufer, a teacher,
statement, “They [people living in the Park Primary neighborhood] have too many problems
within themselves and with their neighbors. For example, they have arguments among
themselves about hometowns.” Most of the parent participants claimed that in mixed
cultural settings, it is “normal” to have violence. Violence, caused by the mixing
together of cultures, will appear in schools, also.
Melike, a parent, said, “Environment is very mixed; we are not all from same culture. It’s mixed here.”

**Peer relations.** Some participants cited peers as a cause of school violence; they stated that peers are important in some age groups, especially in Grades 6, 7, and 8. Teacher and parent participants shared the same idea that at a specific age, children imitate their peers and listen to their friends instead of their parents or teachers.

At Gundogdu Primary School, teachers said nothing about peers as a cause of school violence, but parent participants discussed the importance of peers for this age group. Ozgun, a parent stated, “For this age group, whatever their friends say is very important.”

Teacher participants of Bahceli Primary School claimed that peer groups and being a member of a peer group is important for children. Hacer, a teacher amplified this idea:

Children copy and imitate the kinds of behaviors [violent] they see in their parents, teachers, and friends. They affect one another. At some point, the child doesn’t imitate his or her parents, only his or her friends. Because of this the environment and friends of our children are very important. If their friends are rational, our children take steps accordingly. They want to belong to a group.

Parent participants at Bahceli Primary school did not mention peer relations as a cause of school violence.
At Park Primary School, teacher participants thought involvement in a group may cause school violence; likewise, parent participants expressed that bad friends affect students negatively. For example, Cemil, a parent, said,

I have a son. I sent him to school, but [he] went somewhere else. I sent him to special education, but he didn’t go. He is 12 years old. I want him to sit at home and not make trouble for other people. It can be psychological, but his friends also affect him. To keep him far from his friends, I sent him away to work, but he ran away two or three days later. He found his friends.

Some of the teacher participants at Park Primary School said gaining a reputation was a cause of school violence. In the area surrounding Park Primary School, to gain reputation among others can be achieved by using violence and being violent. Thus, teachers defined this as an individual cause of school violence. Omer, a teacher, said,

Having parents who are in prison or who have killed someone is a normal thing for these kids; they don’t feel bad about that. Also, this is a matter of pride. Yes, these kinds of things are accepted here. For example, a man who works in our cafeteria had been in prison for murder. This is a point of pride for his wife and child, and they use it to threaten others. They say that they are people whom others should fear. Of course, these kinds of things are what create reputation here.
Individual psychological problems. Many participants identified individual psychological problems as a cause of school violence; however, individual factors were also differentiated. Individual problems varied from not knowing how to communicate difficulty in self-expression, impatience, anger, envy, discipline and anger management problems, gaining a reputation, psychological problems, adolescence, diffidence, pretension, problems expending energy, and dissatisfaction.

Some teachers at Gundogdu Primary School also defined discipline and anger management as one of the individualized causes of school violence. Nese, a teacher, said that “school violence occurs because students don’t know empathy, cannot control their anger, and don’t know other methods of conflict resolution.”

Dissatisfaction of children has been defined as another emotional cause of school violence at Gundogdu Primary School. Nowadays, children have everything they want, so they become dissatisfied; and they want to taste violence as some participants mentioned. Ayla, a teacher, stated, “Parents answer all of their kids’ requests economically. Kids are dissatisfied and look for different things for themselves.”

Esra, another teacher, also claimed,

There is a dissatisfied society around us; children are negatively affected by the environment. Always it comes back to the family. While we were being raised, we had rules about what we could and could not do. We never pushed these rules. Now, these kids don’t have any boundaries. This is the most significant deficiency in our society today.
Some parents at Gundogdu Primary School asserted that students cannot relax.

Inci, a parent, said:

My 12-year-old son always studies his lessons, goes to a private cram school for additional tutoring after school and doesn’t have any time to play. I feel very sorry for him. Students cannot relax. This manifests itself as physical or psychological violence. Clever students do this verbally and less clever students do this by physical violence.

Finally, both teacher and parent participants who do not see violence in schools as a serious issue said that violence might just be caused by adolescent changes and would disappear later. For example, Nese, a teacher, said, “It is just something due to adolescence.”

At Bahceli Primary School, most of the teacher and parent participants discussed adolescence as an important cause of violence, claiming that students use violence unconsciously and without thinking about its results. Servet, a teacher, said, “It is thoughtlessness due to childhood; I can describe it as behaviors done without thinking. Instead of conscious behaviors, the events occur because of excitement coming from childhood.”

In addition, Fidan, a teacher, stated, “The child applies these as play during his or her developmental period, but he or she doesn’t think that those things can harm others.”

Teacher participants in Park Primary School also identified miscommunication or lack of communication as one cause of school violence. Most of the Park Primary School
teachers claimed that students do not know how to communicate with one another. Because they cannot express themselves with words, they use violence. Nurcan, a teacher, said, “If you don’t want to be crushed, you should crush. In here, the rules of the jungle are valid. They don’t know normal communication methods.”

Park Primary School participants also mentioned anger toward others derives from poverty. Some children resent their poverty and turn their resentment to anger, so they use violence on others. Nurcan, a teacher, stated:

During my first year of work, things were stolen from my desk and cabinet. Later, a student who was frightened came and told me the name of the student who stole things. The thief, a boy whose father died before he was born, was the leader of the gang. Then, I called that student and asked him why he was stealing. He said, “Teacher, after classes you go to a home, which is warm. You also have dinner with different foods, and you can wear warm clothes. I usually just think about what I am going to eat for the dinner because we don’t have money to buy any food.” He wrote a letter telling me that he wanted to eat good food, wear good clothes, do this, do that, etc. He said, “Because I cannot do and have all these, I am angry at you.” Students look around them and see from TV that people are in better conditions than they are, so they get angry at others.
Table 9

**Focused Coding 2: What are the Causes of School Violence Reported by School and Teachers/Parents?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gundogdu</th>
<th>Bahceli</th>
<th>Park</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family</strong></td>
<td>Family problems, no tolerance, family profile, domestic violence, weakened family ties, fragmented family, lack of communication among family members, parental pressure</td>
<td>Giving children too much freedom, raising a prince, not spending time with children, family problems</td>
<td>Family, children raised like race horses, parental pressure, spoiling children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of available places to play, environmental conditions, lack of outlets for energy</td>
<td>Living space, environment, environment as secondary issue</td>
<td>High levels of criminal activity around the school, too much migration from other regions, unemployment, violence against a child, multicultural environment, environment (marijuana, heroin), violence in everywhere, desire to become a part of society, lack of recreation centers, violence accepted as normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Environment</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Another factor in school violence identified by teacher participants at Park Primary School is envy. For example, Nurcan, a teacher, said, “We reward successful children. Sometimes, those who do not receive awards are jealous; so they use violence against other students, they get angry at you, or they don’t answer your questions.”
Some teacher participants claimed that some students suffer from psychological problems and need the help of a doctor. Omer, a teacher, stated,

A seventh-grade student, whose father had left the family long ago and whose mother also died last year, felt depressed and has some psychological problems. We sent him to a doctor. The student was diagnosed with a personality disorder. The doctor gave him some medication, which he took for a while but then quit. Today, that kid pulled a girl down in his class, beat, kicked, and injured her.

School. None of the Gundogdu Primary School participants talked about school context as a cause of school violence. Parent participants at Bahceli Primary School also lamented that children have too many responsibilities and that they have difficulty fulfilling them. They become angry easily because of the pressure they are under. Thus, some participants said that these heavy responsibilities are a cause of school violence. Most of the participants thought that students have too much schoolwork to do, another source of pressure. Harun, a parent, stated,

In school, after sixth grade, students have heavy courses and important exams, so they feel the pressure of heavy schoolwork. If a child in the development period cannot use up energy in social activities, he or she will use it up in fighting, beating, and shoving. The best way is to direct these kids to social activities. Then we can lower school violence. Our kids should be involved in sports. Children use up the energy stored in them, and after that they are not interested in other things. Children are unable to fulfill all that is expected of them at school or
at home plus complete heavy homework; they get frustrated and cannot live their childhood. Five days, they go to school and then have homework. During the weekend they spend their time at tutoring centers. Children don’t have free time. What does this do to kids? They get depressed. In any event they explode and create havoc around them.

A teacher at Park Primary School suggested that schools are so crowded that teachers and administrators cannot deal with the crowded student population. Osman, a teacher, said, “The number of students in classrooms is very high, which makes classrooms crowded. We’ve got 40 students per classroom normally.”

What Are the Types of School Violence?

The following section contains the findings related to the types of school violence (physical, psychological, drug and gun use, verbal, technological, and sexual violence) as shown in Table 10.

Physical violence. The types of physical violence that participants expressed varied from violence against teachers, fist fights, throwing stones, fighting, and hitting. Esra, a teacher from Gundogdu Primary School, said that a fight among students had resulted in one of them falling down the stairs:

The most serious physical violence that I encountered here is that while two students were fighting each other, one of them fell from the third floor, but he didn’t die. They were joking with each other near the steps. I was on duty that day, and the kid fell down near my feet. That kid stayed six or seven months in
the hospital because most of his bones were broken. I don’t know how they stay healthy. God protects them.

