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**Young People in Turkey Living with Domestic Violence:  
Perspectives, Effects and Coping Strategies**

**By**

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This thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree  
of Doctor of Philosophy in Social Work and Social Policy

**University of Warwick  
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*Osman Tunc*

## **DECLARATION**

I, Osman Tunc, hereby declare that this work, which is being submitted for evaluation is all my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at another university.

## **ABSTRACT**

The present study seeks to explore young Turkish people's exposure to domestic violence during childhood. In doing so it examines their perspectives, the impact of domestic violence on their behaviour and psychological wellbeing, their coping strategies at the time of violence and in its immediate aftermath and it also considers their ideas about possible intervention by support agencies and protection measures. This is a qualitative study, which draws on feminist theory, which centralises gender within the power and control framework, to understand the complex nature of domestic violence. This thesis applies the concept of intersectionality to explore the impacts of intersecting social categories on young people's experiences. In addition, social learning theory, which sees children as passive victims, and sociology of childhood perspectives, which see children as active agencies, were adopted to explore how young people develop perspectives, responses and coping mechanism.

The findings from in-depth interviews revealed that young people perceived the externalizing and internalizing impacts of exposure to domestic violence on their well-being and behaviours including depression, anxiety, low self-confidence, powerlessness, worthlessness and aggression. Findings outlined that domestic violence is considered a private issue and is most likely perpetrated due to gender inequalities and male domination in a Turkish context. Domestic violence is internalised by young people as a way to discipline a wife. Findings showed that complex interaction of factors shapes coping strategies; hiding, saving siblings, calling outside help, leaving home, involvement, marrying in early ages and pretending like a male. The young people also stressed the need to develop parent-focused and child and young people focused strategies to support people of victims of domestic violence. Finally. They highlighted the importance of schools to improve awareness and develop initial support for young survivors of domestic violence and reformulating gender roles to eradicate the issue.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| HSSREC | Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Council      |
| NSPCC  | National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty of Children |
| PTSD   | Post Traumatic Stress Disorder                             |
| SES    | Socio-economic Status                                      |
| TUIK   | Turkish Statistical Institute                              |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children’s Fund                             |
| UNFPA  | Population Association and United Nations Populations Fund |
| WHO    | World Health Organization                                  |

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION: SETTING THE SCENE

*Does anybody wish for death of his father? I did so many times...  
He turned not only my mother's life into hell but also our life.  
Whenever he shouted at or slapped her, I was feeling like a piece of  
my soul is smashed. (Yasar, 18, Istanbul)*

### Introduction

This thesis reports on a qualitative study undertaken in Turkey, to explore the experiences and perspectives of young people who have been exposed to domestic violence in their childhood. The qualitative data was collected from 33 young people aged between 18 and 22 years who are from diverse ethnic, socioeconomic and educational backgrounds, and from varying family structures and geographical areas. The data gathered provided rich information about young people's experiences of living with domestic violence, perceptions of what domestic violence is, its perceived impacts on themselves, the coping strategies they adopted and perceived protective factors. Overall, this research contributes to a nascent area of empirical knowledge about domestic violence in Turkey and also adds to the international body of research about domestic violence on children and young people.

This introductory chapter is divided into five sections that starts with introducing the issue of domestic violence and presenting background information. The second section provides an overview of Turkey where the present research was conducted. The third section highlights my motivation to study domestic

violence while the following section presents the research aims and research questions. The final section describes the overall structure of the thesis.

### ***Introduction to Research Issue: Domestic Violence***

In today's world, domestic violence continues to be a common and on-going social problem which undermines principles of equal social rights, threatens individual security and impedes individuals from accessing basic human rights (WHO, 2005). As declared by the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef, 2006) domestic violence is a human rights issue which has a direct relationship with an individual's health and education. Being exposed to and/or witnessing domestic violence against women is a universal problem which occurs in every country, culture, social, economic and educational class, ethnic group and amongst all ages.

Although men and women can be victims of domestic violence, as most of the literature highlights, violence is mostly perpetrated by men against women (Rai and Choi, 2017, Johnson, 2011, Johnson, 2010). This reality supports feminist explanations of domestic violence that stresses that men are more likely to use violence than women and that violence towards women is derived from gender inequality, male dominance, power and superiority over women that are underpinned by patriarchal structures (Hamberger et al., 2017, Dobash and Dobash, 1979).

Domestic violence is not a new phenomenon. It has a long history and has been inextricably a negative aspect of family life and has been addressed in many societies over many years regardless of geography, economic and educational level (Lamb et al., 2018, Alhabib et al., 2010, Trevillion et al., 2012). This historic and recurring progression of the practice of domestic violence causes diversification of meaning and understandings of the concept and practice for each society (Calder, 2004, Johnson, 2010). In the United Kingdom, a common and officially accepted definition of domestic violence is: "any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or

abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality” (Home Office 2013: 2). Within this broad definition, forced marriage, honour based violence and female genital mutilation (FGM) are also considered as forms of domestic violence (Ibid). Definitions also vary according to different countries and cultural contexts. The variations in definitions of domestic violence raises the need to develop comprehensive definitions so that research and monitoring can become more specific and have greater cross-cultural applicability (Unicef, 2000).

In my study, I follow the definition of domestic violence provided by the *Official Gazette of the Republic of Turkey* (2012:2) which states that domestic violence is constituted by any incidents of violence (physical, sexual, psychological and economic) between those who are or have been intimate partners or family members, even if a victim of violence and a perpetrator do not live in the same household.

In the relevant literature, the phenomenon itself is referred to differently. Common terms that are used include domestic abuse, spousal abuse, domestic assault, battering, partner abuse, intimate partner abuse, marital strife, marital dispute, wife beating, marital discord, woman abuse, dysfunctional relationship, intimate fighting, and mate beating (Evans et al., 2008; Sternberg et al., 2006; Keeling and Mason, 2008). I decided to use the term ‘domestic violence’ because the other terms such as ‘intimate partner violence’ do not cover all types of violence in the home environment. In the Turkish social context, the extended family system which consists of father, mother, children, paternal and in-law parents, is very common. Therefore, a husband or spouse is often not the only perpetrator in the family; paternal or in-law parents can also be perpetrators of violence. So, the term ‘domestic violence’ includes all forms of violence between intimate partners and other family members. Consequently, I have utilised the term ‘domestic violence’ throughout this study for the brevity of the researched phenomenon.

For more than four decades, research on the issue of domestic violence against women has examined its nature, prevalence, risk factors, coping strategies and

effective interventions to better understand the complexity of the problem, to decrease its impacts and to eradicate the problem. Research on prevalence conducted by the World Health Organisation reports that one third of women have experienced domestic violence (WHO, 2013); however, its prevalence is higher in low and middle income countries than countries which are industrially advanced (Colucci and Hassan, 2014). For example, based on the recent study from Ghana, 70% of women experienced domestic violence (Adjah and Agbemafle, 2016), whereas 15% of women reported domestic violence exposure in Japan (WHO, 2013). The data that is available in terms of cross-country comparisons but it need to be treated with care. Because there are differences in the ways that has been collected. Despite this discrepancy, all research has shown that domestic violence is a common problem for every country in the world (Saffari et al., 2017). Because of its presence in every segment of society, domestic violence is studied within different disciplines (e.g. health and social studies, criminology and education) and by various stakeholders (e.g. government, international organisations, non-governmental organisations, private sector organisations, the media, and academics). Hence, research in the field of domestic violence has resulted in many detailed and clear understandings of women as the primary victims of domestic violence. The literature on children and young people who witness domestic violence has developed later (Stanley, 2011, Masood, 2014). Studies have found that children and young people exposed to domestic violence may have internalised and externalized problems (Cook et al., 2017, Swanston et al., 2014, Cicchetti, 2013, Holmes, 2013b, Holmes et al., 2015, Fong et al., 2017, Piotrowski et al., 2017, Emery, 2011).

In Turkey, based on the National Domestic Violence Against Women report (2015), 35.5 per cent of women are exposed to physical violence, 43.9 per cent of women subjected to psychological violence, 30 per cent of women subjected to economical abuse, and 12 per cent of women exposed to sexual violence (Hacettepe University Institute of Population Studies, 2015). Although there is some detailed existing research on women victims of domestic violence (Guvenc et al., 2014, Turk et al., 2017), the issue of domestic violence exposure among children and young people is neglected in Turkey as in other Muslim-majority countries. Research on domestic violence which focuses on the primary victims



(women) also has a short history. In this regard, to date, there is no study in Turkey which specifically gives a voice to young people about their experiences of domestic violence in their childhood. In this context, a key aim of this study is to explore young people's own unique perceptions and interpretations about the phenomenon.

The following section presents an overview of Turkey where this research was conducted, including information about the geographic, and socio-demographic aspects of the country.

### ***Research Setting: Turkey***

Turkey is a secular republic and a transcontinental country between Asia and Europe. It is divided into 81 provinces for administrative purposes and each province is subdivided into districts. The centre of all administrative decisions and strategies is Ankara, the capital city of Turkey. The population of Turkey is over 79 million (TSI, 2017) and includes diverse ethnicities. According to the National Intelligence Agency's report (2016) the majority of people (70 per cent to 80 per cent) have Turkish ethnic background while approximately 20 per cent of people identify themselves as ethnic Kurds. Besides these two ethnicities, there are other ethnic minorities such as Arabs, Laz, Circassians and Albanians. The national language in the country is Turkish, however, other languages which are spoken by ethnic minorities include Kurmanji (Kurdish), Arabic and Zaza.



**Figure 1: Map of Turkey**

Turkish society is widely regarded to be structured by patriarchal and conservative values (Dildar, 2015, Gül, 2013), and patriarchal control appears at every level of social life. In Turkey, there is a rigid separation of gender roles and responsibilities where men are considered to occupy the strong breadwinner role whereas women are carers of children, husbands and the elderly in the family (Yaman Öztürk, 2010). Entrenched male domination and the patriarchal social structure provide great power to male figures and create a dependency of women on men especially economically. This accepted and cultivated superiority of men over women and children is one of the leading risk factors for domestic violence in Turkey (Gokulu et al., 2014). On the other hand, due to social norms, patriarchal and cultural practices, the issue of domestic violence remains invisible and underreported (Turk et al., 2017, Gül, 2013). Given the conservative familial structure of Turkish society, domestic violence is considered a private issue and not a social problem. Therefore, the importance of addressing children's exposure to domestic violence and its effects is not fully recognised and understood in Turkish society. It is necessary here to clarify exactly what is meant by 'conservatism' in the Turkish context. 'Conservatism' here is regarded as resistance to social and cultural change, and the holding of traditional values and beliefs. Despite the fact that Turkey has a secular state system, it has been governed by the AKP (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi) – deemed

a conservative party and identified by its Islamic roots - since 2002. It is argued that since 2002, people have tended to become more conservative in terms of resisting change such as gender equality in the social and economic spheres (Goksel, 2013). Yesilada and Noordijk's (2010) study compared conservative tendencies among Turkish people between 1995 and 2005 by taking 'religiosity' as a primary variable. The findings indicated that public attitudes have become more socially and culturally conservative, especially since 2002. However, the authors claim that while the majority of people in Turkey have not become more religious during this period, religiosity has become more visible within the population. According to Yilmaz's (2008) findings, 67 per cent of people are conservative in religious terms i.e. through the observation of religious norms and beliefs in social life, while 59 per cent of people describe themselves as conservative in terms of sexuality - this means they have strong traditional, patriarchal views about women's rights, gender equality within the family and in social life. Esmer's (2012) results also support these findings and reveal increasing resistance to gender equality and the advancement of women's rights. The findings of the latter study demonstrated that there were increasing numbers of people (including women) who accepted that a husband has the right to use violence against his wife. The proportion of those who held this view had increased from 19 to 30 per cent between 1996 and 2011.

Even though domestic violence is not explicitly documented in Turkey, recent studies show that between 24 per cent and 65 per cent of women reported physical violence (Altınay and Arat, 2007, Akar et al., 2010, Gokler et al., 2014, Arslantaş et al., 2012, Özcan et al., 2014, Izmirli et al., 2014, Turk et al., 2017); 52 per cent to 66 per cent reported verbal abuse (Kocacık et al., 2007, Ipekten Alaman and Yıldız, 2014, Özyurt, 2011, Alan et al., 2016, Summary Report on Domestic Violence Against Women in Turkey, 2014); 6.5 per cent to 15 per cent reported sexual violence (Yüksel-Kaptanoğlu et al., 2012, Selek et al., 2012, Karaoglu et al., 2005) 44 per cent to 55 per cent reported psychological violence (Summary Report on Domestic Violence Against Women in Turkey, 2014) and 8 per cent to 51 per cent reported economic violence (Izmirli et al., 2014, Gokler et al., 2014, Sahin et al., 2012). Lack of proper definition of economic violence and strict social belief of male superiority on women about financial issues

especially in Eastern cities may explain this disparity in prevalence of economic violence in Turkey.

Although the media and the women's movement have put enormous effort into bringing the issue of domestic violence onto the public agenda, it is disquieting to note that the prevalence of domestic violence against women is increasing and becoming a very serious problem in Turkey (Toktaş and Diner, 2015, Ince Yenilmez and Demir, 2016). According to a report by Stopping Femicide Platform (2018), 409 women were murdered in 2017. Of the 409 women, 39 per cent were killed by a husband, boyfriend or ex-partner, 33 per cent were not identified and 24 per cent were murdered by a father, son, step-son, or other relative. Based on the same report, 237 women were murdered in 2013, 303 in 2015 and 328 in 2016. These growing numbers reflect how women's lives are threatened by male hegemony and power in Turkey. Women and girls can face a variety of abuse in the home, including not being able to access financial resources, not being allowed to date, being forced into underage marriage, being subjected to honour crimes<sup>1</sup> and to bride price<sup>2</sup> (Ertürk, 2010, Bilgili and Vural, 2011, Yilmaz et al., 2015, Gül, 2013).

The prevalence, extent and type of domestic violence also varies from region to region. According to the Domestic Violence Against Women Report (2014) the highest rate of domestic violence is in the region of Central Anatolia, where cultural values and moral codes predominantly shape social structures. Especially in the eastern part of Turkey, women's movement and freedom is restricted by strictly-followed cultural values, customs and traditions. Hence these sociocultural and patriarchal controls on women lead them to feel depressed and even suicidal (Gül, 2013). For example, according to a study conducted in Sanliurfa (a province in Eastern Turkey) by Sogut et al. (2011), 110 women committed suicide between 2008 and 2009; however, this number reached 124 in 2010. According to Gul (2013) patriarchal norms normalize violence as a way to protect women's 'chastity and honour'. In this sense,

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<sup>1</sup> Murder of a woman by her family due to sexually inappropriate behaviors

<sup>2</sup> *'A marriage rite which involves the giving of money, animals or goods by the husband to the bride's family on marriage'* (Hague et al., 2011:551)

forcing a woman to commit suicide is necessary and acceptable in the patriarchal view of the world.

Although studies about domestic violence against women were initiated later in Turkey than in the Western world, there are a respectable number of studies published so far as can be seen above. On the other hand, with regard to the issue of domestic violence from young people's point of view, there has been no qualitative study giving them a voice to demonstrate their perspectives on the issue. Thus, my study's over-reaching aim is to contribute to a nascent area of empirical knowledge about children and young people living with domestic violence in Turkey. The following section explains my motivation in exploring the experiences of young people who have lived with domestic violence.

### ***Rationale for the Research***

There is extensive research evidence that exposure to domestic violence in the home not only causes many behavioural, social and psychological problems immediately but also that there are long-term, negative effects on adults' emotional, social and behavioural development (Simmons et al., 2018, Goodman et al., 2017, Sousa et al., 2011, Johnson et al., 2014). Even though violence against women is the first thing that comes to mind when domestic violence is named, the numbers of children who are exposed to or who witness domestic violence cannot be underestimated. In advanced industrialised countries, the field of research on child victims of domestic violence has established a significant place for itself in the scientific world. So far, however, in poor and developing countries there has been little discussion about the impact of domestic violence on children's behaviours, emotions, and psychology. Turkey lacks such comprehensive research (qualitative and quantitative), which reveals the issues and unique perspectives of Turkish young people (and also Turkish children) on exposure to violence during childhood, how they are affected by it and what kind of coping strategies they develop.

This knowledge gap concerning young people's experiences of domestic violence in childhood, in Turkey, is the main reason that led me to conduct this

research. The numbers of existing studies are negligible and/or limited. To date, there only exist quantitative research studies on domestic violence aimed mainly at mapping the prevalence of domestic violence among the general population, and especially violence against Turkish women. This qualitative study, on the other hand, aims to explore young people's perspectives and understandings of domestic violence, its effects, and their coping strategies thus contributing new knowledge to the field.

Compared to international studies such as WHO (2013), national studies (Gokler et al., 2014, Solakoglu et al., 2016) have demonstrated high levels of exposure to domestic violence among Turkish young people (20 per cent), which in itself is likely to be an under-report. This is likely to have implications for the psychological well-being of these young people and to have implications for mental health services whose priorities can be shaped by research into the effects of domestic violence exposure on children and young people. Currently, without research evidence, mental health organisations are unable to meet the needs of young people. Thus, in order for young people who have been affected by domestic violence to successfully get support interventions, it is important to ascertain what effects such exposure has on their psychological well-being in Turkey.

Although domestic violence is considered a private issue in Turkey, the media often reports stories of abused women. Community and policy makers turn their attention towards women sufferers of domestic violence mainly due to media pressure (Page and Ince, 2008). On the other hand, child exposure to domestic violence exists behind closed doors. As victims of domestic violence, children and young people do not have any social platform from which to make their voice heard or get child-specific support. Therefore, an important rationale behind this study is to highlight the voices of children who suffer exposure to domestic violence, and to try and show that whilst women are the primary victims of domestic violence, that children too are victims who are as badly affected as women in Turkish society. It is also interesting to explore the issue of domestic violence, a sensitive and 'private' issue, from a male perspective in male-dominated society.

### ***Aim and Research Questions***

This study's overarching aim is to give voice to young Turkish people (18-24 years old) and to explore and understand their experiences of domestic violence from their perspectives. The objectives of the study are to:

1. Explore the experiences, understandings and perspectives of domestic violence among young people in Turkey.
2. Identify the perceived effects of exposure to domestic violence on young people from their perspectives.
3. Identify young people's coping strategies in relation to all types of violence in the home.
4. Identify possible strategies and policies to support young people who are affected by domestic violence, taking into account cultural sensitivities and beliefs in the Turkish context.

The research questions are as follow:

1. What are the effects on young people of being exposed to domestic violence in their childhood? Do these effects differ on the basis of gender?
2. How does exposure to domestic violence in childhood affect young Turkish women and men on a psychological and emotional level?
3. How do young Turkish people perceive domestic violence?
4. What are the coping strategies developed by young Turkish people to deal with domestic violence and its negative effects?
5. What ideas do they have about the kinds of help required by young people affected by domestic violence?

## **Structure of the Thesis**

This thesis is structured around seven chapters following this introductory chapter. Chapter two begins by laying out the theoretical dimensions of the research, and looks at how a combination of theoretical frameworks helps us to make sense of domestic violence exposure among young people in Turkey. This chapter also consists of a detailed literature review drawing upon studies in the western world on the prevalence and effects of domestic violence on children and young people, and on the moderating factors of exposure to domestic violence. This chapter includes national (Turkish) studies that have addressed the issue of domestic violence to understand the researched topic from a Turkish perspective where possible.

The third chapter discusses the methodology used for exploring young people's experiences and perspectives of domestic violence, its perceived effects, their coping strategies and their ideas about possible support interventions to address the effects of domestic violence. This chapter demonstrates how the theoretical assumptions were adopted and utilised into the entire process of the research in order to address the research questions. This section then presents a discussion about how I position myself in this sensitive research and reveals details of participant recruitment, conduct of interviews and the data analysis process. It concludes with a consideration of the ethical implications of the study.

The findings of in-depth interviews with 33 young people are presented in three chapters, divided according to the research questions. Specifically, chapter four gives an insight into young people's experiences and their perceptions of domestic violence. Chapter five covers the perceived impacts of domestic violence exposure on young people's psychological and emotional well-being in the immediate situation and sometime after the exposure. Chapter six outlines the coping strategies used by young people in the presence and after the incidence of domestic violence. This chapter also presents young people's suggestions about possible prevention and interventions to support and eradicate the issue of domestic violence.



The discussion of findings is presented in chapter seven. The research findings of the study are compared and contrasted with those of other relevant studies within the existing literature. This section draws out the key findings that have been produced by this research and how they contribute to the understandings of domestic violence exposure, its impacts, coping strategies and possible ways to support children and young people from the effects of domestic violence, contained in both Turkish and international literatures.

The concluding chapter ties together the theoretical and empirical strands of the thesis in order to address the research questions and presents the overall conclusion including the significance of the research, study limitations and strengths. This is followed by a discussion of the implications of the findings for policy and practice. In addition, this chapter also highlights some recommendations for future research on the issue of domestic violence in Turkey.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter is comprised of two main sections; a review of literature relevant to the themes running through this thesis and the theoretical framework which underpins my analysis of domestic violence experienced by young people in Turkey, of its nature and meanings for Turkish youngsters and their means of dealing with it. It begins with the extant literature on children and women living with domestic violence. In the field of domestic violence research, many existing studies have been conducted in advanced industrial countries, in the western world, for example, the UK, United States of America, and Australia. On the other hand, a few studies have been undertaken in the developing South including African and Muslim-majority countries in the Middle-East. In order to review literature, this section is divided into four sub-sections which reflect the broader picture of the phenomenon. The first sub-section focuses on prevalence of domestic violence globally by providing statistics from recent studies. The second sub-section takes a closer look into the Turkish setting, at the prevalence of domestic violence, emphasising studies on children and domestic violence in Turkey. This sub-section also reveals the weaknesses of the Turkish literature on children living with domestic violence. This is followed by a sub-section that discusses the effects of domestic violence on women, children and young people, on their emotional wellbeing, psychology, behaviour and on the mother-child relationship while taking into account age, gender, culture, and race/ethnicity as moderating factors. The fourth sub-section focuses on qualitative studies which reflect children and young people's perspectives on domestic violence, its nature, their unique coping strategies and their views about measures to support the effects of domestic violence exposure.

Following the literature review, the second section discusses the theories and perspectives that explain the complex nature of the phenomenon of domestic violence. This section is divided into four sub-sections. It starts with an introduction that provides brief information about existing theories and perspectives which have sought to explain the nature of domestic violence. The second sub-section discusses feminist theory which sees domestic violence as a gender-based issue and an expression of male domination. This sub-section also includes a discussion on the concept of intersectionality which is understood as *‘the intersection of multiple systems of oppression and domination [which] shapes individual and collective experiences and struggles’* (Thiara et al., 2011: 759) to explore how young people’s experiences are shaped by multiple and intersecting identities and factors and how this can be different among individuals and groups. This is followed by a sub-section that focuses on social learning theory which explains why and how individuals engage in domestic violence and become prone to displaying aggressive behaviours by observing others. The last sub-section discusses the sociology of childhood literature which sees the child as authors of their views of and responses to domestic violence rather than passive receivers of or witnesses to domestic violence. All main sections end with summarises of what is presented in each section.

## **Literature Review**

Over the past three decades there has been increased interest and research on domestic violence and its effects on victims. Considering domestic violence as a common and on-going social problem (UNICEF 2000, WHO 2014), researchers have mainly focused on its nature, prevalence, risk factors and effects, moderating factors and effective interventions. In the following section, existing literature on prevalence of domestic violence globally and especially in Turkey, effects of domestic violence, the effects of moderating factors on consequences of domestic violence and children’s perspectives of domestic violence will be reviewed.

### ***Prevalence of Domestic Violence***

Domestic violence is a widespread social and health problem all over the world (WHO, 2013). A large and growing body of literature has revealed the gendered nature of domestic violence by agreeing that women are the primary victims of domestic violence (Garcia-Moreno and Watts, 2011, Laing and Humphreys, 2013, Devries et al., 2013). However, men can also be victims of violence in the home as well as perpetrators (Barber, 2008, Laing and Humphreys, 2013, Hester, 2013, Drijber et al., 2013). For example, based on Hester's (2013) study among 62 recorded cases, even though men were taking a primary role as perpetrator of physical and verbal violence, it is evident that men were also subjected to violence from their partners.

The World Health Organisation (2013) published a systematic review on the prevalence of domestic violence in 10 countries to show that the prevalence of domestic violence was between 15 per cent and 71 per cent. One of the reasons for such big differences in prevalence rates was due to the collection of data from both industrialised and developing countries. Other research and organizations' reports on domestic violence have also showed that in developing and poor countries the rates of prevalence were higher than in developed or industrialised countries. For example based on the study of Olagbuji et al., (2009) in Nigeria, 43 per cent of women have experienced violence in households. Besides, between 14 and 41 per cent of women were exposed to physical intimate partner violence in 2010 (Shamu et al., 2011). The reasons for the variability of these estimates might be the use of different definitions of violence, using different tools and scales and utilising different methods to collect data. However, as a high-income country, in China the prevalence of domestic violence is also considerably high and reported to be 16 per cent; and almost 20 per cent of these households had multiple types of victimisation (i.e. based on physical, sexual, and psychological violence) (Cao et al., 2013).

According to the very recent Crime Survey for England and Wales (2017) approximately 1.9 million adults reported experiencing domestic abuse in the ages between 16 to 59 years. Based on the report, compared to men (4.3 per

cent), women have reported more incidents of domestic abuse (7.5 per cent) from their partner or ex-partner. Moreover, in their review Fahmy and Williamson (2018) states that women from low socio-economic status are more likely to subject to domestic violence than others in the UK. Similarly, the WHO also emphasized the regional differences in the prevalence of domestic violence by suggesting that women who live in countries in South Asia are at greater risk of exposure to domestic violence in their lifetime than women in Europe and the Americas (WHO, 2013). For example, some national research and surveys showed that the average rate of prevalence of domestic violence was 50 per cent among women in Bangladesh (Sambisa et al., 2011, Rahman et al., 2011, Murshid et al., 2016). Ziaei et al. (2016) conducted research to explore domestic violence before and during pregnancy among 3,504 women in Bangladesh. Their results revealed that 57 per cent women reported experiencing physical, sexual, emotional domestic violence in their lifetime whereas 35 per cent of them reported emotional distress.

In general, there is a dearth of population-based research on violence in the home and violence against women in Muslim societies. However, a few studies on domestic violence have been conducted in some Muslim countries where cultural norms and social structures, and society are strongly influenced by religion, as in Turkey. For example, in a cross-sectional study in Iran, a neighbour country of Turkey, the lifetime prevalence of domestic violence was found to be 63.8 per cent among 368 married women; 58 per cent of participants reported emotional violence as a type of violence that they frequently experienced compared to other forms of abuse in the home (Nasrabadi et al., 2015). Barnawi (2017) reported a 20 per cent domestic violence prevalence rate in Saudi Arabia in the sample of 720 women. Whereas, the other cross-sectional studies demonstrated the frequency of domestic violence ranged from 12 per cent to 58 per cent for all forms of violence in the home against Saudi women (Afifi et al., 2011, Fageeh, 2014). The presence of variability between these studies might be due to research settings, demographic of participants and data collection methods (Adineh et al., 2016, Garcia-Moreno et al., 2006).

In research with a sample of 1,046 young adults from Pakistan, Masood (2014) reported 69 per cent lifetime prevalence for verbal abuse and 26 per cent for physical violence against women in the home. Her study also revealed a significant relationship between patriarchal values, cultural norms and perpetration of domestic violence in the Pakistani socio and cultural context. In addition to highlighting gender roles, masculinity and cultural beliefs as a risk factor for domestic violence, the presence of domestic violence has also been linked to socio-demographic factors including low education, poor economic conditions, family structure, family troubles, mental disorders, child maltreatment, and substance abuse (Capaldi et al., 2012, Caetano et al., 2017, Wong and Mellor, 2014, Rasoulia et al., 2014, Rai and Choi, 2017, Abramsky et al., 2011, Trinh et al., 2016, Semahegn and Mengistie, 2015).

Even though existing research highlights the seriousness of the phenomenon by revealing high rates of domestic violence, the problem of under-reporting has also been underlined (Chan, 2011b, Rizo and Macy, 2011). One of the most common reasons for the under-reporting of domestic violence is ‘social desirability effect’ which suggests that people are more likely to be seen as positive and display favourable attitudes instead of undesirable behaviours (Andersson et al., 2010, Sprague et al., 2012). Other reasons for under-reporting domestic violence are shame (Othman et al., 2014), cultural norms and traditional gender roles in the society that perceives violence against women as an acceptable way and innate right of men to discipline and control their wives (Boy and Kulczycki, 2008, Flood and Pease, 2009, Douki et al., 2003, Barnawi, 2017).

While studies in different parts of the world focus on the prevalence of domestic violence against women, some research has stressed that considerable numbers of children are also the victims of domestic violence. For example, a study in the USA of children aged up to 17 years showed that 6.3 per cent had witnessed domestic violence in the past year (Finkelhor et al., 2009). This is equivalent to 4.6 million children being exposed to domestic violence in the USA in 2008 (Holmes, 2013b). Another earlier study conducted in the USA estimated that approximately 15.5 million children were exposed to domestic violence at least

once in the last year (McDonald et al., 2006). According to Fusco and Fantuzzo (2009), of the 1,581 reported domestic violence crimes, 43 per cent had happened when children were in the house and 95 per cent of those children experienced domestic violence directly. In their research, McDonald et al.(2006) found that from 1,615 sample families, 21 per cent of couples reported that they had experienced a severe domestic violence incident in the last year; 59 per cent of domestic violence incidents occurred while children were in the household.

The NSPCC national survey of child maltreatment (Radford et al., 2011) revealed the extent of children exposed to domestic violence in the UK. Significant findings of this survey of 6,195 children and young people showed that 24.8 per cent of young adults aged 18-24 years and 18.4 per cent aged 11-17 years had witnessed at least one type of domestic violence during childhood. The most frequent type of domestic violence was physical violence included kicking, choking or beating up. According to the reports, in the case of 96 per cent of physical violence, men were the perpetrators. Thus, it is evident that not only is domestic violence significant issue for women across the world but it also affects great numbers of children who grow up in homes where domestic violence is occurring.

In the next section, I will look more closely at literature on domestic violence in Turkey.

### ***Domestic Violence in Turkey***

The issue of domestic violence began to gain attention in Turkey only in the late 1980s (Gülseren, 2007). In 1987, when a woman who had been beaten by her husband appeared on trial to divorce, her entire life changed. The judge rejected her demand for divorce and made the following statement in his report: "Never leave a woman unbeaten, nor her belly without an offspring" meaning that husbands should keep beating and impregnating their wives. This case and ruling drew community attention to the issue. A group of women started to protest. This first demonstration against domestic violence called on women to "Say no to battering" and was followed by a second called "Career Women's Fest"

(Kocacik et al., 2007: 699). Domestic violence began to be considered a social problem after these two social protests (ibid). This late attention given to domestic violence may explain the inadequate research carried out in Turkey (Çakır et al., 2014). Another reason may be due to cultural bias against the public recognition of domestic violence; such as considering it a shameful event which must be kept a secret (Marshall and Furr, 2010a).

Consequently, research on domestic violence on Turkey is limited. The earliest research, conducted by Yuksel (1990), included 140 married women where he found that the lifetime prevalence of domestic violence was 57 per cent. Since the sample for the study was limited and recruited from a hospital in Istanbul, it is likely that his estimate is not reliable and does not reflect the real level of domestic violence in Turkey in current times. A private research company called PIAR (1992) conducted a national survey among 1,181 women. The survey showed that 22 per cent of women reported physical violence at the hands of their husbands. Although both studies focused on the prevalence of domestic violence in Turkey, the reason for having such different rates may be to do with the fact that specific definitions of domestic violence were not used by the researchers. In Turkey, as in other eastern countries where extended families are common, the definition of domestic violence should not be limited to violence by husbands or spouses alone, as women tend to live also with their husband's family. Thus, the definition of domestic violence needs to be redefined such that it includes violence against women by an individual who lives in the same household. Research on Black and minority ethnic groups in the UK similarly highlights that domestic violence is perpetrated not only by partners but also by other extended family members (Thiara and Gill, 2012). Kocacik et al. (2007) conducted research among 695 women in several cities in Turkey to explore factors affecting domestic violence. They found that nearly 15 per cent of women lived in an extended family and between four and five per cent were exposed to domestic violence by a family member other than their husband. Other studies focused on the characteristics of perpetrators found that the perpetrators were mostly male siblings, relatives of husband, father, as well as their partner (Bener et al., 2010, Çağlayandereli and Kocacık, 2009, Şahin et al., 2010). In more recent research, conducted by Izmirli et al., (2014), 60 women (22.1 per cent)



lived in an extended family out of 260 sample families, and 23 (63.9 per cent) out of 36 women reported verbal abuse from the mother-in law and also domestic violence by other family members. This research also estimated that the prevalence of domestic violence was 67.7 per cent in Turkey, a higher number when compared with previous research. This variation in prevalence could be due to the recruitment of a sample of women from one specific province of Turkey, who were registered with family physicians.

Altinay and Arat (2007) conducted a study among 1800 women to highlight the severity as well as the reasons for and the implications of domestic violence. In the history of research on domestic violence in Turkey, their survey was one of the leading studies providing detailed national data and knowledge about domestic violence. In the national data, 35 per cent of women reported that they had experienced domestic violence at least once in their life-time and 49 per cent of these women had never talked about their experiences to anyone. In addition, in relation to physical violence, there were significant differences among the educational levels of women victims of domestic violence. That is, women with higher education qualifications (university or above) (12 per cent) and/or women with husbands who had achieved higher education qualifications (18 per cent) reported fewer physical violence incidents (Arat and Altinay, 2007: 62). This research highlighted an important point related to education level, income and domestic violence: that highly educated women and/or women in higher income groups may become more introverted and may hesitate in sharing their history of violence. Furthermore, Arat and Altinay (2007) pointed out that the disparity in income levels between spouses was a risk factor for the occurrence of domestic violence in the family. The risk increased when the income of the wife was higher than that of the husband (2 in 3 women), and the risk is lowered when couples have an equal income (1 in 3 women). When women get their economic freedom, they are considered a threat and become a target of male hegemony (Tetikcok et al., 2016). The national data also showed that 14 per cent of women were forced to have sex (sexual violence) at least once in their lifetime, and 67 per cent of women were subjected to both physical and sexual violence at the same time. Lastly, this study provided a national perspective on women and domestic violence: 89.4 per cent of women agreed that domestic violence was

unacceptable, and that it cannot be justified in any case. This result is in contrast to the above studies (Demographic and Health Survey, 2004, Kocacik et al., 2007). One of the reasons is that the selected sites had different socio-demographic structures. In the research carried out by Kocacik et al. (2007), mostly conservative cities and populations were selected to collect data. On the other hand, Arat and Altinay (2007) tried to obtain data from almost each ethnic minority in order to represent the characteristics of the general population in Turkey. This explains the high rates of women justifying domestic violence from collectivist and conventional populations.

Over the past few decades, especially in collectivist cultures (Midlarsky et al., 2006) domestic violence (especially violence against women) has been considered a private issue. Whatever happens in the household is kept within the family, and thus exposing a 'private issue' such as domestic violence is considered shameful behaviour. In such collectivist cultures, a woman's social status is specified by judging how good a woman is in her responsibilities to her family as a mother, wife and daughter. Hence, to expose domestic violence is proof that a woman cannot perform her duties, which are the tools by which a woman establishes her social status. Thus, disclosing or reporting domestic violence incidents is seen as disgraceful (Marshall and Furr, 2010a, Sakall, 2001). Since domestic violence is considered shameful, and a problem to be kept within the family, disclosing domestic violence in collectivist cultures is a difficult thing (Yildizhan et al., 2009, Burman et al., 2004, Andersson et al., 2010), leading women to remain silent about their experiences.

In Turkey, society, social rules and familial relationships are strongly shaped by patriarchal social norms (Marshall and Furr, 2010a). This popular local saying is a reflection of the norms that sanction domestic violence: 'After all, he's your husband; he can both love and beat you' (Kocacik et al., 2007: 700). These kinds of cultural beliefs and norms make it difficult for women victims to seek help as they believe that disclosing or reporting domestic violence to social services would not change anything in their life. Furthermore, because of cultural and social barriers, women do not even know how to access social services, and how the support process works (Izmirli et al., 2014, Sahin et al., 2012, Tetikcok

et al., 2016, Anderson et al., 2014, Nasrabadi et al., 2015). For example, the cross-sectional research with a sample of 12,795 women in all provinces of Turkey by Ergocmen et al. (2013) found that 36 per cent of women were exposed to physical domestic violence, but only 8.4 per cent of this group reported to the police or social services. In a qualitative study conducted by Turk et al., (2017) with a sample of 24 married women, ‘doing nothing’ and ‘keep silent’ were found to be the most common coping strategies among abused women.

The relationship between cultural and patriarchal norms and domestic violence from women’s perspectives has been revealed in several studies in Turkey. For example, according to Turkey’s Demographic and Health Survey (2004), 29 per cent said that “arguing with him” was the main trigger factor in being beaten. “Spends too much money” without the husband’s permission was a second reason, cited by 27 per cent of women, while 23 per cent cited “neglects child care” and 16.3 per cent said “refuses to have sex with him” as other reasons for being subjected to domestic violence by their husband. Of those surveyed because of the gender discrimination in Turkish culture, 39 per cent of women think that their husbands have the right to beat them. (p.40). In Turkey, approximately 2 in 5 women who experienced violence justified domestic violence rather than questioning it. This study was conducted in several western cities in Turkey. Since eastern cities are regarded as more conservative, it is possible that if this research had included people from eastern cities, the incidence of domestic violence may well have been higher and attitudes towards it more conservative than reported in this study. In another example, Kocacik et al. (2007) found that 42 women out of 191 (22 per cent) reported that they were subjected to domestic violence because of lack of fulfilment of duties as a mother or wife, while 12 women (6 per cent) believed that refusing sex with the husband was a reason. Notably, 48 of the women (25 per cent) believed that they were subjected to violence for no reason.. Similarly, a recent systematic review (Özcan et al., 2016) found that a number of studies have highlighted some causes of domestic violence as disobeying husband, speaking back and not fulfilling responsibilities as a wife (Ergöçmen et al., 2013, Gokkaya, 2011, Sahin et al., 2012, Bener et al., 2010). In addition, according to the findings of the Turkey Demographic and Health Survey (Hacettepe University Institute of Population

Studies/Turkey et al., 2004) among 15,000 women, the life time prevalence of domestic violence was 38 per cent, 43.9 per cent for emotional violence, 35.5 per cent for physical violence, 30 per cent for economical violence, and 12 per cent for sexual violence. 13.3 per cent of participants considered burning food, not treating children well, refusing to have sex and having arguments with the husband as justification for domestic violence (Hacettepe University Institute of Population Studies 2014). Gender roles which accord subservience to women, have been considered the key reason for why women blame themselves and their behaviour for domestic violence and men's violence against women. Women's inferior position means that they are obliged to live under the domination of male figures and need male authority in order to maintain their position in social life.

### Children and Domestic Violence in Turkey

While research on domestic violence has increased in recent years in Turkey, child victims of domestic violence have received little attention from both researchers and policy makers. There are very few studies published about children's exposure to domestic violence and none of them provide any information about effects on children or their coping strategies. According to estimates by Genc Hayat Foundation (2012), approximately 21 per cent of children witnessed intimate partner violence at least one time in their life. The majority of the studies in Turkey have used quantitative data to explore the prevalence and effects of domestic violence on children and young people's well-being from the perspectives of adult victims of violence in the home. However, in 2013, the Population Institute and United Nations Population Fund Turkey (UNFPA) conducted the first qualitative study through 36 focus groups with secondary and high school students in three different provinces. The study explored the views of students about domestic violence through discussion of a real story of domestic violence. The findings showed that among male students, justifying violence towards females was very common. Interestingly, in the sample from the city in eastern Turkey, where patriarchal and conservative values are stronger, young females also justified violence against women. In the same study, both young females and males also stressed early marriage, arranged

marriage, gender inequalities in the society, social structures and cultural norms as reasons for domestic violence.

These studies, while unfurling the fact that domestic violence is a widespread social and health problem in Turkey, did not give voice to children to express their thoughts and feelings about experiencing domestic violence and its effects. Most of the data, even on child exposure, was collected through questionnaires with parents. Thus, to date the research in Turkey has mostly tended to focus on domestic violence against women rather than children who are exposed to or who witness domestic violence. Very few studies have explored the effects of domestic violence on children and none have spoken to children or young people about their experiences of living with domestic violence and how they coped. Given the absence of such research, the primary aim of my qualitative study is to provide insight into young people's views about living with domestic violence, its effects and the coping strategies adopted by them whilst living in the abusive context.

### ***Exposure to domestic violence and its effects***

Exposure to domestic violence is a serious social problem, which threatens the health of millions of children and women and their daily social world (Straus et al., 2017). Numerous empirical studies in the area of domestic violence have examined the effects of domestic violence on the primary victim and/or on those who witness domestic violence.

#### **Effects on women**

There is a growing body of literature which highlights the effects of domestic violence on women's physical and psychological health (Birkley and Eckhardt, 2015, Tavoli et al., 2016, Craparo et al., 2014, Maxwell et al., 2015, Gregory et al., 2017). For example, the mixed method study of Pico-Alfonso et al., (2006) concluded that abused women had had higher scores on these psychological disorders than those who were not abused by their partners. And these findings were consistent with the study of Basile et al. (2004), and Humphreys and

Thiara, (2003). Other studies have also shown that women victims of domestic violence may experience mental health issues such as anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, low self-esteem, depression, fear, panic and nightmares, sleeping disorders, emotional detachment and even suicide (Shoultz et al., 2010, McCue, 2008, Vachher and Sharma, 2010, Kelly, 2010, Lagdon et al., 2014, Pigeon et al., 2011).

Women have also been shown to experience physical health problems such as hypertension, skin disorders, chronic back pain, irritability, chronic headaches, and even cancer (Tomasulo and McNamara, 2007, Aizer, 2011, Ebrahimi et al., 2017, Gandhi et al., 2010, Afifi et al., 2011). McCue (2008) showed how living in a stressful home environment negatively affects women's immune system and makes them weak against disease, so respiratory illnesses and cardiovascular problems are common among abused women. Domestic violence, especially sexual violence, may cause unwanted pregnancies and health problems related to pregnancy such as premature birth, low birth weight babies, abortions and death (Abdollahi et al., 2015, Akyuz et al., 2012, Pallitto et al., 2013, Donovan et al., 2016). As well as physical and psychological effects, exposure to domestic violence affects women's social world (Kunst and van Bon-Martens, 2011, McCue, 2008), resulting in a lack of social connections, loneliness and helplessness. Women experiencing domestic violence are more prone to self-harming behaviours such as alcohol and drug abuse and suicidal attempts, and they display more eating disorders than women who have not been exposed to domestic violence (Devries et al., 2011, 2013, Jahanfar and Mlaekzadegan, 2007, Howard et al., 2013). Whilst many studies demonstrate the psychological difficulties experienced by women as a result of domestic violence, there is disagreement over the connection between women who have a history of domestic violence and poor mothering (Levendosky et al., 2003; Ybarra et al., 2007).

## Mothering and Mother-Child Relationship

Since maternal health (physical and psychological) is an important factor in parenting behaviour, the effects of domestic violence on women have clear implications for children's adjustment and well-being. Many researchers (i.e. Gewirtz et al., 201, Johnson and Lieberman, 2007, Lapierre, 2008, Wendt et al., 2015, Chiesa et al., 2018) have emphasised the importance of the relationship between maternal mental health and parenting quality. Findings from these studies suggest that children are less prone to display behavioural problems when their mothers have strong mental adjustment in the context of exposure to domestic violence. Ybarra et al. (2007) conducted research on children (three to five years of age) who were exposed to intimate partner violence (IPV) and those who were not. Findings showed that mothers who had a history of domestic violence displayed more post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms than non-affected mothers. Mothers who experienced violence reported high levels of internalising problems related to children. Interestingly, Ybarra et al. (2007) did not find any relationship between maternal mental health and children's externalising problems. In addition to studies about maternal mental health and parenting abilities, there is very little research on the association between fathers' or male partners' psychological adjustment and parenting behaviours (DeBoard-Lucas and Grych 2011, Heward-Belle, 2016). Findings of a longitudinal study by Sternberg et al., (2005) were related to above studies. They carried out the research among 110 children and their parents to reveal the relationship between exposure to domestic violence and child-parent attachment. The result showed that children's relationship with their parents was negatively correlated to severity of domestic violence.

