

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACTS OF INDIRECT EXPOSURE TO ONGOING
TERRORIST ATTACKS ON A GROUP OF TURKISH UNIVERSITY
STUDENTS: A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
OF
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY

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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE
IN
THE DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

SEPTEMBER 2017

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ABSTRACT

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACTS OF INDIRECT EXPOSURE TO ONGOING TERRORIST ATTACKS ON A GROUP OF TURKISH UNIVERSITY STUDENTS: A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

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September 2017, 208 pages

The purpose of the current study was to explore the psychological impacts of indirect victimization to ongoing terrorist attacks on college students. For this purpose, qualitative research methodology was adopted. 10 undergraduate students who were living in Ankara, Turkey were recruited as participants. They were vicariously exposed to ongoing terrorist attacks through various media resources. Semi-structured interviews were conducted and these data were analyzed using interpretative phenomenological analysis. The results of this analysis revealed four superordinate themes. These themes were: *evaluations about terrorism and Turkey, the characteristics of events, psychological impacts and coping*. The results

displayed that the ongoing attacks seemed to have become a significant traumatic experience for the youth in this study, which affected various aspects of their lives. Though most of the psychological impacts were more short-lived, there were still many positive and negative impacts that were still enduring. Further, it was found that participants used various coping strategies, both in the short- and long-term to deal with the situation. These results were in accordance with the current literature and pointed out to extensive psychological impacts of ongoing terrorism that spread out to the indirect population; and thus reflect the need for a well-organized disaster preparedness system.

Keywords: Terrorism, Psychological Trauma, College Students, Indirect Victimization, Psychological Effects

ÖZ

SÜREĞEN TERÖR OLAYLARINI DOLAYLI DENEYİMLEMENİN ÜNİVERSİTE ÖĞRENCİLERİ ÜZERİNDEKİ PSİKOLOJİK ETKİLERİ: NİTEL ANALİZ

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Tez Yöneticisi: Prof. Dr. A. Nuray Karancı

Eylül 2017, 208 sayfa

Bu çalışmanın amacı, süreğen terör olaylarını dolaylı deneyimlemenin üniversite öğrencileri üzerindeki psikolojik etkilerini incelemektir. Bu amaç doğrultusunda nitel bir araştırma yürütülmüş ve Ankara’da yaşayan 10 üniversite öğrencisi çalışmanın örneklemini olarak seçilmiştir. Bu katılımcılar, süreğen terör olaylarına çeşitli medya kaynakları üzerinden maruz kalmışlardır. Yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler yapılan katılımcılardan elde edilen veriler, yorumlayıcı fenomenolojik analiz yöntemi ile analiz edilmiştir. Bu analiz sonucunda, dört adet üst tema ortaya çıkmıştır: *Terörizm ve Türkiye’nin değerlendirilmesi, olayların nitelikleri, psikolojik etkiler ve baş etme biçimleri*. Bu sonuçlar, süreğen terör olaylarının

çalışmadaki gençler için önemli bir travmatik deneyim olduğunu ve hayatlarının birçok alanını etkilediğini göstermiştir. Çalışmanın sonucunda bulunan çoğu psikolojik etkinin daha kısa süreli olduğu görülse de, halen devam eden pozitif ve negatif birçok etkinin katılımcılar tarafından deneyimlendiği gözlenmiştir. Ayrıca, katılımcıların bu olaylarla başa çıkmak adına hem kısa hem de uzun dönemde birçok farklı baş etme biçimi kullandığı görülmüştür. Bu çalışmanın sonuçları genel olarak alanyazındaki var olan bilgilerle tutarlıdır. Tüm bunlar, bir kez daha süregelen terör olaylarının, dolaylı olarak deneyimleyen kitlelerde dahi yaygın birçok psikolojik etkiye sebep olabileceğini göstermiş ve bu sebeple de iyi organize edilmiş bir afet müdahale sistemine yönelik ihtiyacı yansıtmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Terörizm, Psikolojik Travma, Üniversite Öğrencileri, Dolaylı Deneyimleme, Psikolojik Etkiler

To all the victims of terrorist attacks in Turkey, but especially
to Berkay Bař and Ozancan Akkuř

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor Prof. Dr. A. Nuray Karancı for her endless support. I thank you for your reassuring attitude, your belief in my work and me. You believed in the psychological growth of people and carried your positive and hopeful attitude in every tough life event. You became an inspiration to me, a light of hope and a guidance. Thank you for all of your contributions.

I would like to thank my examining committee members; Prof. Dr. Özlem Bozo and Prof. Dr. Cengiz Kılıç for their informative, constructive and supportive comments and suggestions.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my family; Oğuz Okay, Oya Okay and Doğa Okay for their limitless support and encouragement during my whole education life. I feel like I am carrying the family tradition of being an academician and I am proud. Thank you for your love and guidance at every step of my life.

I would like to express special thanks to Kutlu Kağan Türkarıslan for being there for me, for motivating me, for always being patient, understanding, supportive and inspiring.

I want to thank to the best roommate and friend Elif Bürümlü, who was the first person I met in METU, who gave her invaluable support for all the years and to whose friendship I know I can always rely on. I would like to express my special thanks to my dear friend Ceren Şimşek for sharing my best memories as well as my worst fears, to which we can always find a way to laugh. I would also like to thank my dear friend Mustafa Çevrim for sharing my last-minute anxieties and for being always there with me throughout all my university life. I also want to acknowledge Aykut Erdoğan for being my guarantor during my master's education.