Parent participants at Gundogdu Primary School had little to say about this issue. Both teacher and parent participants at Bahceli Primary School stated that physical violence is the most common type of school violence. Parents did not mention anything about physical violence, but a few teachers talked about bullying.

At Park Primary School, several teacher participants stated that students mostly use their fists to show their power and sometimes they throw stones at each other. Talha, a teacher, said, “They start to argue in the classroom. After class, they start a fistfight. As a result of fights, their noses bleed, or because of throwing stones at each other, their heads can bleed.”

Nilufer, another teacher, claimed that sometimes parents have been involved in these fights: “Fighting starts and later on, parents are included. We see this kind of physical violence often.”

Teacher participants at Park Primary School also stated that physical violence is at times so severe that students were hospitalized after these fights. Selin, a teacher, stated, “At our school [Park Primary School], you can see physical violence at a very serious level. For example, one student pushed another one and his [head] swelled and bled. Another example was that one of the eighth grade students threw a first-grade student to floor. That kid had brain trauma.”
Park Primary School teacher and parent participants said that most of the time students use violence toward teachers by threatening and attacking them with knives or various cutting tools. Seref, a teacher, discussed parents coming to school to threaten teachers and said, “The first year I taught at Park, students threatened a female teacher. Also, there was a stabbing incident. Once or twice, I witnessed parents coming to school and displaying a gun to teachers or school administrators.”

Selin gave an example of what she witnessed early in her days at the school:

When I first came here, an English teacher was the victim of violence, and I was very afraid and affected. The English teacher got angry at a student and took him out of the classroom. The student came to school with a shaker, a kind of circular blade, and attacked the teacher. I didn’t know anything about violence and squatter environments at that time. I was very afraid. Hopefully nothing happened to teacher.

Naciye, a parent, said, “They used violence on teachers, I heard; but I didn’t hear that one student injured another student. I heard that one teacher had been stabbed. Maybe three years ago, I don’t know.”

Feride, another parent, said that parents come to school and threaten teachers: “Yes, I heard. They draw knives on teachers. We had a school principal who was stabbed many times. If a teacher slaps a student, that student’s parents come to school and beat the teacher.”
Drug and gun use. Only at Park Primary School did participants identify drug and gun use as a type of school violence. Both teachers and parents said that they had witnessed some students bringing guns to school and threatening others, including teachers. Selin, a teacher, said, “For example, there have been guns, knives, and other cutters in attacks inside and outside the school. Luckily, we don’t have the problem now after the police stepped in.”

Around the area of Park Primary School, people bought and sold drugs; thus, students were affected by drug trafficking. According to teacher participants, students were used in this drug trafficking. Omer, a teacher, stated, “Some students are [used] in drug trafficking. They are not addicted to the drugs; however, they are proud of this and say, ‘I used marijuana.’”

In addition, Fuat, a teacher, said, “Kids often say they are using drugs, but we don’t have any actual proof that they are using. Maybe they use outside the school, but we don’t know for sure if they use it or not.”

Even if parent participants at Park accepted problems with drug trafficking and gun use in and around school, they didn’t say much about it. They only answered interview questions with “yes” or “no.” Only Munevver, a parent, said, “Six or seven years ago one student stabbed another student; I heard [about it] but didn’t see [it].”
Verbal violence. At Gundogdu Primary School, both teacher and parent participants defined verbal violence among students as “ridicule and name-calling.” Besides, teachers stated that using swear words and jokes may also be considered as verbal violence. Students tease one another because of appearance. Nese, a teacher, discussed what happened with her own son:

Yes, I saw that with my son. He is overweight, so they hit and run and call him Fatty. My son’s reactions have become harder. I don’t approve, and we don’t have violence at home; but I think because of things he has seen, he is using violence on his friends.

At Bahceli Primary School, both teacher and parent participants treated discussion and small arguments among children as verbal violence. In addition, teachers identified obscene language and giggling to disrupt the lesson. Nilay, one of the teachers, said, “The most common [violence] we encounter is that during class, when a student cannot answer a question, others are cruel and say, ‘You don’t know the answer.’ This is the only thing I witnessed.”

Kevser, a parent participant, stated, “I can give an example about my daughter. Her friends teased her about her name as well. If a child has glasses, they can tease about that.”

At Park Primary School, derision and obscenities among children were cited by teachers as an example of verbal violence; however, parent participants had little to say about this issue much and did not identify anything as verbal violence.
**Sexual violence.** Sexual abuse has been a covert issue in Turkey in the past, but by the time of this writing, people had begun to speak of it; however, the issue was still not talked about openly and easily. Thus, most children who have been sexually abused cannot tell others about what they have lived through or witnessed because talking about sexual abuse is considered shameful in Turkish culture. Fortunately, sexual violence is identified as a type of school violence to be discussed by teachers and parents in this study. Thus, I asked them whether any kind of sexual violence had occurred in their schools. After I brought it up, they talked about the issue openly.

Both teacher and parent participants at Gundogdu and teachers at Park Primary identified the verbal harassment of girls as sexual violence. In addition, teachers at Gundogdu mentioned boys beating up girls. Fuat, a teacher from Gundogdu Primary School, stated, “There is a separation between girls and boys in friendship. As a result of this, boys direct violence at girls, beating or hitting them. Boys take girls’ belongings. Generally, boys direct violence at girls.”

None of the participants in Bahceli Primary School identified sexual abuse as a type of school violence.

Although parents at Park Primary School mentioned nothing about sexual violence, teachers cited sexual abuse as a kind of sexual violence. Oyku, a teacher at Park, said, “Not only physical violence but also in sixth, seventh, and eighth grades, there is sexual violence.”

Omer, another teacher, said, “Boys harass girls verbally to offend them.”
**Cyber bullying.** Cyber bullying was identified by teachers of Gundogdu and parents of Bahceli Primary Schools as one type of school violence, but Park Primary School participants did not mention the issue. In terms of cyber bullying, teachers at Gundogdu talked about “games with violent content and bombardment with text messages or emails.” Ahmet, a teacher at Gundogdu Primary School, said,

> They can reach each other by using technology. They tease each other by using messages on Facebook. They do photomontages and upload photos of others to the Internet. Sometimes parents become involved in this. Sometimes parents come to school saying, “My kid is being harassed by messages.”

In contrast, Nese, a teacher from Gundogdu, said that these are normal activities for this age group, adding, “Sometimes during the adolescent period these behaviors can be seen. Boys take photos under girls’ skirts.”

Bahceli Primary School teachers didn’t talk about this issue, but parents identified cyber bullying with cell phones. Birsen, a parent, said,

> Another girl used cyber bullying against my daughter. For one or two days my daughter was bothered. That girl spoke negatively about my daughter in their group of friends. She was sending messages from the Internet and [her] cell phone. All of their friends saw the messages.
**Psychological violence.** Some teacher participants believed that some well-educated and wealthy parents are authoritative and want their kids to be perfect; thus, they pressure their kids about their behaviors or grades. Because Gundogdu Primary School is in a wealthy district, teachers at this school have seen problems resulting from family pressure. Nese, a teacher, said,

Yes, for example, it has been said to teachers’ children that your mother or father is a teacher, so you should be a successful student. Compared with others, only the size of violence is different. While [the] education level is rising, psychological pressure and violence are also rising.

Hilal, another teacher, stated,

I saw a student who was crying a lot in the restroom. I thought one student beat her and asked her why she was crying. She said that she got an 80% in one of her classes. We stayed with her for a while to calm her down. This is probably because of pressure from the family.

Moreover, parent participants at Gundogdu Primary School described teasing as a form of psychological violence. Canan, a parent, talked about her son:

Psychological violence is [done] more [often]. They tease each other because of their physical appearance. For example, they tease my son because he has braces on his teeth. I had many problems with this. He said he didn’t want to wear [the braces]. He also says “I am already wearing glasses and braces and I am also fat. Why am I so ugly?”
Table 10

Focused Coding 3. What Are the Types Of School Violence Reported by School and Teachers/Parents?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gundogdu Teachers</th>
<th>Gundogdu Parents</th>
<th>Bahceli Teachers</th>
<th>Bahceli Parents</th>
<th>Park Teachers</th>
<th>Park Parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical Violence</td>
<td>Shoving, damaging school property</td>
<td>Physical violence, kicking</td>
<td>Bullying</td>
<td></td>
<td>Pressure, beating up teachers, physical, fist fights, fighting</td>
<td>Fights, argument, beating up teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug and Gun Use</td>
<td>Using obscenities, ridiculing, name-calling, jokes as verbal violence</td>
<td>Ridiculing, name-calling</td>
<td>Discussion, obscene language, giggling to disrupt the lesson</td>
<td></td>
<td>Threatening with a knife or gun, bringing a gun to school, drug possession</td>
<td>Threatening with a knife or gun, bringing a gun to school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal Violence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>Derision, swearword</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Violence</td>
<td>Verbal harassment of girls by boys, boys beating up girls</td>
<td>Verbal harassment of girls</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sexual abuse, verbal harassment of girls by boys</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyber Bullying</td>
<td>Games with violent content, bombardment with SMS or emails</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Violence via cell phone</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological Violence</td>
<td>Family pressure</td>
<td>Teasing</td>
<td></td>
<td>Teasing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At Bahceli Primary School, teacher participants claimed that students tease each other because of childishness, and teasing is destructive and harms the psyche of others; parents, however, did not identify psychological violence. Parent participants said
nothing on this. Neither teacher nor parent participants at Park Primary School addressed psychological violence (Table 10).