A growing body of literature clearly shows that parenting quality is strongly influenced by environmental factors such as spouse abuse, intimate violence, life-stress, and economic conditions. To investigate the relationship between mothering and exposure to domestic violence, Levendosky et al., (2000) carried out an observational study in the USA, involving mothers of 95 children who stayed in sheltered accommodation due to being subjected to intimate violence. The study results revealed that domestic violence had a negative impact on

parenting, warmth and maternal control on children. It was also shown that psychologically abused women displayed more problematic parenting behaviours than physically abused women. The reason may be that psychological violence may affect attachment between mother and child more than physical violence. A qualitative study by Humphreys et al., (2010) argues that domestic violence has to be seen as an attack on the mother-child relationship especially in the case of children seeing or hearing verbal abuse on their mother's parenting. Although mother-child relationship can be adversely affected by domestic violence, once safe and with support these relationships recover (ibid). Furthermore, Lapierre (2010) finds that when fathers directly target mothering, women have more difficulties to express their parental skills.

Many studies have focused on the mother and how she constructs attachment with her children provides protection for her children and how she emotionally supports them (Buchanan et al., 2015, Wendt et al., 2015, Peled and Gil, 2011, Haight et al., 2007). Maternal protectiveness has also been studied by feminist researchers. For example, in his qualitative study Lapierre (2009) highlights that in the abusive environment, mothers tend to maintain and show their mothering skills by considering children before themselves, providing protection and care for them. Similarly, another qualitative study (Wendt et al., 2015) shows that women in domestic violence provide not only physical protection for children including taking the perpetrator's attention and aggression on themselves, but also emotionally and psychologically support their children. Feminist researchers have discussed that exploring mother protection is important to point out how women construct mothering in abusive home environment and maintain parental capacity (Humphreys et al., 2010, Radford and Hester, 2006).

### Effects on children

In recent years, increased attention has been given to the effects of domestic violence on children, who are now considered, equally, to be victims of domestic violence (Cater and Øverlien, 2014, Howell et al., 2016). Whilst earlier studies considered children to be exposed to one or a few types of violence (physical or/and verbal violence), the developing body of literature has shown that many



children are exposed to several types of violence and that violence can be re-experienced (Azad et al., 2014, Lamers-Winkelmann et al., 2012, Huang et al., 2015). A number of studies (Evans, 2008, Yount et al., 2011, Sousa et al., 2011, Geffner et al., 2014, Holmes, 2013a, Raudino et al., 2012) have found that exposure to domestic violence leads to serious negative short and long-term outcomes, including externalising (e.g., aggression, delinquency, and conduct problems) and internalising behaviours (e.g., depression, anxiety, and somatic symptoms) although some studies show that exposure to domestic violence does not induce adjustment problems (Grych et al., 2000).

Exposure to different types of violence affects children's mental health, behaviours, and attachments to the social world not only in childhood but also in adulthood, especially if interventions have not been accessed (Fagan and Wright, 2011, Wood and Sommers, 2011, Moylan et al., 2010). More specifically, in a number of studies children who experienced domestic violence reported more anxiety problems, depressive symptoms, worry, attachment difficulties, school problems and adjustment problems (e.g. Holmes 2013, McCue, 2008, Piotrowski, 2011, Carrell and Hoekstra, 2010). In addition to this, children exposed to domestic violence have been found to be more prone to psychological aggression, emotional and behavioural problems (Maas et al., 2008, Carrell and Hoekstra, 2010) such as withdrawal, hyper vigilance, nightmares and self-blame (Strenberg et al., 2006, Margolin and Vickerman, 2011, McCue, 2008, Fortin et al., 2011, Towe-Goodman et al., 2011) when reported by parents and/or teachers. However, interestingly, Holmes (2013a) conducted research on children (three to five years of age) and their mothers in the USA, the results of which showed that being subjected to physical domestic violence is not directly proportional to aggressive behaviours in childhood. The reason might be due to the use of different theoretical approaches to explore the nature of violence and disagreement about the range of effects of domestic violence.

Some research has found that exposure to domestic violence increases the risk of displaying PTSD symptoms in children (Levendosky et al., 2013, Graham-Bermann et al., 2012, Erolin, et al., 2014), and may also lead to trauma symptoms such as dreams or flashbacks about experienced traumatic events, hyper arousal

or feeling detached from the social world (Margolin and Vickerman, 2007; Evans et al., 2008). Levendosyk (2013) conducted research to examine the potential risk factors of PTSD symptomology in children. The study indicated that 21 per cent of 7 year old children who have experienced traumas (domestic violence) have PTSD symptoms.

In addition to the quantitative research, there are a number of qualitative studies which have explored the effects of domestic violence exposure on children and young people (Mullender, 2002, Stanley et al., 2012, Callaghan et al., 2016). The literature shows that living in a home where children are not only directly subjected to domestic violence but also where they witness the violence against their mothers has strong effects on them (McGee, 2000; Mullender et al., 2002; Buckley, 2007). Thus, in order to be affected by domestic violence, children do not have to be directly abused but need only to witness violence (Mullender et al., 2002; Buckley et al., 2007). Children are aware of everything that happens between their parents; more than is expected. A child's psychology is affected not only by exposure to violence in the household, but also by them discerning a conflict between parents even if a child did not see or hear it. For example, from Mullender et al.'s (2002: 93) study, a 12 year old White girl explains '*that was the only time I saw it. It was behind the closed doors. But I used to know and I would see the bruises that she had before that*'.

One of the most apparent effects of exposure to violence on children is fear, anxiety and dread. Both Mullender et al. (2002) and Buckley et al. (2007) showed that children, even younger children, were aware of conflict and violence between parents, which created a sense of insecurity about themselves, their siblings and their mothers. It is demonstrated by Levendosky et al. (2000) that aggression and living in a high tension and insecure environment makes children anxious. For example, as Mullender et al. (2002: 94) demonstrate:

*It was the worst part of my life - constantly being shouted at, frightened, living in fear. You will never know what it is like, thinking that every day could be your last day. (16 year old south Asian girl).*

This young person's experience from Buckley et al. (2007) easily describes their anxiety and fear even if they did not witness the violence:

*The fear would start then and it did not end until we knew they were in bed sleeping. None of us slept at night when they went out ... we'd stay awake and try and intervene most of the time.*  
(p.301)

Children/young people also talked about the emotional and psychological violence which they were exposed to. They recounted experiences such as being locked in a room, being threatened with being kicked out of the home if their mother left, or threats to harm one of the younger siblings if they intervened. Most of the children reported that perpetrators used excessive discipline to suppress their feelings and behaviours by restricting whom they talked to, not allowing them to connect to people they loved, and not giving them a chance to tell their feelings to others (Callaghan et al., 2014, Katz, 2016).

A qualitative study by Buckley et al. (2007) focused on the effects of domestic violence on children and coping strategies among Irish children. This study demonstrated that children of any age may have a sense of fear and dread for not only themselves but also others no matter if they were directly exposed to violence or not. Moreover, children who lived in violent households displayed low self-esteem and low self-confidence in the social world. Like many other researchers, Buckley et al. (2007) recruited participants from refuges, limiting their insights to children of women who had reported their experiences of domestic violence.

However, these negative outcomes can vary from child to child depending on moderating factors. These factors include developmental stage, gender, 'race'/ethnicity, individuals'/ parents' education level, socio-economic status, frequency of domestic violence, length of time during which violence is experienced, and perpetrators' mental health (Hester et al., 2007, Moylan et al., 2010).

### *Developmental Stage as a moderator of the outcomes of exposure of domestic violence*

Human beings are constantly developing their perspectives and thoughts from birth to death. This cognitive development or variation is frequently observed during childhood. Understanding, interpreting a subject, outcomes of a topic may display differently in children at different developmental stages. In the context of domestic violence, its effects as well as children's perspectives on domestic violence and their coping strategies may vary depending on which developmental stage they are at. Some studies (e.g. Bauer et al., 2006, Igelman et al., 2014) have revealed that externalising problems (attention problems, aggressive or irritable behaviours) were displayed more among school aged children who were exposed to domestic violence, although others have not found similar associations (Ybarra et al., 2007). In addition to these studies, some researchers (Broidy et al., 2003, Ziv, 2012) indicated that children who witnessed domestic violence tended to behave more aggressively during the kindergarten and pre-school ages than their early school ages and adolescent years. Further consistent evidence comes from a study conducted by Graham-Berman and Perkins (2010) with the sample of 190 children between 6-12 years old, where significant relationship between exposure to domestic violence in early ages and having greater externalizing problems were found. These findings are supported by Holmes's (2013b) study which found that there was no greater difference in externalizing effects on children exposed to domestic violence until age three compared to non-exposed group. However, when children were aged eight, more behavioural problems were determined than the control group.

In another example, studies that compare age groups demonstrated that experiencing domestic violence as a traumatic event in childhood leads to greater post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms in later life than experiencing trauma in adulthood (Gerson and Rappaport, 2012). Given the role of moderating factors in terms of manifest negative effects of domestic violence, some studies contradict the above findings. For example, Powell et al. (2003) showed that experiencing trauma in childhood, such as domestic violence, led people to have greater PTSD symptoms in later life than compared to experiencing trauma in adolescence or in

early adulthood. Although some studies support the idea that impacts of domestic violence may vary depending on individuals' development stage, some researchers claim that because little stability in the pattern of symptoms has emerged, developmental stage is not a certain mediating factor for emerging negative outcomes of exposure to domestic violence. For example, Sternberg et al. (2006) state that based on their data collected from teacher reports, family reports and youth self-reports, generally younger children (Median=10.6 years) were more easily affected emotionally and psychologically by witnessing domestic violence than adolescents (Median=15.9 years). Beside this, Sternberg (2006) and colleagues also found that older children reported less problematic behaviour as an outcome of domestic violence than young children. However, this finding, which is contradictory to past research, may be due to the reporting of children's behavioural outcomes by teachers and parents. Howell et al.'s (2016) study demonstrated that exposure to domestic violence heavily effects individual's social attachments in preschool years. In addition, some studies (Kuhlman et al., 2012, Cipriano et al., 2011, Boynton-Jarrett et al., 2010) revealed more effects on physical development of exposed children during preschool years including obesity and asthma. Therefore, younger children may have a greater level of negative outcomes of domestic violence than older children (e.g. Sternberg et al., 2006, DeJonghe et al., 2011) but overall the relationship between developmental stage and intensity of effects of domestic violence appears to be ambiguous.

#### *Gender as a moderator of exposure to domestic violence*

Several studies demonstrate that gender differences are an important moderating factor in the effects of domestic violence. The negative outcomes of domestic violence are displayed differently in girls and boys. According to some studies, in general, girls who are witness to domestic violence are prone to experience more internalising problems such as anxiety, depression, and low self-confidence than boys, whereas boys display more externalising problems such as aggression, delinquency, and violent behaviours (du Plessis et al., 2015, Evans et al., 2008, Holmes, 2013, Sousa et al., 2010, Sternberg et al., 2006, Moylan et al., 2010). The studies conducted by Wolfe et al. (2003), and Evans et al. (2008) suggest

that girls experience higher risk of displaying more externalising behaviours than boys; however, they did not find a connection between gender and internalising symptoms in girls and boys. In these studies, the age of participants was not considered as a variable, but it is known that children display different behaviour at different ages. Some studies demonstrate that gender based outcomes of domestic violence may shift in different developmental stages (Cummings, 1998). Some studies revealed contradictory information about gender effects on outcomes of domestic violence on children. For example, based on Sternberg et al.'s (2006) study, according to the mother's reports girls had more internalising behaviour problems than boys. In contrast, children's reports were not consistent with mother's reports; children's reports suggested that younger girls reported more externalising problems than boys. However, there are also inconsistent findings for the relationship between gender and externalizing problems. Some studies (DeJonghe et al., 2011, Fagan and Wright, 2011) found boosted but not significantly different externalizing problems for boys and girls. The possible explanations for the inconsistency of the gender issue on the effects of domestic violence are inadequate numbers of informants to collect reliable data, or deficiency of determining frequency and severity of domestic violence exposure (Evans et al., 2008, Fong et al., 2017).

#### *Culture and 'Ethnicity/Race as moderating factors of domestic violence exposure*

Domestic violence affects children and women across all socio-cultural, educational, and economic groups. Even though it is a widespread problem and, generally, the victims of domestic violence are women and children, outcomes that emerge in the aftermath of exposure to domestic violence can vary depending on contexts of ethnicity and culture. 'Culture' may be defined as:

*... a fuzzy set of basic assumptions and values, orientations to life, beliefs, policies, procedures and behavioural conventions that are shared by a group of people, and that influence each member's behaviour and his/her interpretations of the 'meaning' of other people's behaviour. (Spencer-Oatey, 2008: 3)*

Human beings are social creatures. Their beliefs, behaviours and thoughts are partly shaped by interaction with people around them. Culture can take the form of invisible interaction which shapes people's ways of thinking, behaving and generally their approach to life. In other words, for the purpose of this thesis, culture is defined as social and intergenerational, transferable information that influences an individual's thoughts, behaviours, and generally his/her life.

According to Campbell et al. (2008) and Yoo (2014) outcomes of experiencing domestic violence and victims' response to violence depend on the cultural and social contexts in which they live. For example, some research suggests that White women in the USA may be at higher risk of having severe psychological and parenting difficulties because of exposure to domestic violence than minority women (Edleson et al., 2007, Taylor et al., 2009). In another example, Campbell et al. (2008) compared the outcomes of domestic violence for White and Black women in the United States and also found that White women reported greater psychological problems than Black women. Similarly, Torres and Han (2000) compared the behaviours of 62 non-Hispanic White and 62 Hispanic women (aged 18 years or older) victims of domestic violence from shelters and courthouses. They found greater similarities than differences in their behaviours, but there was also a significant difference, in that White women were at greater risk of psychological stress due to exposure to domestic violence than Hispanic women. The reason for this difference could be explained by the view that certain cultural beliefs or cultural biases in relation to gender roles, masculinity and violence may make Hispanic women more tolerant of violence; that is to say that Hispanic women may not evaluate domestic violence as stressful an event as White women. So, the social acceptance of domestic violence may lead Hispanic women to perceive violence as a common and inescapable social fact. According to Taylor et al.'s (2009) longitudinal study, Hispanic women victims of domestic violence behave less aggressively to their children than White and Black women. These studies demonstrate that especially in minority communities, cultural context and race may be moderating factors for the effects of domestic violence on both women's and children's mental health and behavioural development. Because effects of domestic violence exposure on children are associated with maternal health and parenting, and women's psychological outcomes and

parenting is strongly influenced by cultural context, children's outcomes may be directly/indirectly affected by cultural and social values (Campbell et al., 2008, Root and Brown, 2014 Yoo, 2014). Culture is not only a moderating factor on outcomes of violence, but also affects women's perspectives on domestic violence. In the USA, a study by Pan et al., (2006) confirmed this diversification of perceptions of domestic violence among different cultures (Somali, Latino, and Vietnamese). The results showed that generally in the three groups but especially in Somali communities their perception of domestic violence is limited to only physical violence and included extended family members as a perpetrator as well as husband, whereas white American perceptions of domestic violence include verbal, physical, sexual and economic violence. However, this study was carried out among a limited numbers of participants (n=50) who were not fully representative of the whole community.

As moderating factors, 'race' and/or ethnicity have been used as control variables in some studies about domestic violence (e.g., Simister, 2010, Ellison et al., 2007, Root and Brown, 2014). The terminology of ethnicity represents a population which lives in a bigger community which has a culture different from itself; ethnic groups '*...social categories that are defined by the idea of or the belief in common descent*' (Schraml, 2014: 620). This implies that ethnic groups have a 'subjective belief in [...] common descent' regardless of 'an objective blood relation' as stated by Weber (1978: 389). On the other hand, 'race' is traditionally derived from differences in physical and biological characteristics, whereas ethnicity is based on socio-cultural characteristic differences (Bulmer and Solomos, 1998) Although there is a little differentiation between 'race' and ethnicity, these terms are often used interchangeably in existing research on domestic violence. I also used the concept of ethnicity and 'race' interchangeably to explore how people's behaviours and beliefs are shaped by these moderating factors.

A number of authors have considered 'race'/ethnicity as a moderating factor on children living with domestic violence. For example, Yoo (2014) conducted longitudinal research consisting of 2,404 mothers of new-borns from White (n=265), Black (n=659) and Hispanic or Mexican (n=273) ethnic backgrounds.



Interviews with mothers were conducted in the hospital when the child was born between 1998 and 2000; surveys were conducted when the children were at different developmental stages (1, 3, 5, and 9 years old) in order to appraise behavioural outcomes of pre-school children and maternal mental health problems. The findings showed that about 15 per cent of Black and White and 16 per cent of Hispanic mothers reported being subjected to domestic violence. This study found that the impacts of domestic violence on children's internalising and externalising behaviours were stronger for Hispanic children than White and Black children; the study found that in Black and White families, children were not directly affected by exposure to domestic violence, but affected through maternal psychological adjustment and relationship with parents whereas children were directly affected by being subjected to domestic violence in Hispanic families. Another conclusion of this study was that Black families were at greater risk of depression and anxiety in the aftermath of domestic violence than White and Hispanic families. Although this research was conducted as a longitudinal study, the researcher did not measure if the incidence of violence occurred once or if it continued in subsequent years. Hence, this limitation may affect the results of the study.

There is a dearth of empirical research exploring how ethnicity and/or culture influences the behavioural outcomes of children exposed to domestic violence. Filling this gap in the domestic violence field is crucial to better understand the detailed effects of domestic violence on children from majority and minority cultures/ethnicities and to develop support services for exposed children based on these insights.

### ***Children's perspectives of domestic violence***

Literature about children exposed to domestic violence and its effects on them has developed since the end of the twentieth century (Øverlien, 2010). These studies used the reports of parents (especially mothers) teachers and/or professionals as an initial data source. Since the mid-1990s (in the UK), and mid-1980s (in the USA) children began to be involved in the research as a primary

information source in order to understand more deeply the meaning of domestic violence from their perspectives.

It is demonstrated by some quantitative (see Jarvis et al., 2005, Sternberg et al., 2006, Edleson et al., 2007) and some qualitative studies (see McGee, 2000, Mullender et al., 2002, Stanley et al., 2012, Åkerlund and Gottzén, 2017, Eriksson and Näsman, 2012) that children have their own unique understanding, interpretation and awareness of domestic violence which is different from the parents' and professionals' assumptions (Mullender et al., 2002; Edleson et al., 2007, Dryden et al., 2010). The meaning of domestic violence can be interpreted differently by children than parents or adults (Mullender et al., 2002, Fosco et al., 2007, Buckley et al., 2007, Thiara and Gill, 2012). In the USA, Sternberg et al. (2006), carried out quantitative research on exposure to domestic violence of children. Based on children's self-reports, children had claimed being subjected to domestic violence whereas their parent's reports claimed no violence occurred in the household. Literature from children and young people's perspectives reveals that they see themselves 'as vulnerable but yet competent social actors' (Åkerlund and Sandberg; 2017: 52). These findings support that 'children are active participants' (Mullender et al., 2002: 21) which is defined as:

*Being listened to and taken seriously as participants in the domestic violence situation; and being able to be actively involved in finding solutions and helping make decisions. (ibid).*

To date, a number of both qualitative and quantitative studies have highlighted children and young people's perspectives on domestic violence as follows:

- Children and young people's perceptions and understandings of domestic violence can be different from parents or adults, or can be unknown by them (Mullender, 2002, Stanley et al., 2012, DeBoard-Lucas and Grych, 2011).
- Coping strategies including saving siblings, involvement in abuse or pretending nothing happened cannot be recognized by the mother (Åkerlund and Gottzén, 2017, Mullender, 2002, Buckley et al., 2007, Thornton, 2014).

- Children and young people are much more aware of and integrated in the issue of domestic violence and abuse than their caregiver's belief (Mullender, 2002, Stanley et al., 2012, Pernebo and Almqvist, 2017).
- The experiences and perceived impact of exposure can also be different between siblings (Callaghan et al., 2016, Stanley et al., 2012, Mullender, 2002, Swanston et al., 2014, Piotrowski et al., 2017, Piotrowski et al., 2014).
- According to some studies (e.g. Mullender, 2002, Åkerlund and Gottzén, 2017, Thiara and Gill, 2012) children are also not aware of the extent of the violence that their mother experiences as well as their mother not being fully aware of the impact of domestic violence on her children.

Children are prone to describe domestic violence as parental conflict in the home as involving arguing, fighting, and hitting: *'I heard my dad swearing and I saw him grab my mum's throat and push her against the door and, later, I saw him slap her around the face and push her around the sink,* (10 year old white girl in Mullender et al., 2002: 94). In the majority of the qualitative studies (Aymer, 2008, Cater and Sjögren, 2016, Channugam, 2015, Swanston et al., 2014, Katz, 2016, Georgsson et al., 2011), children and young people's descriptions and experiences of domestic violence were mostly father oriented. They described their father as a perpetrator and mother as a victim. Children and young people provided diverse examples of violence and abuse that their mother had experienced such as physical violence including punching, slapping, kicking, throwing something, grabbing: *Me and [sister] were in the stairs and we peeked over and just saw my dad punch my mum from front door to the back door and then we saw our dad stab our mum* (Kate in Swanston et al., 2014: 188). Children spoke about being subjected to physical violence alongside witnessing domestic violence, including being hit, being pushed, hit with objects, being slapped or kicked when becoming involved in the fight to stop: *'I remember one time when he was going to when he hit me anyway. It was that [sic] I tried to stop him when he hit mum but, no, then he hit me instead'* (Jenny, 9 years old, Girl in (Georgsson et al., 2011: 421). Although it was not outlined as much as physical violence, verbal/emotional abuse associated with fear features a great deal in children and young people's experiences of domestic violence and includes saying derogatory

words to mother in front of children, swearing, cursing, and humiliating mother's mothering feelings:

*He was just hitting her with his hands and shouting and swearing at her – saying that she's horrible, she's wicked and that she's not a very good mummy. Just saying all horrible things to her and really hurting her, making her cry, and Mum couldn't do anything, I just called the police. (12 year old white girl in Mullender et al 2012: 183)*

However, limited studies are concerned with children witnessing sexual abuse in the context of domestic violence. For example in McGee's (2000) study 15 women talked about being raped or children witnessing sexual assault. In Mullender et al.'s study (2002) only two women mentioned sexual violence while children were present. Moreover, children in both studies spoke about how their abusive fathers brought into disrepute femininity in the family and would maintain excessive control over female figures in the home: '*He said he knew what I was up to – I was a slut, I had taken after my mother, I was sleeping around... he hit me hard on my head...*' (16-year-old South Asian girl in Mullender et al., 2002: 185).

The existing literature shows that children and young people mainly describe the domestic violence as connected to substance use, poor economic conditions, and men's domination over women and children (Ravi and Casolaro, 2017, Chanmugam, 2015, Aymer, 2008, Øverlien, 2013, Buzawa and Buzawa, 2013). Children described their home environment as a peaceful place when they and their mothers obeyed the fathers' demand and he (father) was sober. This is reinforced by a girl in Chanmugam's (2015) study that:

*The best thing, I suppose, is that he's nice sometimes and the worst is that he gets angry easily and demands a lot of things, but he doesn't do anything himself. There are a lot of fathers that don't do very much, but what's unusual about him is that he gets*

*angry easily and doesn't want to do anything himself almost all the time. (p.478)*

In the Turkish context, the first qualitative study focused on attitudes of secondary and high school students on domestic violence (UNFPA 2013) revealed that children described the causes as women's subordination, men's power, alcohol consumption and gambling. Even though female groups mostly spoke of gender roles, women's status and gender power relations to describe possible risk factors for domestic violence in the Turkish context, a number of male students also mentioned gender relations as the reason for domestic violence:

*I can't imagine how this can be – she does not have power or anyone standing behind her, whereas the man has power. Then the opposing party is the oppressed party and she cannot object or even if she does, she would see that her strength is not enough and would eventually stop resisting – and then it may seem as if she is letting this happen. (Ankara, Male, Low Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader in UNFPA 2013: 19)*

Even though both the qualitative and quantitative studies sought to reveal the unique perspectives of children and young people, these studies also have some limitations. For example, in some quantitative studies (Jarvis et al., 2005, Sternberg et al., 2006, Edleson et al., 2007) researchers used deliberate questions, which have predetermined and blurred response choices. Such a limitation led to children not being able to express their feelings and/or experiences well enough from their perspectives. However, these studies contributed to the literature by revealing how exposure to domestic violence affects children's behaviour based on the variables of type of violence, age and gender. Whilst they include children's voices (i.e. McGee, 2000; Mullender et al., 2002, Stafford et al., 2005; Buckley et al., 2007), the latter studies are also restricted by having a limited number of informants (usually between 10 to 25), recruiting children from social services or gaining access via professionals.

### ***Coping Strategies in relation to Exposure to Domestic Violence***

Research with children shows that they develop individual coping mechanisms to deal with domestic violence exposure (DeBoard-Lucas and Grych, 2011, Halket et al., 2014). The considerable literature suggests that children generally use different coping strategies depending on whether they are directly abused or exposed/witness to domestic violence. When witnessing violence especially against their mother, children try to cope with violence in the following ways: hiding in the dark or leaving the home; intervening to save the victim; observing violence without doing anything (Mullender, 2002, Swanston et al., 2014, Anderson et al., 2010) It is demonstrated that these general coping responses can vary even between siblings (Mullender et al., 2002, Skopp et al., 2005). For example, according to a qualitative study by Dryden et al. (2010) the coping strategies of two teenage brothers who witnessed domestic violence were different: the younger brother intervened to get the father's aggression directed towards himself instead of his mother in order to save the mother, whereas the older brother feared increasing the father's violent behaviour towards his mother by intervening.

In the context of experiencing domestic violence, children's responses are likely to include some of the following: trying to forget or pretending as if the violence has not happened; sharing their feelings with siblings, friends or toys for the release of repressed emotions due to the experience of violence (McGee, 2000 Mullender et al., 2002, Swanston et al., 2014). In the qualitative study by Buckley et al., (2007) one of the children said this to describe how she coped with violence:

*I used to hide under my bed all week. I used to make a little place out of it with all my teddies. He ... always used to buy teddies for us... and I used to store them under my bed and any time I felt sad or when they were screaming and roaring down in the kitchen.*  
(p.300)

Remaining silent and/or pretending nothing had happened is another key aspect of immediate and long-term coping not only for children or young people themselves but also their mothers (Mullender, 2002, Callaghan et al., 2016). The following quote from a girl showed that by not speaking they lowered the emotional effects on family members, which indicates that silence can be considered an effective coping mechanism as well as a social or psychological consequence of exposure to domestic violence:

*... cause you wouldn't want to like ((.)) when it was silent all silent you would not want to say something what might make your mum or your brother upset, that's what it was like, you don't really want to say something that you shouldn't. (Rachel in Callaghan et al., 2016: 17)*

A study by Aymer (2008) showed that as distinct from girls, boys developed various coping strategies, ranging from devoting themselves to reading, selling drugs, being involved in gangs, and joining sports programmes. It has been suggested that male children are more prone to display such aggressive and masculine behaviours to prove they have enough of a sense of empowerment to cope with domestic violence (Dryden et al. 2010). Like Aymer (2008), Dryden et al (2010) and Georgsson et al.'s (2011) findings were similar, that younger children often prefer to hide in their room and usually take their younger siblings with them. In Callaghan et al.'s (2016) study, a girl talked clearly about how she was more likely to adopt protective and care-giving role against her sibling in the presence of violence:

*... and my dad did not like it when my mum went out so he was like trying to stop her and all of a sudden I heard this screaming and I thought for a minute, should I go down there? And I realised that my brother was down there, so I went to go and run down there but then I saw my mum and my brother walking up stairs and my dad had squirted ketchup all over them and he'd ruined all their clothes and everything, and basically my brother was crying, I took my brother*

*into the bathroom while my mum went into the bedroom. (Rachel, p.11-12).*

Mullender et al. (2002) also claim that older male children are more prone to intervene to save abused mothers rather than hiding themselves or leaving home because they felt responsible for protecting their mothers and siblings from the perpetrator (McGee, 2000).

According to Greenhoot et al.'s (2005) longitudinal study about remembrance of childhood experiences of domestic violence in young people, 153 of them were asked to recall their exposure to violence memories (only related with child abuse and mother abuse) that were documented six years earlier. The researchers found that participants did not provide detailed information about the events, and that the most severe violence experiences were recalled superficially. Based on the results, it was concluded that childhood memories can be remembered in as much as a child blames the perpetrator and that having strong negative feelings or behaviours leads to detailed recall. Greenholt et al. (2005) stated that young people tended to forget the details of exposure to domestic violence, and 32 per cent of them struggled with recall of domestic aggression especially when the mothers were the victims. Similarly, Georgsson et al. (2011) undertook research in Sweden among 14 children to understand children's perspectives of domestic violence. Many children described their experiences of violence incoherently, some claimed that they could not remember anything related to the violence they experienced in the home, some of the children used phrases such as 'squabbling' to express what they saw in the home, while some were capable of explaining their experiences of domestic violence.

These findings raise some questions about children's memory recalling ability. As mentioned above, forgetting or ignoring the bad experiences is one of the preferred coping strategies by children. However, in other research, Siegel (2004) claimed that traumatic events can damage memories which leads to difficulties in recalling such experiences. So, existing research showed that not recalling or forgetting abusive memories can be either an inability or an effective coping strategy for children and young people.



As distinct from the above researchers, Mullender et al. (2002) categorised children's coping strategies differently: as immediate and longer-term coping mechanisms. During the immediate case of domestic violence, child victims, no matter what gender they are, have coping strategies such as behaving as if nothing happened, blanking out violence, screaming, crying, and tending to make louder noise than the prevailing sound in order to block the sounds of violence (Överlien and Hydén, 2009, Lee et al., 2004). If they cannot protect themselves from the consequences of domestic violence, they try to leave the home. Another common short-term coping strategy is to call the police or to apprise relatives or neighbours about the violence. Notably, in terms of calling the police as an initial coping mechanism, Buckley et al. (2007) and Stanley et al. (2012) found that children who live in England and Ireland generally think that the police is unsupportive in responding to domestic violence and keeping a child safe.

According to Mullender et al. (2002), longer-term coping strategies are more detailed and a long lasting version of the short term coping mechanisms of child victims. For example, children find a safe and quiet place to be alone and isolated from the abusive environment, or they offer emotional support to their mothers or sibling to save them from negative outcomes of witnessing domestic violence, like coping in the immediate situation. In addition to these strategies, children also try to find someone who they trust to express their feelings though children, especially girls, have difficulty in finding someone to confide in to feel safe, and most of the time they remain silent instead (Mullender et al., 2002). In western countries, social work agencies or other professionals who are not part of the family provide an avenue for talking and sharing experiences. However, cultural beliefs and biases are vital obstacles to getting support from these agencies or adults in the aftermath of violence. For example, in Mullender et al.'s (2002) study, among 14 children from Black and minority communities, particularly South Asian children who come from collectivist cultures, hardly any were able to gain access to an agency or professional because such children think that domestic violence must be kept a secret in the family and if it is known by the community, they might be shunned by their family members. Generally,

in collectivist cultures, it is considered a private issue and degrading to be acknowledged within the community, as discussed earlier.

It can be concluded that children's coping strategies vary depending on age and cultural contexts. The provision of support and interventions should take this into account. As a result of their study, Mullender et al. (2002) suggested that social agencies or professionals should give more 'creative responses' to South Asian children. There are no similar studies that explore the effects of cultural beliefs on young people's attitudes to seeking help from agencies or outsiders in Turkey. Considering the suggestion about designing supportive services based on cultural structures, there is really a huge gap of knowledge around this issue in Turkey. This was a question posed in my study, to identify young people's thinking about how agencies and/or social services should respond in order to become more effective, and also reveal the socio-cultural obstacles preventing young people from connecting with support services.

### ***Children's Perspectives on Helping***

Existing literature reveals that the initial way of helping for vulnerable children and young people is to talk to someone, including mother, sibling(s), a family member, a friend or a professional (Åkerlund and Gottzén, 2017, Aymer, 2008, Buckley et al., 2007, Mullender, 2002, Swanston et al., 2014). However, due to diminished trust in adults as an effect of exposure, talking to other people is difficult to disclose children's feelings and thoughts (Stanley et al., 2012, Thiara and Gill, 2012). Children's account shows that they tend to share their sadness by talking to their teddies or pets to relieve stress, get rid of anger, and feel comfortable. In this stance, children's message to vulnerable children is to talk to someone who you trust, even though many children did not want to let their feelings out (Åkerlund and Gottzén, 2017, Mullender, 2002). Narratives also tell us that children want to know about current and future situation between their caregivers and want to be a part of the decision making process, as well as they want to talk to someone (ibid).

*You heard things, 'cause mum and the people at the women's shelter talked sometimes [...] I used to sneak around and listen to what they said, 'cause I really wanted to know what was going on. (15-year-old Alice in Akerlund and Sandberg 2017:56)*

Children in Mullender et al.'s study (2002) gave advice to other children regarding intergenerational transmission theory which is not going to look like the perpetrator: 'It just gets me so muddled up. I am frightened I'll be like it when I grow up. I know what she's going through and I want to help her'. (8-year-old boy, p.96).

Children also spoke about the role of siblings in helping to cope with domestic violence exposure. Many of them mentioned that their sibling(s) was/were the only one with who they wanted to share their experiences and feelings (Mullender, 2002). By protecting each other, *cuddling*, talking, and hiding together, siblings offer help and support to each other: '*You stick together. We did ... We're a team! We help each other*' (9-year-old white boy with a young brother and sister in Mullender et al., 2002: 211).

For children, talking to trusted friends was a significant source of help in their lives. Mullender et al. (2002) found that older girls are more prone to talk to their friends more than boys. And they would disclose to those with had similar experiences. The review of literature showed that the major obstacles that prevent children from sharing were embarrassment, fear of the abuser (Åkerlund and Gottzén, 2017, Buckley et al., 2007, Swanston et al., 2014) and particularly confidentiality:

*I never really liked talking with someone because, um, he [the mother's boyfriend] came and asked a lot of, sort of, yeah, 'What do you talk about? You didn't say anything about me?' ... He [the counsellor] also said that they had to tell, report to the police if anything like that had happened. So then you felt you don't want to be the reason that he moved out (Moa, 18-years-old in Akerlund and Sandberg 2017: 57).*

In addition, lack of trust is also reported as an obstacle which keeps children and young people away from receiving support from professionals such as; school counsellors and social workers, and social organizations (Stanley et al., 2012, Buckley et al., 2007, Åkerlund and Gottzén, 2017).

Lacking knowledge about which and how to access appropriate support services was revealed in the literature (McGee, 2000). To inform children and young people and improve the awareness of domestic violence, children emphasised the role of school (Buckley et al., 2007, Mullender, 2002). In addition to being a *safe place* for children and young people to stay away from the abusive environment, school was a way of getting positive support, a source of encouragement to deal with the issue, and a source of information about agencies and organizations which help vulnerable children.

Overall, the children's perspective literature shown that as cited by Mullender et al., (2002) that:

*Children who have known violence in their own lives would be a rich source of information and advice to other children, both those who are facing specific risks and those who have a general need to learn' (p.90).*

With their unique perspective which derives from their experiences, participation of children in the development of support services can make those services more effective. In contexts such as the UK and the US, recent developments have seen mandatory reporting by the police to social services, however researchers have highlighted the problem of social services getting swamped by the number of referrals, which results in them missing the really problematic cases where children have less 'resilience' (Humphreys and Stanley, 2006).

In the following section, a framework, which consists of different theoretical perspectives, is discussed in order to better explore and understand the

experiences and perspectives of young people living with domestic violence in Turkey.

### **Theoretical Framework**

A number of theories and approaches have been developed to understand the complex nature of the phenomenon of domestic violence. For example, individualistic psychological theories takes the mental characteristic of the abuser into the centre of the issue and explain domestic violence as a result of psychopathological dysfunctions of individuals, including poor impulse control, poor anger management skills, anti-social problems and psychopathic instincts (King, 2012, Dutton, 2011a, Scarpa and Raine, 2007). Sociological theories, on the other hand, emphasise the salience of environmental factors and characteristics of social structure (e.g. socioeconomic status, age, gender roles) in explaining violence. These extensive theories include *social disorganization theory*, which suggests that violence occurs as a result of a combination of physical environmental and social factors; *ecological theory*, which posits that the complex relationship between individual and contextual factors explains the domestic violence; and as a widely used explanation of domestic violence (Heise, 1998, Dutton, 2011b), *family conflict theory* which looks at the issue from a social structuralist perspective and propounds that factors such as poor economic and social conditions, demographics of couples, and employment status cause violence in the home (Gelles, 1985). This theory explains domestic violence as, ‘the outcome of a pileup of stressors associated with a perceived excess of demands over resources’ (Fox et al., 2002:794). As another sociological theory, *resource theory* brings the issue of lacking or having insufficient resources (e.g., unemployment) as primary reasons for domestic violence that lead men to use violence to re-establish their control in family settings (Goode, 1971). Developing this theory even further, *relative resource theory* suggests that inequalities in economic, social and educational status between couples appear to be a main risk factor for perpetrating domestic violence. In other words, if a man has fewer resources than a woman, he is more likely to use violence to regain his position in the relationship (Macmillan and Gartner, 1999). *Family system theories*, suggest that the issue of domestic

violence is not different from other types of violence between family members (including elder violence, siblings violence, child to parent violence) and is considered an adopted way to resolve conflicts in the family. Unlike psychological theories of domestic violence, rather than seeing individual psychological abnormalities as causes of violence, family system theories view violence as ‘normal part of family life in most societies’ (Gelles and Straus, 1979: 549 cited by Lawson, 2012: 575). In addition, these theories (psychological and family system theory) see domestic violence as a gender-neutral issue, which underplays the oppression of women, and considers the inequalities in gender-power relationships as one of the promoting factors for both genders (Straus, 2009, Lawson, 2012). Feminist theory criticizes a family system approach for not separating domestic violence from any other violence in the home by underlining gender and patriarchal power as being at the heart of explanations of domestic violence (Laing and Humphreys, 2013). When we look at the issue of domestic violence in Turkey, according to Turkey’s Demographic and Health Survey (2004) 39 per cent of women agree that their husbands have the right to beat them. This is evident that gender inequality is a compelling explanation behind the issue of domestic violence in Turkey where strong patriarchal social systems and norms promote male superiority over women and children. Hence, this study draws on feminist theory, with its emphasises on gender roles and gender inequality as a root reason for domestic violence (Heise, 2011, Hesse-Biber, 2011), to understand the phenomenon.

Having examined the literature and in order to explore the effects of domestic violence exposure on children/young people, and to understand their views of domestic violence from their perspectives, this study draws upon the following theoretical approaches in addition to feminist theory: sociology of childhood perspectives the concept of intersectionality, social learning theory and. Each is discussed further in the following sections.

### ***The sociology of childhood***

At the beginning of the 1990s, social scientists became interested in the sociology of childhood following the work done by feminist social scientists in

‘giving voice’ to groups marginalised groups: women and children (Mayall, 2013, Corsaro, 2017). Following the UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child (1989), children who constituted a voiceless group in society, and indeed within sociology, were placed centre-stage and new theoretical work and approaches developed to understand how children become fully functioning beings (James and Prout, 2015). Studies taking a sociology of childhood approach provide two different explanations for socialization processes undergone by children (Corsaro 2011). The first one is a deterministic model, similar to that of social learning theory, in which children play a passive role. According to this model, people who surround children shape their behaviours and social world and guide them in becoming effective members of society (James and Prout, 2015, Heywood, 2017). This deterministic model is criticized for seeing children as passive agents in the socialization process and for ignoring their own contribution to becoming members of society. In addition, Corsaro (2011:11) criticises this model for its ‘... *overconcentration on the outcomes of socialization and its underestimation of the active and innovative capacities of all members of society*’.

In contrast to the deterministic model, social scientists have developed an alternative way of understanding childhood that is derived from developmental psychology; this is the ‘constructivist model’. Based on this model, children are seen as active agents who play a large part in constructing their own social world rather than this being entirely shaped by other people. The constructivist view of human development was introduced by Piaget (1954) to explain how children develop behaviours that they cannot see or hear directly. Constructivism can be defined as:

*...the belief that the mind actively participates in assembling knowledge of the world in the process of interacting with the environment, rather than passively acquiring such knowledge through direct perception. (Schaffer, 2006: 36).*

As a constructivist, Piaget (1954, 2013) stated that human beings do not create knowledge by reflecting what is already in the environment; rather since birth they construct knowledge by selecting, organizing and interpreting what is in the external world (Karpov, 2005; Schaffer, 2006, Carpendale and Ulrich, 2014). However, Piaget did not underestimate the role of congenital skills or inclinations in the development of a child's intellectual ability (Fosnot, 2013, Hala, 2013). His views have been criticized for focusing more on constructing knowledge individually or *solitarily* in explaining child development (Tryphon and Vonèche, 2013, Bruner, 1997, Bjorklund and Causey, 2017).

Another influential constructivist theorist, Vygotsky (1956, 1964, 1972, 1980, 1998) developed quite a different constructivist view of human development than Piaget. Compared to Piaget's approach, Vygotsky asserted that the social and cognitive development of children is derived from interaction with the social world (Lourenço, 2012, Morra et al., 2012, Karpov, 2005, John-Steiner and Mahn, 1996). He *'sought to specify the cultural events and practical activities that lead to the appropriation, internalization, and reproduction of culture and society'* (Corsaro 2011:16). According to his approach, the child develops cognitive and social skills first from their social interactions then s/he internalizes or individualizes what they experienced. However, despite this divide, both perceived the child as an active agent in the development of psychological and social skills (Hala, 2013, Tryphon and Vonèche, 2013).

The constructivist approach in the sociology of childhood does not adopt empiricism or a rationalist perspective to explain how to create cognitive, emotional and social skills (James and Prout, 2015, Jenks, 2004, James and James, 2012). Empiricists believe that human beings are born without the skills necessary for gaining of knowledge and that all information must be derived from the environment. On the other hand, rationalists claim that individuals can generate knowledge from instinctive concepts (Harris and Butterworth, 2012, Schaffer, 2006) which is that creating and constructing knowledge totally depends on individuals' innate instincts and feelings. However, the constructivist



approach adopted a synthesis of both perspectives, and says '*the child's active engagement with the material and the social worlds results in the construction of a concept of a reality*' (Vasta, 1997:91). Corsaro (2011:21) offered a new perspective on the socialization of childhood called '*interpretive reproduction*'. He specified that children construct their own social worlds and *peer cultures* by gathering information first from the environment, then reproducing their skills and knowledge by actively interpreting and contributing to what s/he has taken from outside. He also emphasizes on how children take an active role to build their culture by constructing an interrelated cultural network (Gray and MacBlain, 2015).

In sum, the sociology of childhood perspectives, which seeks to explain childhood socialization, emphasize that the child takes an active role in constructing his or her cognitive and social conceptions in their worlds. Therefore, these approaches help me to elucidate how young people actively construct and evolve their own perspective of domestic violence, how they develop strategies to cope with it while in the presence of violence and after and how they interpret their experiences to offer suggestions for ways to protect children from domestic violence exposure.