Finally, I want to acknowledge TUBITAK-BIDEB for supporting me financially during my master's education.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The introduction will present information on traumatic events, providing their definitions from different perspectives and some general qualities. After this brief summary, both negative and positive mental health consequences which are commonly experienced in the aftermath of traumatic events will be covered. To this aim, some psychological models or frameworks that explain diverse psychological reactions will be described in detail. Following this part, types of victims traumatic events generate will be presented, where both direct and indirect victims will be covered. Then, gradually, this introduction chapter will focus more specifically on the main topic of the current study, which is a certain type of traumatic event, more specifically a human-made community disaster, i.e. terrorism. After explaining terrorism, the psychologically effects, both positive and negative will be covered and relevant literature findings will be presented. Afterwards, the effects of terrorism on college students will be focused on in accordance with the current study's sample. Later on, the terrorism problem of Turkey and the difficulties of adapting the current literature findings to the context of Turkey will be discussed. The introduction part will be finalized by presenting the aims of the current study.

1.1 Definition of Traumatic Events

Traumatic events and their short and long-lasting psychological effects were first officially recognized in 1980 with the release of DSM-III and until then, its definition has undergone some changes as trauma knowledge and experience increased over time (American Psychiatric Association, 1980; Horowitz, 2011). Subsequently, the 5th edition of DSM labeled those events that include “actual or threatened death, serious injury or sexual violence” as traumatic events (American Psychiatric Association, 2013, p.272). Some specific examples or traumatic events

can be given as wars, physical assault, natural and technological disasters and motor vehicle accidents.

Although, DSM-V puts some restriction on the events that can be characterized as traumatic, this approach was opposed in the trauma literature. Tedeschi and Calhoun (2004) defines an event as traumatic based on its “seismic” effects on the person. They acknowledge the interaction between the person and the challenging event, with giving priority to the personal responses. According to this transactional view, any event that shakes or shatters the basic assumptions of people about themselves or the world around them; or any event that complicates the person’s ability to make meaning about the event, thereby creating significant amount of distress, could be counted as traumatic (Calhoun & Tedeschi, 1999). Therefore, not every stressful event indicates automatically that it is also traumatic. The detail that makes an event traumatic and not only stressful was argued to be its psychological damage (Shalev, 1996). This damage is proposed to result from new and incongruous information brought by the event, which is “outside the range of usual human experiences” (Horowitz, 2011, p.38); and has the capacity to challenge people’s basic expectations or assumptions (McFarlane & de Girolamo, 1996; Shalev, 2004). These basic assumptions were elaborated in detail by Janoff-Bulman (1992). She proposed in her theory that those abstract beliefs about ourselves, the external world and the relationship of these two could be shattered by traumatic events. These fundamental beliefs, which were proposed to lie at the core of people’s assumptive world, are that the world people live in is meaningful; it is benevolent and that people have self-worth (Janoff-Bulman, 1992). So, although formal definitions dwell on the characteristic of the event in defining whether it can be considered traumatic or not, the view that the experience of the person also needs to be considered is also prevalent.

1.2 Qualities of Traumatic Events

Although, what makes an event traumatic depends on the person-environment interaction, some basic features are commonly ascribed to the essence of nearly all

traumatic events (Calhoun & Tedeschi, 1999). First of all, they are usually dangerous, sudden and unexpected (Figley & Kleber, 1995; Kira, 2001). Loaded with this extreme sudden energy, they limit people's efforts for anticipatory coping (Calhoun & Tedeschi, 1999). Secondly, they threaten people's sense of control, giving them a sense of helplessness (Herman, 1992). Victims may believe that there is nothing to do to change the current situation. Closely linked to these two features, they are unusual and out of ordinary experiences (Herman, 1992; Kira, 2001). However, its being extraordinary does not imply that they are rare events, in fact they are not, but they overwhelm people's ordinary adaptations to life (Herman, 1992). Finally, they usually include a threat to the survival, bodily integrity or safety of the individual due to the person's close encounter with violence and death (Yehuda & McFarlane, 1995). Having mentioned all those features, they usually overwhelm and disrupt personal and community resources in the aftermath (Figley & Kleber, 1995). This, in return, may further limit both individuals' and communities' ability to cope; and thus disrupt people's ordinary systems of control, connection and meaning (Figley & Kleber, 1995; Hobfoll et al., 2007). By keeping these definitions and features in mind, in the subsequent part, the mental health consequences brought by traumatic events will be explained in detail. This part will begin by the literature findings regarding its negative mental health consequences, and move on to its positive psychological effects.

1.3 Mental Health Consequences of Traumatic Events

1.3.1 Negative Mental Health Consequences of Traumatic Events

Unlike the popular belief, it was suggested that traumatic stressors are very common in human life (Norris et al., 2002; Ursano et al., 1994). Majority of adults are exposed to at least one potentially traumatic event in their lifetimes (Bonanno, Rennieke, & Dekel, 2005). Those disruptive events have the potential to cause emotional turmoil (fear, anxiety, depression, guilt, anger), disturbing thoughts (intrusions, thoughts regarding the conceptualization of the world / themselves / other people), problematic behaviors (drug and alcohol overuse, social withdrawal,

aggressive behaviors) or distressing physical reactions (muscle tension, fatigue, gastrointestinal problems) (Calhoun & Tedeschi, 1999). People may experience difficulty in reflecting on their experience; and their sense of meaning or justice could be shaken (Hobfoll et al., 2007).