**Where is School Violence Primarily Found?**

In the current study areas with low SES and squatter areas were identified by the participants as places where school violence is primarily found. Few participants said that location is unimportant, but multicultural settings that matter (Table 11).

**Areas with low SES and squatter areas.** Most teacher and parent participants at all three schools (Gundogdu, Bahceli, and Bahceli) agreed that if the income level of the area is low, then violence can occur. A teacher from Gundogdu Primary School stated, “We don’t see violence here [at Gundogdu Primary School], but I believe there is violence in ghettos.”

Esin, a teacher at Bahceli Primary School said, “It is mostly seen in suburbs. In places where economic problems exist, children have no place for social and sporting activities, and there is no playground where children can burn off their energy.”

Nilufer, a teacher at Park Primary School, said, “For me, this environment is the place that violence occurs at greater frequencies; I mean in low income areas. They have too many problems within themselves and with their neighbors. For example, they have arguments among themselves about hometowns.”

In addition, Selin, another teacher, said that school violence “mostly occurs in people who don’t have economic freedom.” Selin went on to say, “You notice students
who have financial difficulty or who have separated parents. They become crueler than others.”

**Multicultural settings.** Even though I mentioned nothing about culture as the interviewer, participants believed that if an area becomes home to too many immigrants from different cultures, conflict and violence will erupt. Although the Gundogdu Primary School teachers said nothing about this subject, parents stated that family environment is important; and Bahceli Primary School teachers claimed that cultural differences are important in identifying places where violence is likely to occur, but Bahceli parent participants were silent on this issue.

Teacher participants at Park Primary School asserted that in places where mixed groups exist, violence is evident. The area surrounding Park Primary School is multicultural, and people without jobs come to the city of Ankara for better lives, according to the participants. Fuat, a teacher, said:

*Especially if people come from different regions and if the place is overrun with immigrants, violence occurs. People from different cultures live together, and if these people don’t have an understanding of each other or their differences, then intense violence could occur.*

Parent participants at Park Primary School did not cite multiculturalism as an issue in the occurrence of violence.

Table 11 below shows clearly what participants said about the primary location of school violence, in what district or area it takes place.
Table 11

*Focused Coding 4: Where Is School Violence Primarily Found Reported by School and Teachers/Parents?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gundogdu</th>
<th>Bahceli</th>
<th>Park</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teachers</strong></td>
<td>Slum, areas with low SES,</td>
<td>Ghetto, low-income family,</td>
<td>Neighborhoods with a preponderance of immigrants from different regions, schools in undeveloped regions, areas with low SES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>economic situation,</td>
<td>outskirts</td>
<td>In here (Park Primary School environment)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>outskirts</td>
<td>Low income family, slum,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>disorganized places</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parents</strong></td>
<td>Importance of family</td>
<td>Cultural difference</td>
<td>Places with mixed groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>environment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Low SES, squatter areas</strong></td>
<td><strong>Teachers</strong></td>
<td><strong>Parents</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Multicultural settings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**What is the Level of School Violence in Turkey?**

Participants did not state a common understanding of whether school violence is on the rise or decline or at the same level in Turkey. They stated that school violence could be the same, increasing, or decreasing (Table 12).

At Gundogdu Primary School, some teacher participants claimed that violence is increasing; others argued that the level isn’t increasing, but the media is exaggerating school violence, which existed earlier but is in the news more nowadays. Ali, a teacher, said, “The media exaggerates. In the past violence was 10 times more serious than now. This is my opinion. Now violence is very low. In my childhood, violence was more common.” Parent participants at this school thought that school violence is increasing.
Both teacher and parent participants of Bahceli Primary School stated that violence is increasing; however, thoughts varied at Park Primary School. Some participants at Park Primary School believed that because social and economic pressures are increasing, violence both among citizens and students are also increasing. Omer, a teacher, said, “I believe that [violence] is increasing seriously. Social tension causes this.”

Feride, a parent, said,

[Violence] has increased since the past, when we slept with our windows and doors open. Nothing was happening—no murder and no robbery. We came home at midnight from our friends or neighbors, and nothing happened. But now we are afraid even in daylight.

Opposed to people who believe school violence is increasing, other participants at Park Primary School conveyed the idea that school violence is decreasing with regard to their past situations. For example, Talha, a teacher, said,

When we look at the past, it is decreasing. In the past there was one stabbing after another in a school, but we didn’t hear about it. Now, one event occurs per year in a school, but we hear of it quickly; and [the event is] very bad.

Nurcan, another teacher, said,

It is decreasing because our school’s previous name was Yenisehir Primary School. In those times, violence was prevalent, and our teacher friends were beaten. One parent came to a teachers’ room and threatened to kill all of us.
After that event, the Head of Ankara Police Department, Mr. Ertuğrul, took steps to protect the school; and violence in the school decreased.

The parents at Park Primary School had similar thoughts. Ummu said, “For me, it is decreasing. According to the past, it is more organized. School is organized now.”

Table 12

Focused Coding 5: What Is the Level of School Violence in Turkey Reported by School and Teachers/Parents?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gundogdu</th>
<th>Bahceli</th>
<th>Park</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreasing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing</td>
<td>Increasing, increased, heard more than before, formerly physical violence, psychological now and more</td>
<td>Increasing</td>
<td>Increased, happening in 80s, decreased and increased again, increasing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same</td>
<td>Existed before but heard about more nowadays</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What is the Level of School Violence among Girls?

This question and topic were added to the interview questions after two interviews with teachers. While we talked about sexual violence, I heard some participants state that violence among girls is increasing and is more severe than among boys. Participants provided their ideas about the level of violence among girls as shown in Table 13.

At Gundogdu Primary School, teacher participants made the following comments about violence among girls: “more dangerous than boys, existence of psychological violence, and girls behaving like boys.” Specifically, teacher Ali said, “Girls are behaving like boys.” Moreover, “Lately, girls are more apt to become involved with violence. We see on television that girls are fighting over boys and also that they use knives in their fights,” he added. Parent participants mentioned nothing about violence among girls.

At Bahceli Primary School, both teacher and parent participants realized that violence among girls exists, but teachers said that it occurred at a low level and was not a serious issue. Fidan, a teacher, said, “In adolescence, girls want to be accepted by others. Because of this, they do things that start as jokes and might turn into fights. I don’t believe those are intentional but are common in the adolescent period.”

At Park Primary School, parent participants said nothing about violence among girls, but teacher participants believed it starts as quarrels. Fuat, a teacher, said, “I should say that sometimes when girls have disagreements, they can use violence on each other.”
Osman, another teacher, said, “There are small things due to jealousy. [These are generally] verbal arguments, but some of them can turn into small fights, not big ones. When we talk to them individually, they [these small fights] are solved.”

Table 13 shows that girl-on-girl violence was observed at every school but only at Gundogdu did teachers find it to be serious.

Table 13

*Focused Coding 6: What is the Level of School Violence among Girls Reported by School and Teachers/Parents?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gundogdu</th>
<th>Bahceli</th>
<th>Park</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Increasing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Becoming more like a boy</td>
<td>Gundogdu</td>
<td>Bahceli</td>
<td>Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>More serious than boys’ fights</strong></td>
<td>Gundogdu</td>
<td>Bahceli</td>
<td>Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More dangerous, existence of psychological violence</td>
<td>Gundogdu</td>
<td>Bahceli</td>
<td>Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Not very serious</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gundogdu</td>
<td>Bahceli</td>
<td>Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict, exists but small, not very serious</td>
<td>Gundogdu</td>
<td>Bahceli</td>
<td>Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exists</td>
<td>Gundogdu</td>
<td>Bahceli</td>
<td>Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exists, quarrel</td>
<td>Gundogdu</td>
<td>Bahceli</td>
<td>Park</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Additional Topic: Solutions

Although this finding did not contribute to the research questions for this study, participants made statements about solutions to school violence in Turkey. During interviews, some participants suggested solutions, such as volunteerism, love, family education, teaching methods of self-expression to adolescents, and authority (see Table 14).

Volunteerism. At Park Primary School, a few teacher participants believed that if teachers were to volunteer more and work harder, the issue of school violence could be solved. Arda, a teacher, said:

A principal has essential duties. In addition, he or she can do volunteer work. We believe that we can [eliminate violence] with volunteer workers. In places where there is violence, you can adjust by volunteerism. If you come at 8 a.m. and go home at 6 p.m., you cannot do anything. In these kinds of places [Park Primary School], normal teacher duties aren’t enough; teachers should teach, work, and struggle. And you receive excellent results at the end. We had good results. In the past there was violence, and students were using obscenities; but now I can say that violence is little if any and the use of obscenities is decreasing. When we apply alternatives and offer different methods to students, it works. For example, if I talk to students without beating them, they do the same to their friends.
**Love.** At Gundogdu and Park Primary Schools, teacher participants focused on love and care as one solution to violence, but parent participants did not address the subject of love. Teachers said that if there is love of work and of people, school violence can be solved. Ahmet, a teacher from Gundogdu Primary School, said, “If you communicate without violence, there will be no violence. There will be love instead of violence. It happens with mutual dialog. I mean, the basis of all is love.”