### ***Feminist theory and intersectionality***

In the 1970s, research about domestic violence revealed that women were at greater risk than men and concluded that 'violence' is an outcome of the social system which is based on gender norms and patriarchy (Taylor and Jasinski, 2011, McPhail et al., 2007). This approach was a baseline for the feminist ideas which argues that patriarchy lies at the heart of male violence against women. The common inference of feminist literature is that domestic violence is a gender-based problem that stems from male domination (Gill et al., 2016, Thompson, 2001). From a feminist perspective, domestic violence is a means of dominance and control over women and children by men to protect their social and economic hegemony (Dutton and Nicholls, 2005, Dobash and Dobash, 1979). Domestic violence has been strongly associated with incidents of physical violence. However, Stark (2007) conceptualised domestic violence as 'coercive

control’ to highlight the non-physical aspects and how different forms of abuse and control are inter-connected. In Stark’s own words, the concept explains ‘how men entrap women in everyday life’ (2017:4). The concept of coercive control has become extremely influential in helping a more nuanced conceptualisation of domestic violence.

The general stance of feminists is to examine and understand women’s oppression that is rooted in male domination. As Thompson (2001:18) states: ‘A feminist standpoint is grounded first and foremost in acknowledging the existence of male domination in order to challenge and oppose it’.

The main argument utilised by feminists on domestic violence against women is that physically and psychologically abusive behaviours are the results of gender inequality and social injustices between genders (Gill et al., 2016, Namy et al., 2017). Although it is increasingly recognised that patriarchy manifests in different ways in different contexts, patriarchal familial structures attribute a lesser social status to women compared with men; traditional gender roles impose more “inferior obligations” on women than on men, such as household duties, care of children, and emotional support to the family. On the other hand, men are responsible for earning the household income and have more roles connected to the public sphere which are considered more valuable by patriarchal cultures. Hanmer (2000: 15) emphasized the influence of gender roles on people’s behaviour:

*The cultural boundaries of family and community accountability for men incorporate privileging male over female. Men as head of households have the role of maintaining family hierarchies and of ensuring that women and children recognize and respond to authority vested in sons, husbands and fathers.*

In the field of domestic violence, it is primarily women who are considered to be the victims of male violence and relevant studies (Ellsberg et al., 2008, Damant et al., 2010, Kallivayalil, 2010) focus on women’s experiences to understand the phenomenon. Since the 1990s, emphasis has also increasingly been placed on

children who are often the second most frequent victims of domestic violence. Research on domestic violence demonstrates that a high percentage of women victims of violence report that their children also experience violence by their partner (see for example; Stanley et al., 2010). Existing research findings (Guedes et al., 2016, Chan, 2011b, Rada, 2014, Hamby et al., 2010) highlight the correlation between woman abuse and abuse towards children. In relation to this connection, Kelly (1994) offers insight about the ‘double level of intentionality’, which means that if one person is exposed to violence then others who share the same environment are also affected even if they are not directly subject to it. In this respect, understanding the effects of violence on children cannot be separated from women’s exposure to violence. Therefore, feminist perspectives which help our understanding of the nature of the violence against women can also be adopted to identify and analyse the nature of domestic violence against children.

As a consequence of gender inequality, mothers and children have to live under the physical and economic domination of the father (or in extended families this includes other family members such as grandfather and sometimes grandmother), that is an oppressive patriarchal family system in which only the dominant figure (father) has rights to make decisions and the rest of the family shape their behaviour according to his will (Sultana, 2012, Kambarami, 2006). This has been described as the abusive household gender regime by some (Morris, 2009).

Thus, patriarchy may manifest in different ways; in patriarchal communities, children realise that individuals who are powerful in social, physical and economic terms have control over those in a weaker position. Children also learn that these relationships of power and domination are established against women. Eventually, children connect masculinity with power and superiority and code aggression as a functional tool with which to establish control over others, particularly when used by men. On the other hand, aggression in women is often considered as a loss of self-control (Perelberg and Miller, 2011). Displaying aggressive behaviour is seen as a natural part of a boy’s life, resulting in a toleration of such masculine behaviour. On the other hand, girls are taught that

they should protect themselves from male aggression but not in such a way as to display the same aggressive attitudes (Hagemann-White et al., 2001).

The sociology of childhood perspective benefited hugely from feminist approaches and theorisation of power. The recognition and understandings of children and young people as a relatively powerless group has a parallel in an empirical sense with domestic violence research within which feminist researchers have also sought to explore the impact of domestic violence on children and young people from their own perspectives.

Besides meshing violent behaviours with gendered power relations, some feminist researchers emphasise the relationship and importance also of age, socio-economic class and race with gender (see for example Thiara and Gill, 2010; Chavis and Hill, 2009, Fergusson et al., 2013, Sokoloff and Dupont, 2005). One of the ways in which feminists have made sense of the effects of gender power relations and their interface with race and class is through the concept of intersectionality, which was developed by Crenshaw in the USA (1989).

### Intersectionality

The concept of 'intersectionality' was developed by Crenshaw in 1989, and is considered by many to be the 'most important contribution that women's studies has made so far' (McCall, 2005: 1771 cited by Davis, 2008:67). It was developed to understand how the intersection of social categories such as race and gender structure the oppression of Black women in the United States (Collins and Bilge, 2016, Vivar, 2016, Crenshaw, 1989). Crenshaw suggested that studies on Black women's experiences should take both race and gender into account and determine how these identities shape Black women's experiences (Davis, 2008). It is suggested that the experiences of Black women are different from those of White women because of the effects of race in interaction with other systems of domination on women's identities and location which result in different forms and experiences of oppression among women. In other words, Black women suffer different inequality social mechanisms because they are Black *and* women. Beyond providing a theoretical explanation, intersectionality focused

attention on Black women's experiences within the perspective of feminist theory, as Lewis (2013) states "it helped to erode the epistemological boundaries between those who 'know' and those who "experience" (p:873). Besides gender and race, feminist researchers have incorporated class, as well as other dimensions such as age, sexuality and disability (Yuval-Davis, 2006, Davis, 2008, Moodley and Graham, 2015, Shaw et al., 2012, Thiara and Gill, 2010). Even though the concept of intersectionality was formulated to understand how Black women's experiences are shaped by race and gender, it is also adopted to understand how intersecting identities lead to oppression, domination and exclusion of all women of colour (Chantler and Thiara, 2017, Cooper, 2015). Davis (2008) and Yuval-Davis (2006) state that oppression, exploitation, cultural gender roles, patriarchal system and expectations are problems that women often have to deal with. There has been also some diversity in theoretical development in intersectionality. In recent years, it has been used predominantly in two ways. One which refers to people's location within social systems and the other which focuses on identities as shaped by multiple and intersecting forms of power. However, according to Chantler and Thiara (2017) identity arises out of social location and the two cannot be separated.

The concept of intersectionality emphasises how different social categories are intertwined and come into play in reflecting the power dynamics at both societal and family settings (Cho et al., 2013, Vivar, 2016) and how these multiple identities shape individual's experiences of oppression (Thiara and Gill, 2010, Thiara et al., 2011). Therefore, intersectionality has been utilized to understand the diversity in personal experiences of different groups (Samuels and Ross-Sheriff, 2008, Carastathis, 2014, Cole, 2009a, 2009b). Whilst recognising the powerlessness of children and young people as a group, their experiences are not homogenous. Here, intersectionality has also advanced our thinking and enabled us to examine the social location of children and young people who may be affected by a number of oppressions and inequalities. And, it helps to explore the nuances of how age, gender, class and race/ethnicity affects and shapes young people's experiences and perspectives of domestic violence. As mentioned above, the intersection of these identities and their social locations make a difference to individual lives. Since not all young people's experiences

and lives are uniform, the concept of intersectionality enables me to elucidate and understand the experiences of young people as they are shaped by these different aspects and how this intersection of identities results in differential effects of exposure to domestic violence. The combination of these theoretical frameworks (sociology of childhood, feminist theory and intersectionality) centralises young people as a group who are directly and indirectly affected by gender violence directed at their mothers. It also incorporates a nuanced understanding of the impact of other forms of oppression and identity, whilst acknowledging that children and young people are active, not passive, and develop their own strategies of resistance.

### ***Social Learning Theory***

To understand and explain individuals' behaviours in the context of domestic violence, some social scientists have utilised social learning theory (Dutton, 1999). Based on the theory of Bandura (1969, 1977, 1986), individuals' behaviours are seen to be shaped by observing and interpreting emotionally attached people's behaviours (in the case of domestic violence, these people are family members) (Corvo, 2006, Fox et al., 2011, Sellers et al., 2003). In the case of intimate partner violence or domestic violence, social learning theory claims that children perceive violence as a legitimate way of dealing with stressful events and conflict (Wareham et al., 2009, Powers et al., 2017, Widom and Wilson, 2015) and they may adopt these observed behaviours and use them in their own life (Akers, 2011, Anderson and Kras, 2007). Thus, by observing others' abusive behaviours and justifying violence, children may develop a greater tendency to engage in domestic violence in later life (Akers, 2011, Manchikanti Gómez, 2011, Hamby et al., 2012). Social learning theory is of potential use of helping me to elucidate how young people perceive violence through the messages they receive from adult family members who are perpetrators of violence towards others, especially women and children, in the family and also through their justifications for their violent behaviour towards their victims.

Stemming from social learning theory, the theory of intergenerational transmission of violence emphasises the relationship between childhood exposure to domestic violence on later domestic violence perpetration and/or victimization (Widom and Wilson, 2015, Besemer, 2015, Rivera and Fincham, 2015). Witnessing or experiencing domestic violence in childhood, especially exposure to physical violence by fathers towards mothers, is said to be directly correlated with male violence against women in the household (Wareham et al., 2009, Markowitz, 2001). Based on social learning theory, the theory of intergenerational transmission of violence posits the link between gender and transmission of violence (Sellers et al., 2003, Cochran et al., 2011). According to some, exposure to domestic violence in childhood is a primary factor in men having an abusive relationship with a partner and children, and leads to an increased risk in women being subjected to intimate violence (Coker et al., 2000, Powers et al., 2017). Furthermore, risk victimization is increased in the case of experiencing violence from a parent who is the same gender as a child. For example, Laporte and colleagues (2011) found that generally men have a greater risk in becoming perpetrators than women, and men who experienced violence from their fathers are more likely to become perpetrators.

According to social learning theory, children learn and reinforce the violent behaviours from their parents, who provide a message that violence is an appropriate way to solve conflicts (Widom and Wilson, 2015, Black et al., 2010, Franklin and Kercher, 2012). Furthermore, they tend to accept or rationalise the violence as a part of social progression and link it with gender roles in society (Powers et al., 2017). Thus boys acquire masculine roles such as dominant husband and father, breadwinner, and the leader of the family, while girls are likely to adopt more passive roles such as obedient wife and devoted mother (McCarry, 2010). The normalizing or justifying of these traditional gender roles by girls can result in the belief that they deserve the violence in certain situations. For example, according to Hacettepe University's research in Turkey (2004), 39 per cent of women said that a husband has a right to beat his wife if she burns the food, argues with husband, spends a lot of money, does not fulfil her responsibilities as a mother or refuses to have intercourse (Kandemirci and Kağnıcı, 2014). Hence, social learning theory enables me to ask questions to

identify whether or not young people, who have grown up in a family with violence, justify domestic violence and if they perceive it as a normal and acceptable behaviour in the family setting. It also helps me to explore gender differences in the ways in which violence in the home may be internalised and enables me to understand young people's behaviours which occur as a result of exposure to domestic violence in their childhood.

Although the idea of social learning theory has been empirically supported by some research (see for example; Ehrensaft et al., 2003, Widom and Wilson, 2015), other researchers have questioned the link between exposure to domestic violence in childhood and victimization and perpetration in later relationships (see for example; Masood, 2014, Fagan and Wright, 2011). Researchers have found results which challenge gender-based effects of intergenerational transmission of violence. For example, some found that this relationship was seen among only men (Moretti et al., 2006, Alexander et al., 1991) or women (Douglas and Straus, 2006) or there was no gender-specific relationship in transmission of violence (Cui et al., 2010).

Social learning theory explains children's behavioural development to some extent, but has been criticised for being deterministic. It is at this point that feminist theory adds to the explanation of childhood and addresses gaps that are derived from social learning theory. In particular, feminist theory gives voice to children and young people and accords them with agency and thus addresses the determinism inherent in the social learning perspective. Social learning theory can also be criticized for not taking into account variables such as socio-economic status/class, race, gender, socio-cultural background as factors affecting the socialization of children. In order to address the inevitability of young people using violence because they have grown up observing it, the sociology of childhood provides additional and valuable perspectives on children's experiences and how they use such experiences to construct their own understandings/ interpretations of the world while also taking into account the influence of age, gender, socio-economic background and ethnicity (Edleson et al., 2007, Copp et al., 2016, Kernsmith, 2006). Moreover, social learning theory



has resulted in much debate, critique and some qualifications, also remains influential among policymakers and practitioners.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has reviewed literature about the prevalence and effects of domestic violence on children and young people and also their perspectives on domestic violence, how to cope with it, and their ideas about what helps to support survivors of domestic violence. Studies recognise that domestic violence is shown to be a widespread problem. Studies show that domestic violence mainly affects women: however, large numbers of children are also affected. There is a comprehensive research literature showing that children who live with domestic violence are at increased risk of behavioural problems, emotional trauma, and mental well-being in later life (Easterbrooks et al., 2018, Smagur et al., 2017, Bair-Merritt et al., 2015, Cater et al., 2015, McDonald et al., 2016) While there is an extensive literature which treats children as objects of research, there is an increasing literature which centres children's voices and experiences (Edleson et al., 2007, Mullender et al., 2002, Buckley et al., 2007, Swanston et al., 2014) and this literature provides important insights about children's views about living with domestic violence and their coping strategies. This chapter has also provided insight into domestic violence situation in Turkey.

This chapter also has reviewed three theoretical approaches which are useful to explain domestic violence and its effects on children and young people and on which this study draws. The feminist perspective is used as a framework for understanding domestic violence. This reveals that gendered power relations are at the centre of understanding the phenomenon of domestic violence. The feminist perspective advocates that domestic violence is caused by gender inequality in society (Dobash and Dobash, 1979, Thiara and Gill 2010) and stems from male domination. Even though feminist theories of violence were developed to explain violence against women by men, children's exposure to violence can also be understood by using this perspective because children are also exposed to male power and domination in the household.

As literature has revealed that the effects of categories, such as developmental stage, gender, culture and ethnicity/‘race’ result in various experiences of domestic violence on children and young people. In order to understand the role of simultaneous inequalities arising from one’s location, according to different social categories such as age, social class, and race/ethnicity which impact on the young people’s vulnerability, and effects of domestic violence, this study also utilizes the concept of intersectionality.

This study also draws on social learning theory which claims that children develop certain behaviours by observing parents. In the case of domestic violence, the reason for children’s aggressive behaviours is the observation of aggressive behaviour. Some researchers claim that domestic violence exposure in childhood is a predictive factor in the displaying of violence against the child’s future family members (Chung, 2005). Social learning theories also emphasise the importance of traditional gender roles and social inequalities in patriarchal societies (Powers et al., 2017). This theory is helpful to understand the attitudes, cultural beliefs and gender-based perceptions which encourage domestic violence and how they might result in effects on young people’s attitudes and behaviours.

Compared to the deterministic view of social learning theory, this study also draws on the sociology of childhood approaches as an overarching framework which indicate that children take an active role in organizing and building their own social world. As demonstrated in the literature review, children and young people’s perspectives of domestic violence are different from those of adults and this difference is not only dependent on age and gender, but also on culture. A number of studies demonstrate that behaviours that are considered as domestic violence in one culture might not be perceived as such in another. Differences in perspective may influence the effects of domestic violence on both children and young people. Hence, the constructivist approach is adopted to explain how young people interpret their experiences and establish their own perspectives of domestic violence and how they perceive the changing effects of domestic violence exposure.

The English language literature shows that the most comprehensive studies are conducted in western countries such as United Kingdom, United States and Canada. Such studies contribute to the creation of new and/or improvement of existing prevention programmes (eg., AVA Project, Buttleuk), to further research into domestic violence. On the other hand, the literature review has also showed that there are significant knowledge gaps in the domestic violence field especially in relation to child and young exposure to domestic violence in Turkey.

The following chapter discusses the philosophical assumptions that informed the study and elucidates the relationship between theoretical underpinnings and methodology and methods to achieve the research objectives. Furthermore, issues of ethics, research process, and data collection and analysis are also discussed in the following chapter.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY AND METHODS**

#### **Introduction**

Previous chapters have outlined the rationale for conducting the study and established a broader but non-exhaustive record of the available literature in the field of domestic violence exposure, its prevalence specifically in the Turkish national context, its effects on children and young people and the sense they make of their experiences. Some key frameworks (feminist theory and intersectionality, social learning theory and the sociology of childhood) useful to this study were also discussed. In this chapter I discuss the philosophical underpinnings that inform the methodological approach to study as well as methods adopted to achieve the objectives of the research.

This chapter will start by discussing the theoretical assumptions about the generation of knowledge that provide a basis for the research design to address the research questions. To reiterate, the main aim of the research is to identify young people's perspectives on domestic violence and to explore its effects and identify their adopted coping strategies as well as their ideas of protective factors from their point of view. Thereafter, this chapter will elucidate how the employed theoretical assumptions are integrated into the process of empirical research in order to succeed in the research aims.

The theoretical orientation of the study and research questions led me to design a methodology within the qualitative paradigm, because, one of the key aspects in any research is that there must be compatibility between the theoretical assumptions and chosen method in order to embrace the research questions (Cane et al., 2012, Sin, 2010, Bryman, 2015, Padgett, 2016). My purpose in adopting a qualitative method was to give voice to young people who are victims of domestic violence, to enhance understanding of their lived experiences and about domestic violence.

This chapter is separated into six sections. In the first section the philosophical underpinnings that informed the study are discussed. The second section addresses the methodological approach which links with philosophical assumptions. The third section details the data collection process including research settings, sampling, pilot study and its findings, participants profile, and interviewing participants. The fourth section discusses how I organized the data and analysed it. The fifth section focuses on the issues related with reflexivity and positionality and how I maintained these critical stance throughout the fieldwork. The last section details how ethical and practical issues were handled during the process of data collection.

### **Philosophical Underpinnings**

This section elucidates the methodology that underpins this research and reveals the points which connect the epistemology and the qualitative methodology used in this thesis to achieve the research aims. In terms of its methodological basis, my study is designed to combine philosophical assumptions from interpretivism and grounded theory that are in accordance with the theoretical perspectives discussed in the previous chapter. For example, they are in line with a broadly feminist approach which brings marginalized groups into prominence by giving them a chance to express themselves and to reveal the differentiating effects and understandings which are derived from different social locations (Mullender and Hague, 2005, Coddington, 2017). Thus, both the theoretical framework and focus of the study guided me to adopt interpretive paradigm and grounded theory as philosophical assumptions and to choose a qualitative methodology. The epistemological perspectives that informed the study's methodology are discussed below.

#### ***Interpretivism***

Interpretivism as an epistemology contrasts sharply with the positivist paradigm in explaining social reality. A positivist approach seeks to objectively understand a reality or common truth that already exists in nature (Thanh, 2015, Creswell and Poth, 2017, Khan, 2014). On the other hand, interpretivism sees reality as

socially constructed by the values and thinking of individuals who experience it (Crotty, 1998, Willis and Jost, 2007, Thanh, 2015). The nature of interpretivism is subjective which means that every individual understands social reality in the world differently (Creswell, 2007, Khan, 2014). Hence, interpretivist researchers look for an explanation of a phenomenon in the social world through people's perspectives based on their own experiences.

Thus, the interpretivist paradigm emphasises the subjective interpretation and diverse understandings of people. These multiple attached meanings to social phenomenon are seen to be shaped by socio-cultural values and experiences which generate more nuanced perspectives and understandings of social reality (Willis and Jost, 2007, Morehouse, 2012). Adopting an interpretivist perspective as a framework enables young people who experience domestic violence to construct an understanding of domestic violence that is derived from and shaped by their own knowledge as well as cultural and social factors which impact their lives. Thus, this paradigm is consistent with the main aim and research questions of the study: how do young Turkish people perceive domestic violence, its effects and what are their coping strategies?

### ***Grounded Theory***

Grounded theory is also consistent with the interpretivist perspective in that it allows the researcher to use an interpretivist approach, as the data precedes the construction of theoretical concepts and categories. Both perspectives focus on personal experiences and the interpretation of the meaning of social reality from them (Neuman, 2014, Corbetta, 2003, Hennink et al., 2011). Grounded theory, developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967), draws on data gathered in the study and aims to develop theory from that data. This approach argues that the interpretation of collected data is normally restricted by existing theories and suggests instead that data should be systematically analysed and interpreted without adopting any theories. In this approach, social realities can be interpreted and constructed through the influence of participants' and researchers values, perspectives and socio-cultural contexts (Charmaz, 2014).

There are two perspectives in grounded theory, in qualitative studies: Strauss and Corbin's (1998) systematic approach and Charmaz's (2006) constructionist perspective. Strauss and Corbin (1998) developed a systematic and analytic approach to generate theory from data by revealing categories (Cresswell, 2007, 2017). On the other hand, Charmaz (2006) adopts a constructionist perspective, which emphasises observation, beliefs, social conditions, and participants' words rather than an emphasising of core categories. In this approach, the data is re-organized and re-structured by collaborating participants and researcher's values, perspectives, demographic, and position (Charmaz, 2008). However, both perspectives are in the line with the interpretive perspective and adopt similar methodological approaches (Charmaz and Bryant, 2011, Glaser, 2017).

This study adopts Charmaz' social constructivist approach to grounded theory. This is a perspective and tool for analysis in that "the job of classifying and interpreting data begins with data, and [is] not a handed-down conceptual framework" (Hammond and Wellington, 2012:82). In this manner, the purpose of adopting constructivist grounded theory was to enable me to explore how participants construct the social reality of domestic violence and how their perspectives and coping strategies are shaped by their cultural and social norms, locations, ethnicity and gender. Regarding of this, grounded theory was useful to enable me to conduct the study where nothing was ignored, but every possible factors were assessed to utilize better data.

### **Qualitative Methodology**

Considering the research objectives and theoretical frameworks, a qualitative methodology was adopted for my study as already noted. A qualitative approach may be described as an inductive and interactive approach which seeks to explore a phenomenon from the values and interpretations people bring to the research environment (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, Flick, 2014, Ritchie et al., 2013) and to understand people's lives and experiences from their own perspectives and in their own words (Barbour, 2013, Holloway and Galvin, 2016, Parahoo, 2014). The nature of the qualitative methodology is to find answers to 'what' 'why' and 'how' questions instead of concerning itself with numbers

(Ritchie et al., 2013:3), by providing an environment for participants to have their voice heard (Skinner et al., 2013) rather than expecting them to select from already defined answers to express their feelings. According to Smith (2004), due to greater flexibility and less limitation than quantitative research, qualitative research methods are considered a more effective and reflexive way to understand perceptions of people in the context in which they live. Qualitative methods are largely associated with the nature of interpretivism, subjectivity and feminism (Oakley 1998, Masood 2014, Ritchie et al. 2014). Consequently, qualitative research methods enable researchers to access more detailed and rich data to provide grounded information (Parahoo, 2014).

One of the key aspects of a qualitative approach is that a social reality is constructed depending on how it is being interpreted and structured by the researcher and respondents (Taylor et al., 2015, Lindlof and Taylor, 2017, Parahoo, 2014). In line with the adopted philosophical perspectives (interpretivism and grounded theory), I used a qualitative approach and in particular the method of semi-structured interviews with young people to gain an in-depth understanding of their experiences of domestic violence and how these individuals' experiences, locations and beliefs affect their interpretation of domestic violence.

As mentioned above, qualitative methodology is an inductive approach (Bryman, 2015, Holloway and Galvin, 2016, Willis and Jost, 2007), in that it "is often distinguished by the fact that hypotheses are commonly generated from analysis of the data rather than stated at the outset" (Ormston et al., 2014:3). In other words, qualitative research provides more flexibility by enabling researchers to be more involved in the experiences of a participant in order to construct meanings from phenomena. As an adopted philosophical assumption, a grounded theory approach also encourages researchers to establish close relationships with studied subjects (Blaikie, 2007, Crotty, 1998). In this manner, the nature of both the grounded theory approach and qualitative research fit together to enable me to co-construct the data with the inclusion of participants' perspectives, interactions and values.



Adopting a qualitative approach also has the potential for young people who are silent victims of domestic violence to make them visible to perpetrators and the community. This is in line with feminist research that advocates giving a voice to marginalized groups on the issue of domestic violence. Even though there are feminist researchers who have adopted quantitative methodologies in their work on domestic violence (see for example, Mullender et al., 2002), the quantitative paradigm has been criticized by feminist researchers for focusing more on numerical values rather than on emotional effects (Hughes and Cohen, 2010). Considering the research questions asked in this thesis and the feminist critique of quantitative methodology, using qualitative methodology has allowed me to gain an in-depth understanding of domestic violence, its effects as perceived by the young people interviewed, their coping strategies and the protective factors they identified.

As the literature review reveals, in the domestic violence field of research, young survivors of violence in Turkey have only been represented in statistics because of the lack of qualitative studies on Turkish children and domestic violence. I have adopted a qualitative research methodology that draws on feminist approaches in order to fill an important knowledge gap in this field.

### **Data Collection Process**

Conducting fieldwork about sensitive topics requires particular attention to be given to the selection of research sites, the recruiting of suitable participants and the utilization of ethical protocols in the research process (Dempsey et al., 2016). This section discusses how these aspects were handled when undertaking the research.

### ***Research Settings and Recruitment of Participants***

#### **Study Sites**

The study was conducted in two cities in Turkey: Ankara and Istanbul. Both cities are multicultural and represent the demographic characteristics of the

country. By recruiting participants from the two cities, I hoped to include diverse socio-economic and ethnic groups of people with the aim that this would provide a range of perspectives and views through in-depth interviews.

### *Istanbul*

Istanbul has a population nearing 15 million (Turkish Statistical Institute, 2017), which includes people from different socio-economic classes and ethnic groups. It has been the magnet of the country in terms of economic, social and cultural opportunities for years. Due to having internal migrants from all provinces in Turkey, the city has become multicultural. It is easier for young people who are victims of domestic violence to access shelters than getting help in other cities because government and society organisations are better served and organised in Istanbul. Thus, accessibility to victims of violence and the high possibility of obtaining rich data from respondents from different socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds led me to choose Istanbul as one site for my research. It is necessary here to clarify exactly what is meant by ‘shelter’. A shelter is the place which provides protection, food, financial and emotional support to children and young people who are orphans, homeless or who have run away from their home or been taken from an abusive environment by the government due to their experiences of child abuse and/or domestic violence. Young women are allowed to stay in the shelter until they are 25, however, young men are needed to leave when they are 22 years old.

In Istanbul, I had planned to get permission from the government to conduct interviews with young survivors of domestic violence who lived in shelters in order to explore their perspectives on domestic violence, its effects on their well-being and their coping mechanisms.

### *Ankara*

Ankara is the capital city of Turkey with a population of approximately 5.4 million (Turkish Statistical Institute, 2017). Ankara is another centre of attraction for internal migrants (mostly middle class and students from diverse social

classes) but it is not as diverse as Istanbul. I chose Ankara because it is the second province after Istanbul where the highest number of domestic violence incidents are being reported (Ministry of Family and Social Policy Report, 2014). Therefore, it was identified as the second field research site in relation to accessibility to relevant institutions and ease in recruiting relevant participants.

In Ankara I had planned to interview university students who had experienced domestic violence in their childhood. In addition to recruiting young people from shelters, I wanted to identify young people with a high level of education who had not experienced the social service system in Turkey, in order to explore their perspectives on possible protective factors alongside their perspectives on domestic violence, its effects and their coping strategies. The aim was to achieve a multidimensional sample where age, ethnicity, educational and socio-economic backgrounds were concerned. Moreover, Ankara is familiar to me as this is where I undertook my undergraduate education and I had a well-established network of friends and acquaintances who could be called upon to act as gatekeepers to various student groups and organisations. Thus, it was easier for me to gain access and establish trust with potential respondents and organizations.

### ***Entering the Field***

Before starting the fieldwork, a semi-private shelter in Istanbul and a university in Ankara were identified and were informally contacted with a view to conducting the research among the young people in their care. According to my informal agreement with the shelter in Istanbul, social workers would help me to find young people who met the research criteria and they would allow me to interview those young people in the shelter. However, a couple of days before I was due to start the research in the shelter, the pre-arranged interview programme was cancelled by the manager of the shelter due to a *fatwa* (religious rule) issued by the Directorate of Religious Affairs in Turkey which stated that fathers are not guilty of violating religious laws by lusting after daughters aged over nine. The manager explained that this ruling had put them in a difficult position and that she was therefore reluctant and unable to participate in my

study because, she said, the Directorate's comment was promoting child abuse and violence against children and women in the community, which their foundation had been fighting to stop. Following this unexpected and sudden problem, I contacted the Ministry of Family and Social Policies to recruit eligible young people from shelters run by the government. I was asked to translate and submit my research proposal, topic guide and consent form to get permission from the government. After removing the ethnicity questions in my socio-demographic data form, due to ethnic tensions (Turkish-Kurdish) arising from military operations in the East of Turkey during this time, I was given permission to conduct my study in three shelters in Istanbul and one shelter in Ankara.

In order to recruit the participants, I talked to gatekeepers in the shelters who knew the young people's life stories and why they had come to the shelter. According to Coyne (2010) gatekeepers are in a good position to reach suitable participants for research and to help establish a relationship of trust with them. Unlike the potential barriers mentioned by Heath and colleagues (2007), even though I dealt with different levels of gatekeepers, I did not experience any barriers to access. This was mainly because of having permission from the Ministry of Family and Social Policies. The shelter workers assisted me in identifying young people who met the recruitment criteria of my study and all the interviews were arranged according to their suggestions.

Apart from the shelters, as a fifth fieldwork site, a university was chosen, from which to recruit young people with higher academic qualifications and from a higher socio-economic status. The reason for selecting this university was that I knew academic staff in different departments and targeting young people aged 18-24 was easily managed. Before starting the fieldwork, flyers (see Appendix A), which included a brief explanation of the aims of the research and my contact information, were prepared to advertise the study. I then directly contacted the members of staff to get permission to have some time in their class to introduce myself, talk about my research and advertise it by handing out flyers to the students. I asked them to contact me if they were interested in participating in the study. The flyers also included the university student counselling service contact information in case any participants needed further emotional or psychological

help after the interview process. The reason for recruiting young people from two main research sites (university and shelter) was to incorporate different perspectives about the phenomenon of domestic violence, its perceived effects, coping strategies and ideas for intervention from individuals from different socio-economic and educational backgrounds. Another reason for selecting the two cities was to ensure the inclusion of young people from different ethnic backgrounds.

### Sampling

My study consisted of 33 young people who were recruited using a purposive sampling technique. The aim of this technique is to access informants who have certain attributes that would be relevant to study (Etikan et al., 2016, Suen et al., 2014, Mason, 2017) and that enable them to provide in-depth and rich information which can answer the research questions (Ritchie et al., 2013, Etikan et al., 2016, Creswell and Poth, 2017). Accordingly, the aim of my study was not to recruit a representative sample; instead only young people who were or had been living with domestic violence since their childhood were included.

Further inclusion criteria required that participants were selected from the age range 18-24 years. The reason for choosing young adults in this age range as research participants was that people at this stage of life have normally well-developed beliefs, behaviours and perspectives on a given topic. According to Kohlberg (1969), a cognitive development theorist, in young adulthood an individual has advanced perspectives, beliefs and attitudes on any subject by the time they reach young adulthood (Blaikie, 2007, Crotty, 1998). Another reason for selecting young adults was that conducting research with children, and especially that which includes an interviewing phase, requires considerable attention to ethical issues, e.g. informed and voluntary consent from parents or guardians and protection from harm (Alderson and Morrow, 2011, Mullender et al., 2002). Because of inadequate, disorganised and limited school and child counselling services in Turkey, safeguarding children from potential psychological harm arising from such sensitive social research is difficult. Having considered these factors in conducting research with young children, a

decision was made to focus on young people from the 18-24 age group, who could give informed consent, participate voluntarily and elaborate their thoughts and experiences independently.

In both quantitative and qualitative research methods, the most problematic issue is the size of the sample (Bryman, 2015). In qualitative research, one of the main arguments about the sampling is related to generalizability of the study to the whole population (Gobo 2004). However, reflecting the socio-demographic composition of the population in Turkey was not an aim of this study. I therefore, constructed a diverse sample in terms of socio-economic status, educational level, gender and two major ethnicities (Turkish and Kurdish). Within the context of this study, what was important was the quality of the data. As (Crouch and McKenzie, 2006) mention, qualitative research focuses on the meaning of the phenomenon and “not making generalised hypothesis statements” (Mason, 2010). Therefore, this research did not concern itself with the sample size. Consequently, I had intended to interview 25 young people but in fact completed interviews with 33 young people which a sufficient number was allowing me to explore the responses to the research questions from a diverse group of young people.

Data was collected until saturation was reached. To achieve an adequate sample size in qualitative research, theoretical saturation is widely adopted by researchers (Gubrium, 2012). Guest et al., (2006) state ‘saturation has, in fact, become the gold standard by which purposive sample size is determined in health science research’. This means that data collection continues until no more new themes are identified from the interviews (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, Bryman, 2015, Mason, 2010). It is suggested that the sample size is large enough when a researcher thinks that s/he has accessed adequate data to explore the research questions. After collecting fruitful and substantial data from the interviews and realizing that no more new themes could be generated, I decided to stop interviewing when the number reached 33 (not include pilot interviews).

### ***Data Collection Process***

Before conducting the fieldwork, my supervisors and I organized a mock interview to rehearse the questions and my approach to participants as a researcher in the interview process. Based on the results of this mock interview, which explored the research questions, an initial topic guide (see Appendix B) was designed in order to help me to establish consistency in data gathering (Bauer and Gaskell, 2000, Parahoo, 2014, Ritchie et al., 2013, Holloway and Galvin, 2016) and to focus on specific issues rather than broader topics (Dempsey et al., 2016, Doody and Noonan, 2013). The topic guide and related probe questions were developed prior to the fieldwork and were refined after the conduct and analysis of pilot interviews.

The topic guide covered the main areas of the research with some related probing questions. It was broad enough to allow the participants to share fruitful details (Morris, 2015, Ritchie et al., 2013) and not limit the possibility of ‘unanticipated but nonetheless highly relevant themes’ (Arthur and Nazroo, 2003: 115).

As feminist researchers (Mason, 2002, Rubin and Rubin, 2011) have mentioned, instead of asking similar, strictly predetermined questions in each interview, the semi-structured interview method adopted in this study allows questions other than those tied to the specific research questions to emerge spontaneously during the interview process. An unstructured interview also provides similar flexibility to researchers and enables them to collect rich data and to explore in depth meaning from it (Holloway and Galvin, 2016, Ryan et al., 2009). However, due to the high probability of collecting irrelevant data from participants, and considering that this makes the data analysis process harder (by having to limit the creation of a meaningful story from different data sets and codes generated), adopting an unstructured interview approach can take too much time and be difficult to analyse (Doody and Noonan, 2013). Considering that I had limited time for data collection, the semi-structured interview was deemed the appropriate method to adopt.

## Pilot Study

The aim of conducting a pilot study was to identify any weaknesses in the designed method and research protocol and highlight any limitations of my topic guide (Turner III, 2010, Van Teijlingen and Hundley, 2002). The pilot study also helped me to improve my interview skills in this sensitive topic area, my use of recording equipment, my time management skills and also my ability to ask questions and probe further about unshared but deeply affecting experiences of participants. In addition, piloting was also useful in developing a strategy about how to approach a young person and make him/her feel more comfortable.

For the pilot study, two interviews (one with a young man from a shelter and the other with a young woman from the university) were conducted. During the piloting, I realized that I had to stick to the topic guide framework because the participants often wanted to share so many unrelated things with me. Due to the fact that they wanted to talk at length during the interviews, my pilot interviews lasted over 90 minutes. The pilot interviews taught me to make participants focus on the main topic. Consequently, subsequent interviews were conducted more efficiently.

After the pilot interviews, I developed further probing questions and revised my topic guide to elucidate more detailed experiences relevant to the research questions by adding some questions about family involvement, gender differences and coping strategies. To keep young people focused, the research objectives and aims were emphasized again before the interview. On occasions when the young people went off topic, reminders were used to refocus on the main topic.

Piloting was also helpful in modifying my terminology while asking the participants questions. Before the piloting, I had not realized that young people could have limited specific vocabulary related to domestic violence. After piloting, I used common words such as fighting, arguing, cursing, humiliating, and shouting instead of using the terms such as physical, verbal, psychological



violence. By adapting the wording of the questions, my participants were able to better understand the conversation and feel more at ease.

### Interviewing Participants

Interviewing entails the collection of data not only by asking direct (structured) questions but is also a process that brings to the surface participants' hidden, relevant experiences. One of the main aspects of the interview that encourages participants to share their life experiences is to establish a rapport. As Rubin and Rubin (2011) have emphasized, establishing connections between interviewee and interviewer encourages people to become more willing to share their life stories. Establishing rapport is a required aspect in any kind of research but becomes a vital part of the data collection process in sensitive research to access detailed and rich private experiences of participants (Johnson and Clarke, 2003, Abbe and Brandon, 2014, Liamputtong, 2010). I followed two different strategies to enhance rapport development with young people. Prior to conducting the actual interviews, I spent time at the offices of the shelters and the university where the interviews were undertaken and tried to spend as much time as I could with potential participants to establish emotional warmth between us. I also talked to gatekeepers to get as much information as I could about the young people concerned. At the university fieldsite, I visited 10 classes and with the permission of lecturers introduced myself, explained my research and reassured potential participants about how confidentiality and anonymity would be maintained in the study. I also responded to any questions related to the study. I believe that sharing a little about myself and having some personal conversations before starting the interview (Liamputtong, 2013) helped to establish and sustain emotional affinity and mutual trust with participants. I had more chance to build understanding and relationships with young people, especially in the shelters for young men. In the latter, I was allowed to have lunch and dinner with them at the shelters and to visit them in their rooms. Of course, in the shelters for young women I did not have as much freedom of interaction. I let social workers, whom the young women trusted most, introduce me to prospective participants. Following this strategy made them feel comfortable in being involved in my study.

In each interview, right before initiating conversation about serious topics, I also personally introduced myself and asked informal questions, thus allowing the young people to get to know me and to feel more relaxed. According to Corbetta (2003) and Silverman (2013), approaching participants in a friendly manner rather than being formal encourages them to participate more by reducing emotional barriers and establishing a close relationship which facilitates the collection of rich data (Westmarland, 2001, Oakley and Roberts, 1981, Rubin and Rubin, 2011). However, behaving in a friendly manner did not mean not setting clear boundaries between the interviewee and myself. I approached interviewees professionally, as a researcher, during the entire interviewing process. By keeping focused on the main research questions while also asking probing questions at the right moments, I provided a balance between being a total outsider and engaging myself in their life stories. Another factor to consider during the interview process is the power relationship between the interviewer and interviewee. By sharing my experiences of being exposed to domestic violence, and thus revealing this commonality, I was able to further build trust and rapport and de-emphasize the relative imbalance of power that is inherent in the interview process.

After this first step, the information sheet (see Appendix C) was given out to inform young people about my research. However, most of them preferred to ask direct questions about the study rather than to read the information sheet. After providing a detailed explanation about the aims of the research, I asked for written permission to record the session through the consent form (see Appendix D) and reinforced the fact that confidentiality and anonymity would be maintained in order to keep their identity safe; through the use of pseudonyms and other protective mechanisms (see below under ‘Organizing the data and data analysis’). In addition, to ensure informed consent and to make them feel comfortable and safe, I told them they could ask me to stop interviewing or recording at any time or that they could leave the interview and resume when they felt ready to talk. A short socio-demographic data form (see Appendix E) was also given to the young people in order to get information about their background, including details such as age, gender, family structure (extended/nuclear), their parents’ occupation and education level and their own

educational level and attainment. After completion of the socio-demographic data form and the consent form, I reminded them once more that if they experienced any negative effects after the interview, due to talking about hurtful memories, they would be able to contact the counsellor in the university or social workers in the shelters.

Given the comfortable physical environment (my colleague's office in the university and a quiet, private room in each shelter) and having become familiar with the young people, I was able to conduct 33 interviews without causing undue emotional stress to the participants who were remembering hurtful experiences from their childhood. Only two young women declined to be interviewed. One of these women did not state any reason for not wishing to talk, whereas the other young woman declared that she was still extremely emotional and feeling isolated after leaving an abusive environment very recently. Each interview session finished with a recognition of the positive developments in their life, and a recognition of their strengths in minimizing possible negative after effects, something which is mentioned as being of great importance by feminists researchers (Campbell and Wasco, 2000).

At the end of each interview, I presented young people with a souvenir (key rings) from the United Kingdom and dessert (baklava) for social workers as a token of my gratitude for their involvement in my research. Before they left, I asked interviewees to provide feedback on my responses, questions and reflections in order to enable me to revise my behaviour in future interviews if necessary. After a young person left, I noted my observations and initial evaluation of the interview.

### Participant Profile

In total 33 interviews were conducted between March and July 2016 in Ankara and Istanbul, with young people who had witnessed and directly experienced domestic violence. The age range of the young people was between 18 and 22 years, with 14 of them being women and 19 men. Twenty-five of the young

people were recruited from three shelters in Istanbul (two female, one male) and one shelter in Ankara (mixed). Only eight people were recruited from the university, which was lower than I had expected before starting the fieldwork. This was most likely due to the interviews coinciding with the students' final exams or because they feared being seen or heard by their friends even though I had emphasized several times that confidentiality would be maintained.

To provide diversity in ethnicity across genders, I conducted this research in two different cities where having high capacity, well-established shelters enables these institutions to serve not only local people but also those from the other provinces of Turkey. Consequently, I was able to enlist the participation of young people of Turkish (n=19) and Kurdish (n=9) origin, as well as those of mixed ethnicity (n=5). In the Turkish context, there are two dominant ethnicities which are categorized as Turkish and Kurdish. That is the reason that I took these two ethnicities into account in the demographic characteristics of the participants.

Regarding the family structure of the young people recruited, nine lived in an extended family, 18 lived in a nuclear family and six lived in a partly extended (very close to relatives) family system. In addition to this, around half of them (16 out of 33) grew up in rural areas such as villages with poor socio-economic conditions and inadequate educational and health facilities. Almost a quarter of young people (n=9) came from suburban areas which are more developed socio-economically and in terms of intellectual life than rural areas. Those who lived in the outskirts of the city had settled in the peripheral regions that are marked by poor conditions in health, education and economic status. In suburban areas, family income depends on employment in unskilled or manual work, whereas farming and casual employment was used for family income in rural areas. Eight young people came from urban areas which are very developed residential areas in the context of education, economy and health services.

In my study, socio-economic status has been determined by two main factors: the occupation and the highest level of education institution attended by parents. According to the Turkish Statistical Institute's report on *Gender pay gap by*

*educational attainment and major occupational group* (2010), occupational status is classified into nine main categories: (i) managers (ii) professionals (iii) technicians and allied professionals (iv) clerical support workers (v) service and sales workers (vi) skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers (vii) craft and related trades workers (viii) plant and machine operators and assemblers and (ix) elementary occupations. In the light of these official occupational categories and taking into consideration the stated educational background of parents in the socio-demographic data forms, three aggregate socio-economic status groups emerged to which the young people in my sample belonged:

| <b>Socioeconomic Status</b>  | <b>Educational Background of Parents</b>   | <b>Parents' Occupation</b>  |
|------------------------------|--|---|
| Low Socio-economic Strata    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary education and below</li> <li>• Secondary education (from 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grade)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elementary occupations</li> <li>• Plant and machine operators and assemblers</li> <li>• Agricultural, forest and fishery workers</li> <li>• Service and sales workers</li> </ul> |
| Middle Socio-economic Strata | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High school</li> <li>• Vocational high school</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clerical support workers</li> <li>• Technicians and associate professionals</li> <li>• Craft and related trades workers</li> </ul>   |
| High Socio-economic Strata   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher education (University)</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professionals</li> <li>• Managers</li> </ul>   |

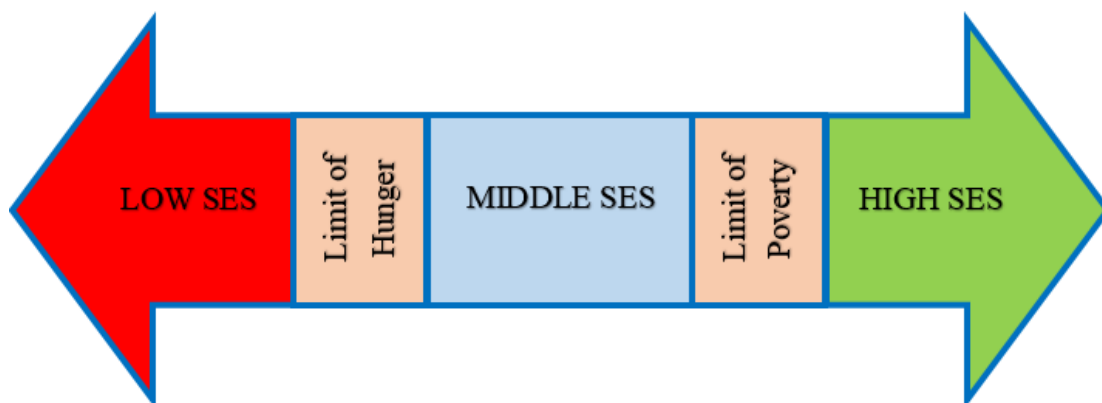
**Table 1: Economic Status Groups**

According to the Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions' annual report on *Limit of Hunger and Poverty* in 2017, the threshold of hunger <sup>3</sup> of a nuclear family is

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<sup>3</sup> The minimum expenditure on food for a basic family of four people.