The most examined mental health consequence brought by traumatic events is posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Kira, 2001; Norris et al., 2002). It is characterized by “intrusion symptoms”, “avoidance symptoms”, “negative alterations in cognitions and mood”, “marked alterations in arousal and reactivity”, and in some cases dissociation symptoms (American Psychiatric Association, 2013, p. 272-273). PTSD is diagnosed when symptoms occur after one month following the traumatic event and when they persist for at least a month. In addition to PTSD, other commonly investigated disorders following traumatic events are acute stress disorder, major depressive disorder, complicated grief or different types of anxiety disorders (Bonanno, 2004; Kira, 2001; Norris et al., 2002; Rubonis & Bickman, 1991).

However, not everyone reacts to traumatic events in the same way. Some people stay symptom-free after being exposed and only a small percentage within the exposed people develop PTSD (Kessler, Sonnega, Bromet, Hughes, & Nelson, 1995). In addition, for most of the people, immediate psychological reactions disappear over time, which is also known as recovery (Bonanno, Galea, Bucciarelli, & Vlahov, 2007; Ursano, Fullerton, & McCaughey, 1994). Norris (1992) reported that the life-time prevalence of experiencing traumatic events for the US population was 69%, and of those exposed only around 15-24% were found to develop PTSD. Karanci et al. (2012) found that for a Turkish sample of 1253 households from three different cities in Turkey, the life-time prevalence of experiencing traumatic events was around 84%. Of those exposed to traumatic events, the prevalence of probable PTSD was found to be around 10%. Considering that traumatic life events are very common, it is vital to understand what makes some people more vulnerable to the adverse impacts of those events. In the next part, some theoretical models will be given in order to clarify these issues.

1.3.2 Some Psychological Models on the Mental Health Consequences of Traumatic Events

1.3.2.1 The Risk Factor Model

The occurrence of significant post-traumatic responses depends on a variety of factors from individual's past, present, expected future, biological givens or social context (Ursano et al., 1994). Trauma theoreticians combined these factors in order to explain why traumatic life events affect some people more than the others. One of these models is called "The Risk Factor Model" which was proposed by Freedy, Resnick and Kilpatrick (1992). Although the model was developed to account for reactions and adaptation to disasters, it can also give an insight on responses to traumatic events. The model provides a detailed explanation regarding the discrepancy in reactions amongst the victims. According to this model, there are three general factors which predict an individual's psychological adjustment to disasters. These are called pre-disaster, within-disaster, and post-disaster factors.

a. Pre-disaster factors

Pre-disaster factors are composed of those variables that exist before the occurrence of a traumatic event like victim's demographic characteristics and the features he / she brings from the past like previous life experiences, previous use of coping strategies, mental health history, and existing social support systems. (Freedy et al., 1992). Several empirical studies showed that age, gender, mental health history and certain personality traits predict the development of post-trauma symptomatology (Karanci et al., 2012; Karanci, Alkan, Aksit, Sucuoglu, & Balta, 1999; Norris et al., 2002). It was also revealed that those who had previous trauma history tend to show more adverse psychological reactions following the new event and their recovery process was also reported to be more gradual and painful (Brewin, Andrews, & Valentine, 2000). These information and data display that even before experiencing a trauma, there are some factors which make some people more vulnerable to its adverse impacts.

b. Within-disaster factors

According to the Risk Factor Model of Freedy et al. (1992), there are also within-disaster factors which predict victims' later adjustment. As the name implies, these are the factors occurring during the time of the trauma; and they are subcategorized as disaster exposure and victim's cognitive appraisal during the disaster exposure. When the traumatic event is appraised as including a threat to life, threat to physical integrity or intentional harm from another human being, it has the capacity to evoke more distress for the victims. Furthermore, the grotesque nature of the event is also noted to be a predictor of poorer adjustment (Freedy et al., 1992).

In relation to the sub-factor of cognitive appraisal during the trauma, it was mentioned that the sense of unpredictability, the diminished sense of personal control and high personal threat are significant factors that make some people more vulnerable to the negative effects of traumatic events (Freedy et al., 1999). Yehuda and McFarlane (1995) also discuss how a victim behaves or thinks during the time of trauma affects the subsequent period. For example, they asserted that dissociative or extremely panic reactions evoked at the time of the trauma is noted to obstruct emotional and cognitive processing of the event later on.

c. Post-disaster factors

The final cluster of Freedy et al.'s model (1992) is called post-disaster factors. It consists of victim's initial distress levels, secondary stressors experienced in the aftermath, resource loss, coping behaviors and social support systems. In regard to these points, it was demonstrated in the literature that acute stress levels predict increase in PTSD symptoms and poorer adjustment in the long run (Blanchard et al., 2004). For the remaining variables, the Conservation of Resources Model proposed by Hobfoll (1989) gives both valuable information and empirical evidence.