**Family education.** At both Gundogdu and Park Primary Schools, participants discussed the importance of family education in preventing violence. At Gundogdu Primary School, teacher participants identified “parental education on child rearing” and “involving parents in education” as a solution to violence, and parent participants claimed “parental awareness” can be a solution. For example, Ozgur, a teacher, said, “We provide education in schools that is disconnected from parents. This is wrong. Especially in primary school, we should include parents in education. Parents should know the things we taught to students or we did in school.”

Likewise, Park Primary School teacher participants discussed the importance of educating families on preventing violence. They claimed that no matter what governments or educators do in schools and no matter what they do with students about school violence, if families do not become educated about the issue, nothing will change. Education in schools should be connected with homes. Thus, Nilüfer, a teacher, said, “We should educate parents, not only mothers but also fathers. Otherwise, we can’t do anything just with children.”
Teaching methods of self-expression. At Gundogdu Primary School, teacher participants believed that since students do not know how to express themselves, they use violence. Thus, they stated that to solve the issue of school violence, students should be taught methods of self-expression. Melek, a teacher, said, “Not only listening but also expressing themselves and controlling anger should be taught. This shouldn’t be done just for some groups of people; we should apply this to the whole society. We should teach that anger is an emotion to be expressed and how to do so.”

Although Bahceli Park Primary School participants said nothing on this solution, Park Primary School teachers recommended “presenting alternative methods in dealing with school violence” to solve the problem of violence at schools. No parent participants at any of the schools talked about this solution.

Authority. Whereas Gundogdu Primary School teacher participants stated nothing about how parents express their authority over their children, parent participants said that most of the parents other than themselves are easy-going and can easily be persuaded; they do whatever their kids want. Therefore, they thought that authority is a must and parents shouldn’t give too much freedom to their kids; students should know their roles and responsibilities. To solve the problem of school violence, Nuray, a parent, said,

As a mother and a teacher I believe that a child shouldn’t grow [up] without respect for authority. A child should know where to stop, how far he or she can
go, and what he or she should do and where. When we look at successful students, we see that those kids have rules.

Table 14

*Focused Coding 7: Solutions Reported by School and Teachers/Parents*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gundogdu Teachers</th>
<th>Gundogdu Parents</th>
<th>Bahceli Teachers</th>
<th>Bahceli Parents</th>
<th>Park Teachers</th>
<th>Park Parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Volunteerism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family education</td>
<td>Parental education, involving parents in education</td>
<td>Parental consciousness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-expression methods</td>
<td>Activities dispatching to think</td>
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Summary of the Findings

After I gathered the transcripts and completed free and focused coding, major topics of the study revealed themselves mainly to parallel the interview questions. Some participants volunteered solutions to school violence, which constitutes the seventh topic. These topics are definition of school violence, causes of school violence, types of school violence, place where school violence is likely to take place, level of school violence, violence among girls, and solutions to school violence in Turkish schools (Table 15).

The definition of violence given by participants included verbal, physical, psychological, and sexual violence. The second major topic, causes of school violence, showed great variance across participants; however, family was the most important cause that most participants noted during the interviews. In addition to family, environment, peers, individuals, media, responsibilities, culture, and schools were other causes mentioned by the participants.

Under types of school violence, verbal, physical, psychological and sexual violence were mentioned.

The places where school violence was observed most by participants were schools serving a population with low SES and less educated families, in ghetto-like areas where squatting is common, and where people from multiple cultural backgrounds and migrants reside.

With regard to the topic of whether school violence in Turkey and in the three schools under consideration was increasing, only Park Primary School participants, who
previously witnessed more violence, stated mostly that school violence is decreasing.

Gundogdu and Bahceli Primary School participants claimed that school violence is the same, but the media exaggerates it.

Under the fifth major topic school violence among girls—some participants stated that girl-on-girl violence is a covert issue and isn’t talked about openly, but some stated it was more serious than violence among boys.

Finally, some participants suggested solutions to school violence even though the study did not focus on solutions for school violence; these included volunteerism, love, family education, the teaching methods of self-expression, and authority. Table 15 shows how the topics that emerged matched the interview questions.
Table 15

*Emerging Topics by Interview Questions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Questions (1-7) and Emerging Topics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1- Definition of School Violence</td>
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<td>• Verbal</td>
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<td>2- Causes of School Violence</td>
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<td>3- Types of School Violence</td>
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<td>4- Place of School Violence</td>
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<td>• Low SES</td>
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<td>• Low Education</td>
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<td>• Ghetto and squatter</td>
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<td>• Different Culture and Migration</td>
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<td>5- Level of School Violence in Turkey and in three Schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Increasing</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Decreasing</td>
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<td>• Same media is exaggerating</td>
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<td>6- School Violence Among Girls</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Increasing</td>
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<tr>
<td>• More serious</td>
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<td>• Not very serious</td>
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<td>7- Solutions</td>
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CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study was based on the premise that school violence is and will be a persistent problem all over the world, including in Turkey. Many studies on school violence have been conducted around the world, yet have been done on school violence in Turkey. The inadequacy of academic work reflects the lack of openness about school violence common in Turkey. The purpose of this study was to investigate the impressions of teachers and parents regarding school violence in three different school settings. Through an inductive and exploratory process, new insights pertaining to school violence in Turkish schools were obtained by examining how teachers and parents define school violence and what they say may be some of the causes.

The justification for conducting this study in the manner chosen is that the studies in Turkey have covered only one type of school violence, and only two studies have shown the entirety of school violence. This study focused on school violence as a whole. One objective of this study was to contribute to the literature a new study on school violence in Turkey. Another objective was to gain knowledge about how teachers and parents define school violence, which may help academicians and practitioners in the field develop new and effective intervention and prevention programs. The suggestions of teachers and parents are valuable for dealing with the problem of school violence. Scholars may observe and have knowledge about the issue beforehand; however, people who are
actually living in the close proximity to the events may be more useful in pointing out the problem.

This section contains the findings and results of the study based on the analysis of data obtained from interviews and from the researcher’s reflective journals and field notes.

**Teachers and Parents Trivialize the School Violence Problem**

Akiba (2002) claimed that school violence has become an important problem requiring attention in many countries. The increasing seriousness of school violence around the world is undermining both the reality and the perception of school as a safe place; however, some teacher and parent participants at Gundogdu and Bahceli Primary Schools trivialize the school violence issue. When I specifically asked about some types of violence, they responded to me by saying, “If you assume that is violence, . . .” In addition, some teacher participants at Gundogdu Primary School stated that what some call violence actually results from adolescence. Finally, some parent participants at Gundogdu and Bahceli Primary School think some behaviors are jokes, such as shoving, using obscenities, and hurting each other. One of the teacher participants at Gundogdu Primary School said, “These are generally jokes, and some of them are mostly sweet jokes. In short, most people trivialize school violence in Turkey. This is very bad because if we do not accept those things as a problem, we cannot solve it.”

Even if school violence exists in Turkish schools, most of the teacher participants at Gundogdu Primary School and parent participants at Park Primary School did not want
to talk about violence in their schools. For example, in Gundogdu, a wealthy public school, one teacher helped me find a volunteer for possible participation in the study; however, she said to the teacher volunteer (I overheard her), “Don’t mention anything about violence in school; she [pointing to me] is going to report this to America.” When I interviewed the teacher volunteer, she said that they did not have any violence in their school; however, other teachers discussed girls cutting their arms with razor blades, students cutting computer cables, and one bullied student who was injured after being pushed and falling from the third floor. To give another example, while I was interviewing a parent at the school, the president of the school council interrupted her and said, “Why do you talk about that? Just mention the superior things.”

Causes of School Violence

Drawing on the data, I sought to identify the thoughts of teachers and parents regarding potential causes of violence witnessed in Turkish schools. When discussing the causes of such violence, most participants stressed that the influence of the family is decisive. Other common causes of school violence discussed in the interviews include environment and the media. In addition, some participants cited the impact of profanity, jokes, popular culture, peer pressure, individual problems, personal responsibilities, and pressures associated with school (see Table 9).

Family

Although teacher and parent participants at Gundogdu Primary School agree on the role of family regarding the causes of school violence, they presented different ideas.
Teachers think that “intolerance in families” and “parental pressure” are the causes whereas parents considered “giving children too much freedom” and “raising a prince” as causes of school violence. Parents at Bahceli Primary School cite “raising children like a race horse, parental pressure, and spoiling children” as the causes of school violence to some extent; however, Park Primary School teachers who participated in the study think that “disregard, antagonism, economic recession, and fragmented family” cause school violence.

In the existing literature, parent and family influences are identified among the major causes of school violence and aggressive student behavior. For example, Price and Everett (1997) stated that parental supervision and involvement in children’s school life are very important factors influencing school children. In addition, some researchers of school violence have investigated whether being abused at home or witnessing violence in the home increases the likelihood that a child will be aggressive at school (Hoffman, 1996).

Analyzing the data, I found that most of the participants said that family is very important because early learning in children takes place in the family. Schools educate children, but when students return home, they are with their parents again. Thus, we should not only educate children but also their parents. In almost every interview some comments related to parents.