1,498 Turkish Liras (313 GBP) and limit of poverty <sup>4</sup> is 4,878 Turkish Liras (1021 GBP) per month. Hence, a triangulation of the information provided about the average salary of clustered occupations from the Turkish Statistical Institute's report (2010), socio-economic classifications were determined as:



**Figure 2: Economic Classification**

Prior to starting the fieldwork, my expectation was to interview young people from higher socio-economic strata, attending university, and to recruit young people from lower socio-economic strata living in shelters because, according to the report of Directorate General of Child Services (2010), 70 per cent of 13.742 children and young people who lived in shelters in Turkey, belonged to low socio-economic status strata. The data I collected also corroborated this data and my expectations. The distribution of socio-economic status of the young people was as follows: 17 were of low socio-economic status and of these all were from the shelter settings; 12 were of middle socio-economic status and of these four of attended university and, eight lived in shelters; four were of high socio-economic status and all of them attended university.

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<sup>4</sup> The minimum expenditure for a basic family of four people.

**Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of the Participants**

| <b>Pseudonym</b> | <b>Sex</b> | <b>Age</b> | <b>Family Structure</b> | <b>Ethnicity</b> | <b>Location of Site</b> | <b>Education</b>     | <b>SES</b> | <b>Area</b> |
|------------------|------------|------------|-------------------------|------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|------------|-------------|
| <b>Elif</b>      | Female     | 19         | Nuclear                 | Turkish          | Istanbul/Shelter        | High School Graduate | Middle SES | Rural       |
| <b>Hasan</b>     | Male       | 18         | Extended                | Kurdish          | Ankara/Shelter          | High School          | Low SES    | Rural       |
| <b>Ali</b>       | Male       | 19         | Nuclear                 | Turkish          | Ankara/Shelter          | High School Graduate | Middle SES | Rural       |
| <b>Emine</b>     | Female     | 18         | Nuclear/Extended        | Turkish          | Istanbul/Shelter        | High School          | Low SES    | Rural       |
| <b>Hakan</b>     | Male       | 21         | Nuclear/Extended        | Turkish          | Ankara                  | University           | Middle SES | Urban       |
| <b>Esmâ</b>      | Female     | 20         | Nuclear                 | Kurdish          | Ankara                  | University           | Middle SES | Urban       |
| <b>Mehmet</b>    | Male       | 18         | Extended                | Turkish          | Ankara/Shelter          | High School          | Low SES    | Rural       |
| <b>Su</b>        | Female     | 19         | Extended                | Kurdish          | Istanbul/Shelter        | High School Graduate | Low SES    | Rural       |
| <b>Damla</b>     | Female     | 18         | Nuclear                 | Turkish          | Ankara/Shelter          | High School          | Low SES    | Suburban    |
| <b>Fatma</b>     | Female     | 20         | Nuclear/Extended        | Turkish          | Ankara                  | University           | High SES   | Urban       |
| <b>Zehra</b>     | Female     | 19         | Extended                | Mixed            | Istanbul/Shelter        | High School Graduate | Low SES    | Rural       |
| <b>Zeynep</b>    | Female     | 18         | Nuclear                 | Turkish          | Istanbul/Shelter        | High School          | Middle SES | Suburban    |
| <b>Canan</b>     | Female     | 19         | Nuclear                 | Turkish          | Ankara/Shelter          | High School Graduate | Low SES    | Suburban    |
| <b>Kader</b>     | Female     | 21         | Nuclear                 | Kurdish          | Ankara                  | University           | High SES   | Urban       |
| <b>Dizdar</b>    | Female     | 20         | Extended                | Kurdish          | Istanbul/Shelter        | High School          | Middle SES | Rural       |
| <b>Sude</b>      | Female     | 18         | Nuclear/Extended        | Turkish          | Istanbul/Shelter        | High School          | Middle SES | Suburban    |
| <b>Dilan</b>     | Female     | 19         | Nuclear/extended        | Turkish          | Ankara                  | University           | Middle SES | Suburban    |
| <b>Leyla</b>     | Female     | 20         | Nuclear                 | Mixed            | Ankara                  | University           | High SES   | Urban       |

| <b>Pseudonym</b> | <b>Sex</b> | <b>Age</b> | <b>Family Structure</b> | <b>Ethnicity</b> | <b>Location of Site</b> | <b>Education</b>     | <b>SES</b> | <b>Area</b> |
|------------------|------------|------------|-------------------------|------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|------------|-------------|
| <b>Musa</b>      | Male       | 19         | Extended                | Kurdish          | Istanbul/Shelter        | High School Graduate | Low SES    | Rural       |
| <b>Serdar</b>    | Male       | 18         | Nuclear                 | Turkish          | Istanbul/Shelter        | High School          | Low SES    | Suburban    |
| <b>Recep</b>     | Male       | 19         | Nuclear                 | Mixed            | Ankara/Shelter          | High School Graduate | Low SES    | Rural       |
| <b>Mustafa</b>   | Male       | 21         | Extended                | Turkish          | Ankara                  | University           | Middle SES | Rural       |
| <b>Aydin</b>     | Male       | 18         | Nuclear                 | Turkish          | Istanbul/Shelter        | High School Graduate | Low SES    | Rural       |
| <b>Kamil</b>     | Male       | 19         | Nuclear                 | Kurdish          | Istanbul/Shelter        | High School Graduate | Low SES    | Suburban    |
| <b>Mecnun</b>    | Male       | 18         | Nuclear/Extended        | Mixed            | Ankara/Shelter          | High School Graduate | Middle SES | Urban       |
| <b>Ismail</b>    | Male       | 18         | Nuclear                 | Turkish          | Istanbul/Shelter        | High School          | Low SES    | Suburban    |
| <b>Erdal</b>     | Male       | 18         | Extended                | Turkish          | Ankara/Shelter          | High School          | Low SES    | Rural       |
| <b>Iskender</b>  | Male       | 22         | Nuclear                 | Kurdish          | Ankara                  | University           | High SES   | Urban       |
| <b>Ugur</b>      | Male       | 19         | Nuclear                 | Turkish          | Istanbul/Shelter        | High School Graduate | Low SES    | Rural       |
| <b>Emre</b>      | Male       | 19         | Nuclear                 | Turkish          | Ankara/Shelter          | High School Graduate | Middle SES | Urban       |
| <b>Yasin</b>     | Male       | 18         | Nuclear                 | Turkish          | Istanbul/Shelter        | High School          | Low SES    | Rural       |
| <b>Yasar</b>     | Male       | 18         | Extended                | Mixed            | Ankara/Shelter          | High School          | Low SES    | Rural       |
| <b>Servet</b>    | Male       | 18         | Nuclear                 | Kurdish          | Istanbul/Shelter        | High School          | Middle SES | Suburban    |



## Organizing the Data and Data Analysis

During the interview process, the only tool used was a digital voice recorder. I did not take notes during the interview so as not to distract participants' attention and for me to remain completely engaged with them. As soon as an interview was completed, I made notes about the participant's responses, gestures, emotional reactions (for example; crying, avoiding eye contact) and my thoughts about the interview. Then, I put the signed consent form, the socio-demographic data form and my notes about the interview in a confidential file, labelled it with the number on the digital voice file. I transcribed the data very shortly after the interview. According to Bryman (2012), in studies that use grounded theory, data should be analysed as soon as it is collected from participants. Thus, the first step was to transcribe each interview into text verbatim, using the original language, remove all identifiers to ensure anonymity and take note of distinctive physical reactions of participants such as crying, body language, rise and fall of voice etc. After conducting a couple of interviews, I translated two anonymised transcripts into English and had both the Turkish and English versions checked for accuracy by a Turkish academic fluent in English. The transcripts were checked for coherence by my supervisors. By following this process, I was able to maintain the consistency and quality of the data gathered.

Prior to analysis, the data was organized and identified according to date, place and participants' gender. According to Marshall and Rossman (2014), data should be read several times in order to have full grasp of it and to avoid misinterpretations. Thus, the transcripts were read several times and double checked with the original recorded interview. Through this process I immersed myself into the data and was able to identify connection points between sentences and make a meaningful story from it (Silverman, 2015, Miles et al., 2014). After each reading and listening, a summary and comments were noted. This summary included my initial comments about what the interviewee said and described his/her explanations and feelings.

The next step was coding, a crucial step in the determination of theory from the collected data, if using a grounded theory approach (Bryman, 2015, Charmaz, 2006). Schwandt (2007: 32) defines coding as '*a procedure that disaggregates the data, breaks them down into manageable segments, and identifies or names those segments*'.

The initial process of coding in grounded theory is open coding based on exploring, identifying, generating and comparing categories of data (Bryman, 2012, Silverman, 2013). In other words, open coding is the analytical process of describing and developing themes, finding similarities and differences between them by making comparison and asking questions of the data.

Initially, I categorised the data from 10 transcripts which sufficiently represented the gender, age, educational background and socio-economic status and ethnic composition of the sample, and read each in great depth in order to gain a thorough understanding of the participants' thoughts, experiences and feelings. Although, I used NVivo software to organize and analyse my whole data set, I preferred to analyse these 10 transcripts manually and to become more familiar with and involved in the findings. After carefully reading and revisiting the data regularly, some of the main categories began to emerge, tying in with my research questions and study aims: violence in the home; understanding of violence; effects of violence; coping strategies; ideas for interventions. Based on this initial analysis of the data, a coding tree was constructed. After developing it to improve the rigour and credibility of my findings, anonymised transcripts were sent to my supervisors to double-check the codes that I had identified from the data (Barusch et al., 2011, Anney, 2014). After my supervisors and I reached a consensus on a common framework of codes, I created a basic coding tree and started the next stage which entailed applying the same process to all the data.

After open coding the first 10 transcripts, I added the remaining transcripts to the coding process to determine further subcategories and establish relationships between themes. This enabled me to gain a deeper understanding of what the whole data set revealed. According to Charmaz (2006: 60) this constitutes axial coding or '*axial coding relates categories to subcategories, specifies the properties and dimensions of a category, and reassembles the data you have fractured during initial coding to give coherence to the emerging analysis*'; that is, the process of building links between categories and their characteristics. However, given my theoretical framework to explain domestic violence, I could not analyse the whole data set by applying a pre-determined coding tree. So, I adopted an inductive approach (Thomas, 2006) which provides the flexibility to develop themes or categories from the raw data instead of fitting the data into a pre-defined coding framework.

The last step in the data analysis was selective coding which involved identifying core categories, and systematically connecting them to sub-categories (see Appendix G) in order to develop a story from interrelated categories (Corbin 2008). All codes, categories, subcategories and interpretation of data was analysed via NVivo software, which is recommended for use by the University of Warwick.

### **Reflexivity and Positioning of the Researcher**

Reflexivity is considered as a continuous process of critical self-assessment by the researcher of his/her own knowledge, experiences and beliefs and their potential outcomes in the research process (Palaganas et al., 2017, Berger, 2015, Darawsheh, 2014, Mauthner and Doucet, 2003, Probst, 2015). In qualitative research, a researcher (and respondent) brings his/her socio-cultural, ethnic and personal values to the interviewing process which enables the researcher to occupy the position of insider and/or outsider (Holloway and Galvin, 2016). Being an insider and outsider at the same time provides both advantages and disadvantages that might influence the research process. My gender, nationality/ethnicity, socio-economic and socio-cultural background, occupation, being a PhD student abroad, and my personal experiences are considered as factors that made me an insider and/or an outsider in my study.

First of all, I saw myself as an insider because I had witnessed domestic violence during my childhood. Besides this being an initial motivating factor for conducting this research, having experienced domestic violence and sharing this with young people before the interviews meant that trust and rapport between the young people and myself was established rapidly and that they were encouraged to be more open. On the other hand, I saw myself as an outsider because I had not been exposed to physical violence as some of them had experienced. Although I could not keep myself from recalling my personal experiences and identifying with the young people during the early interviews, I remained an outsider throughout the interviewing process.

I believe that my identity and previous professional experience as a counsellor and that of doing a PhD in a foreign country helped me considerably during the data collection. Prior to the interviews, revealing my educational and professional background as a counsellor meant that the young people were encouraged to talk about their life stories

more willingly and explicitly because, according to them, this was a great chance to share their traumatic experiences with me who could understand them. There were also some disadvantages to being a counsellor because some young people brought their other personal problems into the interview session which they wanted to discuss. During the early interviews, it was especially challenging for me to maintain my role as a researcher. I sometimes slipped into the role of counsellor. However, as I gained more experience, I managed to keep to the role of researcher and suggested to the young people that they discuss their personal issues with their social workers and the university counsellor.

As a researcher from a UK university, my position was that of an outsider. This positioning influenced my relations with the social workers, the shelter managers and people in the university in a positive way. They really helped me to access participants and willingly allowed me to take some time in their class to advertise my research. I did not face the challenges that a non-Turkish researcher might have accessing participants and gatekeepers during the fieldwork in Turkey.

Where socio-economic status and socio-cultural background are concerned, I held the dual position of insider and outsider. This is because the research was conducted in Turkey, which is my home country, and because I shared a similar socio-economic status (Middle SES) with most of the young people which made me an insider. Coming from a similar social background enabled me to understand at least half of the interviewees' perspectives and to interpret their words and dialects more easily. However, when interviewing young people from low socio-economic strata (constituting almost 52 per cent of the interview sample), I felt that they were initially very ashamed to talk about their home environment and family. By telling them that I had worked as a shepherd in my summer breaks at high school and that I had also worked as a night watchman in buildings to save money for school, I put them at ease and was able to build a closer rapport with them in terms of understanding their social status.

I considered myself as both an insider and outsider in the context of socio-cultural background because of the ethnic diversity among the participants. Although I shared a similar cultural background with some of the young people, there were a number of

Kurdish participants who came from a culture with which I am not familiar. Following the suggestion of Rubin and Rubin (2012) to familiarize oneself with unfamiliar cultures prior to interviews, I took advice from one of my friends, an experienced counsellor in Turkey about how to approach young people from an unfamiliar culture.

Before entering the field, one of my biggest concerns was the effect that my gender would have on the research process, particularly in relation to interviewing young women. Although there are no empirical studies where male researchers have interviewed female domestic violence survivors in Turkey and because of the dominant conservative values in Turkish communities, I expected young women to be introverted and to be averse to sharing their private experiences with someone of the opposite gender. However, this did not prove to be the case and there was little hesitation among the young women I approached in being involved in the research. They were all willing to share their experiences except for two young women whose reasons for not wanting to talk to me were not to do with my gender but their own issues linked to depression. As a matter of fact, most of the young women said that if I were a woman they would not have voluntarily shared as much as they did in the interviews. They told that due to female social workers were so uninterested in their emotions and problems, they would disclose their experiences more deeply to me as a male. In addition, I felt that my biography as a counsellor and a researcher who was studying abroad helped me to deal with the possible vulnerabilities that can emerge during interviews. When I worked as a counsellor in the USA, by counselling women who had suffered from similar familial problems and by providing psychological support to them in dealing with the effects, I had gained sufficient experience in controlling and overcoming many emotional and psychological problems during the interviews.

### **Ethical considerations**

The University of Warwick's Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee's (HSSREC) ethical framework for social research guided this study. Ethics approval (see Appendix F) was sought and received before starting the fieldwork. In addition, because the research was conducted in Turkey, approval was also obtained from the ethics board at the Ministry of Family and Social Policies in Turkey before starting the fieldwork process.

Even though ethical issues are considered in all research areas, research on sensitive topics such as domestic violence must be carefully designed, particularly regarding the safety of participants and in protecting informants from any further emotional harm (Beecham 2009, Doody and Noonan, 2013, Masood 2014). Thus, research should be designed in such a way as to cause no harm to participants, to gain more detailed information from them (Cater and Øverlien 2014, Ellsberg et al., 2005). In other words, the priority during the research must be to ensure an informant's safety and well-being and the aims of the research must be considered as secondary. In my study, due to the possible negative effects on young people of recalling sensitive and emotionally painful memories in the interviews, the safety and well-being of young people was my priority. To support young people with any after effects of remembering traumatic experiences, they were given the contact details of the counselling service at the University in Ankara (in the case of university students) or of specified social workers in each shelter (in the case of shelter residents). Detailed information about the counsellors was provided in flyers for participants from the university. Where respondents became distressed, anxious or very sad during the interview process, I drew upon my experience as a trained counsellor by encouraging them to discover and develop their strengths to ensure that they did not leave the interview with negative emotions/feelings.

Although most of the young people, and almost all the young women, became very emotional during the interview, in the case of two interviews (one with a young man and the other with a young woman) I had to deal with extreme stress, anxiety and sadness. The young woman in question started to cry, bite off the skin around her nails and focused on a painting on the wall instead of making eye contact with me whilst recalling the violence to which her and her siblings were exposed. According to Smith et al. (2009), in the case of participants exposed to possible emotional harm during the interview process, researchers should initially take care of participants' needs instead of following the interview framework. Thus, in this instance, to lower the stress, the first thing that I did was to make her have eye contact with me and to find herself by moving her out of the memories that placed her in a dream-like state. Furthermore, I reminded her that she was safe and living away from the environment where she had had bad experiences. I also advised her to get up, take some deep breaths and change seats. After she controlled her stress level and calmed down, I reminded her that I could

terminate the interview if she did not want to talk anymore, but she wanted to continue to share her experiences. In the interview with a young man who were extremely worried and distressed about his sisters, I used more or less the same strategy to reduce his stress. After the interview, I referred him to the resident social worker in the shelter who supported young people. Out of all the young people, only three requested that I provide an additional support session. Therefore, I conducted three unscheduled support sessions while I was on site. Arrangements with the counsellor and the social workers were made prior to the interviews for them to offer any further necessary support. I liaised closely with them to inform them of the dates and times of interviews so they could be available during those times.

A number of ethical issues arise in any form of research. However, research on sensitive topics require great vigilance in relation to confidentiality and anonymity (Dickson-Swift et al., 2008b, Lee-Treweek and Linkogle, 2002). During the interview process, the importance of maintaining privacy, confidentiality and anonymity for young people was further reinforced because some of the young women in the shelter were still in danger and threatened by their respective families. In the pre-meeting with the young people and prior to each interview, they were reassured that all the information that they provided would be stored securely, that confidentiality would be maintained and that their anonymity would be ensured by removing all personal information such as their name, the name of the university or shelter and any place names that they mentioned in the interview. All the audio-recorded interviews, transcripts, socio-demographic data forms and signed consent forms were scanned and stored securely, with restricted access, on two external hard drives, in password-protected folders, on University of Warwick computers. In addition, I used pseudonyms to protect their identity. The young people were also informed that all the information they provided would not only contribute to knowledge in the field but that it could also encourage policy makers to establish more effective intervention and support policies for children and young people in Turkey.

Social research requires informed consent (Nijhawan et al., 2013) but in the case of conducting research on sensitive topics, having voluntary informed consent becomes a more vital part of the research process (Dickson-Swift, James and Liangputtong 2008, Liangputtong 2013). Prior to the interview all interviewees were given research

information sheets which explained the purpose of the study and how the collected data would be used and stored in order to remove their initial concerns about being involved in the research. They were also asked to sign consent forms. The signed consent form signalled their voluntary participation. Moreover, I let them know that the results of the study could be shared with them if they were curious about the outcomes of the research. However, the only people who asked to see the research results were the social workers and policy makers in the Ministry of Family and Social Policies. Even though data was collected from voluntarily, interviewing people about such sensitive issues can be emotional and distressing. Thus, participants might not be compelled to talk about experiences that make them feel uncomfortable. Hence, all participants were informed that they could pause the interview session at any time or withdraw altogether if that was what they wanted to do.

Conducting interviews about sensitive topics can be very challenging where confidentiality during the interview is concerned (Dickson-Swift et al., 2009, Dickson-Swift et al., 2008b, Dickson-Swift et al., 2007, Hämäläinen and Rautio, 2015) and requires a specific arranged place which is safe and tranquil in order to make participants relaxed enough to share their private experiences (Dempsey et al., 2016) Masood 2014). In the university setting, I used my academic contact's office to conduct interviews and ensured that nobody could interrupt the interview sessions nor know the purpose of the meeting. In the shelter settings, I was provided special office space during the time that I was in the field to conduct the interviews with participants. On a few occasions, in the shelter for men, I conducted interviews in the participant's room in accordance with their wishes. According to some scholars (Doody and Noonan, 2013, Dempsey et al., 2016) the time and place of interview should be determined by the participants.

In addition, apart from considering the physical and psychological safety of participants, some scholars (Dickson-Swift et al., 2008a, Paterson et al., 1999) also address the potential risks faced by researchers, especially while conducting research on sensitive topics. The 'emotional impact' derived from dealing with people's real-life traumatic experiences is considered as an initial risk to the researcher (Parker and O'Reilly, 2013). Such risk may increase for new researchers who do not have enough experience in talking about sensitive issues (Coles and Mudaly, 2010). Unfortunately, I



was faced with such risk while conducting my research. Even though I had experience in counselling, I was a new researcher. And in my early interviews, I struggled somewhat to establish a necessary and clear distance between the participants and myself as a researcher. Thus, I sometimes felt frustration when exposed to extreme traumatic stories because, I thought that such brutal incidents would not happen in real life until I faced the real life experiences in the interviews. However, the experience I gained from each interview, combined with my counselling skills, meant that I managed to protect myself from any adverse emotional impacts.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has provided a discussion of the approaches to generating knowledge – epistemology- and in particular interpretivism and grounded theory which inform my research methodology. It also provides explanations about the selected research design and adopting a qualitative approach. Utilising semi-structured interviews, the study brought together the voices of 33 young people, from the university and shelters in Ankara and Istanbul, who told me what they had experienced, how they perceived domestic violence and its effects, their coping strategies and their ideas about intervention and protection measures. This chapter also reveals how the research was organised and conducted in Turkey while considering ethical issues and how the data were analysed. The next chapter presents the findings from the 33 interviews.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **FINDINGS – I: VIOLENCE IN THE HOME AND PERCEPTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

#### **Introduction**

This qualitative study explores the perspectives of young people in Turkey about their experiences of domestic violence, its effects, their coping strategies and their views about preventive measures and interventions after exposure to domestic violence. Having defined the research objectives and collected the necessary data from young people, chapters four, five and six present the findings and the themes that emerge from the interview data.

As already noted, data is drawn from face-to-face interviews with 33 young people, of whom 14 were young women and 19 young men. All participants had been exposed to domestic violence in their childhood. By asking open-ended questions, young people's experiences, their understandings of domestic violence, their coping strategies and the effects of domestic violence were identified.

In this chapter, I will present four main themes that emerged from the data. The first theme reflects young people's experiences on their exposure to domestic violence. The second theme discusses the role of extended family members in the issue of domestic violence and how they were involved. The third theme focuses on young people's experiences about direct exposure to violence with an emphasis on gender differences. I will conclude by looking at the perspectives of young people on domestic violence, specifically focusing on each type of violence, risk factors for domestic violence from their point of view and how their decisions were shaped by different social factors. In disclosing their experiences and ideas, these young people presented colourful responses that I will discuss throughout this chapter.

## Violence in the Home

This category consists of three key themes: 1) violence against the mother, which includes two sub-themes; 2) involvement of extended family, which consists of two sub-themes; and 3) child abuse, which consists of two sub-themes.

### *Theme 1: Violence against mother*

Frequency of violence. In this study, all participants experienced domestic violence and witnessed physical and verbal violence and economic abuse in their home. Half of the young people (n=17) reported that even though the frequency and severity of violence had decreased, they were still witnessing domestic violence from the father towards the mother. All participants provided detailed information about what they had seen and heard with regard to domestic violence. In most cases, verbal and psychological abuse, such as cursing and insulting, was experienced often and had become a daily routine between parents:

*When my father came home, he used to start cursing my mother, shouting at her, using derogatory words...such as clueless, dirt bag, bitch... (Ali, 19, Shelter)*

*He [father] has never ever spoken well of my mother. He does not say my mother's name when he calls out to her. When he was not angry, he used to use "lan" stupid, cruddy for my mother. However, when he was angry, he could not control himself and cursed my mother with all words that he could think of. (Elif, 19, Shelter)*

The young people who lived in an extended (n=9) and nuclear/extended family (n=6) shared that their father would become harsher and dominant when his mother/father was living in the home:

*Actually, he was behaving normally most of the time towards my mother and us. But, especially since my grandmother [father's mother] moved*

*into our house, he had become harsher and behaved so rude against my mother (Mustafa, 21, University).*

Young people highlighted the difference in their father's behaviours with outsiders when compared with family members:

*It was very difficult to recognize him outside. I was sometimes confused if he was really my father because of his behaviour. He was so kind and thoughtful. But in the home, he evolved to totally opposite character (Emre, 19, Shelter).*

According to the young people's reports, physical violence occurred less often than verbal abuse in the home. Some shared that drinking alcohol or having poor economic conditions was the precipitating cause for physical violence:

*I could not say he [father] was lovely and calm in the home. I thought he was a good person, except the times he started to shout and verbally humiliate her [mother]. Then he totally turned into a beast and besides cursing, he physically abused her and us when he was drunk'. (Leyla, 20, University)*

*My father used to drink a lot. Most days, he came home like totally drunk. I remember, in the beginning, he just used to shout and curse at my mother... Mother did not do anything to make him angry. There was no reason to beat her... but he would not need any reason (Esma, 20, University).*

The majority of the young people (19 out of 33) reported that living with domestic violence, especially verbal abuse, was considered an ordinary part of their daily life and that their father abused their mother for no reason and that most of the time he initiated the violence:

*My father used to fly into a rage at even very small things. I clearly remember that he cursed and slapped my mother because she had not prepared dinner on time (Hasan, 18, Shelter).*

*While my father was painting a wall, my mother took her father to hospital without asking his permission. My father was extremely angry. When she came home, he asked her how dare she leave home without permission while he was working. He was shouting, insulting and cursing her (Hakan, 21, University).*

It was revealed in the narratives of young people that hearing their father insulting and humiliating their mother was experienced very frequently, especially by participants who belonged to a low socio-economic status and came from a rural background. They reported that they heard or saw physical abuse less often than verbal/psychological violence.

Type of violence. Based on young people's narratives, verbal/psychological abuse was the first type of violence that they witnessed in the home. Most young people (n=28) mentioned that using derogatory words about their mother was a common way for their father to humiliate them. Moreover, they spoke about increased emotional harm for their mother when this verbal humiliation was targeting her mothering and femininity:

*...he would never call my mother by her name or words of endearment. He would always use 'woman' or 'lan', wife. The other nickname for her was 'loser'. Because he accused her of not being a proper mother and proper wife. And he would not hesitate to call her by this nickname in front of others (Sude, 18, Shelter).*

In more than one third of cases (9 out of 33), especially those from a rural background and low socio-economic status and low educational level, it became their father's habit to use pejoratives when calling their mother:

*My mother was moving slowly because she was a little overweight. It is very normal isn't it? But it was not for my father. He gave her a*

*nickname 'roly-poly' [toy] because she was not able to move as she did before. That word really hurtful for me, maybe more than it offended her. Because I have seen how she was humiliated in front of us (Recep, 19, Shelter).*

In the following quote, a young man described how he was emotionally affected by abusive language in the home:

*I may forget what he [father] has done to her and us, except his language to her [mother]. He would always use insulting and offensive words while talking to her. And I knew that this was more heart breaking than physically beating (Ugur, 19, Shelter).*

Some of the participants mentioned that it was not only their father but also their mother who cursed and used abusive language toward their fathers. And most of them shared that this verbal 'argy-bargy', especially when their mother responded, was a spark for violence in the home:

*My father was yelling at her [mother] and he was throwing a paintbrush at my mother. My mother said something I could not hear very well, but my father was violently angry at her and started to hit and slap her (Hakan, 21, University).*

*My parents have not got along with each other, actually they still don't. They were always shouting at each other, cursing and threatening to kill. But when my mother responded to my father verbally, or sometimes in physical ways, my father went crazy and hit her more. (Fatma, 20, University)*

However, it was evident that even though there may have been arguing between parents, when this happen fathers often resorted to physical violence. The young people described how abuse often started with verbal and psychological abuse, but escalated into physical violence:

*I have one that I never forget. I was in first grade. She [mother] had been severely beaten with a fire iron. She got very severe injuries...lots of bruises on her back. Her head was bleeding and blood covered whole face (Emine, 18, Shelter).*

*While my mother and I were working in the field, my father came and shouted at my mother to not come to the field again. She replied him back aggressively, I mean shouted back at him. He was totally out of control at that time, he was kicking, slapping, hitting her with a shovel (Hasan, 18, Shelter).*

A quarter of participants (8 out of 33) also mentioned that their father used a weapon (knife, gun or axe) to threaten to kill their mother in incidents of violence and during fights:

*My father was so drunk... my mother told him to buy something to eat instead of buying alcohol. I remember that we had nothing to eat at home... not even bread that night... slapping, shouting, cursing were casual things, I barely used to hear them.. But one night, my mother was beaten brutally...she was bleeding...But when she started shouting at him again, he pulled a gun on her, put it against her forehead... he also kept cursing and threatening to kill her... but he suddenly pointed the gun to the window and fired (Damla, 18, Shelter).*

In a minority of cases (5 out of 33) young people reported that their mother also used a weapon. However, in all these cases, they used a knife or some sharp objects only to protect their children in the face of violence:

*When I was 7 years old, one night he came home drunk. As soon as he stepped in the home, he started to curse my mother and her family. He usually behaved like this to her. We got used to it. But my mother replied back in a loud voice, and then he was out of control... slapping, kicking, and cursing... he was unstoppable. My siblings and I could not do anything but just watch, crying and shouting at him to stop. Then, he*

*suddenly came towards us to beat us. She went to the kitchen, grabbed a knife and threatened to kill him if he dared to touch us. It worked. He stepped back and left home (Yasin, 18, Shelter).*

Over half of the young people (19 out of 33) mentioned that their mother did not react actively during incidents of violence. Instead, their mother would stay silent, cry, or just try to save children from the abuse:

*I do not remember her even shouting back at him. Because she knew that it made him angrier and the abuse would be worse. She just cried silently, although not in front of us... She used to go to the other room and cry in there (Canan, 19, Shelter).*

*...just sitting on the couch with tearful eyes... she did not even raise her head up and look at his face. But I cannot forget how she looked at him hatefully when the abuse stopped (Serdar, 18, Shelter).*

The data indicates that verbal/psychological abuse occurred frequently in the home and was a cause of physical violence. Mothers reacted actively when being abused only to protect their children from violence; the majority of them were passive. The data clearly reveals that fathers were the main perpetrators and were the first to be violent in the home. However, some of the young people reported that in extended families, this situation was somewhat different, as other members of the family also perpetrated violence.

### ***Theme 2: Involvement of Extended Family***

Direct Abuse. The data showed that young people did not only witness inter-parental violence in home. They reported (9 out of 33) that in extended families and nuclear/extended families (6 out of 33) the perpetrator of domestic violence was not only a father but it was also a grandmother, grandfather or some other relatives. Verbal/psychological abuse was also the primary type of violence that mothers of young people were exposed to (n=9) at the hands of other family members, especially the parents of their father:



*We used to live with my grandmother and grandfather in the same house. My grandfather was a very tough man. Even my father was afraid of him. He [grandfather] was scolding, yelling at her [mother] for no obvious reason. (Erdal, 18, Shelter).*

A third of young people (3 out of 9) who lived in an extended family reported hearing verbal abuse from not only the paternal; grandmother and grandfather, but also from an aunt (father's sister) or uncle (father's brother) towards their mothers:

*My aunty [father's sister] was single and living with us. She and my grandmother treated my mother like a servant. She [mother] could not say anything because if my father realized that they were unsatisfied with her, he would not hesitate to beat her (Musa, 19, Shelter).*

A few young people (n=6) gave accounts of how other family members living in the same house were involved in domestic violence that included physical abuse:

*When my father was not at home, my grandmother tortured mother verbally... She blamed my mother for not taking good care of us [children], and for not being a proper wife to her son. She [grandmother] used nicknames her like useless, clumsy. I remember that she once hit my mother with a stick because she was trying to reply verbally not physically. (Mehmet, 18, Shelter)*

A minority of young people from the Kurdish ethnicity who lived within an extended family (3 out of 4) reported more frequent and severe incidents of physical violence towards mother, more so than the rest of the respondents:

*...both of them [grandmother and grandfather] beat my mother... but it was an abnormal but normal thing, not worth thinking about. Because what my father has done was worse and more brutal than what they did to my mother. (Su, 19, Shelter)*

*My grandmother did not love my mother. She never treated my mother well. She considered her a slave and behaved to make her feel that way... cursing, insulting, saying bad things about mother's family and even slapping... These were ordinary, small things that we heard every day. (Hasan, 18, Shelter)*

In addition to witnessing violence from the fathers' relatives towards the mother, in a small number of cases (3 out of 33) the mothers and young people were exposed to physical and verbal/psychological violence at the hands of an older male child in the family. Three young females from a rural area described how their older brother would be verbally aggressive towards their mother and physically abused them like their father did. One of these females emphasized the gender inequality in the family and how her brother took advantage of this:

*When my father was not at home, he [older brother] was king of our house. He was following my father's way by mimicking his anger and behaviour towards us. He used us and my mother like his slaves... shouting, yelling, and scolding... exactly what my father had done. Because he knew that he was the second powerful person in the family after my father. Nobody could say anything against him except my father. He [father] even was very happy when he heard what my brother had done to us. (Dizdar, 20, Shelter)*

Overall, the accounts of young people showed that, especially in extended families, a mother was not only exposed to physical and verbal/psychological violence by the father, but also his relatives. In addition, due to intensive gender inequality in the family structures in rural areas, in a minority of families an older male child was also verbally and physically aggressive towards his mother and younger siblings.

Provoking Father. Some young people shared that their fathers' relatives adopted different strategies to gain control over their mother and to encourage the father to behave more aggressively towards the mother.

*She was beaten or scolded a lot because of my grandmother. When something happened in the home, she [grandmother] made a mountain out of molehill and told him. And, then she sat on couch and watched how my father shouted at her. (Sude, 18, Shelter)*

Around a quarter of young people (8 out of 33) talked about family involvement in domestic violence. However, they referred to family members who did not live in the same house but who had strong interaction with their family. The data shows that these family members also abused the mother verbally/psychologically rather than physically. In addition, fathers were frequently encouraged by them to be more dominant over mothers:

*My aunt [father's sister] provoked my father. She always told my father that my mother walks around in the street and visits her neighbours alone. But my mother did not do such things. My father believed in these slanders. Especially my grandmother and my aunt, who were always saying bad things behind my mother's back and egging my father on to behave harshly to my mother. My father's attitude totally changed, in a positive way, after my grandmother died, especially when we moved to a new house. He started to love my mother (Fatma, 20, University).*

*I suppose my grandmother had an effect on my father's behaviour. Because my mother was always saying that "your grandmother tattled your father, and provoked him to become harsh against us". Maybe he thought that by behaving aggressively, he proved himself to his mother by showing how despotic he is (Hakan, 21, University).*

The data shows that family involvement in the abuse was a common and frequent problem, both in extended families and in families that did not share the same home. It was evident that in Kurdish society, where extended families are common, mothers were exposed to physical violence by other family members more frequently than mothers from other ethnic groups. However, verbal/psychological abuse was a common problem in every ethnic group.

### ***Theme 3: Child Abuse***

Types of perpetrator. The overwhelming majority of young people (29 out of 33) reported being directly abused in the home. As in the case of violence towards mothers, the primary perpetrator of child abuse was also the father. They spoke about how fathers frequently physically and verbally abused them and their siblings by humiliating them in front of others, punishing them, including slapping and throwing something at them, neglecting them and not providing for their needs. Most of them had been living in an abusive environment since they were very young (i.e. preschool age):

*...as far as I know myself, he was always the same towards not only her, but also my siblings and me. We have been beaten a lot of the time but not as much as my mother was abused (Yasar, 18, Shelter).*

*I have not experienced physical violence from my father. But he was torturing us with his tongue... always yelling, harshly criticizing, and scolding in front of others... I thought I was stupid until I came here because of him (Ismail, 18, Shelter).*

Some young people (n=14), especially young men (n=11), also reported that they were subjected mostly to physical violence when they tried to intervene to protect their mother from their father:

*I remember when I was a child, I was beaten so hard several times trying to save my mother. I could not stop him, it was impossible. I threw stones, toys at him. When he caught me, it was my turn to be beaten.... (Hasan,18, Shelter).*

*My father beat my mother very badly. Her face was bleeding, he pulled her hair and slapped her again and again very roughly. We [including siblings] tried to break it up but he started to beat us. He was totally furious... he took a knife and ran after us in the street. We did not know where we should go. I could not even run because of fear. My whole body was shaking... (Damla, 18, Shelter).*

Based on respondents' reports, the frequency of physical violence against them almost stopped and verbal abuse decreased once they became older and were able to protect themselves. However, a significant number of young people (24 out of 33) also experienced verbal/psychological abuse from their father when they were older, but not as often as during their childhood.

The majority of young women (11 out of 14) described how their father abused them (physically and verbally) when they did not fulfil their responsibilities at home, such as helping in the house or taking care of younger siblings: *'When I was 15, he poured a pot of hot water on me and hit me with a belt for not opening the front door on time'* (Elif, 19, Shelter).

*If my siblings were injured or something was not going well at home my mother was the first to be accused. I was the next. If he could not storm at my mother, he slapped me or at least cursed me in front of the rest of my family members.* (Emine, 18, Shelter)

With regard to young men, not earning money for the family became a leading reason to be beaten by their father:

*My father took me to the bazaar to deliver bags. I accidentally complained about how the bags were so heavy in a loud voice. He cursed me in the middle of the bazaar, almost kicked me. When we were home, he used this incident as an excuse to beat me, and he shouted at me for not working, not making money. How could I do? I was just 12 years old. I started to cry. He pushed me to the ground and hit my back with the metallic aquarium bar* (Mehmet, 18, Shelter).

In a third of cases (9 out of 29), young people mentioned that their mothers also physically and verbally/psychologically abused them:

*When I was 8 years old, the TV was broken. I was trying to fix it, unplugged it, and pushed some buttons. My mother was so angry at me*

*and took me to the bathroom and took off all my clothes. She beat me very hard... hit me with a hammer handle.* (Esma, 20, University)

Some of them reported that the incidents of their mother abuse them was part of a chain reaction, which began with violence by the father towards the mother, and then the mother behaving very aggressively towards the children:

*'She would shout or beat us when she was so mad at my father. If he shouted at her, she would take revenge for this behaviour on us by behaving like the same. Because she knew that, even though he was sometimes aggressive towards us, he loved my siblings and me'.* (Kamil, 19, Shelter)

The narrative of young people reveals that in almost every case the incidents of child abuse were experienced in conjunction with domestic violence. In the majority of cases, the father of young people was the main perpetrator of violence; however, a minority of young people were also exposed to violence by their mother.

Gender differences in child abuse. There were no significant gender differences in cases of child abuse until their early years of adolescence. However, gender consciousness and the perspectives of gender roles in society that started to appear in adolescence caused differentiation in the type and frequency of child abuse experiences.

Participants from less educated, lower socio-economic statuses and rural backgrounds reported that gender differences played a significant role in the type of child abuse they experienced in their home. Female participants experienced physical and psychological violence from both their fathers and mothers more frequently than male participants. Based on the young males' reports, when they grew up, physical violence almost ceased and their experiences of psychological abuse also decreased. On the other hand, young females demonstrated that even though the frequency of physical violence diminished, psychological abuse against them still continued or even increased. *My mother always told my father to beat me like he beat her, she is just a female anyway* (Elif, 19, Shelter).

*...slapping, cursing was almost a part of my life when I was a child. My father beat my mother almost every day. I shouted at him to stop, sometimes tried to physically intervene to break it up. He kicked me as well, hit me with iron bars... it was unbearable or intolerable. When I grew up, I started to protect myself from my father's physical attacks. But the insulting, cursing, shouting never stopped. (Fatma, 20, University)*

Some young women (4 out of 14) from a rural background also mentioned that they were neglected and deprived of their right to an education by their father. In the following quote, a young woman described the perspective of her family about being female:

*I started to work at around 12 years old. Actually, I really wanted to go to school but my father did not allow me to go. My father and his family are not inclined to let females educate. They believed that a girl is supposed to sit at home. (Dizdar, 20, Shelter)*

*For my family, females should stay at home, take care of her siblings, help her mother, not even go outside... even though my older sister was doing great in school, he did not let her continue in her education. (Zehra, 19, Shelter)*

In sum, physical and psychological abuse was experienced by almost all young people in their home. But the type of child abuse and frequency of incidents differed according to gender, because being a female and male child had different implications in families with different socio-economic and socio-cultural backgrounds.

## Understandings of Violence

This key theme highlights young people's understandings of domestic violence, the reasons why it happens and how their exposure to violence has affected their thinking, behaviours and emotions. Three key themes emerged from their narratives within this key theme: perceptions of domestic violence; young people's perceptions of the effects of exposure to domestic violence while it was occurring; and on-going effects of exposure.

### *Theme 4: Perception of Domestic Violence*

This key theme provides insight into young people's understandings of domestic violence and the factors that promote or trigger it.

Description of domestic violence. When young people were asked what they thought domestic violence was, the majority, in particular those who were from shelters illustrated their definition by giving an example. Although they witnessed verbal abuse more often than physical violence in their home, most of them (29 out of 33) drew a picture of domestic violence as being strongly related with physical violence. Four young people from a rural area and low education background said they had never heard the term domestic violence before. But they provided an explanation of domestic violence by inferring from the word 'violence'.

*Physical violence.* All of those who responded to the question about what domestic violence meant to them defined it as involving hitting, punching, and fighting. Some young people (13 out of 33) described instances of physical violence only to describe domestic violence: '*Hitting, fighting, beating. Violence by father towards his wife and children*'. (Elif, 19 Shelter)

When a young man was asked what came to his mind when I said domestic violence, he said:



*It reminds me of his belt. The sound of its metallic part is still in my ears. He sometimes has beaten her and us badly with this belt. For me, domestic violence means being beaten by belt (Erdal, 18, Shelter).*

Some young people were confused about providing a definition of domestic violence. This may be because they experienced child abuse along with violence by their father towards their mother. A large proportion of respondents (23 out of 33), who had been subject to direct abuse, included abuse of children within their definition.