1.3.2.2 The Conservation of Resources Model

In order to better conceptualize especially the post-disaster period and place psychological distress in it; Conservation of Resources (COR) Model of Hobfoll (1989) is found as an important reference point. According to this model, people possess both internal (e.g. socioeconomic status, self-esteem, self-efficacy) and external resources (e.g. residence, social support), which they struggle to sustain or gain new ones. Unfortunately, disasters have the capacity to deplete victims' resources and put significant amount of environmental demands. Perceived or actual resource loss brought by disasters or the inability of the victims to gain resources are the presented as reasons for victims' heightened psychological distress. If this resource loss persists for a long time in the aftermath, ongoing distress is usually inevitable (Maguen, Papa, & Litz, 2008). However, it was demonstrated that some people are better able to cope with the traumatic events by investing their resources and using them as coping methods (Hobfoll, 1989). Still, some other people may be more vulnerable to the resource-depleting characteristic of disasters; and experience more difficulty in dealing with the overwhelming situation. This was proposed to be resulting from pre-disaster factors, which means having limited resources in the pre-disaster period. According to the literature, disadvantaged groups like elderly, disabled people or people from low socioeconomic status have fewer internal and external resources (Hobfoll, 1989). Hence, they are asserted to be experiencing more difficulty in adjusting to the disaster situations due to their impaired coping abilities resulting from their lack of resources. This gives a useful idea about why some people remain resilient after traumatic events while others develop significant levels of psychological stress. Furthermore, according to the COR model, various types of secondary stressors usually follow the initial hit of the large-scale traumatic events like financial losses, property damage, huge death toll, high numbers of injuries, and diminished social resources due to the community-wide bereavement (Norris et al., 2002). These secondary stressors have the potential to cause resource loss, which also impair victims' coping capabilities. These secondary stressors are reported to become

sometimes even more powerful in terms of generating adverse psychological consequences than the traumatic event itself (Hobfoll, 1989).

The models proposed by both Freedy et al. (1992) and Hobfoll (1989) provide the opportunity to develop a general perspective about the factors affecting psychological adjustment following traumatic events. Overall, these factors determine how people will adjust to the event, which psychological reactions they will show, and to what extent they will experience these reactions. Freedy et al. (1992) named several possible mental health consequences that depend on these factors like PTSD, anxiety and depressive disorders, psychosomatic problems or aggressive behaviors. Depending on these factors, posttraumatic reactions could be transitory or permanent; and the person may adapt well or poorly in the aftermath. These various psychological reactions will be discussed in the next parts along with the literature findings and concerning the main subject of the current study. In the following part, people who develop posttraumatic stress symptoms will be the focus.

1.3.2.3 The Stress Response Theory

The question of why people show posttraumatic responses in the aftermath of traumatic events caught considerable attention by many trauma researchers. One of those explanations was brought forward by “The Stress Response Theory” as proposed by Horowitz (2011).

According to this theory, traumatic events bring with itself new and threatening information, which are in contradiction with the victim’s existing belief systems regarding the self, world, relationships or the future. So, trauma information becomes a threat for them. These two contradictory beliefs should be integrated so that the conflict could be resolved and meaning could be made out of the event. This is made possible only through adapting the new devastating information into the existing schemas; and thereby creating somewhat more realistic beliefs compared to before (Horowitz, 2011). However, since new information is difficult to acknowledge for the person, psychological defense mechanisms get into action in

an attempt to protect the person, where person may avoid any reminders or memories of it, use denial or experience a numbing of emotions. On the other hand, the integration process still continues in the background of the person's mind and comes to consciousness through intrusion symptoms (Horowitz, 2011). As long as this rebuilding process continues, the person may continue to show stress responses related to the traumatic event. Due to "the completion tendency" of human mind, which can be translated as the humans' psychological need to reconcile new and old meaning structures; trauma information stays in active memory and intrude into consciousness until sufficient level of integration is achieved (Horowitz, 2011, p.82). With each revision of old and new information, the inner world of the victim is transformed. However, if the person fails to deal with the traumatic event effectively, and fails to give meaning to it, this trauma information will stay in the active memory. This leads the victims to experience a continuous change between attempts to avoid the trauma information and disruptions by the recurring intrusions (Horowitz, 2011). In that way, those reactions may become persistent leading to PTSD (Magwaza, 1999). On the other hand, when these world assumptions are revised and become uniform negative beliefs, depressive or anxiety symptoms are most likely to occur (Foa, Ehlers, Clark, Tolin, & Orsillo, 1999). It is denoted that the more incompatible and diverse the old and new information are from each other, the harder it is for the victims to finalize the completion process and to make meaning out of the traumatic event (Horowitz, 2011).

Having discussed the negative mental health consequences of traumatic events and reasons for developing trauma-related symptoms, the next part will be related to the positive psychological outcomes following traumatic events.

1.4 Positive Psychological Outcomes Following Traumatic Events

Although an extensive literature exclusively focuses on the adverse impacts of disasters, there is also significant amount of information regarding the positive changes and growth outcomes following traumatic events (Schaefer & Moos, 1992; 1998). To begin with, some people may show resilience in the face of trauma,

which means that they are able to “maintain a relatively stable, healthy level of psychological and physical functioning” (Bonanno, 2004, p.20-21).