This study parallels existing Turkish literature. Hatipoglu-Sumer and Cetinkaya (2004) stated that factors contributing to school violence on the family level were
violence at home, parental apathy, negligence, and parental support of aggressive behavior. Similar to Hatipoglu-Sumer and Cetinkaya (2004), Yerin-Guneri and Cakir (2003) found family as one of the contributing factors of school violence; however, these researchers did not mention family or parents as a major cause of school violence.

Similar to this study, Hatipoglu-Sumer and Cetinkaya collected data from teachers, parents, and students; yet one cannot conclude that teachers’ and parents’ identifying familial problems and parenting styles as a number one cause of school violence is typical to this study. Moreover, in existing literature, studies have been done in only one setting; whereas this study was conducted in three different socio-economic settings. Teachers and parents from both wealthy and poor neighborhoods identifying parents as a key problem is an unusual and specific finding in Turkish literature.

Environment

At Park Primary School, both teacher and parent participants tend to identify students’ environment as a primary cause of school violence. Nevertheless, while teachers in Gundogdu Primary School talk about “lack of available places for children to play and environmental conditions” as a cause of school violence, parents do not identify any environmental factors as possible causes of school violence. Both parents and teachers at Bahceli Primary School do not give priority to the role of environment in causing school violence. Although parents said nothing about the environment, a few teachers mentioned it as a “secondary issue.”
However, existing literature on school violence in other countries indicates that community and local neighborhood crime rates and direct measures of community disorganization are the strongest indicators of school violence (Laub & Lauritsen, 1998). Thus, existing literature also indicates community and neighborhood as one of the major causes of school violence; thus findings of the current study are unusual with regard to the existing literature of other countries because participants saw the family as the more pressing source of the problem. This may be so because Turkish people attach considerable importance to the responsibility of family and parents on raising children and students’ behaviors.

In addition, beside teachers, parents also stated that parents are responsible for children’s aggressive and violent behaviors; however, parents blamed other parents and not themselves, following a general tendency to blame others.

Some of the teachers at Park Primary School define the lack of places for social activities as one of the causes of school violence. Because students do not have after-school programs and places to engage in constructive activity, they play and spend time on the streets, where they learn violence from adults. After school and on weekends, students have few opportunities for social activities and, thus, choose to kill time or do homework. Three or four parks and playgrounds are located near the school in Bahceli, but no such parks are located around Park Primary School. Thus, students at Park do not know about cinema or theatre and lack the opportunity to take courses, in which they can
learn new things; therefore, they tend to play in the school yard, witness, and imitate adults using profanity, selling drugs, and fighting.

**TV Series and Children**

Many violent TV series appear on Turkish channels. Numerous participants at all three schools stated that children learn by imitating the heroes of these series who kill others or who have and use guns. I heard from almost all participants that children want to be Polat or Ezel; they imitate the clothing and mannerisms of their TV heroes. Thus, they said that images in the media affect children negatively and media is directing kids to be violent. As a result, no matter who kills or is killed, someone is nevertheless violently killed. Teacher participants also stated that most parents watch these films together with their kids and say to their sons, “You are my Polat,” or to their girls, “You are my Ezel.” Teachers feel that many TV series negatively affect children; however, parents also directly or indirectly support this by allowing them to watch these films. In fact, although parents blame TV series and Internet games for being violent, teacher participants stated that “parents are leading their kids to watch or play violent games and series by calling their kids by the names of the heroes of series or watching these series together.” Some participants indicated that most of their students watch some television programs containing violence with their parents.

**Cultural Conflict**

From the analysis of the current study, I found a less known but still important cause of school violence: disagreements among people of different cultural backgrounds.
In a community, members of minority cultures may feel alienated from the larger mainstream culture. The feeling that the larger society does not respect members of their community and that the lives of members of their community are viewed as shameful contributes to this sense of alienation (Hoffman, 1996, p. 228). Laub and Lauritsen (1998) drew two broad conclusions from studies that examined the causes of school violence in American schools. First, neighborhood conditions, such as high population turnover and loss, heterogeneity, poverty, and family structure, are strong indicators of a neighborhood’s violence and general crime rate.

Heterogeneity and alienation from the popular culture may cause violence. For example, violence has occurred and continues to occur at Park Primary School. The demographics of that neighborhood include migrants from eastern, southeastern, northern and southern parts of Turkey who came to Ankara to find jobs; however, many remain unemployed. Unfortunately, some turn to theft and other crimes; and because they come from different backgrounds and cultures, they experience difficulty getting along, which may result in fighting and violence. These problems are reflected in schools.

Because no previous studies have been conducted in areas of differing SES, no previous Turkish studies have mentioned cultural conflict as a cause of violence. Furthermore, in Turkey, talking about and discussing rights and differences among ethnicities and groups is still taboo, participants may have been reluctant to talk about cultural conflict and its influence on violence and school violence.
Cultural Change

Clearly, most of the participants at the three schools determined that cultural change and degeneration is a secondary cause of school violence. Both teacher and parent participants agree that Turkish cultural structure is changing with negative influences from other countries; in fact, most of the participants believe that old Turkish culture was better than the current situation. They gave examples of visiting relatives, neighbors and spending holidays at grandparents’ homes. They also stated that media culture had also changed and affected the culture of children. Decades ago, innocent and silly series or cartoons appeared on TV; however, current TV series and programming features violence. Thus, cultural change and degeneration were suggested as causes of school violence.

Cultural change has not been identified as a cause of school violence in existing Turkish literature perhaps because those studies did not include the views of a large enough number of participants to collect varied thoughts and ideas.

School Context Problem

In American schools, Gottfredson and Gottfredson (1985) found that school resources, governance, and administration independently influence school violence, in addition to the effects of community disorganization. Despite the evidence of school context as one cause of school violence found in previous studies, only one teacher participant at Park Primary School talked about crowded classrooms (almost 40 students
in a classroom) as a possible cause of violence in school. Other teachers and parents cited family, media, and environment as causes.

The literature on school violence suggests that large schools with crowded classrooms, where teachers cannot give enough attention to each student and where school administration cannot easily carry out discipline, face many violent events during the school year. Moreover, in previous studies (Yerin-Guneri & Cakir, 2003; Hatipoglu-Sumer & Cetinkaya, 2004) school-based and school-related factors have been determined as causes of school violence.

**Sexual Violence**

Although the prevalence of sexual abuse has been studied in many countries, in Turkey a scarcity exists in both hospital- and community-based studies. Various pediatric, forensic, psychiatric, and clinical case studies and only one community-based study have been carried out in recent years (Tirtil-Taskiranoglu, 2001; Tutkun et al., 1998). The majority of sexual abuse cases are not reported to child protective services because of the nature of Turkish culture: Reporting incidents of sexual abuse is believed to ruin the victim’s reputation, especially if the victim is female. Thus, victims, especially females, do not easily talk about it and most often prefer to keep the abuse secret.

Recently, however, according to the participants of the study, sexual violence has been recognized as a problem and has been discussed in schools. In fact, when I brought
it up and asked about sexual violence among students during interviews, the participants didn’t hesitate to talk about the existence of sexual violence in schools.

**Girl-on-Girl Violence**

Surprisingly, the results show that many teacher and parent participants believe that violence among girls is increasing, and sometimes these can be more serious than violence among boys. This issue was raised by the participants while we talked about sexual violence.

Recent research by feminists from outside the field of bullying has shown that females have a long history of violence against one another (Chesney-Lind & Shelden, 2004). In Turkey, previous studies have not focused on violence among Turkish females, and a lack of information exists about girl-on-girl violence; however, this study shows that girl-on-girl violence exists in Turkish schools and teachers and parents think that kind of violence may be more destructive than boy-on-boy fights.

Some of the teacher participants at Gundogdu and Park Primary Schools stated that girls’ violence is increasing. Girls were different in the past in that they were quiet and feminine, but now they are like boys; and some parents blame mothers for this turn. Because some mothers are domestically under pressure and do not have an education, they want their daughters to be outstanding and have self-confidence; however, the girls also behave violently toward one another and can cause harm. Most fights involving girls derive from jealousy and envy. Girls shout at one another, but these shouting
incidents, which sometime are about boys, can lead to stabbing, according to some parents.

Two teacher participants at Park Primary School stated that girls’ violence is more dangerous than boys’ because boys express themselves with power, such as fighting and behaving roughly. Identifying girls with problems is difficult because they generally keep secret their emotions until they explode. Because girls are generally involved with psychological violence, their involvement with violence can be more destructive than boys, some participants stated.

The results of the study show that teacher and parent participants argue that among girls in Turkish schools violence is increasing and girls are behaving like boys. Some participants stated that girl fights and arguments can be more dangerous than those among boys because girls’ violence is more psychological and boys’ is more physical; furthermore, identifying violence and envy among girls is difficult. By contrast boys hit one another, and the violence among them is over; however, girls’ violence does not cease until one girl feels ashamed at school.

Additional Findings

Definition of School Violence

Virtually all teachers and parents who participated in this study expressed their opinions about the definition of school violence in very different ways. Initially, I felt a need to clarify the meaning of school violence as treated in this study, given that most of the parents did not appear to understand what I was asking them about. In time, however,
they voiced their own unique opinions, ideas, and feelings on the subject of school violence. Some of the participants defined school violence as physical, but others defined it as psychological or verbal.