*Slapping, hitting, punching, cursing, and humiliating come to my mind when I think about this term. An ignorant father who beats his wife and his little children (Ali, 19, Shelter).*

*Fighting, cursing, and hitting...blood... It is like figure of an animal...a bleeding animal. This animal looks like my father. This blood is dropping from his hand. It is my mother's, my siblings' and my blood (Su, 19, Shelter).*

When describing their definitions of domestic violence, it is evident that young people were drawing on their own experiences of violence in the home. In their narratives, young people perceived domestic violence to be perpetrated by men or their fathers and although they witnessed violence towards their mothers from their father's relatives, they did not mention those people as the perpetrators of domestic violence, except in the case of one female, who said:

*It means violence which occurs in the home. Not only experiencing violence from father to mother, but also exposure to violence from her child to mother. (Dizdar, 20, Shelter)*

Notably, even though some of them were subjected to violence from their mother, very few of them regarded the 'mother' as a perpetrator in their definition:

*If a man beats his wife and his children, it means domestic violence for me. But, moreover, if a mother beats her children, it is also domestic violence (Sude, 18, Shelter).*

Only one young woman who was subjected to child abuse by her foster mother described domestic violence as something different from the rest of the young people, as reflected below:

*The case of a mother's abuse towards a child is violence. But fatherly abuse towards a mother is violence of revenge, not domestic violence (Zeynep, 18, Shelter).*

When young people were asked about the role of mother in domestic violence and child abuse, some of them justified and defended their mothers and talked about other reasons to explain mother's abusive behaviours:

*...ok she used a knife against him but to defend herself and us, not to attack. The father is always behind conflicts, not the mother. (Yasin, 18, Shelter)*

*Although she slapped my siblings and me, this was nothing compared to what my father did to us. She slapped me affectionately... this does not count as violence. (Aydin, 18, Shelter)*

Overall, from young people's narratives it is clear that they described domestic violence in terms of physical violence oriented explanations. Even though they spoke of verbal/psychological abuse more frequently than physical violence, they placed greater emphasis on physical violence in their explanation. On the other hand, 13 young people used only physically violent acts (hitting, punching, and kicking) when giving examples of domestic violence.

Interestingly, almost one third of young people (10 out of 33) said that sometimes slapping or hitting should not be counted as violence. They added that if a father uses violence as a tool to discipline his wife or children, physical abuse that is limited to a

couple of slaps or pulling hair should be tolerated. This perspective towards domestic violence was mentioned more by young men (7) than young women (3). For example, a young man from a rural background shared the following to demonstrate his understanding of violence:

*He is a father who supposed to be dominant over family members, but not excessively. When his child or sometimes wife flies in the teeth of and becomes insistent on doing the same thing again, I think he can use a little bit of violence, such as a slap, to keep them from making a mistake'. (Ugur, 19, Shelter)*

Thus, they thought that a little violence could be tolerated in the family if it was for the “right” reasons. However, they had a different view of verbal/psychological abuse, which they regarded as more damaging than physical violence:

*People who are not beaten cannot figure out some facts of life. He or she do not realize that what they are doing is wrong. He/she needs to feel this pain to not repeat the same mistake. Violence should be in our life but not too often. Not cursing or insulting though. It hurts more than physical violence. You may forget the slap, but not the word, which stays in your heart. (Zehra, 19, Shelter)*

*Psychological violence.* The majority of young people (20 out of 33) also viewed domestic violence as verbal aggression and gave examples such as cursing, humiliating and insulting to describe what domestic violence is. However, no young person defined domestic violence without mentioning physical abuse, alongside other forms:

*Shouting for no reason, cursing, insulting, hitting, punching... These are what I visualize in my eyes when you say domestic violence. Because I have experienced all of them. (Esma, 20, University)*

*My father used to swear at my mother like you are an idiot and useless etc. In my opinion this behaviour must be evaluated as domestic*

*violence, because being exposed to such words is very derogatory.*  
(Mecnun, 18, Shelter)

Compared to cursing and swearing, some young people considered being humiliated or insulted in front of others as severe types of verbal abuse and more emotionally heart-breaking than being subjected to physical violence:

*'...slapping, kicking, cursing might happen in every family. These can be grinned and borne. On the other hand, from my perspective, the most painful one is to subject to degrading treatment in front of people. I think this is the real violence'.* (Mustafa, 21, University)

It was evident from their responses that all of the young people described domestic violence based on their personal experiences. If they had not witnessed any type of violence, they would not address it in their explanation even though they were well educated: *'For me, domestic violence is insulting, shouting, hitting, punching and staining one's honour. The father generally displays these behaviours towards the mother'* (Hakan, 21, University).

*Economic abuse.* Interestingly, although I prompted the issue of economic abuse during the interview, young people did not include economic abuse towards the mother and children in their definition. Moreover, the majority of them (26 out of 33) were not familiar with the term 'economic abuse'.

Although some spoke about how their father abused their family by not providing money for living expenses and pushed mother to make handicrafts to sell, or to do farming, they did not appear to consider this as a form or aspect of domestic violence:

*He did not pay the bills. We sometimes borrowed money from my grandfather [mother's father] to pay the bills or I earned money by collecting paper* (Kamil, 19, Shelter).

*When he had money, he would spend all of them in gambling. He mostly did not care about our needs. My uncle [mother's brother] sometimes gave us money to go shopping (Ugur, 19, Shelter).*

Overall, in the Turkish context, father was responsible for taking care of the family needs and was supposed to provide family expenses. However, interestingly, young people did not consider not fulfilling the financial responsibility towards family as a form of violence. The findings proved strong connection between economical violence and perception of gender roles in Turkish context. The quotes in the following section support the results how gender specific roles affect the understandings of economical abuse.

During the interview, I did not ask any direct questions to young people about sexual violence. As mentioned earlier, because of the structure of Turkish society, talking about domestic violence is already a difficult and sensitive topic. Therefore, asking about sexual violence may have made the participants more worried and more anxious which I wanted to avoid. This is why there are no findings regarding sexual violence.

Reasons for domestic violence. Young people expressed a variety of perspectives about the possible reasons for domestic violence in Turkish society. The majority of them, instead of drawing a whole picture, reflected upon their understandings of possible promoting factors for domestic violence by looking at their own experiences in the home. Four sub sub-themes emerged from the data, including gender roles; cultural context; family involvement; substance abuse.

*Gender roles.* According to young people, gender roles in the family and community were the key reason for the fathers' abusive behaviours in the home. The majority of young women (10 out 14) had a clear view that gender roles, where the father/man has complete authority and power in the family, were responsible for and encouraged violence against the mother and children.

*My mother was worthless for him. She does not have the right to speak about family related issues. As a matter a fact, when she said something,*

*he immediately tensed up with her or shouted at her. If she kept talking, he beat her (Emine, 18, Shelter).*

*He did not see her as a human I think. Based on his behaviours against her she was there for cooking, carrying out his orders, and giving birth to a child. He usually said, how can she know? She is a woman (Dilan,19, University).*

Gender roles were seen to have a great effect on the abuse of mothers by young women from a low socio-economic background. In the following quote, a young woman paints a picture of her mother's position in the family:

*He held all the money at home. Even asking for money to buy bread he gave it like a big favour. She was not allowed to go to the bazaar or market without being accompanied by one of us. Generally, my father did all the shopping. (Canan, 19, Shelter)*

Male domination was recognized as a significant factor in domestic violence among Kurdish women (3 out of 4). Based on their narratives, fathers had total authority in the home, whereas the females (including mothers) are placed even after the male children of the family. A young woman clearly demonstrated how gender roles affect familial relationships:

*Each family has gender inequality among family members. Men are freer than women. People in the community give a very high, untouchable position to males. For example, in my family, nobody could say anything against him. Even when we have tried, he was so angry. (Esma, 20, University)*

*We have such a tradition or custom or rule whatever you want to say: females always serve males. It does not matter how old he is. If you do not indulge their wishes or if you are two seconds, you will be slapped...He pours a glass of water on top of your head or takes it out*

*on you. These behaviours are very normal in my family (Dizdar, 20, Shelter).*

*...let me describe the picture of the family...A woman is supposed to stay at home, take care of children, clean the house, and cook. If she is a child, she is not allowed to go to school and must wait quietly and patiently for her marriage. These are the borders for women. If you exceed the line, you will suffer abuse as a consequence (Su, 19, Shelter).*

In contrast to young women's thoughts about the role of gender in domestic violence, few young men (6 out of 19) viewed dominant male behaviours as one of the reasons for abuse towards mothers. It is significant that young women identified gender roles/inequality as a key explanation for domestic violence, but not young men:

*My father was so dominant, over my mom especially. If somebody disagreed with his ideas or violated a rule, I think he perceived it as a threat to his authority. I think in patriarchal families, being a father brings some holy, untouchable positions to males. They are the ruler of the family; the rest of the members are his slaves. This extraordinary power makes males oppressive and not tolerant to opposing or threatening behaviours in the family. I mean, these feelings push males to become over strict. I think that is the reason at least in my family. (Hakan,21, University)*

On the other hand, a minority of young men (4 out of 19) blamed their mothers for their father's aggression and talked about other possible reasons for violence. This included a mother not showing enough respect to a father, raising objections about the father's decisions and undermining his authority:

*Actually, on the one side, violence was occurring because of my mother. She usually provoked him by not doing what he said, or answering him back in the way that he does not like (Servet, 18, Shelter).*

*Do you know when she was beaten so badly? When she touched his sore spot. Then hitting punching, scolding...uncountable... She should have kept silent to avoid being beaten (Recep, 19, Shelter).*

Three young women and four young men did not totally hold their father responsible for violence in the home. They shared that their father was also subjected to domestic violence in his childhood and thus, was behaving in the way that he saw his father behave:

*I don't want to put all responsibilities of violence on his shoulders. Because he is also a victim of domestic violence. My grandfather behaved the same to my grandmother as my father was towards my mother. He does not know any other way to solve problems in the family. (Sude, 18, Shelter)*

*I think he was doing the same thing that he witnessed in his home. I am afraid of looking like my father when I have family in the future. (Mecnun, 18, Shelter)*

Overall, most of the young women reported that gender and power issues were the main factor behind promoting or precipitating domestic violence in the home. On the other hand, because of growing up in a patriarchal society and witnessing male domination over women in his life, a very small number of young men spoke of gender, power and control issues as a reason for perpetrating violence towards women.

*Social structure.* Almost a third of young people (young women=9; young men=4) reflected upon how socio-cultural context and norms played a significant role in the perpetration of male violence in the home. Those from a rural background revealed a clear picture of how cultural practices increased women's vulnerability. Some mentioned that the belief of "you can only leave the house that you entered with a wedding dress in a burial shroud"; this might mean that women accept domestic violence as their destiny. They explained the domestic violence issue by referencing this, saying:



*This belief closes all gates for women to escape from the abusive environment. And it gives huge power to males. Because this social belief makes males think like, she has to stay with him forever and has to endure what he does to her. He knows there is no U-turn for a woman (Leyla, 20, University).*

Some young women also mentioned a different ideology by using a Turkish saying: a person who does not beat her/his daughter; he/she will punch his/her knees', which emphasized the need of abuse to discipline female children to avoid being regretful in future. They perceived that this belief might be one of the reasons behind violence towards women:

*...we have this social belief which normalizes women's vulnerability and child abuse towards girls. On the other hand, do we have any saying for men? Absolutely no (Dilan, 19, University).*

Young people also considered some cultural practices as a factor in justifying violence against women, such as arranged marriage and early marriage:

*Their marriage was arranged. They did not know each other, so they don't like each other. How do you expect to behave gently to whom you do not like? (Zehra, 19, Shelter)*

Overall, young people reported that the cultural context of Turkish society provided a lot of power to men to become dominant over women while emphasizing women's passivity. As a result, these cultural practices encouraged men to behave in whatever way they wished.

*Family involvement.* As revealed in the first main theme, family involvement was one of the frequent types of abuse towards mothers that children were exposed to. Thus, young people (7 out of 9) who lived/had been living with the extended family reported that one of the reasons for violence was the father being encouraged to be more dominant by his family members:

*He expected the same respect and obeying for my grandmother and father also. My mother was abused because of not showing respect to my grandparents. (Yasar, 18, Shelter)*

*My grandmother used to live with us. She shouted at my mother or sometimes scolding but never abused her physically. Instead, she told my father to do it so. (Erdal, 18, Shelter)*

In one case, the participant demonstrated how his grandmother affected his father's behaviour:

*Actually my father has tended to be gentle toward us. But his behaviours were totally changed when my grandmother showed up. He would prove himself to his mother by displaying aggressive behaviours and being more dominant. (Hasan, 18, Shelter)*

Another young man talked about changes in his father's behaviour after his grandmother and aunt left their home:

*My grandmother and my aunt were the primary reasons. He had beaten my mother because of what they had said to him about my mother. But after he was vexed with them, he became more kind towards us. (Mehmet, 18, Shelter)*

*Substance Abuse\_* Almost half of young people (14 out of 33) talked about substance abuse as a promoting factor for women's vulnerability in the home. It was said that physical violence occurred after the consumption of alcohol or drugs:

*...yelling, scolding, belittling were normal things in my family. But, when he was drunk, and if my mother said something bad about him against his face, then physical things started. (Serdar, 18, Shelter)*

*Alcohol changed him in a very bad way. Ok, he was not a perfect father or husband, but not as bad as when he was drunk... he displayed a different character. (Iskender, 22, University)*

A minority of young people (5 out of 33) believed that taking drugs or over-consuming alcohol was the primary reason for their father's abuse of their mother:

*He was not so bad a father when he was not drunk. Almost each night, he used to come home drunk and smell very bad. And then suddenly conflict would begin for no reason. (Ali, 19, Shelter)*

*My family was so poor. But my father had spent all the money to buy drugs. If he did not have enough money to buy, he would be so aggressive towards us, totally out of control. (Damla, 18, Shelter)*

Overall, very few young people spoke of substance abuse as a main reason for all of the father's abusive behaviours towards mother. But approximately half of them shared that the severity of violence from father to mother increased when their father was drunk or high.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter reflects upon the experiences and perspectives of young people living with domestic violence. It is evident that young people have been exposed to a great extent of physical, verbal/psychological and economical abuse from their fathers to their mothers. Alongside domestic violence, young people were also subjected to child abuse from their parents. It is evident that their fathers, without any proper 'reasons', perpetrated violence initially and violence subsequently increased when their mothers replied verbally or physically. It emerged from the analysis that young people were not silent victims, but instead they were active agents who tried to understand the context of domestic violence and reflect upon the factors that cause and/or promote domestic violence. Their accounts, especially those of young women, show that gender roles and social norms in Turkish society reinforce male domination, masculinity and the subordination of women, which are considered the main reasons for domestic violence.

In addition, it was also revealed how social beliefs, norms and gender identities shaped the perspectives of young people, especially young men, by causing them to internalize or justify domestic violence as way to express anger to discipline their wives. Finally, this chapter provides great insight into the field of domestic violence and what it means to young people in Turkey.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### FINDINGS-II: EFFECTS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE EXPOSURE

#### Introduction

Chapter four discussed what domestic violence means for young people and the extent to which they have experienced it since their childhood. This chapter draws on the data to outline how they perceived the effects of domestic violence on their feelings, behaviours, social and academic skills and family relationships.

Chapter five is divided into two main themes. The first focuses on perceived effects of exposure to domestic violence in the immediate situation of violence. It addresses the internalizing and externalizing effects and how they felt about the perpetrator (father) and victim (mother) of domestic violence. The second investigates on-going internalizing and externalizing effects of exposure on young people's well-being and social lives. This chapter also highlights how these effects were shaped by different factors such as age, gender and socio-economic status.

#### *Theme One: Young People's Perception of Effects of Exposure to Domestic Violence While Occurring*

Young people talked about the effects of domestic violence at the time it was happening in three main categories: internalizing effects; externalizing effects; and effects on relationships with family members.

Internalizing Effects. When young people were asked to describe how they felt while incidents of violence were occurring, they mentioned fear, anxiety, depression, being withdrawn, powerlessness, feeling shame, low self-confidence and lack of trust as behaviours that can be described as internalizing effects.

*Fear.* Based on the young people reports, fear was the initial internalizing effect of domestic violence while it was occurring. Especially when they were younger (before high school age), young people had extreme feelings of fear for not only themselves but also for their siblings and their mother. The following quote demonstrates how a young man experienced fear while witnessing verbal abuse in the home:

*I was so scared of my father when he was abusing my mother. Even though I was not in the same room as my parents, when I heard his voice, my hands were shaking because of fear (Ali, 19, Shelter).*

Some said that feelings of fear did not appear only in the case of violence. Instead, feeling scared of their father influenced all actions. *When my father was at home, we hesitated to sit close to him because of fear.* (Canan, 19, Shelter). A number mentioned that even a sound that reminded them of their abusive father caused excessive fear:

*For example, while we were watching TV or sitting in the home, we recognized that he was at home by the sound of his cough. We immediately turned TV off and went to our room. When he was at home, we were extremely unhappy and scared.* (Ugur, 19, Shelter)

The narratives show gender discrepancies in feelings of fear, as young women reported higher levels than young men. Because, most of the young men spoke about the necessity of ‘being a tough man’ so they pushed themselves to not display fear. Because of this reason, feelings of fear emerged more clearly and strongly in young women’s reports. A young woman shared the following to demonstrate how she used to be scared while violence was occurring:

*When he got angry and started to shout at her, I was scared half to death. Sometimes, I was like a rabbit caught in the headlights. I wet my underclothes once.* (Zehra, 19, Shelter)

Another young woman shared the following to demonstrate how she was scared of her father; indeed, this sentence reflects all young women’s feelings; *first love of each girl is her father, but he is my first fear.* (Kader, 21, University)

Until early adolescence (high school age), the differences in experiences of fear between the genders was small, but when young men became able to protect themselves, rates of fear in men decreased, while in women they continued.

*Anxiety.* According to the young people's reports, anxiety emerged alongside fear. As mentioned in the first key theme, most of the violence occurred due to very small excuses. This low violence threshold in the home made young people anxious, especially in their childhood, as violence was often unpredictable:

*I could not figure out what made him angry. He sometimes got angry at something, but the day after he was not. It made me confused. We were on tenterhooks when he was at home. (Musa, 19, Shelter)*

A significant number (21 out of 33) mentioned how they were frequently worried and clearly articulated links between anxiety, fear and exposure to domestic violence:

*My whole childhood was in fear and worry. I had everlasting question in my mind like: what was going to happen tonight? Or what reason would he find to abuse her? (Dilan, 19, University)*

When they got older, it was expected that the level of anxiety decreased. However, accounts of young people demonstrate that they still had a high level of anxiety even though they were less scared of their father:

*What made him definitely angry was to come home after sunset. Whenever my mother had gone to our neighbours, I had nightmares in the home. I used to keep looking at the clock and bite my fingers. I knew, she was late, she would be abused at least verbally as a consequence. (Mustafa, 21, University)*

*Depression.* Like many people who have been exposed to traumatic events, depression was a frequent problem. This was true the participants of this study when they were children. According to the narratives, witnessing domestic violence caused a variety of depressive symptoms for children of all ages,

ethnicities, socio-economic statuses and genders. Young people displayed a number of depressive symptoms while violence was occurring at home, such as hopelessness, worthlessness and feelings of loneliness. The data clearly shows that such symptoms were related to each other and triggered each other in a chain reaction.

*Hopelessness.* According to the young people's reports, exposure to violent episodes at home caused desperation in their inner world. The level of hopelessness increased drastically among those young people who had experienced violence more frequently. It was also evident that young women were more deeply affected than young men:

*I used to see the same scenario in my home since I was 5 or 6 years old. He drinks, shouts at her, kicks her... it's always the same. I thought my whole life will be the same... There was no escape (Emine, 18, Shelter).*

*On the way from school to home, I sometimes wished to have a traffic accident and die to break the impasse. I did not want to go home because I was feeling this endless disturbance since the time that I entered the home (Kader, 21, University).*

As revealed earlier, men are freer to leave home and integrate into social life than women. By interacting with the world outside of their abusive environment, young men tended to express less hopelessness than young women. In addition, when young men started to realize male superiority and power derived from the hierarchical status in the home, they realized that they could stop the violence when they had developed enough physically. This factor may have led young men to be more positive than young women for their future life:

*When I was a little, I thought we have never normal and peaceful family. But when got older, I realized that I could stop them at least I could restrain physical abuse from father to mother. Although it was a little step, I changed something in our family. (Recep, 19, Shelter)*



The feelings of never having a life without violence in the home or not having a promising future were stressed more strongly by young people who had tried to get outside help to stop domestic violence but had not accomplished this. *I could not escape from home, there was no one to stop him, no one to help us... I knew that conflicts never ended.* (Su, 19, Shelter). Feelings of hopelessness resulted in justifying and internalizing violence and accepting it as a part of family life.

Several young people (6 out of 33) said that witnessing fluctuation in their father's behaviours towards their mothers drove them to despair because the sudden changes in their fathers' attitudes (from good to bad), without any reason, caused them to abandon any hope of ever becoming a normal family:

*While he was kind to us for couple of days or weeks, I thought he was ok. He was not going to hurt neither my mother nor me and my siblings. But, when he started to shout and slapped my mother again, all my dreams and all my hopes for a good life were demolished.* (Mehmet, 18, Shelter)

As shown in the above quotes, young people, especially when they were younger (until high school ages), experienced and were imprisoned by repetitive and inescapable violence. They were caught in a vicious circle, a situation which caused hopelessness in young people.

*Worthlessness.* In families where domestic violence was frequently experienced, worthlessness was a notable effect of such violence among young people. Those from low socio-economic contexts, who had low levels of education and those who lived in rural areas in particular mentioned feelings of worthlessness in their narratives. These feelings of worthlessness were mentioned equally by both genders. Young people said that they had seen themselves as having a lower quality of life. A young woman expressed how she disliked herself in her childhood because of her perceived failure to stop the violence:

*I feel like I was totally useless. I could not do anything to save my mother or my siblings, or even myself. I begged my parents to stop, saying "if you*

*love us please stop". But they have not. It meant that we are worth nothing for them (Fatma, 20, University).*

As shown in the above quote, in younger ages the leading reason for feeling worthless was a lack of paternal love towards children, as mentioned by a young woman; '*I do not remember that he even caressed my head. We mean nothing to him*' (Zehra, 19, Shelter). Another prominent reason for worthlessness was the father's dominance over children to behave as he willed. In the following, a young man talked about how he sacrificed his personality to not challenge his father for abusing his mother:

*Before he came home, we helped our mother to tidy up room so as to not provide an excuse for him to behave badly towards her. He did not say anything lovely about us except when he was ordering us. We were playing very silently to not disturb him. (Serdar, 18, Shelter)*

Interestingly, feelings of powerlessness caused a sense of worthlessness among young men, whereas gender differences in the family drove women to feel worthless.

*My father always insulted my mother and me, he rarely shouted at him (the older brother). Because he was a male, he was second to my father. In my family, if you are a woman, you are worth less than men. I was feeling like I was a total waste for my father. (Esma, 18, Shelter)*

From early adolescence, when young men became able to save their mothers by intervening, they felt worthless if they did not prevent their mother from being abused by their father, a feeling derived from their powerlessness. The following quote clearly articulates the link between feelings of worthlessness and powerlessness, especially among young men:

*I sometimes could not stop him. It hurt me very bad, because I was the only one who could save her from my father's hands, but I could not. I remember, while he was battering her, she looked at me as if begging for help, but I could not (he was crying...). At those moments, I*

*questioned myself. Why I was there, what for? I used to feel totally useless.* (Hasan, 18, Shelter)

*Feeling of Loneliness.* As mentioned above, a lack of excitement for their life, and feelings of worthlessness combined and caused young people to isolate themselves physically and psychologically from the immediate situation of violence. Even though all the young people have siblings and had tried to support each other to deal with the effects of domestic violence, they reported that feeling alone was one of the strongest effects of witnessing abuse.

The data shows that loneliness and hesitation about sharing their feelings with anyone were correlated. As discussed in a later chapter on coping strategies, sharing was the least preferred way to deal with effects of violence for young people. Therefore, not telling anyone, even their siblings, pushed them to create their own silent world. The following quote from a woman demonstrates how she was affected:

*There is a saying, “feeling alone in a crowd”. That was what I was feeling. I did not talk to anyone, I could not go outside to socialize to not let anyone know about my situation.* (Su, 19, Shelter)

Feeling shame played a large part in the choice to be alone which, in turn, became an obstacle to integrating into social life. According to the narratives, loneliness was still considered an effect when they were adolescents, even though they became more sociable at this age than when they were younger. Even though young men were able to leave home when violence was occurring to deal with it, feelings of loneliness among young men were derived from not feeling understood. For example:

*I sometimes ran away from home when they started to shout at each other or when he abused her. I had my own quiet place to go in this case. I prefer to sit there and thought about my life. I could not talk to any of my friends about what was going on in my family. It was a family issue.* (Ali, 19, Shelter)

Unsurprisingly, young women reported more intense feelings of loneliness than young men, due to the social effects of living in a male dominated society. In patriarchal communities, such as Turkey, women are expected to have a more limited social world than men. Therefore, as might be expected, a young woman who was not allowed to socialize and was pushed to question her worth in the family found herself intensely alone as a result of domestic violence.

*I got used to or I accepted what has happening in my family as times go by. That was my destiny. I thought I was imprisoned in this family. I could not escape, could not talk to anyone but only myself. My best friend was me. (Emine, 18, Shelter)*

Overall, young people reported that they felt alone and not supported psychologically in the presence of violence. It was evident that feeling worthlessness, shame, and limited social interaction led young people to feel greater loneliness. In particular, although this effect appeared among the majority of young people (27 out of 33), young women experienced it more intensely and frequently than young men. As a result, with the contribution of other depressive symptoms, loneliness pushed young people to be more isolated from the wider social world.

*Being Withdrawn.* As explained above, all these internalizing effects are strongly connected to and can trigger one another. Loneliness and feeling worthless caused a more self-oriented life for young people. The majority of them (25 out of 33) reported that they felt so isolated that they tended to avoid emotional and social bonds, even with their siblings. *I was such a quiet, calmed child. I always sat in corner of the room without making noise. I was the same in school (Sude, 18, Shelter).*

*I have never shared my feelings or reflected upon my emotions to anyone. If I was sad, people would ask the reason and I had to explain what was happening at home. It would bring big shame to my family and me. So I supressed my emotions and didn't share them (Servet, 18, Shelter).*

Young people reported that even in their adolescence ages, the intensity of feeling self-oriented or isolated had not decreased. They felt that they could not avoid being introverted because they lived in an abusive environment:

*As far as I know myself, I have been like that... living alone, not much talking... I have created my own world inside me and I am very happy living within it (Leyla, 20, University).*

Powerlessness. A majority of young people reported that feeling powerless was one of the leading effects on them when faced with violence. However, young women were the worst affected gender, although feelings of powerlessness were also observed in young men's narratives. For example;

*I cannot describe how I used to feel, how I was weak and powerless. My mother was beaten, humiliated in front of me and I could not do anything. I was the oldest child in the family. I was the one who was responsible to save my mother. But I was a child... so weak... (Hakan, 21, University).*

As this quotation shows, cultural and social values provide some expectations for men, such as taking care of younger siblings and all female figures in the family. When a man cannot meet these expectations or responsibilities, it may cause him to feel powerless. When self-blame is taken into account, powerlessness became more apparent in young men's inner world. In the following, a young man explained his feelings when domestic violence was occurring:

*When he was insulting my mother, especially beating her, I wished I had superpowers to stop him. I could not stand seeing her tears and being beaten. I used to feel a sense of paralysis when violence was occurring. I am the oldest son of my mother; I needed to do something to end this. Sometimes, I thought she had been beaten because of my weakness... because of not being able to save her. (Emre, 19, Shelter)*

Compared to the majority of men (17 out of 19) reported feelings of powerlessness, only two thirds of women (9 out of 14) emphasized it in their narratives.

*It was a very derogatory situation. My mother was beaten in front of me or I heard lots of bad words that she did not deserve and I could do nothing. The only thing that I did was beg him to stop and save my siblings (Elif, 19, Shelter).*

*I could not forget this... When I was little, he started cursing my mother, he was so angry. She sent us to the other room and told us to close the door. We sit behind the door and heard all of her supplications to make him stop. I could not describe how weak and desperate I was (Dizdar, 20, Shelter).*

Young women shared feeling less powerless in the immediate situation of violence. This might be because they accepted domestic violence as a destiny for all women. The following quote clearly shows how some young women dealt with their feelings of hopelessness:

*I always felt weakness and powerless. Even though I cried, begged or sometimes shouted at him or intervened in conflicts, I could not stop him. When I grew up, I tried to ignore it. Doing this hurt me less than witnessing and doing nothing. (Fatma, 20, University)*

When the accounts of all young people are taken into consideration, it is evident that powerlessness was a dominant effect of domestic violence for both genders. However, because of the strong links between masculinity and power, young men became more visible in this theme.

Feeling Shame. Feeling shame was the most dominant internalizing effect of domestic violence among young people. All reported that they had felt shame not only for themselves but also for their mother. Almost all respondents talked about feeling ashamed of being heard by their neighbours and of spreading their familial problems outside of the home. Based on the data, the idea of exposure to violence was something to be ashamed of for fear of being denigrated by society, which caused embarrassment to young people. In this quote, a woman emphasized how she felt while violence was occurring;

*When I heard they were shouting at each other, I was worried about being heard by our neighbours. Because what was happening in my house was derogatory. Everyone has had normal family in my neighbourhood but we have had an abusive father. It was extremely disgraceful. (Emine, 18, Shelter)*

*Whenever they had fight, I used to close windows and doors to stop being heard by our neighbours. Having such parents made me ashamed. (Kader, 21, University)*

In addition to feeling shame for themselves, young people also mentioned that they had felt shame for their father's humiliating treatment towards their mother. The majority of participants who lived in an extended family (7 out of 9) and those who lived very close to their relatives (partly extended) (4 out of 6) reported that their fathers behaved badly towards their mothers in front of relatives (fathers' side). According to them, this was extremely embarrassing and they felt shame for their mother due to being subjected to such a dis-honourable behaviour in front of others. *He sometimes would curse and humiliate her while my grandmother was there. I felt very ashamed. She is my mother, she did not deserve that (Hasan, 18, Shelter).*

Feeling shame was a common reason behind the internalising effects of domestic violence, such as being introverted, feeling loneliness or isolation from society. A young woman spoke about how she tried to avoid her friends because of shame:

*Everyone in the classroom shared what activities they did with their family in weekends. I had nothing to share. What should I tell? I tried to not to get involved. When they asked me, I said like we went for a picnic or had great time etc. All of them were lies. (Zeynep, 18, Shelter)*

Low Self-confidence. Low self-confidence was a combined consequence of powerlessness, shame, being withdrawn and feeling loneliness. As a reflection of these effects, the majority of young people (23 out of 33) spoke about how they did not believe in themselves, and did not have the confidence to accomplish something in the

social world. In particular, young people who were subjected to verbal abuse and were criticized in their childhood mentioned more intense feelings of low self-confidence than others

*I looked ethereal or like the walking dead. I also did not have self-courage to do something. I was always afraid of making mistakes. Because I witnessed that a mistake can conclude with huge suffering.*  
(Canan, 19, Shelter)

Although there was not a significant difference between the genders in childhood, when they got older, young women talked about greater confidence problems than young men. In particular, young women who were from a rural background and who had low education emphasized more problems:

*Whatever I have done in the home, hit him in the eye. Before I did something even if it was very easy thing to do, I questioned myself lots of times. Because if it was wrong, at least he yelled at me and then shouted at my mother due to not checking my work* (Leyla, 20, University).

This may have happened because of the greater social and familial pressure on young women, as their attitudes and behaviours were more structured by their fathers and the elder people in the family. Consequently, this may have caused low self-confidence compared to young men.

Lack of Trust. The majority of young people (29 out of 33) talked about trust issues while they were living in the abusive environment. As illustrated later in the section on coping strategies, lack of trust was behind the hesitation to adopt sharing as a way to deal with negative effects. According to their narratives, along with shame, finding it hard to trust anyone drove young people to become more isolated from the social world:

*I could not trust anyone and share what happened in my family. What if he tells my secrets to someone? I could not take this risk.* (Ismail, 18, Shelter)



A significant number (7 out of 33) said that they did not even establish trustful relationship with their siblings, especially if they received an unsympathetic response when they had tried:

*I have talked about my inner world, my emotions and thought about my father and mother relationship with my older brother. He said don't put your nose in older people's business and sent me away. Since that time, I did not even trust my brother. (Sude, 19, Shelter)*

When people asked about the reason they did not trust anyone, the majority commented that they perceived their father as a traitor to the family. Based on the socio-cultural perspective, fathers are supposed to care for the family and to protect them. But because of witnessing opposite behaviours from their fathers, whom they inherently trusted, it was very difficult for them to establish trust in other social relationships, as reflected in the following words of a young women:

*... Look what he has done to us. The whole of my family fell apart because of him, the one who I trusted most. He has beaten my mother, my siblings and me instead of saving us from bad things. How should I trust someone else whilst my father treated us like that? (Damla, 18, Shelter)*

However, not all young people felt this way. Four young women talked about not having a problem with trusting others: '*When I was a child, when somebody showed some interest in me, I could easily make friends with him/her*'. (Leyla, 20, University). However, the reason behind them not having problems with trust might be them seeking love elsewhere, because they did not have it in the home.

**Externalizing Effects.** Externalizing behaviours are unusual attitudes that display a person's problematic inner world to the external environment. In this sub-theme, the externalizing effects of domestic violence on young people while violence was occurring was aggression.

Aggression. This was one of the prominent effects reported by all young people with regard to their behaviour, which consisted of physical and verbal aggression towards others and the environment. Until early adolescence, young women reported less aggressiveness than young men. As already mentioned, young women became more protective over their siblings during the course of violence; a few of them (6 out of 33) reported that they had also treated their siblings badly. *Sadly, we have not got along with each other well. I have sometimes beaten my siblings.* (Elif, 19, Shelter). Half of the young women talked about being hot tempered and resorting to violence towards their friends, even though they were quiet and diffident in social life.

*I have had very few friends. I did not know how to make a friend. All I knew was pick a fight. Almost every day, I have fought with my friends for lame excuses.* (Emine, 19, Shelter)

Over half of women (8 out of 14) said that they expressed their aggressiveness verbally rather than physically: *I was so aggressive when I was a child. I picked fights a lot. But nothing related to physical violence. They were just argy-bargies* (Su, 19, Shelter).

Compared to young women, the data shows that young men largely displayed aggressiveness towards other people in their childhood. Half of young men shared that they saw this as a way of relaxing: *I would hit someone whom I don't like as my father hit my mother and me. I felt better by behaving like this* (Mehmet, 18, Shelter).

Young women's accounts showed that physical aggression dramatically increased as they grew (since adolescence): *It was always difficult to get on with my friends. I easily started quarrels in school. When I was in high school I beat my teacher once* (Damla, 18, Shelter). A young woman said that she would beat males as if they were her father. As described above, some young men adopted aggressive behaviours to remove distress; this young woman revenged her father for what he had done to her family members:

*I was so aggressive. I have smashed everything in my room. I would pick a fight with anyone, especially with boys. I would pretend that he was my father* (Esmā, 20, University).

All young men, except three, indicated that they became more aggressive physically and verbally towards everyone, including themselves, more frequently than they did when they were younger:

*I was so quarrelsome when I was in high school. I was looking for someone to pick a fight to make me relax. Especially after when I got mad at my father. Because I could not hit him.* (Kamil, 19, Shelter)

This finding may be linked with powerlessness and worthlessness, because young people, especially young men, may have tried to overcome such feelings lowly by displaying aggressive behaviour towards somebody other than their fathers.

***Effects on Relationship with Family Members.*** Young people reflected upon how their relationships with their family members had been affected by domestic violence. Two themes emerged, related to their fathers and mothers, while violence was occurring: hate and pity.

Hate. In all domestic violence experiences, the main perpetrator was the father and the person who was subjected to violence was the mother. All young people mentioned how they hated their fathers, especially in their childhood years: *I did not hide that I hate him. I told him couple of times. My hate was getting bigger and bigger in each slap that he did.* (Musa, 19, University)

In the case of family involvement in violence towards mothers, more than half of the young people also shared their views about other people who had abused their mothers. A young man who lived in an extended family said:

*I hate my grandmother. Because she has humiliated my mother, or encouraged my father to be more aggressive. I have showed my respect but it meant nothing to her. But look at what she has done to her... to us...* (Hasan, 18, Shelter).

According to the narratives, hate for perpetrators was a dominant on-going feeling for all young people, except five. These young people (three men and two women) believed that the primary reason for their father's abusive behaviour was drugs or alcohol.

*Actually I could not be angry at him, I might say I did like him most of the time. Especially when he was sober. But when he was drunk, he turned into a monster that I would like to kill. (Damla, 18, Shelter)*

A number of young people (7 out of 33) said that they became indifferent towards their father when they were adolescents (high school ages): '*I did not hate him, was not even angry at him. Neither love nor hate... nothing*' (Su, 19, Shelter). This feeling of indifference might be because they got used to and accepted the violence as a 'normal' part of their life and lacked hope about their ever-changing family environment. It could also be a way of coping with their situation.

However, some young women (3 out of 14) reported that they also got angry at their mother because of behaving so passively and for not wishing to divorce their father:

*When I was little, I hated my father very much because of what he has done to us. But later on, I realized that my mother encouraged him to behave like a blusterer. She deserved it in one sense. (Leyla, 19, University)*

Pity. Having highlighted young people's feelings about the perpetrators, this section addresses the feelings reported by young people for the victim of the violence. The majority of the respondents (28 out of 33) said that they felt pity for their mothers for being defenceless against their fathers. Pitying mother was especially marked when violence occurred frequently and there was little hope of escape from the situation.

*I felt very sorry for her. It is a pity that she did not have the great life that she deserved. It was very miserable, being that humiliated and exposed to derogatory behaviours almost every day. (Emine, 18, Shelter)*

As described in the previous section, since young people tended to become more indifferent about domestic violence, the level of pity for their mother decreased as they got older (since high school).

*When I was a child, I really pitied her because of witnessing what my father has done to her. But as the years go by, I have felt nothing for her. I did not really care what they have done to each other. I have only tried to save my siblings and me. (Damla, 19 Shelter).*

The findings reported in this section demonstrate that young people were affected in a range of ways by domestic violence in the home during their childhood. Moreover, there emerged two extreme feelings for perpetrators and victims of domestic violence: hate and pity. The next section moves on to discuss the on-going effects of exposure to domestic violence.

### ***Theme Two: On-going Effects of Exposure to Domestic Violence***

In this study, the majority of young people (25 out of 33) were recruited from shelters. Although they do not experience domestic violence anymore, the effects derived from past traumatic events continued to impact young people. Three young people from the university (out of 8) had continued to witness verbal abuse when they visited their parents. This sub-theme explores the on-going effects of domestic violence on the young people from their perspectives and contains four sub-categories: internalizing effects; externalizing effects; impact on academic studies; and relationships with family members.

*Internalizing effects.* The young people reported some problems that can be said to be related to their inner world as long term effects. They claimed that these appeared because of experiencing father's abuse towards their mother and child abuse. These effects are: fear; anxiety; depression; being an introvert; lack of trust; and shame.

Fear. According to their reports, fear mostly appeared for those young people who were exposed to domestic violence, including child abuse. Five young people (two male and three female) reported that they were still scared of their father because their father still threatens to behave badly towards their mother or to them if they do not return home:

*He called me couple of times and accused me of provoking my mother to leave home. He told me that if he finds me, he will beat me very badly. I keep looking around for him when I go to school. Even if he is away from me, he can turn my life into a living hell. (Sude, 18, Shelter)*

*He has stuffed me with lies and took me to the forest. He beat me with the belt in there and threatened me with a knife. He said I was responsible for the devastation of our family. He can come back to do the same thing. I will move out soon (Yasin, 18, Shelter).*

In the following two cases from young women in the shelter, it was apparent that they dreaded any reminders of their agonising memories:

*He had a very noisy and old motorcycle. When I heard the sound of it, I was stressed because it meant that the trouble of my family was back home. Whenever I hear that sound, I get goose pimples and look around in fear as if he is there (Elif, 19, Shelter).*

*My father has had a key chain and all keys hit each other and made a sound. When I remember those times, this sound is in my ears even now. It is kind of a vital part of my bad experiences. Even now, whenever I hear this sound it makes me shudder. I feel like he is following me to beat me up (Su, 19, Shelter).*

Interestingly, university respondents did not have any concerns for themselves but rather feared their mothers being humiliated in front of family members:

*What my father gets angry at is an untidy kitchen. My mother is old and not energetic as she was. When I am at home in holidays, if there are some dishes to be washed and she did not, I will wash them for my mother. Because I cannot stand and tolerate his verbal aggression to my mother. (Mustafa, 21, University)*

Anxiety. This sub-theme was mentioned frequently in the narratives of young people whose mother is still living with the abusive father. Even though the participants were safe in the shelter, the father of some still displayed aggressive behaviours against the mother. Half of young women spoke about how their mother was treated in the home:

*They have not divorced as yet. When I call my mother, she said she was well but I understood that something is still the same. I will be full of happiness if my mother leaves the home. As long as she stays with him, I am on pins and needles in here. (Sude, 18, Shelter)*

Similarly, eight young people from the university who still sometimes witness verbal abuse in their home, talked about how they continue to fear for their mother being subjected to violence:

*I am still anxious, especially when my mom leaves the house to visit someone. I am afraid and pray for her to not come so late and not to get on my father's nerves. Those are very stressful moments for me (Hakan, 21, University).*

*My youngest sister and my mother are still living in the same house with him. They told me that he changed his attitudes towards them in a good way, but I am not sure about this. You cannot teach an old dog new tricks. I call them often to check everything is ok in the home. (Musa, 19, Shelter)*

In addition, not knowing what they will do after leaving the shelter created anxiety and worry, especially for young women who have no place but their father's home to go to:

*I have to leave this shelter in the next year. I don't want to go back to his house and live the same things again. But I don't know where to go. Most of my relatives are vexed with me due to coming into this shelter. I sometimes am unable to get to sleep because I'm thinking about my future. (Sude, 18, Shelter)*

Accounts of young men reveal that most of them did not worry about themselves but for their younger siblings (especially sisters) and their mothers:

*I can save myself. No need to worry about myself. But my older sister is going to graduate from university at the end of this year. My mother is also living in a shelter, so there is no home that my sister will live in. I won't let them live with my father again [biting his fingers]. Thinking about this issue prevents me from sleeping and eating. (Yasar, 18, Shelter)*

As seen in the above quote, young men take on the role of taking care of their family and being unable to do so creates anxiety for them.

Depression. All young people talked about their on-going problems and issues associated with experiencing domestic violence. According to the data, depression was the most prevalent on-going internalizing effect amongst all young people, just as it was while living with domestic violence. These depressive symptoms were: hopelessness; low self-confidence; concentration problems; and social withdrawal.

*Hopelessness.* Young people who lived in shelters and were less educated frequently talked about how their life would continue to be as difficult as it had been so far. As a result of severe self-confidence problems among young women in shelters, a sense of hopelessness was clearly evident in their narratives. Even though young women's feelings of desperation were less intense than when they were younger, still over half of them (9 out of 14) reported that they had little hope of getting rid of the effects of violence on themselves:



*I know, I will never ever be a normal person. These nightmares and experiences, my mother and my siblings will always be in my mind. How can I expect to have a good future for myself with all these? It is very hard* (Su, 19, Shelter).

*Can you expect someone to be a good person who has these (showing cuts on her arm). I will remember how my life was miserable when I look at these. Actually, I do not need to look, all of them were scraped into my brain.* (Dizdar, 20, Shelter)

In particular, some young women from the shelter who have to live with their family, including their abusive father, reported greater issues related to hopelessness. The possibility of witnessing the same violence again when they return home caused a great sense of hopelessness for them:

*When I leave this shelter, I will definitely go to my family again. I have nowhere to go. I could not live alone, could not find a job due to lack of proper education. So, everything will start again for me.* (Damla, 18, Shelter)

Hopelessness was not frequently expressed in the narratives of young people (8 out of 33) from the university. Perhaps due to greater self-confidence compared to the young people from the shelters, participants from the university could envision a brighter future life for themselves.