Asides from that, Calhoun and Tedeschi (1999) argued that positive changes following sufferings have a long history and that there are many myths about them in various cultures. Facing emotionally difficult events and coping with them may incite people to restructure a new life that is more meaningful and superior compared to their old one (Calhoun & Tedeschi, 1998). Janoff-Bulman (1992) defines this process as rebuilding a new assumptive world after the shattering of basic assumptions. People may go beyond their previous level of adaptation; and experience beneficial changes in cognitive and emotional realms which may also be reflected in their behaviors (Calhoun & Tedeschi, 1998). This attained higher level of adaptation is called posttraumatic growth (PTG), which is described as “positive change that the individual experiences as a result of the struggle with a traumatic event” (Calhoun & Tedeschi, 1999, p. 142). They emphasize that PTG results from a long process of struggle where the person compares the trauma memories and its meanings with their prevailing schemas; and gradually experience positive changes (Calhoun & Tedeschi, 1999). What these theoreticians mean by struggle is that PTG outcomes entail an initial period of psychological distress, which is in fact a trigger for growth. This point was also supported by the results of a longitudinal study with war victims of Israel, where the initial PTSD levels predicted later PTG levels (Dekel, Ein-Dor, & Solomon, 2012). Similarly, Horowitz (2011) mentions that PTS symptoms actually represent survivor’s active attempts to resolve the information brought by the traumatic event. He mentions that this point is necessary to attain positive changes in the long run. Also, Schaefer and Moos (1998) emphasizes that at least some degree of distress resolution is necessary. In fact, it was shown that as trauma-related stress symptoms decrease over time, growth outcomes become more visible (Butler et al., 2005). Thus, Calhoun and Tedeschi (1999) states that thinking about the traumatic event, i.e. ruminations, is a necessary condition for experiencing positive outcome, although it is devastating for the survivor. Still, the content of ruminations is emphasized to be important. Whereas trying to find meaning out of

the event, focusing on pre-trauma positive memories, and possible future coping strategies were given as important factors for growth; focusing on downsides of the event, self-blame, and regrets were given as rumination contents that are destructive for the person (Calhoun & Tedeschi, 1999).

PTG Theory of Calhoun and Tedeschi (1998) proposes that these changes could be observed in three areas of life. After the struggle of coping with traumatic events, people could feel changes in how they see themselves, experience changes in their relationships with others, and/or changes in their life philosophies.

The first area of change is experienced in one's perception of the self. Seeing that one was able to cope with the devastating traumatic event, the survivor can slowly begin to appreciate oneself as more vulnerable due to the realization of own mortality; but also begin to rely on own strength more (Calhoun & Tedeschi, 1999). Having coped with this event, the person's belief in oneself to deal with future difficulties could be strengthened. Calhoun and Tedeschi (1999) define this process as "more vulnerable yet stronger." (p. 143).

According to the PTG Theory, another area of growth after traumatic events could be observed in person's relationship with others (Calhoun & Tedeschi, 1999). People may feel that they are more willing to engage in intimate relationships with others. This was indicated to be the result of people's questioning the meaning of life and changing their life priorities, where their appreciation for smaller pleasures in life increases (Calhoun & Tedeschi, 1999). In the aftermath of disasters, they have the opportunity to find out who they can rely on, and begin to spend more time and effort on pursuing those relationships. Especially after collective traumatic events, people may feel compassion towards those who suffer and show inclination towards helping them, which has an additional effect on the person's perception of own strength (Calhoun & Tedeschi, 1999).

Finally, after the struggle of coping with a traumatic event, people may also observe that they are transforming in existential, spiritual or religious realms. Existential changes include questioning about life and death more than before; and try to locate

people's and own meaning in life in the shadow of death. While doing this, some people may use their present spiritual beliefs to make meaning out of the event and thereby experience a deeper linkage to them. Others may negate their existing ways of understanding the world and witness a gradual change in their previous spiritual beliefs (Tedeschi, 1999).

Regarding these points, Kılıç (2010) mentioned that the way victims cope with the traumatic event determines the domain, in which they will experience growth. Whereas people who use social support and rely on others in an attempt to cope with the event are more likely to experience growth outcomes in the realm of their relationships; people who prefer to rely on themselves and cope with their own efforts tend to experience growth in the realm of personal strength.

Although three clusters of potential growth outcomes are mentioned above; according to Calhoun and Tedeschi (1999), while some survivors are more likely to experience posttraumatic growth, it is not an absolute outcome for all. In the next part, a conceptual framework which presents factors affecting positive outcomes will be described.

1.4.1 A Conceptual Framework to Explain Positive Outcomes of Crises

Schafer and Moos (1992, 1998) organized some factors contributing to growth outcomes in people following life crises and transitions. These factors are (a) event-related factors, (b) personal factors, (c) environmental factors. They are very similar to the Freedy et al.'s (1992) Risk Factor Model in the sense that several factors are combined and presented as factors affecting the outcomes. However, this model is different in the sense that the theoreticians emphasize points that encourage growth outcomes.

a. Event-related factors

First of these categories consist of event-related factors. These include factors like the severity, duration, predictability, controllability, pervasiveness, and extent of the traumatic event (Schaefer & Moos, 1992). According to this model, when the event

is predictable and expected like long-term illnesses, PTG is found to be more likely, since the person can accommodate oneself to the expected death of a loved one. However, when the event is sudden and unexpected or results in high death toll, it leads to a decrease in the likelihood of experiencing PTG. Additionally, if the event is a wide-ranging or a severe problem affecting the whole community, and thus brings decreased social support as a by-product, then PTG is much less likely to occur. By the same token, the severity of a traumatic event may also bring more social support from the environment due to the increased compassion of the environment (Schaefer & Moos, 1998). Finally, depending on the type of the event, different growth outcomes may occur. Schaefer and Moos (1992) gives the example of events including a threat to life, which usually bring an increased appreciation for life; whereas events necessitating courage like war usually brings increased self-reliance.