Even if too much name-calling and teasing occur in Turkish schools; most people ignore or trivialize it. Beside the conformity, this study found that such trivialization was approved by the participants. Children usually name-call based on physical appearance; however, teachers and parents neither saw it as a problem nor mentioned it until I asked them. They also said, “If you call it violence...” However, Wessler (2003) stated that psychological violence may be more destructive to one’s personality than physical violence. Wounds on one’s body will disappear, but wounds of the heart or brain do not disappear easily and may remain with an individual forever. In short, name-calling and teasing exist in all three schools, but participants saw these as normal and not part of their definition of violence.

Taken as a whole, this section describes the manner in which the definition of school violence varies from person to person and place to place. As noted, school violence was characterized in many ways, including physical beating, verbal threats, profanity, shoving, failure to obey rules, and hostile attitudes.

**Self-Expression**

Teacher participants at Park Primary School said that most students see beating or fighting their peers or neighbors as a means of self-expression or solving their problems. Their parents beat them when they do something wrong; thus, they think that beating
others can help solve problems or express oneself better. In districts with high or medium SES (Gundogdu or Bahceli), some students are not heard by their parents. Most parents do not listen to their children or pretend to listen. Children then try to express themselves in other ways to gain attention by making trouble at home or school. Behaving badly or becoming involved with violence is a way of gaining attention or expressing oneself.

**Variation in Type by SES of School**

At both Park and Gundogdu Primary Schools, families pressure their children and mistreat them according to teacher participants. At Park Primary School, mistreatment is physical, and families beat their children; at Gundogdu Primary School, this violence is psychological, and they use psychological pressure on their children. For example, during the interviews at Park Primary School, the deputy principal told me about a female parent I had just interviewed. Just after she had left, the principal said to me, “She beats her students with a hose when they spit on other kids.”

Another teacher participant at Gundogdu Primary School said,

I saw a student who was crying a lot in the restroom. I thought one student beat her and asked why she was crying. She said that she got an 80% in one of her classes. We stayed with her for a while to calm her down. This is probably because of pressure from the family.

She was crying because of emotional stress and pressure. In wealthy environments, parents have university educations and good jobs and want their children to be perfect,
refusing to accept failure. Moreover, when I first entered Gundogdu Primary School, I talked with the school principal. During our very first conversation, he said,

There was a kid who had many problems, not getting along with his friends and making trouble during classes. Teachers talked to him, but he didn’t say anything to them. I called him in my office, and we talked as friends. At last, he told me that his parents told him not to come home if he got a grade under 100% in one of his classes. We assumed that this psychological pressure resulted in his violent behavior in school.

**Place of School Violence**

Because the types and causes of school violence differ from place to place and from participant to participant, identifying where the school violence is found is crucial. In this study, most participants believed that places with low SES, squatter areas, and ghettos are the sites where school violence is most prevalent. Few participants said that location is unimportant, but culture is another important issue. Thus, the participants had different opinions regarding violence and location.

The interviewees at all three schools provided different answers to the question concerning places where violence is most likely to occur. Initially, many stated that violence can be seen in areas with low SES, squatter areas, and ghettos; however, after pondering the idea, they said that violence was not just related to money or economic situations. Some participants at Park and Gundogdu Primary Schools added that conflict among people of different cultures impacts everything from economy to education. They
many poor people live in the neighborhood, but they are not involved in any violence or inappropriate behavior.

Based on the data from this section, participants determined places of school violence in Turkey: (a) places with low SES, (b) ghettos and squatter areas, and (c) multicultural areas. Initially, most participants indicated that school violence is found mostly in areas with low SES, ghettos, and squatter areas. Eventually, they claimed that it cannot be said that school violence occurs in some places but not in others; in other words school violence can be seen everywhere but in different forms.

Data analysis of this study shows that Bahceli Primary School, a school district with a medium SES, is the best candidate for achieving a violence-free educational environment. According to Elliott et al. (1998), “The social environment of the school can significantly affect the rates of violent behavior in the classroom, on school grounds, and even in the neighborhoods surrounding the school” in American schools (p. 17).

Although a high level of concern for physical violence exists at Park Primary School, a school environment in an area with a low SES, a high level of anxiety for psychological violence and pressure exists at Gundogdu Primary School, a wealthy school environment. However, at Bahceli Primary School, teachers and parents do not worry much about school violence and are happy with the educational environment in the school, so that students can learn and teachers can teach safely without any concern of violence. In the neighborhood surrounding Bahceli Primary School, parents are fairly
educated and work but are not too busy, nor are many families separated. The neighborhood surrounding the school is relatively safe.

**Level of School Violence: Increasing Versus Decreasing**

Two thirds of participants said that school violence is increasing in Turkey, but the rest believed that it is decreasing. A few participants suggested that it is neither increasing nor decreasing; the media has exaggerated the situation.

Too much violence had occurred in the past at Park Primary School, and those interviewed generally believe that violence is currently decreasing if viewed in the context of past experiences. So much violence occurred that neither administrators nor teachers could do anything about it. Parents came to school with guns, threatening teachers. Students threatened teachers and stabbed their classmates. In 1995, after police officers began work as liaison officers, violence decreased. Participants at Park Primary School believe that violence is decreasing in Turkey; however, participants from Gundogdu and Bahceli (schools in district with wealthy and average SES, respectively) think that school violence is increasing, according to reports they see in the media.

In this study, the level of school violence cannot be clearly identified because participants’ ideas vary widely. One cannot say that the level of school violence differs from place to place; one can say only that every participant has different ideas and thoughts about the level of school violence and that these ideas and thoughts derive from childhood experiences. The effect of the media is apparent: Some participants believe that media is promoting the idea that school violence is increasing in Turkey. A new
study should be conducted to discover the motivation of the media in creating the impression of an increase in school violence in Turkey.

**Reflections on the Research**

Because school violence has not been a topic openly addressed in Turkish society, not only was careful design of the study important, but also important is reflection on how the contemporary ethos might have and did influence the gathering of information and the process of interpretation.

**The Population and the Sample**

The purpose of the study was to explore and describe what teachers and parents in Turkey think, understand, and say about school violence as well as their interpretations and experiences of school violence in their schools. Because the issue of school violence is not generally acknowledged as a problem by formal governmental educational bodies in Turkey, this study aimed to rectify the lack of acknowledgement of school violence and its types as a problem. This researcher, however, neither intended to discover the statistical realities and facts about school violence in Turkey nor implement projects to reduce school violence; therefore, no intervention and prevention programs are part of the results of this study. Nevertheless, the study will be useful and informative for those who design policies on school violence in the future.

While planning and designing the research, I originally wanted to obtain a representative sample and interview students; however, I could not include students because of governmental restrictions. Thus, using a purposeful sampling strategy was
appropriate for the purposes of my study. Teachers from three different schools were selected to participate in this study; given the nature of Turkish culture, they represented the school administration and had to consider the school’s reputation. Hence, I included parents in the study to obtain thoughts and feelings from different sides. I expected parents’ to blame either teachers or schools for issues of school violence and teachers to blame parents. In contrast the findings showed that both teachers and parents mostly blamed other parents and families for contributing to school violence.

This study was conducted using a semi-structured, qualitative interviewing process. In the course of this study, I was an outsider in the public schools. My position as an outsider during data collection and conducting only interviews instead of case study are limitations of this study. If I had used case study or ethnographic methodology and spent much more time in the setting, I would have been able to pick up on additional aspects of the schools and people. For example, in person I might have witnessed some fights among students, communication styles of students among one another or between student and teacher. Instead, I collected data from 60 participants from three different schools which provide a broad cross-section of input, a contribution to the trustworthiness of the study. If I had conducted a case study, I would have been unable to hear as many voices and gather as many data points and the 60 different viewpoints.

Questioning and Answering

During interviews, I was comfortable asking questions about school violence in general; however, asking questions about violence at the participants’ schools was
difficult. Teacher participants did not want to talk about the issues in their schools, considering the school reputation. Parent participants did not want to talk about their children’s school because they worried that I would report what they said to the school administration. Thus, asking the participants about violence at a specific school was uncomfortable for me.

In addition, I was also uncomfortable asking questions about influences of ethnicity and race on school violence because talking about ethnicity and race in Turkey is uncommon and people are ill at ease talking about that issue. I was somewhat more comfortable asking questions about sexual violence and drug use in schools because many TV news programs and newspapers have recently covered both these phenomena. Sexual violence has been discussed more frequently in the society in general.

Through a qualitative study, I gained in depth understanding of teachers’ and parents’ perceptions of school violence. With a quantitative study, I would have been unable to obtain detailed information on a problem because of the structured instead of open-ended questioning. For example, while we talked about sexual violence during interviews, the issue of girl-on-girl violence was raised by the participants; however, in a quantitative study the participants would answer only the question about sexual violence.

The experiences and explanations of teachers are very important in the study of school violence. Without the inclusion of parent participants, one may question whether teacher participants are biased and overly concerned with the reputation of school. For example, both teacher and parent participants stated that familial problems and parenting
styles are the main cause of school violence in Turkey. By obtaining ideas and thoughts of parents, I avoided creating the impression that teachers are just blaming parents.