*Social Withdrawal.* Another significant problem related to depression that emerged from the interviews was isolation from the social world. Even though this effect was raised in most of the narratives, it was strongly emphasized by young people who lived in shelters. According to their reports, some young people who lived in shelters tended to adapt their behaviours according to where they were, in or outside of the shelter. When they were outside of the shelter, they struggled to integrate into social life because of feeling shame and a fear of being humiliated by others. In the following example, a woman talked about what caused her social withdrawal:

*I have very few friends who are not from this shelter. I don't want to have more people in my life actually. When you meet someone, he/she asks questions about life, my family that is, I would not let anyone know about that. I have some friends in here who have familiar experiences to me. I feel comfortable to talk to them about my life (Su, 19, Shelter).*

As demonstrated by the above, there was a negative correlation between self-confidence and social withdrawal. A significant number of women (9 out of 14) who were not confident also had a tendency to become more isolated from the social world:

*I feel like I am stupid because of my father. He used to say like that. I tried to not talk to anyone to avoid being perceived as stupid. Actually I am still like that. I think when I talk to someone, he/she is going to tease me. (Zeynep, 18, Shelter)*

In contrast to people in shelters, young people in universities reported less problematic issues regarding social withdrawal. The majority of them (6 out of 8) talked about how they had become more sociable since they started university, though they still sometimes avoided social interaction.

*Compared with my past years, I am so social right now. I have more friends than I imagined. But I still get cold feet when I meet them due to conversations about family related issue. When the conversation is about the family, I keep quiet or find an excuse to leave (Fatma, 20, University).*

Social withdrawal in young men who lived in shelters was quite different to that of young women. According to the young women's narratives, they tended to be sociable in the shelter or outside the shelter. On the other hand, half of the young men reported that social withdrawal was common in each part of their social life. Based on their reports, if they tended to be unsocial, they behaved in the same way both in the shelter and outside of it:

*I still like being alone. I feel like when I share something that hurts my soul, it seems like they look with pity to me. I do not need their mercy. I can deal with all my problems as much as I can.* (Erdal, 18, Shelter)

As revealed in the above quote, to some extent, long lasting effects of feeling powerless may prevent young men from disclosing their emotions.

*Being Introverted.* The narratives revealed that as an internalizing effect being introverted was the significant link in the chain of effects of domestic violence. That is to say, almost all effects mentioned above led young people to become more quiet, introspective and withdrawn.

Most of the young men (15 out of 19) and the majority of young women (11 out of 14) reported that they tended to be focused on their inner thoughts and emotions rather than external stimulation: *I would wear my headphones to break all my connections with the external world and be by myself. I do not want to interact with anyone* (Mehmet, 18, Shelter). As seen in the quote, a majority of young people indicated that they would rather spend time on self-oriented activities than on social get-togethers.

As already mentioned, experiences of domestic violence caused low self-confidence in young people, which drove young people to become more avoidant. Some talked about how they were closed to making social interaction by not initiating talk with someone:

*I am always like that... quiet and calm... I prefer to sit back and let others take all the attention. I would not be willing to talk without someone asking a direct question to me'.* (Sude, 18, Shelter).

University students reported less introverted behaviours as did young people who had separated from the family. However, young people who lived with their family tended to be more reserved and quiet.

*When I remember what my father has done to my mother, what we have lived so far, my personality is completely reversed from social and happy to unsocial and unhappy. In particular, when I go home in the*

*holidays, if he shouted at her or humiliated her in front of me, I would become as uncommunicative and closed to the external world as I was before I came to the university. (Fatma, 20, University)*

As demonstrated in the above quote, witnessing violence, even if it is not as frequent as before, affected young people in the same way as when they lived in the abusive context.

Low self-confidence. Although not mentioned as frequently as in the immediate situation of violence, over half of young people (18 out of 33) complained about lack confidence as an on-going effect of domestic violence. As mentioned above, young people who were from rural areas, who had low socio-economic status and who were less educated talked more about low self-confidence issues than young people from university and those with high socio-economic status.

A majority of young women (9 out of 14) stated, however, that although they had become more confident compared to before, they were still avoidant of the idea of self-accomplishment:

*I lack self-confidence. I assume that whatever I do is definitely wrong. I always feel like “somebody come and check my work and find a mistake and then get angry at me”. I always say to myself like ‘I cannot do it, or ok I will finish it but it will be full of mistakes. (Emine, 18, Shelter)*

As already discussed, a lack of self-confidence was clearly and strongly evident in the narratives of young women who were also exposed to child abuse:

*Due to looking for a mistake in whatever I have done in the home, the idea of not being able to do something perfect is settled in my brain. So, I still cannot tell myself that I can accomplish something (Zehra, 19, Shelter).*

In the accounts of young men, the data showed that even though they seemed more confident than young women, they were still suffering from self-doubt:

*I could not encourage myself to be successful in something when I was a child. But I can say it to myself like ‘you can do it’. But I still have some hesitation or fear of making a mistake. I could not get over this timidity yet. (Mehmet, 18, Shelter)*

In the following, two young men demonstrate that they not only have low confidence in becoming successful in life but also in becoming a husband to be like their fathers:

*I hesitate to the idea of getting married. Because I am afraid of being like my father, treating my wife in his way and providing the same bad life for my children (Hakan, 21, University).*

*I sometimes get extremely angry and get bent out of shape. What if I behave aggressively to my wife and my children like my father did? I have been suffering his aggressiveness a lot. I promised myself to not look like him. But I sometimes do. I cannot be confident about this issue (Ali, 19, Shelter).*

Concentration Problems. A small number of young people (seven out of 33) indicated that they struggled to focus on anything for a long time. This problem was mentioned more in young women’s narratives, which showed that a lack of concentration affected not only their school life but also their social life, as was evident in the following quote from a young woman:

*I actually try to listen to them. I make lots of effort to catch their words. But I cannot concentrate if the conversation takes too long. I have the same problem in the classroom. I cannot settle down to my study or books. (Emine, 18, Shelter)*

Notably, the mother of four young people (three women and one man) still lived with the abusive father and anxiety about their family members caused concentration problems among these young people:

*I always think about my mother more than myself. Even though I am safe in this shelter, she is still in the same house with him. When I call her she says she is ok but I am in doubt about it. I could not pay attention to anything properly. This worry is always in my mind. (Su, 19, Shelter)*

In addition to worry, the narratives demonstrate that there was a positive correlation between hopelessness and having concentration problems. The young people who worried about their future frequently reported attention problems:

*My education life is totally messed up. I cannot even listen to the teacher in the classroom. The question of “what will happen to me?” always echoes in my brain. I cannot refrain from thinking about it. (Damla, 18, Shelter)*

Lack of trust. The majority of young people (27 out of 33) talked about trust issues in their relationship. As mentioned earlier, lack of trust was a significant immediate effect on young people. Although young people become more self-confident and more social than before, they continue to have problems establishing trust with people:

*I have trusted no one in the past, and still do not trust anyone. I have lost my positive outlook about humans. As I said, it was my father who has done all of the abuses to us. How can I trust someone now? (Dilan, 19, University).*

*I don't make a plan that relies upon someone. I was knocked for six by my father. He dried the feelings of trust inside me. He was my father, who was supposed to protect my siblings, my mother and me. But look how we are separated. (Aydin, 18, Shelter)*

Some young people said that they were very prejudiced against everyone, because they think everyone would emotionally injure or betray them:

*I am afraid of people. It seems like they all want to hurt me. I thought a lot about attending this interview or not last night. Here I am because I will never see you again, you will use this information for the sake of other people. (Kamil, 19, Shelter)*

It was clear from the interviews that lack of trust was one of the significant on-going and ever-increasing effects on young people in each gender, ethnicity, socio-economic and educational background.

Shame. Although young people were staying away from abusive environments, and the violence that they witnessed in the home had decreased, most of them acknowledged that they were still feeling shame. The majority of young men from the shelter (14 out of 16) declared that they were still hesitant to tell someone the reason that made them come to the shelter:

*Those times are like disgraces in my life which will remain forever. I cannot describe how witnessing such humiliating behaviour was dishonourable and brought such a shame that never comes out (Servet, 18, Shelter).*

*I never tell my friend in school that I am a victim of domestic violence. You cannot imagine how it is degrading for men. The thing that I experienced, even though I have been trying to forget, it is unforgettable. On the other hand, you cannot share because it is your weak part that threatens your masculinity. (Serdar, 18, Shelter)*

Young women's accounts also showed that feeling shame was still one of the significant on-going effects for them, especially for the majority of those in the shelter (6 out of 9). Similar to young men, they said that they did not want anyone to know their life experiences and the reason why they were living in the shelter:

*I do not tell anything to anyone in the school. I introduced myself to them like I am a very different person. How can I say that my father beat my mother, my siblings and me and kicked us out of the home? There*

*are few people who know what I have experienced in the home; this is already hurting me badly (Canan, 19, Shelter).*

It is clear that feeling shame is greater among young men than young women, especially those who are living in the shelter. Perhaps because they are unable to fulfil the responsibilities as a son towards their mother, and are not able protect her from their father's abusive, they feel ashamed to disclose the truth.

#### Externalizing on-going effects of domestic violence.

When young people were asked to define the current problematic behaviours that derived from growing up in an abusive environment, the majority reported that aggression was a prominent effect on their behaviour from their point of view.

*Aggression.* The majority of young people (21 out of 33) reported that they sometimes display aggressive behaviours towards others, which created problems in their social interactions. According to the narratives of all young men, their threshold for resorting to violence was lower than that of young women. As a result of this, compared to young women, they tended to use violence more frequently:

*I admit that I get easily aggressive. I try to control my emotions but most of the time I could not. I easily lose my temper and find myself in conflict. (Hasan, 18, Shelter)*

They also acknowledged that they had poor conflict resolution skills and they admitted that fighting was the only way that they knew to solve problems:

*I do not solve my problems with anyone by talking. That is what I have learned from my parents. Each argument concluded with fighting in the home. I take the short cut and start with fighting right from the beginning (Ugur, 19, Shelter).*

They also mentioned that they often felt very regretful after showing aggressive behaviour because of unconsciously imitating their father's abusive behaviours:



*I am a very hot-tempered person and get easily involved in conflicts, both verbally and physically. Normally, I should not behave like that because I am the one who suffers from it. I do not know, but the first thing that comes to my mind when I am very angry with someone is to beat her or him. At those times, I look like my father, which is what I do not want to be. (Ali, 19, Shelter)*

It would appear that some young men who grew up in an abusive home environment find it difficult to control their anger and solve conflict in non-aggressive ways. However, it is also apparent that they experienced a great deal of regret when they behaved in a similar fashion to their abusive father and knew their behaviour was wrong and unacceptable, not only to others but to themselves:

*When I picked a fight or displayed excessive aggression, I looked like someone who I do not want to be: my father. After I calmed down, I felt so much regret behaving like him. (Serdar, 18, Shelter)*

However, over half of young women (9 out of 14) did not report displaying aggressive behaviours to the same extent as young men, although a considerable number of incidents were mentioned in their narratives:

*'I look like a very patient person but I am not. I have been becoming more hot-tempered. I would have a fight with someone who does wrong to me. I was not like that before... I was more well-balanced before and could control my emotions'. (Su, 19, Shelter)*

Young women's accounts (6 out of 14) show that aggression as a response had become more common as they got older. Through the accounts of young people, it was evident that gender and education status was an important factor in the use of aggression as such behaviours were more frequently reported by young people from the shelters than by those from the university.

*Relationship with family members.* When young people were asked about what they feel about the perpetrator (father), two intense emotions emerged: hate and forgiveness.

*Hate.* As already mentioned in the first main theme, almost all of young people were exposed to child abuse in addition to witnessing domestic violence. Some young men (9 out of 19) who had experienced more frequent and more severe types of violence in the home reported feelings of hate towards their father; such as a young man from a shelter with divorced parents, who used the word “hate” to talk about his father:

*He had persecuted my family a lot. We are separated from each other because of him. You should see my mother to realize what he has done to her. I hate more and more each time that I see my mother. (Ali, 19, Shelter)*

In another example, a young man described his intense negative emotions about his father:

*I do not even want to see his face or hear his voice. My mother was hospitalized because of him. The whole of our life is messed up because of him. I wish he dies soon and we have peace in our life. (Aydin, 18, Shelter)*

However, the remainder of the young men were indifferent to their father, though they also talked about still showing respect to him: ‘*He means nothing to me. But I have to be respectful and do my duties as a son. He killed all my emotions about him inside me*’ (Hasan, 18, Shelter). This is significant, because in the Turkish socio-cultural context, children, especially males, are required to be always respectful towards their parents and elders. They are also responsible for taking care of their parents when needed. Thus, young men express their respect even if they did not feel emotionally attached to their father anymore. In the following quote a young man shows how cultural responsibilities affect his feelings towards his father:

*He is my father anyway. Whatever he has done to us, I have to treat him kindly. But it does not mean allowing him to do the same things again. I did not let him and I will not. But I am his only son, I have to take care of him when he is old. Sometimes my mother also says like “he is your*

*father, nothing can change this reality". She is right. I do not like him anyhow, but I have to show my respect' (Musa, 19, Shelter).*

Compared with young men, more young women used the word hate when describing their relationship with their father. The majority of them (8 out of 14) reported a lack of emotional bonding with the perpetrators, except for feelings of hate:

*I would not see his face again in my life. He is to blame for my miserable life. My mother is suffering mental illness because of him... He made her crazy by beating her. Look at me... I am what I am because of how he had treated us (crying)... how do I love him? Why should I love him? (Emine, 18, Shelter)*

Feelings of extreme powerlessness and emotional suffering from male domination in the family are likely to be factors in young women rejecting any emotional attachment and feeling only hate for their father.

*Forgiveness.* Around a quarter of young people (8 out of 33) mentioned that they had forgiven their father for the child abuse to which they were no longer being subjected. However, they (number of young women= 5, number of young men= 3) expressed greater indifference about violence towards their mother: *'Whatever he has done to me, he is still my father. It does not mean I love him, but I forgive him'* (Fatma, 20, University).

*As I said, he has been changing in a positive way since my grandmother died. I realize this. At least he is not aggressive as much as he was. Even though what he has done to my family remains bad and I have nightmares, I excuse him, but only in my name, not that of my mother, nor my siblings. (Hakan, 21, University)*

As demonstrated above, feelings of forgiveness only emerged with being indifferent. Witnessing domestic violence clearly affects emotional bonding between victims and perpetrators.

*Take a dim view of marriage.* When young people were asked about their ideas about marriage, seven of them (2 men, 5 women) expressed negative attitudes towards marriage. The corresponding point of these five young women was the assumption that they might be abused by their future husbands. They expressed a prejudice against marriage, based on the assumption that every husband abuses every woman, sooner or later:

*I want to live my life the best I can as a single person. Because I witnessed how a marriage ended. Although I claim that I never let the same thing happen to me, how can I be sure? I do not want to have the same episodes again.* (Dizdar, 20, Shelter)

*Whenever we saw a wedding convoy, my mother used to say, "Everything seems good for you but you will come to bad end at the end". I do not know this saying led me to have negative feelings against marriage but I do not want to go to this bad end.* (Leyla, 20, University)

The two young men mentioned a lack of self-control when they were angry as a reason for being biased against marriage:

*I am afraid of myself. Because when I get angry, I am out of control and can display great aggression. What if I will do this to my wife or to my children? The possibility of looking like my father prevents me from this idea. I do not want to let her suffer from me.* (Iskender, 22, University)

Overall, it was evident that learned aggression and perceiving domestic violence as an inevitable consequence of being married caused prejudice against marriage among some young people.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has detailed the findings that illuminate the long and short-term effects of domestic violence exposure on young people's feelings, emotions and behaviours. The narratives revealed anxiety, symptoms of depression, feeling of shame, feeling of powerlessness, lack of trust and aggression within most of the interviews. The results support the concept of intersectionality by showing how intersecting factors such as gender, social class, age and location shape the results of experiencing domestic violence among young people. In addition, the findings also reinforce social learning theory in reporting externalizing effects, and support sociology of childhood theory in a wide range of internalizing and externalizing behaviours in the context of domestic violence. The accounts by young people in the chapter also highlighted how exposing violence in the home affects their feelings towards and relationships with their parents with respect to social values and social norms in Turkey.

In having these effects, young people needed to adopt some coping strategies to overcome the difficulties that they have experienced. The next chapter details how young people deal with the issue of domestic violence at the time of violence and in the aftermath, together with their perspectives of how to help children and young people who have been exposed to domestic violence.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **FINDINGS - III: COPING STRATEGIES AND PERSPECTIVES ON WHAT HELPS**

#### **Introduction**

Chapter four discussed the abusive environment in which the children grew up and reflected upon their perspectives and understandings of what domestic violence is and its causes and how intersecting identities and factors shapes their perceptions. Chapter five highlighted how the way in which young people perceived their well-being and life were affected by their experiences of domestic violence in childhood. In this chapter, I discuss the themes related to coping strategies that young people develop in the presence and after the incidence of violence. Moreover, it discusses young people's ideas about possible intervention by support agencies and possible protection measures.

This chapter is divided into four main themes. The first theme explores active and passive mechanisms that young people adopted in the immediate situation to cope with difficulties, including involvement, saving siblings, leaving home, calling outside help, hiding, and pretending nothing happened. The second theme focuses on coping strategies that young people use after incidents of violence to deal with the on-going difficulties of exposure, including sharing, denying, accepting, self-harm, suicide and pretending like male by replacing feminine behaviours into more masculine behaviours. The third theme illustrates the possible preventive measures focusing on the role of school, encouraging children and young people to share and shift gender roles. The last theme in this chapter explores young people's ideas for support services and possible intervention after being exposed to domestic violence.

## **Coping Strategies**

In the section that follows, two key themes will be presented: how young adults dealt with domestic violence when it was occurring and how they cope with living with abuse after the incidence of violence.

### ***Theme One: Coping Strategies Used by Young Adults in the Presence of Domestic Violence***

In relation to this theme, mixed findings emerged according to young people's age, gender, whether or not they had siblings and the severity of violence. The coping strategies reported by young adults were categorized into two different groups: active and passive.

Active. Most young people coped with domestic violence actively when exposed to it. They reflected upon how their chosen ways of coping were related to age, gender, power and having responsibility to their mother and siblings.

*Involvement.* The narratives revealed that involvement in violence was related to gender and power. The data showed that young people adopted two means of involvement: verbal and physical. Some reported that when they were in childhood and not able to stop their father physically, they would beg to their father to stop with tearful eyes to relieve the situation: *'We [children] sometimes tried to shout more than they did, to shift their attention to us' (Recep, 19, Shelter).*

However, when young people got older, involvement changed from verbal to physical intervention, especially for young men. Due to having sufficient physical power, this became the leading coping strategy reported by almost two third of young men (12 out of 19) in the presence of violence. They stated that they had tried to intervene in the conflict to break up and save their mother, especially when they were older: *When I was growing up, I mean when I was in high school, I tried to get involved in and protect my mother (Hakan, 21, University).*

However, 10 young men mentioned that this physical involvement only included saving mother by keeping father away and not physically attacking their father. This finding may be linked with cultural norms about the expectation for young people to show unconditional respect to their father under any circumstances. The following quote describes how a young woman felt guilty and regretted shouting at her father when defending her mother:

*When my father was shouting at my mother for nothing, I shouted back at him and told a lot of things that were kept inside me... accused him of not being a good father, etc. But after I calmed down, I felt big regret and shame to say those words to him. Because he is my father and he has a right to love, like or hit us. This rule is valid also for mother. I mean this is a cultural fact. You cannot object to his or her attitudes towards you. (Kader, 21, University)*

There were two exceptions to this, where young men from low socio-economic contexts and rural backgrounds said that in the presence of excessive violence towards their mother, they used a weapon to stop their father:

*... I was around 16 years old... they were fighting as always. But this time was so different... he slapped her harshly so many times... I thought she was going to die. I went to the kitchen, took a knife and stabbed him on his leg. If I did not do this, he would kill her in front of us. (Ugur, 19, Shelter)*

On the other hand, the majority of young women respondents (10 out of 14) spoke about how they were afraid of becoming involved in fights between their parents, even if they were old enough to guard their mother from father: *...no... [Crying]... I have never ever tried to break them up... even now... Because I was extremely afraid of being beaten by my father (Emine, 18, Shelter).*

*Due to fear of getting a whipping, I would never involve myself in fights between my parents. My father used to beat me up sometimes. If I tried to save my mother, he would definitely have started to kick me. But my younger*



*brother used to break up the fights. When he was around eight, he broke his arm while he was saving my mother from my father. (Damla, 18, Shelter)*

Overall, it was clear from their narratives that fear of getting abused and powerlessness results in the use of verbal involvement to cope with violence in the home. However, when they got older, young men, because they had developed sufficient physical capability to deal with the aggression of their father, used physical force to save their mother and siblings. However, despite intervening in the violence they behaved respectfully toward fathers, as expected by the dominant cultural value system.

*Saving Siblings.* This sub-theme demonstrates how young adults who have siblings (all respondents have) felt a sense of responsibility towards their brothers or sisters and to relieve the violence at home. Unsurprisingly, over half of the young women (8 out of 14) who have younger siblings shared that saving them was the initial strategy in the presence of violence, especially when physical violence occurred:

*I am the oldest child of my parents.... I have three siblings... When I heard my father shout at my mother, or felt that they were going to fight, I took my siblings to the other room if I could, or at least kept them away from them as much as I could. At that time they were so young, I feel like, I was responsible for them as the oldest child at home (Fatma, 20, University).*

*...I could feel that something was going to happen following shouting and cursing. At those times, he was totally out of control and sometimes also abused us. I took her [my sister] to the other room and closed the door to avoid being beaten. It was also what my mother wanted (Canan, 19, Girl, Shelter).*

Even though it was the main active coping strategy for most young women to protect their siblings or take them away from the room, only one third (n=6) of young men said that considering siblings' safety was their main issue while violence was occurring, especially when they were in childhood and faced the threat of being beaten:

*I have an older brother. While he was trying to break them up, I got my younger siblings together to be sure that they will not be injured by my father (Ugur, 19, Shelter).*

Older children always struggled to protect their mother first for as long as they could. If they did not accomplish this, then saving siblings would be the next step.

*They [his siblings] could run away or go to my relatives to save themselves. But she [mother] was alone to deal with my father. And she was the one who was beaten severely, who was insulted. I had to save her as an older son. (Mecnun, 18, Shelter).*

*Leaving home.* This strategy was another key aspect of coping. The majority of young people (21 out of 33), male and female, and of diverse ethnicities, preferred to leave home when mothers were being abused. But this reaction frequently emerged when respondents became older. In particular, most of the young men (14 out of 19) frequently talked of going out of the home as a way to survive domestic violence. Some of them reported a sense of powerlessness and feelings of desperation because of not able help their mother or feeling of hopelessness due to repeated violence or not feeling safe in the home encouraged them to leave abusive environment:

*When I was in high school, I ran away from home several times. I could not stand living in my home. Because I was tired of worrying about my mother and siblings (Kamil, 19, Shelter).*

*I would consider the tension in the home. If it was very high and caused physical violence, I would stay at home. Otherwise I would go to the park and stay there until late (Mustafa, 21, University).*

Even though most of the young men spoke about leaving home for a short time, those who are from a suburban and an urban background reported long-term departure from home as a survival strategy more often than others. This finding might be because they are a broader range of available places to stay in suburban and urban areas.

However, for female respondents, leaving home was only considered when trying to ensure that all siblings were safe and they would not break their parents up:

*When I was little, I would take my sisters and hide in another room, or sometimes I would leave home with my siblings and go far away so they wouldn't hear the sounds of our parents. (Leyla, 20, University)*

Leaving home for a long time would not be an option (as a coping strategy) for young women from rural and more conservative backgrounds. In the following quote, a young woman who left home during the incident and did not come back home for a couple of hours describes her parents' response:

*He was so aggressive towards her... he was cursing, hitting, throwing things at my mother... I begged him to stop and intervene in the situation verbally, but he did not stop. Then, I left home and did not come till evening. I was 13 or 14. When I came home, my father and interestingly my mother were also so angry with me. He slapped and kicked me several times and my mother also beat me because I stayed outside for a long time. (Su, 19, Shelter)*

Compared to young women, young men reported that leaving home was frequently used as a long term coping strategy. Taking into consideration young people's perspectives on gender roles and responsibilities, young men seem to have greater freedom in their lives.

*Calling for outside help.* A quarter of young people (n=8) reported calling the police or another person to stop their father during an incident of violence. In some cases, young people (6 out of 33) attempted to alert the police or at least tried to, instead of telling someone else to obtain assistance. Calling the police happened only in life-threatening cases, where young people thought the mother was in great danger during the violent incident. One third of the young women (5 out of 14) mentioned that they had called the police at least once because they were worried about their mother's life.

*I have called the police two or three times if I am not wrong... But this was because of very brutal fights between my parents. He was almost, her... her face was bleeding a lot... I could not stop him. I have left home and run to the police station and told them what was happening at home. Nothing was changed anyway (Elif, 19, Shelter).*

In a minority of cases (2 out of 19), young men reported that they had attempted to alert the police a couple of times in the immediate situation of violence. However, seeking outside help, especially calling the police, had tailed off when they grew up:

*When I was a child I mean 6-7, I clearly remember that I used to go to my aunt's home to call them to save my mother and my siblings. But they did not do anything.... Just told me that it was a family issue... While I was getting grown up I tried to deal with this issue by myself. But I called the police twice. (Ali, 19, Shelter)*

*I called the police once when he hit her shoulder with an axe. It was the most graphic scene in the fights between my parents. (Serdar, 18, Shelter)*

The idea of “what happens in the family must stay in the family” creates social pressure on other people to not intervene in domestic violence. This social unresponsiveness prevented the young people from asking for outside help. Most of the respondents painted a hopeless picture when it came to external intervention.

*My relatives and neighbours know about whatever has happened in my family, but they have never helped us. They have refrained from my father. They did not want to lend a hand due to it being a family issue (Emine 18, Shelter).*

*...even the police do not mess with this issue because it is considered a private issue. How can you expect anyone to jump in this trouble voluntarily? Their only word was that they cannot get involved in this familial issue. (Erdal, 18, Shelter)*

Almost all young people mentioned that they were afraid of seeking outside help in the presence of violence because they believed that involving other people in family issues would make their father more aggressive towards them and that it may lead the situation at home becoming worse. In the following quote, a young woman explained why she prevented herself from informing somebody about the violence at home:

*No... I could not let anyone know what was happening in our home. I have tried once. He was cursing and slapping my mother. My grandfather (father's side) was living very close to us. I went to his home to beg my grandfather to stop his son. He did not do anything at that time. But later on, he warned my father to behave gently to us. But this made my father crazy. Not only my mother, but also my siblings and I were severely beaten because we told everyone our family secrets. After that time, I did not try to say a word to anyone (Damla, 18, Shelter).*

*...even if I called the police, nothing would change. They would not do anything to him. He came back home eventually and continued to abuse us (Ugur, 19, Shelter).*

In addition, in response to a question about the reasons for not calling the police, some young people indicated that they did not want their father to be punished and cause their parents to divorce:

*Even though he was a very bad person, father is a father anyway. If he was arrested, who would take care of my family? Nobody. I don't want to feel guilty and full of remorse about him (Dilan, 19, University).*

When young people were asked to talk about possible reasons for not wishing to call outside help, feeling shame was also frequently emphasized. Some spoke about how they would bring embarrassment not only to themselves but also to their family if they let anyone know about the abusive environment in the home:

*How could I call someone else to save her and us? I was even feeling ashamed of being heard by people in the surroundings. I would go out after a long day to avoid being exposed to people's pity (Sude, 18, Shelter).*

Young people's experiences showed that those from a rural background in particular (16 out of 33) had not considered seeking outside help. According to their reports, domestic violence was also a common and recurring problem in other homes and was an accepted part of family life.

*Sharing.* As discussed earlier, exposure to domestic violence caused young people to become withdrawn and antisocial. These effects made young people reluctant to share their feelings and thoughts about what they were experiencing in the home. A number of young people (9 out of 33) mentioned that they talked to someone else to lower their stress levels:

*There is only one person who is a friend of mine since primary school. She knows everything about me and my life at home (Zeynep, 18, Shelter).*

However, young women were more likely to find someone to share their emotions with than young men. Among those eight young people, six were female and came from a suburban and urban background.

Only four young women shared that they spoke with school counsellors when they were older (since middle school ages) because of stress and depression. But the corresponding point of these three narratives was that they shared their feelings with professionals in cases of excessive child abuse:

*I had not shared anything with someone else until then. I could not stand what he was doing to my mother, my siblings and me. I did not want to keep all my thoughts and emotions inside me anymore and spoke with one of my teachers (Leyla, 20, University).*

In the case of young men, only three said that they preferred to share their feelings with a pet, toy or with their older siblings rather than talking to a friend or a professional:

*I had a dog. After my parents had a fight or something bad happened or when I felt sad, I used to tell everything to him. It was the only one who could understand me deeply (Musa, 19, Shelter).*

*I did not speak with anyone but my older sister when I was really sad and depressive. We talked about why it was happening to us and how we deal with it. (Yasar, 18, Shelter)*

Overall, compared to young women, very few young men adopted sharing as a way to relieve effects of domestic violence. On the other hand, some young women spoke with a teacher or a counsellor to decrease stress derived from living in the abusive environment, only in cases where they were subjected to intolerable child abuse.

Passive. This sub-theme explores how young people had used a wide range of ways in which to cope emotionally in the immediate situation of violence to manage the effects of domestic violence. These ways of coping included: hiding; pretending nothing had happened; watching parents.

*Hiding.* This was the most common emotional coping strategy for young people from all ethnicities and all social backgrounds. Hiding was a frequent way to cope when domestic violence was occurring among both young women and men, particularly when they were younger:

*I am the youngest child in the family. So I was unable to stop them. As soon as I heard my father had started to shout at my mom or hit her, I ran to my room and put my hand under the blanket until he was calmed. I was so afraid (Esma, 20, University).*

Young people who were subjected to direct violence and were imperilled by recurring abuse described hiding as a way to cope so as not to be overwhelmed by domestic violence:

We had very limited choice when I was kid. We were either be beaten or disappeared from sight and protect ourselves. I mostly preferred to disappear (Dilan, 19, University)

*When he was drunk and became aggressive, my mother told us to go to the other room. And then screaming, scolding.... We were so afraid. There was a little storage unit that was covered by curtains. We hid in it and closed the curtains. All of us were crying, but not loudly (Zehra, 19, Shelter).*

However, when they got old enough to protect themselves and their mother, a majority of young men (16 out of 19) reported that instead of hiding, they had involved into conflict, pretended the violence was not happening or left the home:

*I used to leave the room with my siblings. it was impossible to stop them because I was so small, tiny, powerless... I used to go to the other room, close the door, hide in very far away corner until my mother came into the room (Hakan, 21, University).*

*Pretending nothing had happened.* When young people became older, the ways they acted to reduce the effects of domestic violence were more precisely separated: either they became physically or verbally involved in the conflict, or avoided it by isolating themselves from the abusive environment or by leaving home. Approximately one third of young people (10 out of 33) said that they had pretended that they were not in the room during abusive episodes by trying to block out the sound of violence by listening to loud music or keeping themselves busy with something in another room:

*I used to go to my room, lock my door and put my headphones on my ears or cover myself with a blanket. I tried to isolate myself. Because I*



*could not stop them, I had tried but I could not... it was better to turn a blind eye (Zeynep, 19, Shelter).*

*It has become a routine thing for me. I had been watching these abusive episodes frequently. After a while, the best things to do was to not see and hear anymore. Otherwise I could not stand what happened in the home (Leyla, 20, University).*

It was revealed that this way of coping was mostly used by young women, because young men had options like leaving the house or becoming involved in the fight to stop the violence. These opportunities for girls were limited.

Overall, young people's narratives demonstrated that having very limited escape routes from the abusive environment led to them ignoring what was happening in the home. One third of them said that by listening to music or making themselves busy, they turned a blind eye to the situation to save themselves and/or their siblings from the effects of witnessing repeated and frequent domestic violence.

*Watching Parents.* This way of coping mostly appeared when young people were children (in elementary school ages). Based on the narratives of 12 young people, watching parents with fearful eyes was an immediate response for both genders. In the following quote, a young woman describes how she used to react while violence was occurring:

*...sense of paralysis... I could not do anything... I could not save my mum... I wish I could do... it was bad... Very bad... (she was crying a lot and kept quiet for approximately two minutes). I was so afraid of getting wounded for my mum... but I was not strong enough to stop my father (Emine, 18, Shelter).*

The data shows that young men were more likely to get involved in the conflict or leave home instead of watching parents. On the other hand, some young women (8 out of 14) had watched their parents when violence was occurring, even when they were older (high school ages).

*I hated my life because of them... there was always unrest in the home. I sometimes sat on the couch and watched them until it ended. I did not care if one of them was injured or not. I sometimes thought that if one of them was wounded or something, this miserable life would be finished. (Elif, 19, Shelter)*

*I sometimes sat on the couch at a safe distance and prayed for death of one of my parents. It would bring at least a peace for rest of us (Sude, 18, Shelter).*

The data shows that the young people who had been subject to violence over a long time, became indifferent to abusive scenes to lessen the effects of violence on them.

Suicide attempt. A minority of young women (3 out of 33) from low socio-economic contexts and who had low levels of education said that a permanent way of escaping their abusive environment was to attempt suicide:

*'I was in high school and I cut my wrists. I felt like life was worth living because it seemed that this situation would never be over. I did not feel that I was a human being... I had never been treated to feel like I was human' (Zehra, 19, Shelter).*

A combination of living under social pressure, father's oppression and experiencing child abuse along with witnessing domestic violence, created an extremely pessimist picture for young women and made them consider suicide as a way to end all suffering:

*A couple of months before I came here, he beat my mother and me very bad. I had lots of bruises in all my body. I swallowed pills to free myself from abuse. I could do nothing but commit suicide. (Sude, 18, Shelter)*

Wishing to marry in early ages. Three young women from rural and suburban background and who had low levels of education spoke about this as a way of escaping from the abusive environment. In the interviews, two of them talked about their older sisters, who married before they turned 18 to free themselves from domestic violence:

*If I had not come to this shelter, I would definitely find a man to marry like my older sister. Instead of living with him (father), it would be better to live with someone else who I even do not love. (Zehra, 19, Shelter)*

*'...in those times, I sometimes thought about marriage. Because I was feeling like trapped... there was no way to escape except marry and settle down'. (Dizdar, 20, Shelter)*

As was mentioned earlier, it was mostly young men who left home to reduce the effects of domestic violence. On the other hand, young women, who were living under more social and parental pressure than men, modified this strategy based on cultural norms. They may consider marriage as a culturally acceptable way to leave home. The following quote from a young woman supports this; *'... as long as I'm leaving home in a bridal dress, no one can say anything'* (Su, 19, Shelter).

### ***Theme Two: Coping Strategies used by Young People after Incidence of Violence***

When speaking to young people about the ways in which they have dealt with their experiences of violence in the home, it was evident that they have used different and complex ways of coping. The themes that emerged were: social withdrawal, self-harm and suicide. It was also evident that their ways of coping were shaped by age, gender, and socio-economic status.

#### **Social withdrawal**

*Sharing.* Even though this was not a key coping strategy among all young people, a significant number of them stressed their intention to find someone with whom to share their life stories, to minimize their distress and depression.

Unsurprisingly, the data shows that young women tended to share their experiences voluntarily, more so than young men. However, young women were particular about the people with whom they shared emotional and psychological distress caused by their experiences. Over half of young women (8 out of 14) in the shelter had talked only to

their friends who had similar experiences of violence in the home. Sharing with others who had similar experiences was an important way for young people to feel understood:

*I have three very close friends in here. They also had come here due to exposure to violence. So they are the only people who can deeply understand me. We often come together to pour out our grief to each other (Elif, 18, Shelter).*

Notably, some young women from a rural background and low socio-economic status mentioned that they were averse to sharing memories that made them distressed. As shown in the following quote, reluctance to talk about their experiences resulted from a belief that no one would understand their experiences:

*I have never talked to anyone about my past. I assume that nobody would understand me. I was taken to a psychiatrist once. That was one of the exceptional times that I shared something with somebody (Emine, 18, Shelter).*

Approximately half of the young women (6 out of 14) were hesitant about sharing their experiences because they did not wish to cause stress to anyone or did not trust anyone, except a trusted social worker in the shelter:

*I did not even talk to any of my friends. I talk to her (name of social worker). Only her... because she is the only one who I trust (Su, 19, Shelter).*

Lack of trust as a common on-going effect of domestic violence may be considered as a main reason for not disclosing feelings. Most of the young people said that they mostly expected first step from others to gain encouragement to talk. In the following quote, a young woman clearly highlights a link between trust and sharing:

*I do not display my emotions or share my feeling abruptly with someone. This man or woman, whomever I want to talk to, is supposed to disclose him/herself first. (Dizdar, 20, Shelter)*

Accounts of young men revealed that sharing their experiences with others or talking to somebody to reduce the effects of domestic violence was hardly ever considered. All young men, except six, reported that they had not thought about this as an option for relieving the stress that stemmed from their past experiences:

*Of course I do still have a lot of memories. That makes me anxious and sad... But I don't want to talk to anyone about this issue. I need to appear tough. Those stories reveal all my weakness in front of others (Ali, 19, Shelter).*

*I still try to avoid remembering all the bad things. Talking about these experiences to someone makes it more degrading. I can deal with this by myself (Ismail, 18, Shelter).*

Although all young men from every socio-economic background, ethnicity and educational background demonstrated an unwillingness to share with friends and professionals, four of them indicated a preference for sharing with their siblings to cope with the on-going effects of domestic violence. As one interviewee put it: *'when I feel suffocated and not able to cope with this alone, I call my older sister. We talk on the phone about the past'*. (Mehmet, 18, Shelter). As was pointed out in the previous key theme, young men disclosed only to their older siblings.

Overall, as it was in the presence of violence, sharing was not commonly adopted as a way of coping to relieve the after effects of domestic violence. According to the accounts of young women, the issue of a lack of trust may be a reason for not wishing to disclose. Along with a lack of trust, a desire to not appear powerless and helpless may cause young men to keep everything inside them.

*Denying.* The majority of young people (12 out of 33) reported that they dealt with their experiences of domestic violence by forgetting or denying what they had

witnessed at home. Some young women expressed the view that having a safe place in a shelter provided them a new life where they needed to remove all past bad memories. In one case, the participant said:

*I know I cannot delete those memories, but my life was changed when I came here (shelter). I try not to remember any incidences that take me to my horrible past days (Canan, 18, Shelter).*

The accounts of most young people from the shelter show that moving into a safe place and living away from the abusive environment were a corner stone in their life. Some said that they did not want to take past negative things with them in their new life. Some said that by forgetting everything that reminded them of the past, they saved themselves from the after effects of domestic violence:

*In my first weeks in here [shelter], I kept a diary and wrote whatever I experienced in the home, what my feelings were, what I wanted to say to my father, etc. I locked it in a box that I will never open. However, I do not have the heart to throw it away. It has everything about all my family (Elif, 19, Shelter).*

*I threw away everything, whatever reminds me of my past, even my clothes. Because whenever I saw them, my father's face appeared in front of my eyes. It made me feel sad and weird (Zehra, 19, Shelter).*

Two young women talked about a similar strategy to decrease the on-going effects of domestic violence:

*I sometimes remember those days. I'd get paper, write those experiences and my emotional reactions and tear it into very small pieces. It makes me feel relaxed. That is the way I seek revenge from him... erasing everything about him' (Sude, 18, Shelter).*

Compared to young women, a small number of young men (n=4) spoke about attempting to forget or denying reality as a way to deal with effects of violence in the

home. Two of them said that they broke off relationships with their family to try to erase all memory about their past:

*When I remembered my life back at home, I felt like I got stuck in the marsh. I could not think or plan my future because of this feeling. I had no option but starting over with a clean slate which includes only me for now (Emre, 19, Shelter).*

Some of the young people talked about how the modified behaviour of their father towards family members led them to forgive their fathers and forget how he treated them badly:

*He is not like what he was... not physically abusive at least... he shouts and curses sometimes but it is tolerable. I have to give him an opportunity by forgetting everything. Otherwise I cannot afford to live with him (Iskender, 22, University).*

By not recalling hurtful memories or pretending they never experienced domestic violence, young people, particularly young women, tried to avoid possible on-going effects. Young people's narratives all mentioned establishing a new life that is free from their past life. On the other hand, gender roles in Turkey place a burden on males to take care of their family. Because they feel responsible for their siblings and mother, young men mostly preferred to endure their fate rather than deny it.

*Accepting.* In contrast to a denial of past experiences, however, this sub-theme was more frequently talked about by young men (10 out of 19) than young women (4 out of 14). According to the narratives, some tended to accept all their related life experience and its effects in one of two ways; generalizing or considering motivating factors.

One third of young people said they considered their experiences of violence in the home as something that was common to many individuals and families in society. In other words, they minimised the reality of domestic violence and they thought it is not a thing that affects lives of people. By making such connections, young people could

cope with the distress and anxiety stemming from their experiences of violence. The following quotes echo this theme:

*It is very hard to suppress all memories in my head. Of course I remember. But look at all the people in here. They are living, smiling. All of them have similar or worse lives than me. That is part of life. I believe almost all people are exposed to domestic violence. If they can survive, why can't I? (Hasan, 18, Shelter)*

*This [domestic violence] is a reality of life. Look at yourself... Even though you are well educated, you have experienced it. It is how I console myself; everyone witnesses violence in the home. If they can live and smile, I can too. This is not a big deal. (Ugur, 19, Shelter)*

The exception to acceptance or generalizing the existence of violence were those participants with high levels of education, who believed that domestic violence does not appear in every family. By becoming integrated into society, young people became more aware of the familial structures in society, and by meeting people who had a family without any violence, they realized that even though domestic violence seems to be very common, there are lots of families that are free of violence.

When young people were asked how they dealt with the effects of recalling their memories, some commented that they tried to convert negative effects into motivating factors or something that boosted their inner strength to rebuild their life. For example, in the following quote, a young man described how he considered the after effects of domestic violence:

*...I realize that all those experiences took lots of things from me. However, instead of crying or living in depression mode, I prefer to look what it brought to me in a positive way... Even though I am young, I feel I am ready for real life. I can fight with it. Because I came to this age through very difficult conditions. I always motivate myself when I stress (Mustafa, 21, University).*



Overall, young people's narratives demonstrated that they either tried to minimise the effects of domestic violence on people by normalising violence as something that happens in every family, or used it to gain inner strength to build their future. However, a general picture emerges of young people dealing with the effects of domestic violence on their own.

*Dealing with it alone.* This sub-theme was particularly prominent in the interview data. The majority of young people from each ethnicity, gender and socio-economic and educational level mentioned that the initial strategy to cope with their experiences and the effects of domestic violence was to deal with it alone, by not talking to anyone and staying silent until the pressure of the memories had lessened.

*I try to keep related memories a secret for myself as much as I can. I push myself to think about my future to get rid of the past. I usually cry but I don't let anyone see me. I go outside find a place far from prying eyes and cry [she was crying at that moment] (Emine, 18, Shelter).*

Staying silent was a coping strategy frequently used by all young men. As mentioned in previous sections, young men tended to become more introverted about this issue than young women. The majority of young men (15 out of 19), dealing with the distress and anxiety arising from witnessing domestic violence alone was the only strategy that they had adopted. Talking about this, a young man said:

*When these bad times are envisioned again and again, I become distressed, sad and do not want to talk to anyone. I would go to my room, sometimes I cry for my mother and myself. I keep asking myself why? Why did my father behave like this? (Hakan, 21, University)*

*Especially after I talked to my mother, I feel very sad and stressed. In these times, I put earphones in my ear and withdraw into my shell... I do not wish to talk to anyone. (Yasin, 18, Shelter)*

Self-Harm. The data showed that aggression was reported as an on-going and immediate effect in the behaviour of victims of violence. Whereas young people who have witnessed domestic violence tended to be more aggressive towards other people, they also reported aggression against themselves. In this regard, self-harm was a strategy among some young people to cope with the effects of violence. A third of young women (5 out of 14) from the shelter who had low levels of education mentioned how they had harmed themselves when they were experiencing depression and sadness:

*I sometimes have nervous breakdowns. I push myself to forget everything but I could not. In these times I slap myself, bite my arms instead of hurting someone (Dizdar, 20, Shelter).*

*'I punch walls when I am depressed or angry. That makes me relax and it is better than hitting someone else' (Damla, 18, Shelter).*

Two of the young women spoke about self-harm as a coping strategy. Both of the participants were from an extended family and low socio-economic status and less educated.