b. Personal factors

Another factor that has an influence on PTG is noted as personal factors which consist of sociodemographic characteristics, characteristic features and past history of the survivor. According to the model, factors like socioeconomic status which provide personal and social resources to the person; or personal characteristics like self-reliance, optimism, self-confidence or ego-strength increase the person's possibility of experiencing growth (Schaefer & Moos, 1992, 1998). In addition, prior success in coping with stressful events increase survivor's self-efficacy and provide him / her with coping resources, which in turn, affect growth positively. Further, it is mentioned that the type of growth is also dependent on age. While younger victims usually change the direction of their lives and become more willing to discover different paths; older victims usually struggle to find meaning or give more value on their relationships.

c. Environmental factors

Another sub-category affecting the development of PTG is stated as environmental factors or resources (Schaefer & Moos, 1992, 1998). This category consists of three

further sub-categories, which are (a) family and informal social support, (b) community groups and resources, and (c) post-crisis environment. In regard to the final point, it is vital for growth outcomes that a new environment is established which includes no secondary stressors. This gives the victim hope regarding the future, which is an important triggering factor for growth.

Although predicted by pre-disaster factors, having a larger social network or the type of support from the environment were shown to predict better adjustment. Social support, whether it is provided in a closer circle or community-wide, was noted to have several benefits on positive outcomes. Firstly, it is emphasized to be beneficial in itself as a coping strategy. Secondly, it assists the survivors in reappraising the situation in a more positive way and in developing new and more successful coping strategies (Calhoun & Tedeschi, 1999; Schaefer & Moos, 1992). The final point is related to the tangible benefits that the social environment provides to the person. This may be at times giving relevant information or money; and at other times, this can be performing some actions for the benefit of the person (Carpenter & Scott, 1992).

d. Appraisals and Coping Responses

Final category that is delineated as affecting survivors' growth outcomes is their appraisal and coping responses following the psychologically disruptive event (Schaefer & Moos, 1992). Lazarus and Folkman (1984) defines coping as "constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of a person" (p.141). They delineated two types of coping which are called "problem-focused coping" and "emotion-focused coping". While the former type means that the victim mostly focuses on the source of stress and try to change it; the second type necessitates the regulation of emotions that result from stress.

On the other hand, cognitive appraisals are categorized into two subparts, which are called primary appraisals and secondary appraisals. While in the former, person analyzes the environment in order to figure out if the event in question concerns his

/ her well-being or values; in the latter, the person weighs his / her available coping resources in order to better deal with the problem (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Three types of appraisals are discussed by theoreticians. These are (1) harm / loss appraisal, (2) threat appraisal, and (3) challenge appraisal (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The first type of appraisal communicates the information that the harm or loss has already occurred to the person or another person / concept that this person values. The threat appraisal, on the other hand, occurs when the person anticipates a harm or loss in future. Finally, the challenge appraisal occurs when person anticipates an opportunity or a positive side from the current situation.

It is mentioned that there is a continuous relationship between a person's cognitive appraisals and coping mechanisms. Depending on the information gathered regarding the stressor, appraisals are formed, which directs necessary coping strategies. Through coping, the survivor is able to reappraise the situation and arrange new coping strategies (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Schaefer and Moos (1992) highlight that challenge appraisals where the survivor concentrates on the opportunities of gain or mastery at the end of the struggle with the life crisis, he / she is able to cope more actively and experience more positive outcomes. Similarly, the continuous relation between positive appraisals and problem-focused coping strategies were reported. Additionally, cognitive attempts to find meaning, to look for a favorable side of the devastating situation and to accept it was found to be helpful in terms of helping the person to cope more effectively. Lastly, they also report that while active or problem-focused coping styles are associated with better growth outcomes, avoidance was determined to be a less adaptive coping style associated with poorer adjustment (Schaefer & Moos, 1992).

Until now, both negative and positive psychological outcomes that follow traumatic events have been discussed. In the following part, people displaying those outcomes, in other words those who are exposed to psychologically disruptive events, i.e. the victims of traumatic events will be defined.

1.5 Types of Victims of Traumatic Events

DSM-V delineates trauma victims based on three criteria. It includes those people who (A1) directly experience the event, (A2) witness that the event is occurring to others, (A3) *indirectly* experience the event through learning that it occurred to others, and (A4) experiencing repeated or extreme exposure to aversive details of the event (American Psychiatric Association, 2013, p. 272). A similar distinction exists in the trauma literature, which points out to direct (primary) and indirect (secondary) victims. While direct victims include those people who had undergone a personal encounter with the traumatic event and who have usually become the main subject of research; indirect victims do not have such an encounter, but they either witness or hear about the traumatic event (Figley & Kleber, 1995). However, according to DSM-V, the disruptive event that indirect victims learn about should be either violent or accidental; and it should be experienced by significant others like close friends or relatives. This latter issue is commonly recognized in the literature. Through the mechanisms of empathy and being a consistent support to loved ones, one could be exposed to the trauma material repeatedly and consequently feel exhausted, which is also known as “compassion fatigue” (Figley & Kleber, 1995). Those indirect victims were found to show secondary traumatic stress reactions which are similar to that of direct victims. The same reactions were in fact observed in those who have not lost any close relatives or friends, but who are actually psychological victims that are deeply shocked by the event (Calhoun & Tedeschi, 1999). They are those people who are exposed to the event vicariously through violent images repeatedly broadcasted in TV, radio, newspapers, social media, or hear the stories about the event from the public (Blanchard et al., 2004; Galea et al., 2003).