If future research were to be conducted by an insider, I believe that he or she would be able to obtain more detailed field notes, may witness some violent events in person, and may develop a better understanding of the reality of school violence and its results. Although the insider researcher would also have his or her own biases, he or she might have an advantage of extensive time on task in identifying the biases in the voices of participants; therefore, I encourage future action research to be conducted by teachers or public school officials as a contribution to understanding school violence.

**Implications for Future Research**

Knowledge of teachers’ and parents’ feelings and thoughts on school violence in different settings (poor, average and wealthy) suggests new research topics and questions for future studies. When looking at the results of the study, several issues should be considered for further research.

First, in this study, most participants believed that familial problems and parenting styles played a major role in preventing or promoting school violence. However, the realization that many participants (both teachers and parents) were unaware of the severity of the problem of school violence is shocking and upsetting. Therefore, I placed an emphasis in this study on the role of families and raising awareness of the severity of the problem of school violence. I recommend that future studies aiming to understand and examine school violence in Turkey should include families in the design
and formation of policies; furthermore, future studies should be planned to take place off school grounds.

Second, cultural conflict is an important finding of the study, a topic usually ignored in Turkey. Several studies address problems of migration, but only a few researchers of school violence took this into account and developed an intervention program, suggesting a possible solution for problems resulting from cultural conflict and migration. Further studies should be conducted on the effects of domestic migration and cultural conflict to improve an understanding of the problem and to point to possible solutions, such as a curriculum or seminars to increase awareness among all stakeholders of the extent of the problem and to address the complex impact of domestic migration and cultural conflict.

Third, cultural change and degeneration are also problems in developing countries. Because the world is globalizing, both positive and negative aspects of various cultures spread quickly. Participants stated that Turkish culture is changing and Turkish culture is losing its essence; they also believe that Turkish society is becoming more individualistic and resultant envy of what others have accumulated triggers violence. Thus, future studies should be conducted on the effects of cultural change on violence and school violence.

The fourth implication of the study regards sexual violence. The existence of sexual violence among students in Turkish schools has been discussed in this study. Even though sexual violence is a covert issue and generally not discussed in the society,
teachers and parents spoke about it openly in schools. Thus, future studies on sexual violence among students should be conducted by researchers need to examine the existence, its frequency and level of sexual violence within Turkish schools.

Fifth, because obtaining permission from the Ministry of National Education of Turkey to collect data from students on school violence was impossible, this study could not include students. Including students’ perspectives in future studies may improve understanding of school violence because students are the ones engaged in it directly, and they might talk about the issue without concern for school reputation. Either qualitative or quantitative, further studies should include the perspectives of students.

Sixth, using qualitative methodology, I collected valuable data that could not have been collected through quantitative methodology. In surveys, extensive planning must occur because implementing methodology is inflexible and any change during the survey may cause methodological problems or biases. Using the advantages of a qualitative method, I pursued in-depth answers by asking new questions related to interviewee’s answers that were not and could not be planned ahead. In fact, educational research needs more of both qualitative and quantitative studies before effective policies to solve the problem of school violence in Turkey can be designed and tested.

**Conclusion**

No group in the world suffers more from the culture of violence than children and youth. It cuts across socioeconomic and ethnic lines and affects men, women, and children of all religions and races. It is not limited to the poor, inner-city neighborhoods:
It can be found in suburban and rural areas, not only in America but also in all countries. The purpose of this study was to improve understanding of school violence from the perspective of adults most closely involved with it. The study gives voice to teachers and parents on the subject of school violence.

The findings of this study show that school violence is prevalent in Turkish schools but that many teachers and parents trivialize it by attributing violent events to joking, issues of adolescence, and temporary conditions. Familial problems and parenting styles were found to be the most important causes of violence along with violent media and violence in the community and school environment; in addition cultural change and cultural conflict were determined by the participants as secondary causes of school violence. Moreover, the study uncovered sexual violence as a problem in Turkish schools at present that people can talk about openly. Parallel to sexual violence, girl-on-girl violence was also identified as a type of school violence, and its increase and harm were not unimportant as stated by the participants.

In short, this study yields new information about school violence and supports mostly the existing literature. In the existing Turkish literature, family, individual, environment, and peers are the known causes of school violence; however, the study also reveals some findings different from what appears in existing literature. For example, cultural change and cultural conflict as a secondary cause of school violence is a new result of this study that does not appear in existing Turkish literature. Previous studies do not focus on violence among girls in Turkey and do not include information about girl-
on-girl violence. This study shows that girl-on-girl violence is common in Turkish schools, and teachers and parents believe that kind of violence may be more destructive than boys’ fights.

Like all studies, this one has some limitations discussed in this chapter. However, findings of this study suggest some useful implications for further studies. First of all, Turkish educational literature needs more of both qualitative and quantitative studies. Because familial problems and parenting styles were determined to play a major role in preventing or promoting school violence, future studies aiming to understand and examine school violence in Turkey should include families in the design and formation of policies. Further studies should be conducted on the negative effects of cultural conflict on school atmosphere because the results show that participants raised the issue even though it is usually ignored in Turkey. Cultural change and degeneration are also problems in developing countries, so future researchers should consider the effects of cultural change on school violence. Future studies on sexual violence among students should address its frequency and level within Turkish public schools. Policy restrictions disallow interviewing students; however, future researchers should include the perspective of students to improve understanding of school violence.

**International and National Dimensions**

At the outset of this study, I aimed to have a cross-cultural study by comparing the USA and Turkey; however, when I reviewed the literature of both the USA and Turkey, I determined the gap between them was too substantial. Because research in this
field is in initial stages in Turkey, American research is too advanced. Thus, I relinquished the idea of a cross-cultural study; however, once I became acquainted with the American educational literature and conducted a pilot study in U.S. schools, I notice some differences and commonalities between Turkey and the USA.

According to Elliott et al. (1998), “The social environment of the school can significantly affect the rates of violent behavior in the classroom, on school grounds, and even in the neighborhoods surrounding the school” in American schools (p. 17). As stated in the literature, school violence seems to be somehow shaped by the environment surrounding of the school; however, cross-nationally, findings differ. The pilot study in the USA showed that drug use and trafficking are common in schools in areas of higher socioeconomic status (SES); whereas in Turkey they are common in schools in areas with lower SES. Nevertheless, similarities exist between the two countries. Analyses of data in this study show that Bahceli Primary School, a school in an area of medium SES, is the best candidate for achieving a violence-free educational environment; A similar argument can be made for school in areas of medium SES in the USA. Finally, program organizers and policy makers should consider the findings of this study in making policies to reduce the problem of school violence.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

Interview Questions
APPENDIX A

Interview Questions

The interview questions of the study are as follows:

1. What is school violence?
2. What are the causes of school violence?
3. What are the types of school violence?
4. Where is school violence primarily found (district or area)?
5. What is the level of school violence in Turkey?
6. What is the level of school violence among girls?
APPENDIX B

Approval for the Study

by the Ministry of Turkish National Education
APPENDIX B

Approval for the Study

by the Ministry of Turkish National Education
APPENDIX C

Audio Tape Consent Form
APPENDIX C

Audio Tape Consent Form

I agree to audio taping

at________________________________________________________
on______________________________________________.

______________________________
Signature                          Date

I have been told that I have the right to hear the audio tapes before they are used. I have decided that I

___________want to hear the tapes       __________do not want to hear the tapes

Sign now below if you do not want to hear the tapes. If you want to hear the tapes, you will be asked to sign after hearing them.

Aysun Dogutas approved by Kent State University may / may not use the tapes made of me. The original tapes or copies may be used for:

        _____this research project       _____teacher education

        _____ presentation at professional meetings

______________________________
Signature                          Date

Address:
Audio Tape Consent Form (Turkish)

Ses Kayıt İzin Formu

Sesimin
___________________ ____________________________ de
___________________ ____________________________ (tarih) kaydedilmesine
izin veriyorum.

___________________  ________________________
İmza Tarih

Ses kaydının kullanılmadan önce dinleyebileceğim bana bildirildi.

_________ Kayıtları dinlemek istiyorum ___________ Kayıtları dinlemek
istemiyorum

Eğer kayıtları dinlemek istemiyorsanız şimdi imzalayın. Eğer dinlemek istiyorsanız
kayıtları dinledikten sonra imzalayın.

Kent Devlet Üniversitesi tarafından onaylanan Aysun Doğutaş benimle yapılan
kayıtları kullanabilir/ kullanamaz. Kasetlerin orjinaleri:

______ bu araştırma projesi ______ öğretmen eğitimi ______ profesyonel seminer
sunumlarında kullanılabilir.

___________________  ________________________
İmza Tarih

Adres:
CONSENT FORM

School Violence in Turkey: Multiple Perspectives in Multiple Settings

I want to do research on thoughts and ideas of teachers and parents on school violence in Turkey. I want to do this because school violence is a growing and a serious problem around the world and school violence is important in Turkey. School violence should be recognized first to have better intervention programs. Teachers and parents are with students at all times, and they know them well. I would like you take part in this project. If you decide to do this, you will be asked to do interviews with Aysun Dogutas approximately 45 minutes long.