*I usually cry because of feelings of sadness. I hurt myself. I have done this to myself a couple of months ago. (She showed her arm with lots of cuts on it) I cut my self in the home. (Su, 19, Shelter)*

Five young men who came from low education and low socio-economic backgrounds talked about punching themselves, cutting arms or legs when remembering the past to reduce stress; *'approximately two or three weeks ago, I did this to me (he showed his arm full of cuts). But I regretted it all after' (Hasan, 18, Shelter).*

*These abusive scenes appear in my mind. I get angry at myself for not being able to protect her in these times. I slap myself to try to feel the same pain that she had. (Yasar, 18, Shelter)*

Young people also talked about how self-harm provided emotional release when they were extremely nervous and distressed. When they were asked the possible reasons behind hurting themselves, some commented:

*When I am angry or extremely sad, I look for something to harm. It makes me relaxed. If I do not transfer my aggressiveness into actions, I won't feel ok. So, instead of injuring someone, I hurt myself (Musa, 19, Shelter).*

Overall, young people's narratives revealed that they considered self-harm as a way of channelling distress when they were nervous or a way to calm down when they were feeling aggressive.

Suicide. This sub-theme emerged in three (out of 14) young women who had considered suicide as a last resort and a permanent way of getting rid of all stress, anxiety and sadness in their life.

*I could not stand against what I have lived so far. Even though I live in here, I feel his pressure on me psychologically. Two years ago, I tried to commit suicide. I thought that was the only way to stay away from my father and erase all memories (Damla, 18, Shelter)*

A young female talked about her attempt to commit suicide and the regret she now felt:

*I used to watch an episode on TV each Wednesday. I kept telling myself that after watching it I was going to commit suicide. One day I did. I took an overdose of medicine. But I was so regretful and threw up because my mother and my siblings came up in my mind. I could not leave them with him. (Elif, 19, Shelter)*

Young men did not mention any suicide attempts in their narratives. Only one young man talked about feeling suicidal and thinking about suicide but he had never attempted it: *'I sometimes think of suicide. But this idea always stays as a theory, not an action. Life is worth living anyway'* (Mehmet, 18, Shelter).

Pretending to be like a male. Three young women talked about how they redeveloped their attitudes and adopted more masculine and aggressive behaviours. When they were asked about the reasons for showing such ‘masculine’ behaviours, self-protection was a key factor mentioned:

*I know how I will pay the price if I look weak from my past experiences. My mother and also I were too weak to defend ourselves against him. We were the ones always beaten up. I do not let it happen to me. That is because I pretend to be stronger and more cruel than I am (Elif, 18, Shelter).*

In addition to the idea of defending herself, another young woman talked about how in order to have a respectful and valuable position in society, she would pretend to be like a man:

*Nobody recognizes us as long as we are polite, calm and quiet women. If you are a woman, nobody will respect you as much as they respect men. It is the reality of our community, everyone denies it but it exists (Emine, 18, Shelter).*

They also spoke of how as women, they felt trapped compared to men’s freedom in society. To overcome the feeling of imprisonment, they were trying to appear harder and more masculine in order to gain the same freedom as men:

*My older brother could leave the home whenever he wished. But I had to stay and witness all this violence. What was his privilege? ...the ability to defend himself? I have been behaving like him like a lizard that swells his body in the face of danger. If this is the only way to be equal with them, I am into this. (Dizdar, 20, Shelter)*

Two young women also complained about how the weaknesses of females encouraged males to become more dominant over them:

*‘However, there are lots of male victims of domestic violence, still the primary victims are women. Actually it is somewhat because of us. If we were more powerful, they would not dare to behave like this. I wished I were a male. This feeling very strongly appeared when I could not protect my mother. I don’t want to be a woman in one sense because as long as I do, I am in danger of being abused. For this reason, I like looking like a male’. (Damla, 18, Shelter)*

This theme emerged because of the perceived gender inequality in Turkish society. Accounts of these young women demonstrate that pretending to be like a male was the only effective strategy that prevents them from experiencing domestic violence and provides a similar social freedom to men in life.

### **Ideas for Interventions**

As discussed earlier, a majority of young people explained domestic violence by connecting it with their own experiences of growing up in an abusive family context. A majority of young people in shelters became familiar with the term ‘domestic violence’ after they had started to live in the shelter. This lack of knowledge about domestic violence in childhood possibly prevented young people from searching for a way to escape from the abusive environment and from dealing with its effects. Young people were asked about the strategies and interventions that should be developed and implemented to keep children safe from domestic violence and its effects. These will be discussed in the following section.

### ***Theme Three: Preventive Measures***

Young people’s suggestions about preventing the occurrence of domestic violence were to inform children about violence at home and to encourage them to call for help if they were experiencing it. In addition to this, young people who identified gender inequality as one of the reasons for domestic violence also talked about changing gender roles in society.

Raising Awareness about Domestic Violence. When young people were asked about possible ways to prevent the effects of domestic violence on children, they commented that children should be informed that domestic violence can occur in every home but that they can get over it. They also said that children should be encouraged to talk about the familial problems related to domestic violence and child abuse.

*Role of school.* A third of respondents indicated that elementary schools should be the first place where children get initial information about domestic violence. As seen in their narratives, some young people did not let anyone know about the abuse at home because they were not aware of where they could ask for help to escape from the abusive home environment:

*I did not know that I can call the police regarding familial issues. He had sometimes beaten her very hard. I did cry, but nothing happened. I would have called the police to take him away if I knew that I could call them. Children should be taught about this issue. For example, when you face domestic violence, call the police (Elif, 19, Shelter).*

*I was not informed about the shelters. I had not known until I got here. If I would know the environment here back then, I would go to the police or a shelter for help (Damla, 18, Shelter).*

Young people also pointed out that children must be enlightened about effective ways to cope with domestic violence. According to them, the most important way to deal with domestic violence is by sharing and talking to others.

*Encourage to share.* As has already been mentioned in previous chapters, almost all of the young people had not shared what they had witnessed in the home because of feelings of shame and fear. Even though they had hesitated or were afraid of talking about familial issues to others when they were children, most of them (19 out of 33) emphasized that children should be encouraged to talk about what was happening in the home:

*First of all, counsellors or social workers, whoever is responsible for this issue, needs to know that most of the children do not want to come to their door to ask for help about family issues. This is because family is considered an important component of our culture. Children think that if I speak about my family or if I complain about my dad, I will betray them and cause the whole family to break up. Nobody wants that. They have to come to children and ask very privately, try to deal with this issue by taking the family together, not taking the children away from the family. (Hakan, 21, University)*

*You can easily recognize from children's face that they have problem. In this case, I think the biggest responsibility is on teachers' shoulders. Teachers have to persuade or push a child to talk about his/her problems. Otherwise, I am sorry but no child wishes to share something with somebody, especially familial issues (Mustafa, 21, University).*

The potential for families to separate keeps young people from sharing their experiences of violence in the home. They recommended that fear should be extinguished by persuading children that keeping the family together is the priority of the school counsellors or social workers. After dealing with such fears, ways should be developed to communicate with children's emotions and inner world:

*I did not mention anything about my familial problems to anyone because of a fear of causing trouble for my family. For example, I decided to talk to one of my teachers in middle school. But, before the main conversation, I told him that if any of my family members so much as harms a hair on her/his head, I would kill myself. (Su, 19, Shelter)*

Perspective of gender roles must be changed. Although most young women identified male domination as an important reason for why domestic violence occurs, nine of them pointed out the need to reinterpret gender roles in society. It was remarkable that five of these nine women were from university and were highly educated. For example, a young Kurdish woman from the university commented:

*If you want to reduce incidents of domestic violence, the over-exaggerated male domination over women must be shattered in each part of the society. Man and woman have never been considered as equal genders in the eyes of the community. Men are always on top. Whatever women do, they cannot get close to men. I think the priority should be to give respect and value to women that they already deserve.*  
(Esma, 20, University)

Some young women also from the university stressed the imbalance between genders in society:

*Inequality between men and women is clearly seen, especially in rural areas. Men pretend to be like a king, women are servants for them. This gender-based humiliation is the main reason for domestic violence. This must be changed* (Fatma, 20, University).

*It is impossible to stop domestic violence as long as society gives prominence to men while underestimating women. Males are dominant everywhere; in work, in academia, in marketing, etc. Women always stay in the background. As a result, male domination is perceived as very normal* (Dilan, 19, University).

The reason behind other young women not mentioning the need to address gender roles might be an acceptance of male domination or a sense that people would never change their views about this. In the following quote, a young woman talked about this problem when she was asked about this issue:

*No matter how people are educated, they will not change their mind about this gender differences. There is a big gap between women and men in this country. Men are always on the front burner whereas women remain in the background.* (Su, 19, Shelter)



#### ***Theme Four: Interventions after being exposed to domestic violence***

When respondents were asked about possible ways to help children/young people who are victims of domestic violence, some commented that compulsory psychological or therapeutic support must be provided and that the victim should be taken away from the abusive family. For the adult victims (mother) of domestic violence, they suggested emotional support and divorce as positive interventions. In addition to these, they also mentioned interventions with the whole family after all the risk factors had been removed.

Psychological support. All young people stated that having a professional to provide emotional support to victims to help them to deal with the effects of violence is needed for both mothers and children. In the case of offering counselling for a mother, some (8 out of 33) emphasized that besides private sessions with a victim, joint sessions with a perpetrator must also be established to reduce the risk factors of domestic violence reemerging:

*Compared with me as a witness of violence and a person who was badly affected, my mother is definitely in worse psychological condition as a main victim and absolutely required psychological support. Actually, the government is supposed to provide this to all victims, even if they do not want it. Furthermore, the fathers must be involved this because they are responsible for all abusive incidents in the home. They need to face their wife and solve their problems (Damla, 18, Shelter).*

However, all young people except three rejected the idea of establishing joint counselling sessions in the case of psychological support for young people:

*All these therapies or conversation hours should be done one to one because, as I said, a child who was abused is already feeling embarrassment about what s/he has experienced. Gatekeepers or counsellors, whoever runs this therapy, cannot expect to get a true answer from children in group therapy. Nobody wants to bring his/her whole life out in public (Hakan, 21, University).*

As seen in the above quote, some young people still feel shame in sharing what has happened, even though other residents in the shelter have similar experiences to them.

Divorce. Over a third of young people (12 out of 33) declared that psychological support to a perpetrator is not a permanent solution to eradicating all risks of domestic violence. Instead, a mother must be taken away from the abusive home environment and should divorce:

*I don't think that an abusive man can easily quit his aggressive attitudes towards their family members. These behaviours are in his genes, impossible to get rid of. Sooner or later, he behaves as he did. Because of this, they must be divorced and a mother should be kept away from him.* (Elif, 19, Shelter)

In addition to this, young people suggested divorce as an intervention, even if the perpetrator no longer displays aggressive behaviours, because of the psychological impact his violence would have had on the adult victim:

*'If we look at this situation from a mother's perspective, as long as she sees him, all bad memories will come back. She remembers how he had beaten and humiliated her. It is impossible for a mother to become a normal person as a victim of domestic violence as long as she lives with him'.* (Fatma, 20, University)

Taking children away. Regarding children who witness and are subjected to child abuse, seven young people suggested removing children from the abusive family as a way of saving them from its effects:

*I think they should be separated from the home environment. They should be taken to shelters, like the one here. A lovely environment should be established because children like me feel a lack of love. Those children should be treated in a friendly way, very warmly.* (Emine, 18, Shelter)

They mentioned that the probability of co-occurrence of child abuse was high in the family, even if parents were educated or rehabilitated:

*It does not matter how you trained fathers or mothers to become normal people, everything goes back to the beginning in the home. Because, I think they perceive violence as a best way to discipline their children. So, at least by taking children from family, you can save them and help them become a normal people. (Zehra, 19, Shelter)*

*I have experienced both type of violence; violence towards my mother and child abuse. Since my high school years, I used to leave home and stay outside at nights and went off from school. If the government took me away from home and took care, I would have different life and different personality. (Yasar, 18, Shelter)*

Overall, young people who were victims of child abuse especially urged the idea of taking children away from the family after realizing the existence of places such as the shelters, which provide safety for them.

Reunite family. A significant number of young people (13 out of 33) talked about whole family intervention as an option in the context of domestic violence. They stated that reuniting the family could be an option in the case of rehabilitation for the father and stopping all risk factors for reoccurring domestic violence:

*Social workers should try to bring family members in to discuss familial problems and conclude with satisfying resolutions for everyone. If a mother and child are happy, and make sure the same experiences do not happen again in the home, the family should reunite. Because if we stay away from our family, we deeply feel a lack of family love in here (Su, 19, Shelter).*

They also highlighted that in the case of violence, which is linked to substance abuse or mental health problems, after rehabilitation of these issues all family should be reunited to establish a peaceful environment for them:

*Having a family is so important for children. In addition, family as a foundation is also significant in our society. So, if there was domestic violence because of consuming alcohol or lack of communication skills, perpetrator should be rehabilitated, and all other risk factors must be eradicated and all family can then get together in peace (Iskender, 22, University).*

*If the reason behind the violence has not become chronic, I mean if there is even a limited solution for resolving all stressing factors for the family, I think first option should be reuniting the family. (Mustafa, 20, University)*

The accounts of young women from the shelter in particular highlighted the need to reunite the family after removing all reasons that created conflicts between parents in the first place. The reason may be that most of the young women who stay at the shelter have low self-confidence to face the difficulties of life when they leave the shelter. They might think that their journey ends in the house where they have run away. Thus, before they move back in, they may want to have family without any risk factors that make them re-experience their past traumatic experiences.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter presented a detailed description of coping mechanism in the context of domestic violence as mentioned by young people. It was evident that at a younger age, passive strategies were mostly adopted. However, when they were older, social norms and social factors influenced their coping mechanism, meaning they shifted from passive to active. It was also highlighted that gender roles expectations played a significant role in the development of coping mechanisms, because they led young men to adopt more active coping mechanisms, such as involvement and leaving abusive environments, whereas they led young women to use passive strategies, such as pretending nothing happened, watching their parents and hiding. This chapter has demonstrated avoidant styles of coping with on-going difficulties associated with exposure to domestic violence.

This chapter has also outlined the role of professionals and teachers to raise awareness on the issue of domestic violence and remove the barriers to disclosure. This chapter has further demonstrated the significance of individual psychological support for young people in enhancing the ability to cope with the difficulties that result from exposure to violence. This chapter has also reflected young people's views on domestic violence and on possible interventions. Some of them, in particular those who think that the violence will never end, have proposed divorce as an effective intervention. However, after eradicating all risk factors and receiving psychological support, reuniting families would be one possible intervention option. The next chapter presents detailed discussion on the findings from this chapter and the two that precede it in the context of both the existing literature and the theoretical frameworks.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

#### **Introduction**

Domestic violence has been researched by social scientists around the world for over four decades, through both qualitative and quantitative studies. However, the issue has only recently been studied in the context of eastern countries, especially Muslim-majority societies, but many gaps remain. This is the case in Turkey, where some quantitative research highlighting the prevalence and effects of domestic violence on women (see (Gokler et al., 2014, Guvenc et al., 2014, Izmirli et al., 2014, Ergöçmen et al., 2013, Sahin et al., 2012, Yüksel-Kaptanoğlu et al., 2012, Savas and Agridag, 2011, Akar et al., 2010, Marshall and Furr, 2010a, Kocacık et al., 2007, Erten and Keskin, 2018, Mete et al., 2017), effects of exposure on children (Bayindir, 2010) and attitudes towards domestic violence (Ozcakir et al., 2008, Adıbelli et al., 2016, Marshall and Furr, 2010b, Özgür et al., 2011) have all been studied. However, there is a paucity of both qualitative studies on domestic violence and research that focuses on the perspectives of Turkish young people.

The first qualitative study which focused on young people and domestic violence was conducted in 2013 by Population Association and United Nations Populations Fund-UNFPA among secondary school children. To my knowledge, however, none of these studies have explored in detail the experiences of young people living with domestic violence, their coping strategies and perceptions, and the effects and protective factors from the perspectives of young Turkish people who have been exposed to violence towards their mother from their father and/or other family members. In this regard, my research was designed to contribute to the dearth of knowledge on domestic violence in Turkey by giving voice to young people in order to explore what they understood and perceived from their experiences, how they thought that they were/are affected and how they have dealt/are dealing with the effects of living with domestic violence.

In this chapter, I draw upon the key findings presented in chapters four, five and six, to provide a broader discussion as related to my research questions. These significant cross-cutting themes include: violence in the home setting; relationship between child abuse and domestic violence; internal and external effects of domestic violence on the young people, particularly powerlessness; shame and aggression; their understandings of violence, which were structured by their gender, age and educational background; their developing coping strategies, including passive and more active ways of dealing with the situation. This chapter also makes connections between the existing international literature on domestic violence and the findings of my study in order to identify some similarities and differences and extend the broader discussion of domestic violence in an international context.

In light of the overarching theoretical perspective, sociology of childhood approach, this chapter also discusses the relevance of insights from feminist theory, intersectionality and social learning theory. In this chapter, I critically evaluate the findings in relation to these theoretical frameworks.

The following sections outline the key findings of the research and highlight the new and overlapping findings with the existing literature.

### **Domestic Violence: Young People's Understandings and Perceptions**

With respect to the first objective, to illustrate young people's experiences about domestic violence, this section initially highlights the key issues that emerged in the research findings with regard to young people's experiences of the domestic violence they witnessed in their household.

#### ***Violence in the home: a male preserve***

According to the experiences of the young people interviewed, and as also highlighted in the international literature, fathers took a leading role as perpetrators of domestic violence. All participants reported witnessing verbal or psychological abuse, physical violence and economic abuse of their mothers by their fathers. Even though all

participants talked explicitly about physical violence during the interviews, most of them described verbal and psychological abuse towards their mothers as a daily routine in the household. This finding is consistent with existing research on the prevalence of domestic violence in Turkey amongst women victims (Izmirli et al., 2014, Gokler et al., 2014, Sahin et al., 2012, Akar et al., 2010, Kocacık et al., 2007). One reason for this finding might be that verbal aggression or humiliation of mothers by fathers is accepted as normal behaviour in every marriage, where the status of the woman is much lower than that of the husband.

Verbal violence against mothers consisted of swearing, threatening, calling her by derogatory nicknames and insulting her emotions by making negative and undermining remarks about her motherliness or mothering. These results mirror those of international studies (Mullender, 2002, Thiara and Gill, 2012), which have in particular examined how verbal/emotional abuse is perpetrated by men to undermine women's mothering and to erode their sense of self. The findings demonstrate that when fathers verbally attacked mothers' maternal feelings or approach to mothering and blamed them for not being a good mother, it caused greater emotional harm to the mother's well-being and certainly as much as the harm as physical violence. This is significant because in societies such as Turkey, where male hegemony overshadows femininity, the initial criteria for vulnerability in women in society is their maternal role. In other words, for women, getting a respected social position as an individual, either in the family or society, strongly correlates with their motherliness, whether that means reproducing, caring for or caring about children. In this manner, by targeting a mother's maternal role and mothering, fathers attempted to debase the woman's social status in their children's eyes. As mentioned by Stark (2007), this is beyond a crime of violence, it is a liberty/human rights crime based in gender inequality 'which seeks to take away the victim's liberty or freedom, to strip away their sense of self' (Silvestri and Crother-Dowey, 2016:279). The perpetrators would not only violate the physical well-being of the victims but also abuse their human rights and 'entrap women in everyday life' (Stark, 2007:15).

Although all young people described their experiences connecting to their father's physical abusive behaviours towards their mother, including punching, kicking, slapping, shoving and throwing an object, only a minority reported witnessing their



mothers also using a knife or an object during an incident of physical violence. The findings of the current study appear to be similar to those in previous studies. For example, a study by Hester (2013) that focused on reporting domestic violence incidents in England found that women are more likely to use weapons against their partners to stop further violence. However, findings of the current study, within the context of Turkey, showed that the mothers only used an object to save their children, not even for self-defence purposes. Overall, this finding reflects the feminist perspective on the gender symmetry debate by showing that domestic violence is asymmetrical in that men are more likely to use violence than women, and that women use violence in self-defence and/or in the protection of children (DeKeseredy and Dragiewicz, 2007, Stark, 2006, Gerstenberger and Williams, 2013).

The majority of young people talked about how their mother displayed passive reactions against a perpetrator, such as keeping silent and/or crying. Their mother's might adopt such passive strategies as a form of resistance or as a way to avoid further abuse. Young people also talked about how the severity of abuse would worsen if their mother reacted to the father's aggression verbally or physically. It is possible that men perceived women's aggressive responses as a threat to their 'patriarchal' position and that this then could lead them to display more violence against women in order to strengthen their dominance.

In addition to witnessing violence from father to mother, young people who lived in an extended family, something which is common in Turkish family structures (Vahip and Doğanavşargil, 2006), also talked about verbal, psychological and physical violence from paternal relatives towards their mother. In addition to reporting direct verbal and physical abuse, especially from the grandmother or father towards their mother, young people also mentioned how other family members encouraged their father to behave in a more controlling way over their mother and themselves. This finding highlights that male hegemony is being reinforced not only by the perpetrator's inner dynamics and social norms but also by paternal family members. An interesting point in this finding is that paternal family members did not use direct power to control the victim (mother), however, they used husband/father as a tool to oppress mother/wife in the home settings. These results are in line with previous research, which revealed the role of marital family members as a source of violence and abuse towards mothers in the home

and in promoting intimate partner violence (Clark et al., 2010, Chan et al., 2008, Hyder et al., 2007).

Another interesting finding, reported by few young women from a rural background, was that of mothers being subjected to physical and verbal violence by their older sons. This result supports previous studies (Howard and Rottem, 2008, Holt, 2013, Ulman and Straus, 2003, Calvete et al., 2014), which found that exposure to domestic violence is a risk factor for adolescent to engage in parental abuse. Besides poor attachment (Kennair and Mellor, 2007, Paulson et al., 1990) and permissive or excessive parental control (Holt, 2013, Calvete et al., 2014, Tew and Nixon, 2010) as potential risk factors for child to parent abuse. This finding may also be explained in this way: from these limited numbers of lived experiences, it was demonstrated that male children tended to take over the dominant position in the home when their father was absent. So, by being verbally and being physically aggressive towards their mother, they were strengthening their hierarchical position in the family (where the older son is considered the second most powerful figure in the home after the father), having observed how a male family figure (father) establishes and strengthens his authority over a woman in the family; that is, by using the physical and verbal power generated by gender roles, which are, in turn, supported by cultural norms. Even though this data was gathered from a small sample, it gives insight the view of gender-based social learning theory, which specifies that boys learned masculine roles from their violent fathers and they tend to justify the violence to establish superiority over others (Widom and Wilson, 2015, Franklin and Kercher, 2012). However, there is an exception too. The finding also shows that majority of young men did not take over their father's role and assert their masculinity when he was absent. This reinforce that they have their agency that they exercised in this regard.

### ***Child abuse and domestic violence***

A significant number of studies illustrate the co-occurrence of domestic violence and child abuse (Hamby et al., 2010, Edleson et al., 2007, Radford et al., 2013, Turner et al., 2017, Guedes et al., 2016, Kyegombe et al., 2015, Wathen and MacMillan, 2013). This combination is referred to as 'double whammy' or 'dual exposure effect' in the literature (Hughes et al., 1989, Moylan et al., 2010). The present study also

corroborated these findings (Osofsky 2003, Sousa et al. 2011, Mullender 2002, Jouriles et al. 2008, Zolotor et al. 2007, Holmes 2013a, Rada 2014), with almost all young people from shelters and half of the young people from the university revealing that they had experienced child abuse alongside witnessing domestic violence. Interestingly, the interview data showed that young people not only reported direct verbal and/or physical violence by their father, but also they described how their mother also abused them physically and psychologically. In most of the child abuse cases, mothers tended to abuse their children after they had been abused by the husband. Research undertaken by Levendosky et al (2002) concludes that maternal authority and control over children are negatively affected by domestic violence and that there is a significant correlation between child abuse by the mother right after she has experienced violence herself and abuse perpetrated by fathers towards mothers. Thus, mothers may display aggressive behaviours to children in order to reinforce their subordinated hierarchical power over children and to cope with the feeling of powerlessness that emerges after exposure to violence. On the other hand, it was found that in the majority of cases, mothers displayed protective roles for children in the context of violence, which is consistent with previous research (Lapierre, 2009, Haight et al., 2007, Wendt et al., 2015). However, the findings and existing literature highlighted that the nature of child abuse needs to be explored within the context of women's systematic oppression. The findings revealed that almost all child abuse incidents had happened after violence against the mother. The inter-connection between domestic violence and child abuse was also mentioned strongly in young people's narratives and they drew on both to explain their perspectives on domestic violence.

When it comes to age and gender differences in reporting domestic violence and child abuse, the findings revealed that even though there were no significant gender differences in experiencing abuse in the home during childhood years, adolescent girls were more likely to experience physical violence and verbal abuse than young men. This result could be explained by young men's greater physical capability to resist their fathers' abusive behaviour. However, it is also the case that the Turkish cultural context provides greater freedom to male children, such as going out of the home when they wish and behaving independently, whereas girls and young women have to live under more strict rules in a limited environment (mostly in the home) and hence have more risk of exposure to abuse.

Young people also talked about the type of violence that their fathers perpetrated against them, such as scolding, beating in front of people or humiliating by using derogatory words. With regard to factors promoting child abuse in the family, accounts of young people highlight the influence of gender role differences, such as not doing home duties (cleaning, taking care of younger siblings and cooking), were mentioned by the majority of young women (11 out of 14), whereas not earning money became a reason for being beaten for young men.

### ***Perceptions and understanding of violence in the home***

Having highlighted young people's experiences of domestic violence, it is interesting to see how these connect to their perceptions or understanding of domestic violence. Although the research findings showed that verbal/psychological violence occurred more frequently than physical abuse, all young people, except four, described domestic violence as physical violence that they witnessed in the home. Notably, almost half of them did not integrate verbal/psychological abuse into their definition of domestic violence. One of the possible reasons for not considering verbal abuse as a type of domestic violence may be because these behaviours become normalised within the family since they occur so frequently and thus are witnessed almost every day. Moreover, even though they talked about financial abuse by their father, they did not include economic abuse in their perception of domestic violence. These findings help us to understand that regardless of age, gender and education level, as a breadwinner, the domination and hegemony of father over financial issues in the family (Ecirli, 2012) is unquestionably accepted by young people in Turkey. These findings demonstrated the significance of feminist perspectives in understanding the reasons for domestic violence. Domestic violence was regarded as related to systems of gender norms, gender inequalities and a power structure that subordinates women (Taylor and Jasinski, 2011, Eagly et al., 2012). Particularly in the case financial abuse as a type of domestic violence, it is clear from the data that young people framed their gender roles within a male dominance model that reflects patriarchal values that consider men as more powerful and women as dependent.

Overall, the young people appeared to accept that domestic violence is gendered in nature and that it undermines men's masculinity and power status. They mostly tended to frame it strictly as physical violence and all of them described their perspectives by

substantiating the gender asymmetry of domestic violence. This gives insight the feminist literature which states that it is predominantly men who are the perpetrators and women who are the victims of domestic violence (Skinner et al., 2013, Johnson, 2011), and which centralizes the issue of gender to domestic violence by claiming that men use power and control over women to enhance their domination and women's subordination (Dobash and Dobash, 1979, Maynard and Purvis, 2013, Crenshaw et al., 2018).

The present study also demonstrated that experiencing domestic violence associated with child abuse causes ambiguity in young people's perception of domestic violence. In contrast to the findings of Mullender et al., (2002) the majority of young people combined child abuse and child maltreatment into their definition of domestic violence.

According to social learning theory, experiencing domestic violence in childhood is a risk factor for perpetrating domestic violence in future life. Although there is some research which provides contradictory evidence to these theories (Black et al., 2010, Elizabeth, 2005, Masood, 2014), the finding does not clearly highlights the relationship between domestic violence exposure and developing negative attitudes toward domestic violence and victimization. Even though all young people described how they were badly affected by their father's abusive behaviours against their mother and themselves, of them who were less educated and belong to low socio-economic status justified some of these aggressive behaviours (slapping or pulling hair) as a reasonable and appropriate way to discipline women and children. This finding is in accord with a recent qualitative study from Turkey (UNPFA, 2013), which found that tolerance of violence by young men, as well as young women, showed that violence against women and children is an accepted as a part of life, particularly in families where incidents of such violence occur frequently. As seen in this result, there is a gender gap in internalizing violence. Among this small sample, justification and attitudes towards domestic violence is worst among young men than young women. The poor attitudes of the young men in particular may reflect traditional gender roles, which are associated with greater acceptance of domestic violence. According to feminist perspectives on domestic violence, which is used in this study, women are primary victim of domestic violence (DeKeseredy, 2011, Johnson, 2011, Gilfus et al., 2010) and they are pushed to accord and restrict their behaviour to avoid to exposure to male violence, which can

occur unpredictably and without any reason. This contributes the interconnected system of patriarchy and male dominance (Martinez, 2011, Tong, 2013, Thompson, 2001, Hamel, 2009, Hamel, 2007). Patriarchy and domestic violence is interconnected because patriarchal norms contribute its perpetration by justifying and legitimating it, and also male violence helps construct patriarchy. In this study, findings showed that men are understood as dominant and women are submissive; ten young people argued that male violence or abuse towards female partners is legitimate when female display unsubmitive attitudes. Moreover, the young people conceptualised the man as those with unlimited and unquestionable power to decide upon and lead the home setting. Thus, his aggressive behaviour is acceptable and understandable if there is disobedience to his wishes and challenges to his power. This means that women are not only considered less powerful than men, but also that any behaviour which threatens men's authority can promote violence or abuse. According to ten young people's opinions, they accept the male dominance model and legitimate domestic violence as an acceptable way of expressing masculinity and a constitutive part of male gender behaviour.

However, the data also provides complex interactions of different factors in developing violence-supportive attitudes. This finding is in line with previous research (Lohman et al., 2013, Fagan and Wright, 2011, Black et al., 2010, Kerley et al., 2010), which highlights that exposure to domestic violence in childhood and later victimization are grounded in different mediating and moderating factors, such as social norms, socio-demographic factors, and educational background. This study indicates that intergenerational transmission of violence theory, which stems from social learning theory, does not sufficiently explain the issue of domestic violence and that individual and social factors need to be integrated into an explanation of domestic violence. Moreover, this result also highlights that children and young people are active in the process of learning and developing behaviours, which is also claimed by studies of sociology of childhood.

Even though, based on the social learning theory, children acquire and internalize traditional gender role attitudes and link the submissive roles with women (Powers et al., 2017, Lindsey, 2015), the data also provides contradictory results to this theorem. Although some of them have also witnessed verbal abuse and physical violence by

paternal family members towards their mothers, all explanation of domestic violence were father oriented and they considered the father as responsible for initiating conflicts in the home. However, the data reveals two significant gender-oriented results in understanding the nature of domestic violence from the young people's point of view. With regard to the proactive role of fathers in domestic violence, only the majority of young women pointed to male superiority and power relationships between genders in Turkish society as a primary reason for the incidence of violence towards women in the home. Instead of internalizing the passive role of women in Turkish society (Özaydinlik, 2014), which results in violence in the home, these young women saw the issue of male domination as a leading promoting factor for domestic violence. This result clearly highlights the constructivist childhood sociology approach, which claims that children are active in the learning process by gathering, organizing, interpreting and creating new knowledge and understandings (Corsaro, 2017, Tryphon and Vonèche, 2013, Hala, 2013, James and Prout, 2015a). On the other hand, in line with previous research (Ozcakir et al., 2008, Karda and Yuksel-Kaptanoglu, 2009), amongst high school students in Turkey, young men, especially those from low socioeconomic status and those with low levels of education, suggested that different factors, such as substance abuse or economic reasons, underpinned domestic violence, instead of male hegemony and masculinity. The reason for this gender differential may be that young men consider male superiority over women as their natural right; this is derived from the patriarchal cultural norms and values in strongly male-dominated Turkish society, which exist as means to establish control and discipline over women.

### ***Perceived Effects of Domestic Violence***

Although there are numerous studies that have explored the physical, psychological, behavioural, social and emotional effects of children and young people's exposure to domestic violence (Evans et al., 2008, Geffner, 2014, Rossman et al., 2013, Holt, 2017), there is also an emphasis on the need to research the issue of domestic violence from children's and young people's perspectives (Swanston et al., 2014, Mullender, 2002). Here, the second research question focussing on exploring how young people perceive and analyse the effects of domestic violence is addressed.

The interviews revealed that the young people were well aware and descriptive about how experiencing domestic violence affected and is affecting their lives. The findings showed that young people experienced inexorable internalizing effects, such as fear, anxiety, depression, powerlessness, worthlessness, shame, low self-confidence, and lack of trust. They also experienced externalizing effects, such as aggression and concentration problems. Some of them also talked about ambivalent feelings about their parents, having negative attitudes towards marriage and suicidal thoughts. The present study reveals similar themes as effects of domestic violence and is in the line with previous research (Sousa et al., 2011, Moylan et al., 2010, Evans et al., 2008, Levendosky et al., 2013).

Although the emergent themes seem similar to those found in previous studies, there are also some contradictory findings with regards to the developmental stage of young people and gender. The sociology of childhood perspectives hypothesize that construction of knowledge is a continuous process, such that children experience, perceive and interpret the same event individually and create new beliefs and understandings from it (Schaffer, 2006, Holmes, 2013a, Corsaro, 2017). Accordingly, the present study identified young people's age and gender as an effective moderating factor in displaying aggressive behaviours as an effect of exposure to domestic violence. Although aggressive behaviours have been observed in childhood in both genders, the interviews revealed that young men were more likely to display aggression than young women, which is in line with previous research (Izaguirre and Calvete, 2015, Alizzy et al., 2017, Fowler et al., 2009, Cao et al., 2016, Holt, 2017). In the accounts of young men, aggression towards others is associated with two different feelings: relief and regret. When it comes to the presence of violence, they are likely to use violence as a means to alleviate stress, however, afterwards, the idea of being like their father leads them to regret behaving in the same way. Young men seem to express confusion about displaying aggressive behaviours and showing off power but they also embrace it. However, young women regard themselves as inferior as girls and would continue to be as women. Moreover, when it comes to age as a moderating factor, the frequency and intensity of aggressive behaviours among young people tended to increase as they got older, particularly from the accounts of young women the type of aggressiveness tended to change, from verbal to physical violence. These results clearly show that the effects of domestic violence exposure on young people are change



throughout the development stages, and that those effects appear differently in different genders. Hence, this study supports findings from sociology of childhood studies (Mayall, 2013, Mayall, 2002, Dodge, 2014, James et al., 1998), which point out that children are social agents and construct their own social worlds actively rather than merely accepting and reacting to existing conditions.

### Power and the lack of it

Young people's narratives clearly demonstrated how feelings of powerlessness appeared as a strong emotional effect in the face of violence, which is related to gender and age. In contrast to earlier findings (Masood, 2014), the present study revealed that from their early adolescence, young men reported a more intense sense of powerlessness than young women. This finding may be due to role expectations in Turkish culture, where males are responsible for protecting their mother and younger siblings from harm, as well as having to show respect to elders. From the young men's reports, it became clear how not fulfilling the duty of saving their mother from abuse caused feelings powerlessness and led them to feel worthlessness and to have low self-confidence. The results of the study also show a strong correlation between fear of being abused, adopting avoidant coping strategies such as denial, doing nothing or leaving home, and the sense of powerlessness.

### Shame

Feelings of shame appeared to be one of the more intense feelings among young people that are affected by domestic violence and which result in not seeking help, not wanting to share stressors and being silent against violence (Othman et al., 2014, Fugate et al., 2005, Lev-Wiesel et al., 2014, Thiara, 2005). Young people also talked about how feelings of shame negatively influenced their self-confidence and social relations and led them to lose self-respect and isolate themselves from society. The findings of the study contribute to the existing literature by drawing an explicit picture of how the feeling of shame affects young peoples' well-being and their coping strategies. The results also show that in addition to cultural beliefs and lack of information about resources, shame is one of the main factors preventing children and young people from accessing institutional services. The young people said that if they had disclosed what

they experienced in the home to anyone, they would feel dishonoured and would have brought shame to their family, because they thought that domestic violence and child abuse were private, family issues and a thing that no one needed to be informed about. In this regard, this result is in agreement with Mullender et al.'s (2002) study, which found that children from South Asian cultures feel responsible for protecting family honour. However, this subject needs to be explored further with regard to the development of intervention programmes for children and young people.

### Effects of family relations

The majority of young people spoke about how witnessing their father abuse their mother, and themselves, caused feelings of betrayal. Witnessing such behaviour from their father, who in principle was responsible for the safety and protection of the family, they were not able to establish trustful relationships easily, not just with their father, but also with other people. According to all narratives, a lack of trust was seen as a significant effect of domestic violence exposure, which is in line with previous studies (Sousa et al., 2011, Hester, 2007). Alongside feelings of shame, lack of trust is the leading factor that makes young people avoid disclosing their feelings and emotions. In other words, due to lack of trust and low attachment skills, young people and children are more likely to adopt more self-oriented coping strategies, such as being silent, doing nothing or avoiding people or situations.

The present study corroborates the findings of a large amount of previous research (Mullender, 2002, Sousa et al., 2011) about the coexistence of opposing and indecisive feelings towards the perpetrator of violence among children and young people living with domestic violence. The majority of participants described their conflicting feelings towards their father (as perpetrator), with strong feelings of hate and revenge, combined with respect. However, young people expressed ambivalent feelings towards their mother as a victim of domestic violence. As children witnessing violence, they reported that they felt pity, love and strong attachments towards their mother, especially in the presence of violence. Yet, interestingly, when they got older and witnessed frequent and repetitive violent episodes, the feelings of pity sometimes turned into feelings of indifference. Some young women became indifferent towards their mothers, due to not being able to protect them and acquiesced to the violence. This calls for further research

with regards to domestic violence and parental warmth and the effects of attachment in future relationships. Concerning emotional relationships with the perpetrator, even though the majority of them felt hate and were emotionally unattached to their father in the face of violence, 16 of them said that after they left the abusive environment, they neither emotionally bonded nor hated, but they respected their father due to responsibilities that derived from prevailing cultural expectations. However, a quarter of the young people also stressed that they forgave the perpetrator, but that this forgiveness only covered child abuse and not violence against their mother. Interestingly, as mentioned in chapter four, young women were exposed to more physical violence and psychological abuse than young men, and young women who lived in a rural areas and were from a low socio-economic and low educational backgrounds were more likely to use the term forgiveness to describe their feelings about their father. One of the reasons for this gender differential may be that due to social norms, gender roles and attitudes, those young women are still economically dependent on their family, particularly their father, and they have no option but to forgive him in order to live with them.

The findings of the study provide some insight into how different aspects of social categories are intertwined and result in a variety of effects faced by young people. The concept of intersectionality applied in this study argues that the impact of intersecting oppressions shapes lives and experiences of individuals (Walby et al., 2012, MacDowell, 2013, Cho et al., 2013, Nixon and Humphreys, 2010). The findings discussed above reinforced those from others by showing that, in the case of effects of domestic violence exposure, the interrelationship of social categories, especially gender, age, educational background, locations and gender roles, brought about internalizing and externalizing behaviours and familial and social relations in Turkey.

### ***Coping Strategies for Domestic Violence Exposure: Active and Passive***

To date, there is a wide range of research published that explores how children and young people cope with stressful, traumatic incidents (Mullender, 2002, Thompson and Trice-Black, 2012, Howell et al., 2010, Skinner and Zimmer-Gembeck, 2007). In relation to this, this study sought to determine how young people deal with their

experience of witnessing domestic violence while it was occurring and after leaving the context of violence.

The findings revealed two main categories of coping strategies adopted by young people who were present during the abuse of their mothers: Active strategies include direct involvement, saving siblings, leaving home, calling outside help and sharing their feelings to relieve distress while passive strategies include hiding, pretending nothing had happened and watching parents fight. In this study, strategies cited by the young people were utilized in a diverse range of ways and at different ages. The majority of young people stated more passive ways of coping in their childhood. However, they disclosed that the extent to which they used active strategies to cope increased as they matured. This is consistent with previous research (see, for example, Masood, 2014; (Chanmugam, 2015). There were also gender differences in the coping strategies used in the face of violence, including a greater tendency for young women to protect their siblings before themselves, share feelings to relieve stress and calling for outside help to stop the conflict, whereas young men sought to actively intervene in the violent situation and leave home while the violence was occurring. These gender and age-related differences in adaptive coping strategies were also found by other researchers (see, for example, (Skinner and Zimmer-Gembeck, 2007, Anderson and Danis, 2006, van Heugten and Wilson, 2017).

The data clearly demonstrated how the social context of Turkish society shapes the ways that young people adapt to and deal with violence. For example, a few young people said that they seek external help to stop violence in the home only in life threatening circumstances. This result not only links with the common perception of domestic violence being considered as a private issue, but also highlights the correlation between feelings of shame and a sense of responsibility for family honour. This result is also in accordance with previous studies on barriers to help-seeking behaviours in Asian countries, which showed that domestic violence is a family issue and that disclosing its presence might attract unpleasant perceptions of their family (Niaz, 2003, Bent-Goodley, 2005, Othman et al., 2014)

In addition to social structural factors shaping coping strategies, gender also plays a role in the ways in which young people decided to deal with immediate situations of

domestic violence. For example, even though young women often had adequate physical capability to stop their father, the majority of them had not even tried to physically intervene in conflicts. However, direct involvement was the initial strategy for most of the young men in the presence of violence when excessive physical abuse was involved. Interestingly, all the young men, except two, had stepped into abuse with the aim of protecting their mother by not physically harming their father. Such young men's attitudes towards their father during the intervention may explain the correlation between the cultural obligations of protecting the mother and siblings and showing respect to the father, who has an unquestionably high status in the home.

However, the findings of the current study do not support previous research (Mullender, 2002, Stanley et al., 2012, Buckley et al., 2007), which considered sharing to be a commonly adopted coping strategy. The result reflects the barriers to understanding domestic violence in Turkish society because they show that only few young people spoke of talking to others – but not family members – in order to lower their stress in the presence of violence. There also appear to be gender differences in this way of coping; there is a higher tendency for young women to share their feelings than young men especially when they were older. This is echoed in previous research (Humphreys, 2001). The reason for this hesitation to share may derive from the fear of bringing dishonour to the family and of feeling ashamed. This finding highlights how the issue of domestic violence is a strong taboo in the Turkish context and is not considered a health and human right issue but as the cause of shame. However, young men also linked this reluctance to share with feelings of powerlessness. The majority of young men tried to deal with the violence and its immediate effects on their own because they were emotionally weak and ashamed because of not being able to fulfil their responsibility of protecting their mother. This signifies the powerful intersection of culture and gender which prevents young people from seeking help and which needs to be challenged. However, amongst all young people in the study, sharing was not even the main way of coping after incidents of domestic violence. Even though half of the young people talked about their feelings to other people to lower distress and anxiety, they only shared with people who had similar life stories/experiences and not with their mother or siblings. This results support the 'conspiracy of silence', which claims that silence may be established between the mother and child so that they can protect one another (Thiara and Humphreys, 2017). This study also subscribes to the

‘conspiracy of silence’, by highlighting that besides avoiding talking to their mother, they also attempted to develop silence between siblings to protect themselves. The narratives also showed that after they settled in a safe environment, young people tended to express their feelings explicitly in order to bring about personal psychological relief. This result is in line with existing research, which emphasizes the importance of providing safe environments for children exposed to domestic violence, which strongly influences the willingness to talk about traumatic experiences (Swanston et al., 2014, Mullender, 2002).

The findings revealed two coping strategies, which showed gender differences in the ways that the outcomes of domestic violence were minimised at the time of occurrence: leaving home and getting married to escape the abusive home environment. Due to the socio-cultural context of Turkey, leaving home is considered a doable way of coping for young men than young women. The data provided information that supported this view on social reality; the majority of young men from an urban background considered leaving home for short or long time periods as a way of finding relief when they felt depressed, because of the exposure to repetitive violence episodes. In contrast, only two of the female interviewees spoke of leaving home for a short period of time as an option of avoiding domestic violence.