Although not always the focus of attention, indirect victims were somewhat always there in the literature in various ways (Liverant, Hoffman, & Litz, 2004; Vázquez, Pérez-Sales, & Matt, 2006). The name that is proposed by different theoreticians for those vicariously exposed victims actually gives the idea of why they are more out of sight. They are called “hidden victims” (Saari, 2005), “peripheral victims”

(Dixon, Rehling, & Shiwach, 1993) or “silent victims” (Fullerton, Ursano, Norwood, & Holloway, 2003). They are those who were not at the disaster area, who have no direct experience with the traumatic event or its aftermath (Dixon et al., 1993). Some examples for those indirect victims are those who suffered financial damages in the aftermath, those who were relocated, or those who might have been in the disaster area (Saari, 2005). Needless to say, having this perspective in defining victims multiplies the number of affected people. They could be spread out of the disaster area to different cities of that country or even to different countries in the world (Galea et al., 2003; Saari, 2005; Ursano et al., 1994). They may begin to appraise their once regular environment as threatening and perceive their lives at risk (Dixon et al., 1993; Yehuda & McFarlane, 1995). Research showed that having the same occupation with the direct victims was a reason for probable PTSD, significant levels of psychological distress, sleep disorders, and impairments in social, occupational or interpersonal functioning (Dixon et al. 1993). These symptoms were actually reported to be the same as those of the direct victims. In addition, just like it is with direct victims, core assumptions of indirect victims, too, were hypothesized to be shattered (Ursano, Fullerton, Vance, & Kao, 1999).

Unfortunately, indirect victims are often overlooked and cannot be clearly detected (Fullerton et al., 2003). Consequently, they are not typically given proper care unless careful attention is being paid. Although in the aftermath, disaster relief efforts are important for recovery to occur, failure to detect those victims create an obstacle to this (Galea et al., 2003; Schuster et al., 2001). All these actually point out that psychological trauma is not the result of a threat to life, but in fact, it is the outcome of the threat creating a confusion of one’s image of the world (Shalev, 2004).

In sum, though the literature is mainly concerned with the direct victims of traumatic events, there are also huge numbers of indirect victims that those events generate, who are mostly out of sight. Before returning to those indirect victims in

more detail, in the following part, different types of traumatic events will be explained.

1.6 Types of Traumatic Events

Based on various criteria, traumatic events are divided into several subcategories. Initially, depending on the people exposed to them, they are divided into two categories: (1) Individual traumatic events, and (2) Communal traumatic events (Fullerton et al., 2003). Based on the perpetrators' motivation, individual traumatic events can be further categorized into: (1.a.) Intentional traumatic events, like physical or sexual assault, and (1.b.) Unintentional traumatic events, like motor vehicle accidents. In the same way, communal traumatic events can be divided into two, which is grounded on the origin of force that is applied on the victims (Herman, 1992). This force may be exerted by intentional human beings or by the nature. This classification system divides communal traumatic events into two categories: (2.a.) Human-made disasters, like terrorist attacks or war, and (2.b.) Natural disasters like earthquakes or floods (Fullerton et al., 2003).

No matter to whom the harm is done (on a single person or on a group of people), interpersonal violence that is deliberate and intentional from another human being was shown to be the most disturbing traumatic experience (Karanci et al., 2012; Norris et al., 2002). Such events become more traumatic, and create more adverse psychological responses in the target population (Galea & Resnick, 2005). In the following part, these events that include intentional harm from another human being and that expose a whole community, i.e. human-made community disasters, will be elucidated.

1.7 Human-made Community Disasters

Although there are many factors influencing the intensity of people's posttraumatic reactions after an event, the review of the trauma literature shows that intentional and deliberate harm from another human being is associated with more severe and long-lasting psychological distress than those without human malfeasance (Galea &

Resnick, 2005; Norris et al., 2002; Smith & North, 1993). Thus, the consequences of human-made disasters are shown to be more severe than that of natural disasters (Smith & North, 1993). This results from the fact that one's core beliefs about the self and the world are more vulnerable to the concept of interpersonal violence (Janoff-Bulman, 1985). It is harder for people to make meaning out of such events and integrate them into their existing belief systems. Additionally, those traumatic events that include high perceived life threat, low controllability and lack of predictability are known to be associated with higher risk of psychiatric morbidity (Fullerton et al., 2003; North et al., 1999; Schuster et al., 2001). Human-made disasters, by their very nature, involve all of those risk factors, which could be accounted as an explanation of why they psychologically hurt people more.