Your name and identifiable information will never be asked at any point during this study. No names will be collected or reported with your responses. All data will be reported in group form only. Only I and the transcriber will have access to them, and all information will be kept in a locked file cabinet.

Please understand that your consent and the participation are completely voluntary. You may decide not to participate at any time.

If you want to know more about this research project, please call me at +905066003114 and my advisor Vilma Seeberg at 330-672-0604 office voicemail or 330-672-2294 EFSS Dept. The project has been approved by Kent State University. If you have questions about Kent State University’s rules for research, please call Dr. John West, Vice President of Research, Division of Research and Graduate Studies (Tel. 330.672.2704).

You will get a copy of this consent form.

Sincerely,
Aysun Dogutas
Ph.D. Candidate in Cultural Foundations Department

I agree to take part in this project. I know what I will have to do and that I can stop at any time.

____________________________________________________________________

Signature Date
Türkiye’de Okullarda Şiddet: Farklı Çevrelerde Farklı Görüşler


Şunu belitmeliyim ki katılımınız ve izniniz tamamen gönüllülük esasına dayanmaktadır. Her an katılma kararı alabilirsiniz.

Eğer bu çalışmayla ilgili daha fazla bilgi almak isterseniz bana +90(506) 600-3114 ve tez danışmanım Vilma Seeberg’e +1(330) 672-0604 telefon numaralarından ulaşabilirsiniz. Çalışmanın taslağı Kent Devlet Üniversitesi tarafından onaylanmıştır. Eğer Kent Devlet Üniversitesi’nin araştırmalarını ilgilendiren araştırma Araştırmacıspa Başkan Yardımcısı Dr. John West’e +1(330) 672-2704 telefon numarasından ulaşabilirsiniz.

Bu izin formunun bir nüshasını alabilirsiniz.

Saygılarla,

Aysun Doğutaş
Eğitim Kültürel Temelleri Bölümü
Doktor Adayı

Bu projede yer almak istiyorum. Ne yapmam gerektğini ve istediğim zaman bırakabileceği biliyorum.

İmza

Tarih
APPENDIX E

IRB Approval Form

Aysun Dogutas
EFSS

Re: 08-759: “Perceptions of Teachers and Parents on Major Contributing Factors in School Violence in Turkey”

Dear Mr. Dogutas:

I am pleased to inform you that the Kent State University Institutional Review Board has reviewed and approved your Application for Approval to Use Human Research Participants as Level 1 research. This application was approved on November 26, 2008 and is effective for a twelve-month period, expiring on November 26, 2009.

Kent State University IRB policy requires that research be reviewed at intervals appropriate to the degree of risk, but not less than once per year. The IRB has determined that this protocol requires an annual review and progress report. The IRB will forward an annual review reminder notice to you by email as a courtesy. Please note that it is the responsibility of the principal investigator to be aware of the study expiration date and submit the required materials. Please submit review materials (annual review form and copy of current consent form) one month prior to the expiration date.

HHS regulations and Kent State University Institutional Review Board guidelines require that any changes in research methodology, protocol design, or principal investigator have the prior approval of the IRB before implementation and continuation of the protocol. The IRB must also be informed of any adverse events associated with the study. The IRB further requests a final report at the conclusion of the study.

Kent State University has a Federal Wide Assurance on file with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP): FWA Number 00001853.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at 330-672-2704 or tonya.frederick@kent.edu.

Sincerely,

Tonya Frederick, R.N., B.S.N.
Research Compliance Administrator
APPENDIX F

Transcription of an Interview with a Teacher from Park Primary School

Technology Teacher Talha
APPENDIX F

Transcription of an Interview with a Teacher from Park Primary School

Technology Teacher Talha

Researcher: In your opinion what is school violence?

Interviewee: It is a situation that applies to students. Teachers don’t use violence as long as you didn’t blast away [with a gun]. Even if teachers use violence, they don’t hurt students; but it might be verbal. Violence among students involves hurting one another; other than that, it starts as quarrels and continues with throwing things at one another. This can occur especially in class. Once out of the classroom, they start to fight.

Researcher: Does violence always involve hurting someone, or does it sometime just involve shoving?

Interviewee: Shoving always takes place. Violence also involves hurting each other. Shoving is a normal thing around here.

Researcher: What are the reasons for violence?

Interviewee: Violence occurs because they see it all around. They grow up like that. Generally, they see it in their environment. For example, when I warn them verbally, they openly say, “Teacher, I don’t understand this type of warning. You need to beat me.” Of course, as a teacher I will do no such thing. I try to warn them verbally. They see violence in their family and environment. For example, when sixth graders go out for recess, they see the eighth graders and regard them as models. They leave school
and see their friends fighting. They see fights all the time. Researcher: Does the media have any effect on them?

Interviewee: The kids all have television even if their economic conditions are very bad. They do have TVs. There is imitation. Some of them say, “I am Polat.” Some students want to try everything they see on TV series or in films. For example, eighth graders watch Recep İvedik [comedy film star] and pretend to be him and behave like him for two or three days. They cannot get over it.

Researcher: Do they play computer games?

Interviewee: They use the Internet. While I was teaching them how they should do research on the Internet, they asked me if I play Metin2 or Counter games.

Researcher: Do you see any other causes of violence? Is there taunting?

Interviewee: It might happen, but not too much. For example, if someone has an odd or unusual last name, they’ll get teased about it. If someone’s skin is darker, they’ll get teased. Violence in the family and in the neighborhood is an issue. They fight in the schoolyard. If you are asking reasons other than these, getting attention can be a reason. For example, if students don’t get enough attention at home, when they come to school, they think about what they can do to get attention from the teacher. They can be the top student in the class by attending class, but to do that, they have to study at home, listen to teachers, and behave in the classroom. This is a hard choice. What can they do other than studying? Talking or fighting with a friend and walking into the classroom while the teacher is talking. They try to get attention by doing all these things. This is one
reason, of course. This is the easiest way. Since economic conditions are low, they don’t have any interest.

Researcher: Are a lot of parents separated?

Interviewee: Some are separated. Generally they are together, but there is domestic violence. I had trouble with three students. I talked to one’s elder brother. He said, “There is always a problem at our home. My parents argue all the time, and we see this.” Another student also sees violence from his parents. I talked to him. I said, “I see that you are not learning, but please do not prevent your friends learning. If you don’t want to do lessons, that’s fine; but at least sit in the back and don’t talk.” But he didn’t change. Finally, I told him, “I will talk to the administration and your parents.” I asked him his parents’ phone number. He asked me why I wanted to talk to his parents. He said they would beat him very badly. After we left the classroom, he came near me and told me that if I said anything to his parents, bad things might happen. He threatened me. It is clear that they are afraid of their families because of the possibility of beating and violence.

Researcher: Can you give me an example of a violent event in this school?

Interviewee: I didn’t see violence at very serious levels, but kids start to argue in class. After class, they start to fight and punch. That’s what I see. There have been very serious violent events, but I don’t know about them. The incidents I saw are the ones I told you. As a result of these, I saw plenty of nosebleeds and bloodied heads.

Researcher: Have there been any gun or knife events?
Interviewee: No, I didn’t see any of that, especially during the last two years. The school has changed. Its name has even changed. I used to be called Yenidoğan, but now it is called Polis Amca [Park Primary]. We worked with the police, and security cameras were installed. People are afraid of those cameras. I haven’t seen any students involved with knives or guns.

Researcher: Is there any drug use?

Interviewee: I teach 6th graders, and there isn’t any of that among them. I suspect from some of them are smoking cigarettes, though.

Researcher: Have you heard anything about any students using drugs?

Interviewee: I haven’t seen any drugs in the school, but they are seen outside the school. For example, I live 15 minutes from here. As of today, four people have come up to me on my way to school and asked me whether I wanted to buy drugs. Normally, I have a briefcase with me and am dressed in a suit and tie, and it is clear that I am a teacher or civil servant; but they ask me anyway. Sometimes, I think I must look like a drug user [laughs]. Three or four times they asked me. And if you want to know the ages of these children—they’re 16 or 17.

Researcher: Where do you typically see violence?

Interviewee: In İstanbul, Gazi district, and in Ankara, Yenidoğan Çin Çin district. Generally, in Turkey, Diyarbakır or Mersin. When we look at these districts, that’s where economic conditions are bad; and families cannot provide a good future for their kids and neglect them. Culture is first and economic conditions are second. Because
when we think only in terms of economic conditions, northeast Turkey is a region that has a very poor economic structure; but we never see any violence there. There might be some on a personal level, though. When we look at the southeast, there is violence. Manners and moral values are first, culture is second, and third is economic condition.

Researcher: Is there any psychological violence?

Interviewee: I didn’t come across any abuse. This is a conservative area.

Taunting happens.

Researcher: Do students have cell-phones?

Interviewee: Very few students have cell-phones.

Researcher: Is violence increasing?

Interviewee: When we look at the past, there is a decrease. Before, there was one stabbing just about very month, but it was not talked about. But now, it’s really at a remarkable level: No violent event has happened throughout the school year, but if anything happens, they say, “There is violence in schools.” When you tell kids to be quiet about it, you come across as a reinforcer. When kids hear that in one school a boy stabbed his girlfriend, they start to do that.
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