However, a small number of young women from rural backgrounds and who were not highly educated mentioned getting married to escape the family of origin, even if they were younger than 18 years old. They had thoughts about marriage being the only acceptable way that a woman could leave home and not disrupt cultural norms. This is consistent with previous research (see, for example, (Humphreys, 2001); however, the link between early age marriage and domestic violence needs to be explored in future research.

The results also show two opposing coping strategies in domestic violence after its incidence: acceptance and denial. There appear to be gender differences here also, such as there being a greater tendency for young women to deny experiences of violence. Some of the reasons that were cited by young women as a push factor to minimize experienced violence are consistent with previous research (Mullender et al., 2002; Masood, 2014) and include fear, protecting the abuser, the desire to have a new life,

and shame. Considering these compelling reasons, by forgetting or rejecting what they have witnessed in their life, they may try to lower the after effects of exposure by regaining control of their life (Silvern and Kaersvang, 1989), cited by (Swanston et al., 2014).

Although many of the young people believed that experiencing domestic violence resulted in the loss of a normal childhood and burdened them with excessive responsibilities (Cunningham and Baker, 2007), some young people interpreted all related experiences as a way of developing positive attitudes towards life, increasing self-esteem and enhancing their ability to cope with difficulties in life and to establish more protective and supportive relationships with their siblings and their mother. In this regard, in addition to normalizing or rejecting their traumatic experiences in order to control distress, some young people also tended to consider these past experiences of suffering as a strength and as a way of developing a protective role and an inbuilt resilience in the face of set-backs in life.

Another significant finding was that there were numbers of young people from low socioeconomic and less educated backgrounds who had deliberately self-harmed (e.g. cutting arms) to avoid or escape distressing experiences. This result is in congruence with the findings of other studies (Weiss et al., 2015, Jaquier et al., 2013, Sansone et al., 2007), in which the significant relationship between domestic violence and self-harm has been emphasised. According to social learning theory, exposure to domestic violence is a risk factor for behaving aggressively towards others in future life. Hence, this result contributes to the emerging literature about the social learning perspective by revealing that some young people who grow up in domestic violence deal with anger in different ways in order not to be like their father. Thus, it may not be a simplistic notion that if a person observes violence, s/he will behave in the same aggressive way and justify violence. On the other hand, due to contradictory data from the remaining participants, which showed that displaying aggression towards anyone else or themselves was not an option to cope with the on-going effects of exposure, social learning theory alone cannot capture the complexity of domestic violence exposure. So, the premise of the sociology of childhood perspectives is needed to fully understand the complex phenomenon regarding how young people construct their unique way of disclosing aggressiveness.

The present study finds an interesting gender specific result where the coping strategies of women are concerned. Three of the female participants who experienced and understood the moderating role of male domination over women and children talked about mimicking specific male attitudes by adopting more masculine behaviours to prevent themselves from experiencing similar oppression to that experienced by their mother. One explanation for this might be that in Turkey, where male hegemony appears at every level of life and suppresses femininity, girls and women consider adopting male behaviours as an effective protective mechanism from further harm. This finding corroborates the mechanisms underpinning domestic violence in society, which are unequal gender power relations and male domination, as feminist theory suggests (DeKeseredy, 2011, Tong, 2013, Hesse-Biber, 2011). This finding also highlights the constructivist perspective on sociology of childhood, which explains the process of developing behaviours by considering human beings as active agents who develop their behaviours by interpreting and processing gathered information (Schaffer, 2006).

Overall, the findings provide insight into how intersecting identities impact on experiences and result in different coping strategies adopted by young people. As an adopted theoretical framework, intersectionality theory, which explores how the interrelationship of class, gender, age and ethnicity shapes the lives and experiences of individuals (Yuval-Davis, 2006, Crenshaw, 1991, Carbin and Edenheim, 2013, Cho et al., 2013, Dill and Zambrana, 2009), proved useful in interpreting the results of the study across gender, socioeconomic class, educational level and age within the sociocultural context of Turkey. For example, in contrast to young men, young women tend to adopt more passive ways of dealing with the effects of domestic violence, including hiding, pretending nothing has happened and emotional avoidance. In addition, this study explicitly illustrated how the social structure of Turkey (specifically culture) affects and forms coping mechanisms for young people, such as negative attitudes towards seeking outside help and sharing. However, young people frequently reported self-oriented coping strategies that result in social withdrawal. In this regard, these findings bring a very important perspective to possible intervention programmes, where the aim of such programmes should be not just to help people who apply for them, but also to determine potential victims of domestic violence through teachers or police reports.



### ***Ideas about Possible Intervention Ways and Protective Factors for Victims of Domestic Violence***

When young people were asked for ideas about how to eradicate domestic violence and help children and young people as victims of violence, they elaborated the role of teachers and schools by raising awareness about domestic violence and initiating programmes to help children affected by not only domestic violence but also child abuse. Even though most of them were not likely to share their traumatic experiences, they also suggested the need to have school counsellors encourage vulnerable children to disclose their stress and seek psychological support. This result also addresses the importance of schools in early interventions for developmental and mental health problems resulting from domestic violence exposure (Thompson 2012, Harrison and Thiara, 2013).

Although the majority of young women spoke about gender roles as a main reason for domestic violence, only some well-educated young women highlighted the need to acknowledge domestic violence as a social problem, which is strongly interlinked with gender roles in Turkey. They stressed the need to bring about change to the traditional role of men, which entitles the latter to wield excessive control over women and children. This finding suggests developing intervention programmes to strengthen and support the status of women in Turkey to eradicate domestic violence.

Even though young people mostly tend to share their traumatic experiences with someone who has a similar history, almost all did not consider a joint/group psychological session as an effective intervention to lower the after effects of exposure to domestic violence. Instead, they proposed individual support with a professional as a way of dealing with the immediate and after effects of exposure. Thus, this result also reinforces the general perspective of Turkish people on domestic violence as a secret or forbidden issue not to be disclosed. This showed that the feeling of shame is a permanent and long lasting emotional effect of exposure to violence on young people, even if they do not experience it any longer. This finding points towards the importance of interventions, which should take the form of individual supportive programmes rather than group participation.

Young people discussed two different suggestions concerning family: divorce and reunite. Almost one third of those who have witnessed violent episodes frequently since childhood listed divorce as a permanent solution to eradicate violence, because they believed that victimisation never ends once it has happened. However, 13 of those who grew up in rural areas recommended maintaining family unity in a physical and emotional way after removing all stressors and predictors of domestic violence.

Overall, most of the young people drew an optimistic picture about bringing about change and stopping – or at least decreasing – domestic violence in Turkish society.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has discussed the key results by drawing on feminist theory, the concept of intersectionality, social learning theory, and the sociology of childhood perspectives in order to explore young people's lived experiences, perspectives of domestic violence, its effects, their coping strategies and their suggestions for interventions. There was a complementary relationship between the findings and theoretical frameworks; all the theoretical perspectives provided me with a broader and inclusive scope to explore domestic violence through the lens of young people's experiences. Feminist theory enabled me to explore domestic violence as rooted in gender power issues within the sociocultural context of Turkey. Social learning and the sociology of childhood theories provided a lens to participants' lives to understand how they make sense of domestic violence and how they were/are affected by being exposed. In addition, utilising intersectionality theory proved valuable in understanding the differentiated experiences and perspectives of young people and revealing that age, gender and social structures shaped the lives and experiences of young people. The study also reinforced much of the existing literature in the field of domestic violence and generated new knowledge within the Turkish context, which will go some way in addressing the paucity of research on this issue.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

### **CONCLUSION**

#### **Introduction**

Domestic violence is considered a very serious health and social issue which affects the well-being of families and children of all ages, genders, ethnicities, cultural, educational, social and economic backgrounds (García-Moreno et al., 2015, Alesina et al., 2016, WHO, 2013). This phenomenon has been carefully researched over decades by social work professionals and researchers in the Western world. However, the issue of domestic violence is not well studied in Turkey. Although studies have been conducted within the area of domestic violence in Turkey (Salcioglu et al., 2017, Turk et al., 2017, Akyazi et al., 2018) as the literature reviewed outlined there is no qualitative research on children and young people living with domestic violence, particularly that which addresses the issue from their own perspectives. This thesis has focused on domestic violence in Turkey, in particular the experiences and perspectives of young Turkish people who have witnessed domestic violence. This study sought to explore young people's understandings and perceptions of domestic violence through their experiences, how they perceive its effects, the coping strategies they adopt and their recommendations for possible interventions and prevention factors. This chapter consists of six sections that review the key findings of the study and empirical and theoretical contributions to the literature on children and young people living with domestic violence. Moreover, this chapter also discusses the limitations of the study and its implications for policy and practice and makes recommendations for future work.

## **Key Findings of the Study**

This study lays a foundation for future qualitative empirical research on domestic violence, based on young people's accounts in Turkey and extends knowledge within domestic violence research about an important Muslim majority country located at Europe's South-Eastern borders.

This study reveals that young people witness various forms of domestic violence (i.e. verbal/psychological and economic abuse, physical violence) not only from their father but also from paternal relatives towards their mother. It demonstrates that socioeconomic class, the educational background of victim(s) and the geographical location (rural or urban) of a household can have significant effects on reporting exposure to domestic violence. Another significant finding is that there is a strong relationship between domestic violence exposure and child abuse.

In this study, although the majority of young people reported verbal abuse as part of their daily routine, their understanding of domestic violence was predicated on various types of physical violence. All of them mentioned slapping, kicking or punching as a form of domestic violence, a third of young people perceived violence (i.e. pulling hair or a slap) towards mothers and children as an acceptable way of maintaining discipline in the household. Gender bias was found in reporting risk factors for domestic violence exposure in the study sample. Compared to young men, the majority of young women (10 out of 14) stated that male superiority and domination over women and children is the primary risk factor for violence in the home. Young people also identified the role of social context, socioeconomic difficulties, substance abuse and the involvement of extended family as supporting factors for domestic violence exposure.

This study has further shown that witnessing domestic violence affected young people's well-being and caused long and short-term internalizing and externalizing problems with their behaviours, emotions, and psychology. Besides symptoms of depression, feelings of powerlessness, lack of trust and shame have emerged as a significant and intense effect of domestic violence exposure which, according to the interviewees, were considered as the most fundamental factors in experiencing depression, loneliness and a strong tendency to deal with exposure to domestic violence on their own. Gender and age bias strongly influenced perceived effects of domestic violence especially in early

adolescence. As children grew older, intense feelings of powerlessness and aggression appeared particularly among young men, whereas young women experienced stronger effects of internalization on their well-being. In addition, the most obvious finding to emerge from this study is that lack of trust in other people, regardless of socio-demographics of participants, was a common effect of exposure to domestic violence.

This study has identified that as youngsters, young Turkish people primarily tend to adopt self-coping strategies (i.e. hiding, pretending nothing has happened or leaving a place of abuse) in the face of domestic violence. However, gender contributed to a significant difference in adopting more active coping mechanisms as children reached adolescence. Young men mostly utilized strategies of intervention to try and stop violence or of leaving home whereas young women have a greater tendency to use passive coping strategies including saving siblings. The influences of social structure and gender roles in society were very obvious on ways of coping with exposure to domestic violence. Young women also talked about getting married at an early age and adopting more masculine behaviours to protect themselves from domestic violence. They also identified education, emotional support for children to be able to disclose experiences of abuse, reformulating gender roles and having an effective social policy as prevention and protective factors in eradicating domestic violence. They also stressed individual and parent- focused psychological support to help affected people rebuild their life.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The scope of this study was limited in terms of the number of participants finally recruited from the university in Ankara whereas originally it was envisaged that those participants would form a more substantial part of the overall sample. Although I advertised my research to over 200 students at the university, only eight people were recruited. I conducted fieldwork at the university from March to May 2016 when the exam term had started. This may have caused the students to be indifferent to the research and I may have recruited more participants if I had conducted the fieldwork before the start of their exam period. However, because the Turkish government had given me time-limited permission to run the study in the shelters, the period between March and May was the only available time to interview young people from the

university. Due to this limited number of participants from the university, this study draws only a smaller number of young people who are highly-educated and from high socio-economic status, to draw out their perspectives on domestic violence.

The sample was intended to be nationally reflective of two major ethnicities in Turkey: Turkish and Kurdish, but it only included a small number of young people (n=9) of Kurdish ethnicity. As a result, if ethnicity differences exist, the present study may not clearly identify ethnic differences in understandings of domestic violence, its perceived effects, and coping strategies between Turkish and Kurdish young people. To get a clear picture of young Kurdish people's situation, it would have served me better to visit cities in Eastern Turkey where the density of the Kurdish population is high. However, due to the political turmoil and on-going military operation in those cities, in 2016, it was unsafe to travel to those sites to conduct my research.

### **Contributions of the Study**

Notwithstanding these limitations, this study makes a significant contribution to the developing field of research on young people and domestic violence exposure. As stated already, domestic violence is not well explored and understood from the point of view of young people who witness violence in the home in Turkey. First of all, this study reduces the paucity of research on domestic violence in the Turkish national context. This is the first qualitative study which deals with the lived experiences of young people; about how they understand the phenomenon, perceive the impacts of exposure on their well-being, cope with the situation and impacts, and identify possible protective factors. Due to the high prevalence of domestic violence in Turkey, developing an inclusive policy to eradicate the problem and establish an effective support system for those affected, a deep understanding of young people's unique experiences and their perspectives, as active agents in the field of domestic violence, is required. The Turkish government enacted the protecting Family and Prevention Violence against Women in 2012 which states that the government is responsible for providing psychological, social and judicial support to victims of domestic violence (women and children). But to improve the effectiveness of this support programmes young people and children's experiences must be understood. This study identified their unique experiences and perspectives.

In addition to contributing knowledge about domestic violence in Turkey, this study also contributes to international scholarship in the area of domestic violence by adding to the literature on coping strategies with domestic violence exposure and risk factors of it from the unique socio-cultural perspectives of Turkish young people. Moreover, this research reinforces existing knowledge on the issue of domestic violence exposure such as powerlessness, shame and adopting masculine behaviours constituted a coping strategy for young women and new insight about Turkey.

In as far as theoretical approaches to the study of domestic violence are concerned, a contribution of this research is to utilize the combination of social learning theory and sociology of childhood perspectives to extend our understanding of the relationship between exposure to domestic violence and its effects on young people's behaviours. Interpreting the data using this combined framework proves useful in expanding our understanding about how the children and young people affected by domestic violence develop their attitudes towards violence. Thus, such theoretical synthesis helps provide a more comprehensive picture of domestic violence exposure than might a single theoretical framework. The present findings also show that socio-economic status, age, gender, educational background, type of family system, and location of young people intersect with domestic violence exposure and result in variety of effects, coping strategies and perspectives. Moreover, combining the concept of intersectionality, social learning theory and the sociology of childhood perspective in the frame of a feminist framework allowed the researched phenomenon to be explored by revealing the relationship between gender inequality and gender power issues in Turkish society and domestic violence from young people's perspectives.

This research also contributes to methodological and epistemological issues. I, as a male researcher, explored the issue of domestic violence in which men are considered as primary perpetrators of violence in the home. In a patriarchal country, a man examining domestic violence issue from feminist perspective is valuable to signify the reality and significance of gender related issues in this field. Therefore, the present research demonstrates that male researchers can contribute to the growing body of feminist research by adopting appropriate theoretical and methodological approaches.

## **Implications for the Field of Knowledge**

First of all, since exposure to domestic violence is an increased risk factor for child abuse, the finding highlights the need for a specific and clear definition of child abuse in the context of domestic violence among young people in Turkey as an initial step to developing effective intervention programmes. This is important because the results show that young people integrated incidents of child abuse into domestic violence. A clear definition is required to establish effective support services to child and young survivors of domestic violence.

In this study, the data gathered showed that due to feelings of shame and lack of trust in anyone, children hesitate to seek help from outside. To eradicate these obstacles to disclosing, the role of schools need to be reinforced to raise awareness about domestic violence by utilizing initial programmes to teach children what domestic violence is and how to deal with this issue at the moment of violence or after it has occurred. Most importantly, a safe and confidential environment need to be arranged to encourage children to share their experiences and provide emotional support to be empowered and make them able to cope with the possible effects of domestic violence. So, what this study shows us is that, policy makers, school counsellors or professionals should not expect children to disclose voluntarily, instead, they should initially develop activities to identify affected children and young people and help them.

Furthermore, the young people from the shelters indicated that before they moved to the shelters, they had not been informed about shelters and social services available to them; some said that they had heard about such services, including shelters. Therefore, incidences of domestic violence must be revealed through the social services especially in regions where domestic violence is experienced intensively, possible victims must be informed about social services and they should be referred them to counselling services if necessary.

The findings showed that generally all the young people interviewed were hesitant and afraid of calling outside help in the presence of violence although the police was the initial official port of call for a number of young people asking for help. However, it was not strategy that they used repeatedly because they said that the police turned a



blind eye to what happened in their home and did not want to be involved in family issues unless a life was being threatened. Such responses destroyed young people's trust in the police where domestic violence is concerned. However, in 2011, the Supreme Board of Judges and Prosecutors issued a circular letter to police departments, instructing them to handle all domestic violence cases and apply injunction decisions professionally. But, the general reaction of not poking one's nose in family matters continues to prevent the police from handling the issue of domestic violence with care. In this respect, issues of gender-based violence must become part of police training in order to provide an effective and sustainable system of protection for victims of domestic violence. It is also important to develop cooperation and coordination between police centres and social service organizations in order to ensure continuity of care to victims of domestic violence. Not just continuity but also a comprehensiveness in the care afforded to victims to ensure that no-one falls through the net.

As mentioned by a third of young people interviewed, domestic violence is mainly derived from male superiority and gender inequality in the Turkish social context. To develop strategies to eradicate domestic violence, young people recommend challenging gender roles. In terms of societal level suggestions, the role of women should be empowered in order to challenge patriarchal attitudes and practices which eventually could lead to a societal change in gender attitudes and relations. In addition to the role of schools, receiving support from opinion leaders and especially religious leaders in conservative societies carries importance and influences society to promote the status and public role of women equally with that of men.

### **Recommendations for Future Research Work**

This study reveals that young people in Turkey, in common with their counterparts all over the world, are active agents in situations of domestic violence. Although this study is based on small-scale qualitative data, it is evident that exposure to domestic violence affects young people's well-being dramatically even after leaving the abusive environment, and that a diverse understanding of domestic violence and coping strategies are developed by young people. However, it is very important to understand the perspectives of child victims on domestic violence and how they perceive its effects and cope with it. To formulate effective policy to eradicate domestic violence and

design comprehensive support services for affected children, further studies need to give voice to children, to uncover their hidden stories.

This study does not provide sufficient information about parent-child relationships and feelings of dishonour in the context of domestic violence. Further studies should address these issues to develop a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. In addition, as outlined in the literature review chapter, ethnicity and culture are mediating factors in effects and perspectives of domestic violence. In this regard, a greater focus on other ethnicities and cultures in Turkey could produce interesting findings in the context of domestic violence, which would help us to establish a greater degree of accuracy on this matter.

### **Concluding Remarks**

This study has attempted to give a voice to young people to express their feelings regarding domestic violence exposure and gave them the opportunity to present a detailed picture of the phenomenon including their understanding of the issue, its effects, their coping strategies, and their ideas on prevention and intervention strategies. It is hoped that this study, as an initial step in the field of domestic violence affecting young people and from their perspectives, will motivate social researchers and policy makers to focus more on children and young people's experiences, feelings, emotional and physical needs. It is further hoped that will contribute to the development of effective and inclusive social policies to help build resilience among and empower children, young people and the primary victims of domestic violence: their mothers.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A

# AİLE İÇİ ŞİDDET:Gördüm, Duydum, Hissettim

*Araştırma Ne Hakkında:* Gençlerin aile içi şiddet hakkındaki düşüncelerini, deneyimlerini, ondan nasıl etkilendiklerini, başa çıkma yöntemlerini ve mağdurlara nasıl destek verilmesi gerektiği hakkında fikirlerini öğrenmek.

*Kim Katılabilir:* 18-24 yaş arası, geçmişinde aile içi şiddete tanık olmuş herkes katılabilir.

*Araştırma Nasıl Olacak:* Araştırma, gönüllü olarak katılan kişilerle mülakat şeklinde olacaktır.

*NOT:* Katılımcıların kişisel bilgileri hiçbir şekilde yayınlanmayacaktır.

**Araştırma hakkında daha fazla bilgi ve katılım için:**

**Osman Tunc**

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## Appendix B

### Warm up questions:

1. Please tell me about yourself. *Possible prompt:* How is going on your school/work?
2. Please tell me about your family structure. *Possible prompt:* How is your relation ship with family members?
3. What are the differences between being female and male in your family?  
*Possible prompts:* What is the possible role differences between female and male in your family? Who make the rules? Who is the most dominant in your family?

### Experiences:

1. Could you please describe the atmosphere in your house when you growing up? What about now?
2. What was it like growing up in your family? Could you tell me your some negative/positive memories?
3. As you know, I am interested in your experiences of growing up in a family where there was conflict/arguing etc. between your parents and/or other family members. Could you please tell me about what used to happen between parents or/and family members? Have you ever experienced arguments, hitting, shouting, one person trying to control other, no talking, not giving money, punishing etc.
4. Who used to do these behaviours and to whom?
5. Did anyone else ever get involved?
6. How often did this happen?
7. What was it like growing up as a boy/girl in your family?
8. Could you please tell me one strong memory of instance of violence that sticks in your mind? What did happen? How old are you when this happened and what did you do?

### Perspectives:

1. Why do you think this happened in your family? Why did your dad or/and others do this? *Possible prompt:* What do you think about gender inequality and attitudes towards female, may these be reasons to violent behaviours?
2. Were you aware of this happening in other families?
3. How did your parents deal with issues of anger, sadness, disappointment and any other pressures?

4. This field of study is termed "domestic violence". Have you heard of this? If yes, what do you understand by it?

I now want to move on to ask you about the coping strategies you used when you were growing up with this issues.

**Responses/ Coping Strategies:**

1. What were you feeling/ did you feel when you saw instance of violence happening between your parents? What did you used to think? What were you thinking and feeling?
2. What did you used to do when this happening? Did you got to your room, leave the house, get involved etc.?
3. Did you ask for outside help? *If yes*, from who and what happened? *If no*, why did not you think to ask for help?
4. Any differences in how you felt when you saw the violence/abuse and when out of the house or not there?
5. After an incident, how did you relate to your dad and mum? What about other family members?
6. Did you feel close to your mum? Did you feel divided? Or caught in the middle?

**Effects:**

*Past effects:*

1. Thinking back, how do you think you were affected by growing up in a situation of violence and abuse? In terms of self-confidence, anger, withdrawn, stress, anxiety, indifference, school performance, concentration, relationship with others outside and family members?
2. How you thought about yourself?
3. What was different for a girl/boy? Do you think these effects were different for you as a boy /girl?
4. What do you think about the effects of violence on your relationship with mum and dad?
5. What do you think about the effects of violence on your relationship with siblings?



*Present/ on-going:*

1. Are you still living now within your family? *If yes*, have you had any support to deal with your experiences? What support have you had?
2. Do you still contact with your family?
3. Are the issues of violence and abuse still continuing? *If not*, what happened to change situation?
4. *In the case of interviewing with a person from shelter*, why is s/he in the shelter? What happened?
5. What are, if any, continuing effects either when you remember/recall or you still live in that situation? What about the effects on confidence, stress etc.?

*Ideas for interventions:*

1. Based on your experiences, what help and support should be available for children growing up in families where there is violence and abuse in Turkey?
2. What kind of support should be for example; counselling, one to one, group support etc.?
3. Who should provide this support? And where?
4. Have you requested or received any support to deal with violence in home? *If yes*, how did you access it? What was it and do you feel that it was helpful? *If no*, why did not you ask any help? Did not you know about it? Or did you hesitate or fear to ask for outside help? How did you make you feel relax and safe without receiving any help form others?
5. What do you think about the barriers might be to gain support?
6. What do you think about the role of cultural issues in providing support? Do you think should supportive services be established based on cultural sensitivity? *If yes*, how should it be?
7. What help should be available for parents or adults?

*Closing Question:*

1. Is there anything else you want to say that we have not talked about yet?

## Appendix C-1 (English Version)

### INFORMATION SHEET

#### **Young People in Turkey Living with Domestic Violence: Perspectives, Effects and Coping Strategies**

My name is Osman Tunc and I am doing my PhD at the Centre for Lifelong Learning at the University of Warwick, Coventry, England. I also have a Masters degree in Counselling Psychology from the University of Arkansas in the United States.

I would like to invite you to become a participant in this research which is part of my PhD studies. What follows is more information about this research project and what it would involve if you agree to voluntarily participate.

#### **What is the research about?**

My research is about gaining an in-depth understanding of young people's experiences of growing up in a home where there is regular conflict between their parents or where one parent regularly uses physical or non-physical means to control or intimidate the other parent. I am interested in what young people feel about such situations, how these experiences may have affected them in their childhood and later, and how they reacted and coped when they were living in such situations.

Since there is very little research done on this in Turkey, I hope that my research will not only add to knowledge in this area but also help policy makers and professionals to develop services which offer help and support to young people affected by such experiences.

#### **What does taking part involve?**

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary and you are under no pressure to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be asked to sign a consent form before the interview takes place. The interview will take about 60 minutes and you will be asked some questions. These will include some personal questions about experiences of conflict between your parents during your childhood. You do not have to answer all the questions and you can decide to end the interview, or withdraw from the study, at any point without giving a reason if it causes you any discomfort or distress. The interview will take place in a safe and accessible place. With your

permission, the interview will be audio-recorded and later transcribed and translated into English. It will be destroyed once the transcription has been finalised. You can ask any questions about the research, at any time during your involvement.

Even though, this study requires voluntary participation, there might be some possible risks in taking part.

#### **What if I need support?**

Talking about difficult experiences can be upsetting but also therapeutic. It is possible that you may feel upset or distressed when remembering negative experiences during the interview. The interview will be completely led by you and you will not be under pressure to talk or answer questions at any point. If you feel that you need any support following the interview, a trained counsellor/ social worker with whom you can speak will be available for you. I will ask you about this at the end of the interview.

#### **Confidentiality and Anonymity**

Everything you say in the interview will be kept strictly confidential. Your interview will be anonymised, and your name and other identifiers will be removed from the transcripts. All signed consent forms will be stored in a secure location. The anonymised transcripts will be discussed with my two supervisors in England, and my colleague from the Psychology department at Bulent Ecevit University in Turkey to make sure the data collected is appropriately represented and analysed.

If you would like more information about the research project and how it is being conducted, or have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact me at any point.

#### **What will be done with the research?**

The interviews will be analysed and together with other aspects of my study, the findings will be used for my PhD thesis. After this, the findings will be published in research journals and in brief reports for policy makers and professionals so they can use them for developing help and support services for young people. You will not be identifiable from any report or publication.

If you would like a copy of the study findings, you can ask your college counsellor or social worker who will inform the researcher. If you have any questions you can contact me at any point.

**Who do I contact?**

If you are interested in taking part in this research or have any questions, please contact me on the details below. If you have any complaints relating to this research, please contact to Director of Delivery Assurance at University of Warwick on the details below.

Director of Delivery Assurance  
Registrar's Office  
University House, University of Warwick  
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## Appendix C-2 (Turkish Version)

### BILGI FORMU

#### **Aile içi siddete maruz kalmış gençlerin aile içi siddet perspektifleri, aile içi siddetin uzun ve kısa vadede bireyler üzerine etkileri ve basa çıkma yöntemleri**

Benim ismim Osman Tunc. İngiltere’de, University of Warwick’ de Sosyal Hizmetler ve Sosyal Politikalar alanında doktora yapmaktayım. Ayrıca, Psikolojik Danışmanlık alanında Amerika Birleşik Devletleri’nde University of Arkansas’dan master diplomam bulunmaktadır. Doktora çalışmamın bir parçası olan bu araştırmaya, size gönüllülük esasına bağlı olarak katılımcı olmanız için davette bulunuyorum. Aşağıda bu araştırma hakkında kısa bir bilgi ve eğer araştırmanın katılımcısı olmayı kabul ederseniz araştırmanın prosedürleri hakkında bilgi bulunmaktadır.

#### **Bu araştırma ne hakkındadır?**

Bu araştırma, aile içi siddetin yavaş bir şekilde yaşandığı ev ortamında büyüyen, gerek abevelerinin avgalarına ve tartışmalarına şahitlik etmiş gerekse kendisi aile içi siddete maruz kalmış genç insanların bu konu hakkında deneyimlerini ve perspektiflerini derinlemesine anlamak amacıyla düzenlenmektedir. Bu araştırmanın ilgi alanı, genç insanların çocukluk dönemlerinde deneyimledikleri aile içi siddetin, onların davranışlarına, psikolojilerine ve sosyal çevre ile olan ilişkilerine olan etkilerini keşfetmek ve onların bu durumla başa çıkabilme stratejilerini öğrenmektir.

Türkiye’de bu alanda çok az nitel çalışmanın bulunmasından dolayı, yapılan bu çalışmanın bu alana sadece bilgi yönünde katkıları değil, aile içi siddet mağduru olan çocuklara yardım sunan sosyal hizmet mensuplarına ve konunun uzmanlarına yeni bir bakış açisi getireceğini umut ediyorum.

#### **Araştırmada katılımcı olmak hangi sorumlulukları gerektiriyor?**

Bu araştırmada katılımcı olmak tamamen gönüllülük esasına dayalı ve katılımcı olmanız için en ufak bir baskı altında değilsiniz. Eğer bu araştırmada katılımcı olmayı kabul ederseniz, mülakata başlamadan önce sizin mülakat izin formunu okumanız ve imzalamanız istenecektir, Mülakat tahminen 60 dakika sürecek ve size bu zaman süresince bazı sorular yöneltilenektir. Bu sorular sizin geçmişte yaşadığınız aile içi siddet ile alakalı olacaktır. Mülakatta sorulacak bütün sorulara cevap vermek zorun değilsiniz. Eğer size rahatsız eden bir durumla karşılaşsanız veya kendinizi stress altında hissederseniz herhangi bir sebep belirtmeden mülakati sonlandırabilir veya ara verebilirsiniz. Mülakat sizin kendinizi rahat ve güvenli hissettiğiniz bir ortamda gerçekleştirilecektir. Sizin vereceğiniz izinle yapılacak mülakatin ses kaydı alınacak, daha sonra yazıya dökülecek ve daha sonra İngilizceye çevrilecektir. Ses kaydı yazı diline çevrildikten sonra tamamen silenecektir. İstedığınız zaman yapılan bu çalışma hakkında aklınızda bulunan istediğiniz soruyu sorabilirsiniz.

Her ne kadar bu çalışma gönüllü katılım gerektirirse de, bazı risklerin ortaya çıkma ihtimali bulunur.



### **Herhangi bir destege veya yardıma ihtiyacım olursa ne olacak?**

Bu tür gecmiste yasanılan zorlu deneyimlerle alakalı yapılan mülakatlar üzüntü vericide olsa aynı zamanda tedavi edici, terapötik yönüde vardır. Eski deneyimlerinizi hatırlamak sizin için uzucu veya stres verici olabilir. Eger mülakat süresince veya mülakat sonrasında herhangi bir psikolojik destege ihtiyac duyduğunuzu hissederseniz gerek psikolojik danışman olarak ben, gerekse kurumda bulunan sosyal hizmet uzmanı size yardımcı olacaktır, Mülakat bittiginde size herhangi bi psikolojik destek isteyip istemediginiz ayrıca sorulacaktır.

### **Kişisel bilgilerimizin gizliliği nasıl sağlanacak?**

Mülakat sırasında verdiğiniz her bilgi sadece araştırmacı olarak benim ulaşabileceğim bir yerde, son derece güvenilir bir şekilde saklanacaktır. Kişisel bilgileriniz veya size kimliğinizi ortaya çıkaracak herhangi bir bilgi mülakat formlarından ve mülakatin yazı şeklindeki halinden kaldırılacak veya kodlanacaktır, Kişisel herhangi bir bilginizi bulunmadığı mülakat formlarınız, araştırmamızın amacıyla tam olarak uygunluğu ve analizinin doğru yapılıp yapılmadığı hususunda İngiltere’de ki üniversitedeki 2 danışmanım ve Bulent Ecevit Üniversitesi’nde Psikoloji bölümünden bir akademisyenle görüş alisverisi için paylaşılabilecektir.

Bu araştırma projesinin nasıl yapıldığı hakkında herhangi bir soru veya şüpheleriniz varsa, lütfen bu formun en sonunda vereceğim iletişim adreslerinden benimle iletişime geçin.

### **Bu araştırmamızın sonuçlarıyla ne yapmayı düşünüyorsunuz?**

Yapılacak olan mülakatlar dikkatli bir şekilde analiz yapılar ve yapılacak olduğum diğer çalışmalarım ile birleştirilerek doktora tezime için kullanılacaktır. Yapılacak bu çalışmanın sonuçları daha sonra akademik dergilerde yayınlanacak ve sosyal hizmet uzman ve kurumlarına gençler ve çocuklar için daha verimli yardım ve destek hizmeti geliştirilmesine katkısı olması için birer rapor olarak sunulacaktır. Yapılacak olan akademik çalışmalarda ve sunulacak raporlarda mülakata katılanların hiçbir kişisel bilgisi yer almayacaktır,

Eğer yapılan bu araştırmamızın sonucunun bir kopyasını istiyorsanız lütfen benimle veya benimle irtibatı bulunan sosyal hizmet uzmanının haber veriniz.

### **Kim ile iletişime geçebilirim?**

Bu araştırmada katılımcı olmak istiyorsanız veya araştırma hakkında herhangi bir sorunuz varsa aşağıda verilen iletişim adreslerinden benim ile irtibata geçebilirsiniz. Eger bu çalışma hakkında herhangi bir şikayetiniz varsa lütfen aşağıda belirtilen doktora yaptığım İngiltere’de bulunan University of Warwick’in Director of Delivery Assurance bölümü ile iletişime geçin.

**Director of Delivery Assurance**  
Registrar's Office  
University House, University of Warwick  
CV4 8UW  
Coventry, England  
Telephone: +44 (0)24 7657 4774  
Email: [complaints@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:complaints@warwick.ac.uk)

**Osman Tunc**  
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## Appendix D-1 (English Version)

### CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEWS

**Project Title: Young People in Turkey Living with Domestic Violence:  
Perspectives, Effects and Coping Strategies**

I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet of the above research study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw from the research at any time, without giving reason.

I understand that talking about childhood experiences may raise some difficult feelings but that if it occurs, I will be able to access support from the counsellor or social worker.

**Please tick box if you agree with the following statements**

I agree to take part in this in-depth interview.

☐

I agree to the interview being audio-recorded.

☐

I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications.

☐

I agree that my data will be stored, after it has been anonymised, and may be used for future research.

☐

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Researcher

#### Contact details

Osman Tunc

PhD Researcher, Centre of Lifelong Learning

University of Warwick, UK.

Telephone: +44 7415 483909

[O.Tunc@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:O.Tunc@warwick.ac.uk)



## Appendix D-2 (Turkish Version)

### MULAKAT IZIN FORMU

**Proje Konusu: Aile içi siddete maruz kalmış gençlerin aile içi siddet perspektifleri, aile içi siddetin uzun ve kısa vadede bireyler üzerine etkileri ve basa çıkma yöntemleri**

Yapılan çalışma hakkında bana verilen bilgi formunu okudugumu ve çalışma hakkında aklımdaki bütün soruların araştırmacı tarafından cevaplandırıldığını kabul ederim. Benim bu çalışmaya katılımım tamamen gönüllülük esasına dayalı olduğunu ve istediğim zaman hiç bir sebep belirtmeksizin araştırmadan çekilme hakkımın olduğunu biliyorum.

Cocuklukta yaşamış olduğum deneyimler hakkında konuşmamın bazı negatif duyguları uyandırabileceğini biliyor ve eğer böyle bir durumla karşılaşırsam bu durumdan kurtulmak için kolaylıkla araştırmacıyla veya sosyal hizmetler çalışanıyla iletişime geçebileceğimi biliyorum.

Assagida belirtilen şartkari kabul ediyorsanız kutucuklari isaretleyiniz

☐

Mulakata katılmayı kabul ediyorum

☐

Mulakat sırasında ses kaydı yapılmasını kabul ediyorum

☐

Kisisel bilgilerimin hiç bir şekilde yapılacak yayında belirtilmemesini kabul ediyorum

☐

Mulkaat sırasında elde edilen bilgilerin kisisel bilgilerimin gizliliğini sağlamak kosuluyla saklanmasını ve gelecek çalışmalarda kullanılmasını kabul ediyorum

☐

\_\_\_\_\_  
Gun

\_\_\_\_\_  
Katilimcinin Imzasi

\_\_\_\_\_  
Gun

\_\_\_\_\_  
Arastirmacinin Imzasi

#### İletişim Bilgileri

Osman Tunc  
Doktora Araştırmacısı  
Centre of Lifelong Learning  
University of Warwick  
Telefon: +90 545  
Email: o.tunc@warwick.ac.uk

## Appendix E-1 (English Version)

### DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SHEET

**Age:**

**Gender:**

**City:**

**DIASBLED: Y/N**

#### **Your residential Status:**

Living in Nuclear family with my parents and siblings:

Living with my husband and children:

Living in Extended family:

Living alone:

Living with friend(s):

Living with own partner:

#### **Family Status: FOR RESPONDENT**

Single:

Married:

Cohabiting:

Divorced:

#### **Your educational level:**

No School :

Went to Primary School but not completed:

Completed primary school:

Went to Middle School but not completed:

Completed middle school:

Went to High School but not completed:

Completed High School:

Currently at university:

Completed university:

Studying for postgraduate education:

Completed postgraduate education:

Other:

#### **Your Employment status:**

Have full time job:

Have part time job:

Full time student:

Part time student and have part time job:  
Unemployed:  
Other:

**Your parents' educational level: information about your parents**

**Father's education: simplify**

No School :  
Primary school:  
Middle school:  
High school:  
University:  
Postgraduate:

**Mother's education**

No School :  
Primary school:  
Middle school:  
High school:  
University:  
Postgraduate:

**Your Familial Employment Status:**

**Your Father's Occupation:**

**Your Mother's Occupation:**

## Appendix E-2 (Turkish Version)

### Demografik Bilgi Formu

**Yas:**

**Arastirmanın Yapildiği Şehir:**

**Herhangi bir bedensel engeliniz var mı? *Evet / Hayir***

**Eğitim durumunuz:**

Hic okula gitmedim:  
İlkokula gittim fakat tamamlamadım:  
İlkokul mezunuyum:  
Ortaokula gittim fakat tamamlamadım:  
Ortaokul mezunuyum:  
Liseye gittim fakat tamamlamadım:  
Lise mezunuyum:  
Üniversite öğrenciyim:  
Üniversite mezunuyum:  
Lisans üstü öğrenciyim:  
Lisans üstü mezunuyum:  
Diğer:

**İş durumunuz:**

Tam zamanlı işe sahibim:  
Yarı zamanlı (part-time) işe sahibim:  
Tam zamanlı öğrenciyim:  
Yarı zamanlı öğrenciyim ve yarı zamanlı işe sahibim:  
Herhangi bir işte çalışmıyorum:  
Diğer:

**Ailenizin Eğitim Durumu:**

**Babanızın Eğitim Durumu:**

Hic okula gitmedi:  
İlkokul mezunu:  
Ortaokul mezunu:  
Lise mezunu:  
Üniversite mezunu:  
Lisans üstü mezunu:

**Annenizin Eğitim Durumu:**

Hic okula gitmedi:  
İlkokul mezunu:  
Ortaokul mezunu:  
Lise mezunu:  
Univeriste mezunu:  
Lisans ustu mezunu:

**Ailenizin is durumu:**

**Babanizin isi:**

**Annenizin isi:**

## Appendix F



**WARWICK**  
THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee  
Kirby Corner Road  
Coventry  
CV4 8UW

04 November 2015

Mr Osman Tunc  
Centre for Lifelong Learning  
University of Warwick  
Coventry  
CV4 8UW

Dear Mr Tunc,

Ethical Application Reference: 120/14-15

**Title: Young people's perspectives on Living with Domestic Violence. It's Effects and Coping Strategies: A case Study of Turkey**

Thank you for submitting your project amendments to the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Sub-Committee for consideration. We are pleased to advise you that, under the authority delegated to us by the University of Warwick Research Ethics Committee, full approval for your project is hereby granted for a period of 36 months.

Any material changes to any aspect of the project will require further consideration by the Committee and the PI is required to notify the Committee as early as possible should they wish to make any such changes.

May I take this opportunity to wish you the very best of luck with this study.

Yours sincerely

Dr Friederike Schlaghecken  
Chair, Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Sub-Committee

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## Appendix G

| Category of Themes   | Key themes  | Sub-themes   |
|----------------------|---|--|
| Violence in the Home | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Violence Against Mother</li> <li>• Involvement of Extended Family</li> <li>• Child Abuse</li> <li>• Perception of Domestic Violence</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Frequency of violence</i></li> <li>• <i>Type of violence</i></li> <li>• <i>Direct abuse</i></li> <li>• <i>Provoking</i></li> <li>• <i>Type of perpetrator</i></li> <li>• <i>Gender differences in child abuse</i></li> <li>• <i>Description of domestic violence</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Physical violence</li> <li>- Psychological Violence</li> <li>- Economical Violence</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <i>Reasons for domestic violence</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gender roles</li> <li>- Social Structure</li> <li>- Family involvement</li> <li>- Substance Abuse</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <p><b>Understanding of Violence</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Young People's Perception of Effects of Exposure to Domestic Violence while It is Occurring</b></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Internalizing Effects</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fear</li> <li>- Anxiety</li> <li>- Depression <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hopelessness</li> <li>Worthlessness</li> <li>Feeling of Loneliness</li> <li>Being withdrawal</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Powerlessness</li> <li>- Feeling shame</li> <li>- Low self-confidence</li> <li>- Lack of trust</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <i>Externalizing Effects</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Aggression</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <i>Relationship with family members</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hate</li> <li>- Pity</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
|---|--|--|



|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <p><b>Understanding of Violence</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>On-going Effects of Exposure</b></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Internalizing effects</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fear</li> <li>- Anxiety</li> <li>- Depression</li> <li>    Hopelessness</li> <li>    Social Withdrawal</li> <li>    Being Introvert</li> <li>- Low self-confidence</li> <li>- Concentration problems</li> <li>- Lack of trust</li> <li>- Shame</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <i>Externalizing effects</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Aggression</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <i>Relationship with family members</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hate</li> <li>- Forgiveness</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <i>Take a dim view of marriage/relationships</i></li> </ul> |
|---|---|--|

|                   |  |  |
|-------------------|--|--|
| Coping Strategies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coping Strategies Used by Young Adults in the Presence of Domestic Violence</li> <li>• Coping Strategies Used by Young People After Incidence of Domestic Violence</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Active</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Involvement</li> <li>- Save siblings</li> <li>- Leaving home</li> <li>- Calling for outside help</li> <li>- Sharing</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <i>Passive</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hiding</li> <li>- Pretending nothing had happened</li> <li>- Watching parents</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <i>Suicide Attempt</i></li> <li>• <i>Wishing to marry in early ages</i></li> <li>• <i>Social Withdrawal</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sharing</li> <li>- Denial</li> <li>- Accepting</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <i>Pretending like male</i></li> <li>• <i>Self- harm</i></li> <li>• <i>Suicide</i></li> </ul> |
|-------------------|--|--|

|                                       |   |  |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| <p><b>Ideas for Interventions</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Preventive Measures</b></li> <li>• <b>Interventions After Exposed to Domestic Violence</b></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Raising awareness on Domestic Violence</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Role of school</li> <li>- Encourage to share</li> <li>- Perspective of gender roles must be changed</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <i>Psychological support</i></li> <li>• <i>Divorce</i></li> <li>• <i>Immediately taking a child from family</i></li> <li>• <i>Reunite family</i></li> </ul> |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|