Furthermore, when a traumatic event is community-wide, it has far-reaching consequences which could also become secondary stressors for the members of that community (Pfefferbaum, North, Flynn, Norris, & DeMartino, 2002; Rubonis & Bickman, 1991). They include extensive loss of life, prolonged threat of life in the aftermath, property or financial damages (Rubonis & Bickman, 1991). Such large scale community events are also called mass casualty events in the literature, which by definition mean that the event in question puts physical, social, and psychological demands on the community; and thus overwhelm institutional and health care systems (Fullerton et al., 2003; Hobfoll et al., 2007). Besides, social capital of the community is also usually damaged due to the destruction of people's networks through death, relocation of people's neighborhood, or decline in social participation and cooperation (Hobfoll et al., 2007; Norris et al., 2002; Stein et al., 2004). Furthermore, when the event is community-wide, potential support providers may also be the victims themselves; creating a possible barrier to the availability of services (Norris et al., 2002). All of those result in a situation where the community needs exceed the available resources (Pfefferbaum et al., 2002). Deprived of those basic resources, recovery time for both individuals and community as a whole usually become escalated in the aftermath (Hobfoll et al., 2007; Pfefferbaum et al., 2002). For developing countries, it becomes especially hard, since their lack of

disaster preparedness results in more long-lasting material or psychological damages (Benjamin, Bassily-Marcus, Babu, Silver, & Marin, 2011).

One of the most psychologically disturbing human-made community disasters is terrorism. It is most probably one of the most vital problems of Turkey, and also the main subject of the current study. In the subsequent parts, its definition and psychological repercussions following it will be discussed along with the relevant literature findings.

1.8 The Concept of Terrorism and Its Definition

Terrorist attacks belong to the category of human-made disasters that involve intentional human violence from another human being, resulting in high numbers of violent death, injuries and casualties (Abrahamson, 2014; Van der Kolk, Weisaeth, & Van der Hart, 1996). For the purpose of understanding the problem at hand and moving forward to its psychological effects, it is necessary to first define the concept.

In the literature, the definition of terrorism is proposed to be largely linked to the defining agency (Hoffman, 1998). This means that the terrorist of one country, community, group, or single individual is usually the martyr or hero of another one (Marsella, 2004). While the target group almost always blames terrorist groups for their actions, those same actions could win support and moral justification in their own community (Parkes, 2014). In addition to that, the definition of terrorism showed historical transformations and is still undergoing international disagreements. As a result, it was emphasized that it is almost impossible to make an absolute definition for terrorism (Parkes, 2014).

Marsella (2004) analyzed various definitions from different sources in an attempt to define what constitutes terrorism. The resulting analysis defined terrorism as “the use of force or violence by individuals or groups that is directed toward civilian populations and intended to instill fear as a means of coercing individuals or groups to change their political or social populations” (Marsella, 2004, p.16). However, he

emphasized that even this definition is not comprehensive enough to conceptualize all existing types terrorism, because the patterns of it (political terrorism, religious terrorism, separatist terrorism) and the motives of the perpetrators (destruction of the socio-political order, divinely sanctioned violence, state-sponsored terrorism) demonstrate significant changes depending on the context (Marsella, 2004).

Apart from those, the most widely used definition of terrorism especially in the Western literature is adapted from the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations. Their version states that terrorism is “the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives.” (28 C.F.R. § 0.85, 1969). Although the definition of terrorism is mentioned to depend on the socio-political environment, how the Turkish state defines it shares common features with the aforementioned ones. According to the 1991 “Anti-Terror Law” of the Turkish criminal code, all criminal acts that are conducted by a person or a group of people belonging to a terrorist group, which use force and violence in an aim to create an environment of suppression, fear and threat by attempting to change the current political, legal, social, secular or economic system of Turkey; to intimidate the national integrity; or to destroy internal and external security, public order and safety are accounted as acts of terrorism (Terörle Mücadele Kanunu, 1991).

Although these definitions agree on several points, the ultimate aim of terrorist attacks cannot be simplified and have many sides depending on the terrorist group, but mainly it can be said that the aim is always in a way to change the behavior, the political or social position of people, communities or the state (Marsella, 2004). Such attacks could be planned using different methods ranging from kidnappings to the use of chemicals. Today, the mostly used method worldwide is bombings, executed especially in the form of “suicide” bombers (Marsella, 2004; Mukherjee, Kumar, & Mandal, 2014). This type of terrorism depends on the death of the perpetrator which includes motivation of giving up one’s life and thus hard for the victims to make meaning out of the traumatic event (Mukherjee et al., 2014).

Compared to other political conflicts and struggles, the methods of modern terrorism were mentioned to be mutating over time (Kiper & Sosis, 2016). The explosive types (explosive-filled cars, adding iron marbles to explosives), target populations (police, soldiers, general public), or attack sites (shopping malls, underground stations, public transports) change and still unprecedented ones develop every day. This mutation characteristic of modern terrorism makes it hard to anticipate how the next attack would be, who the targets will be, and how many people it would affect, signifies its unpredictability (Kiper & Sosis, 2016; Pfefferbaum et al., 2002). This is what makes it terrifying for both communities and governments; and signals it as an important type of psychological weapon (Kiper & Sosis, 2016; Stasko & Ickovics, 2007). It surpasses individual health and well-being, and threaten an entire community or nation (Fullerton et al., 2003; Mukherjee et al., 2014; North et al., 1999). These characteristics of terrorism implies that it is a distinct disaster both for communities and individuals within those communities. In the next part, psychological effects of this distinct type of human-made disaster and related literature findings will be discussed.

1.8.1 General Psychological Effects of Terrorism

Terrorism has become an ever-mounting universal problem extended to different countries and continents due to terrorist shootings, suicide terrorism, trucks driven into crowds happening almost anywhere today. Several examples from the past could be given as 19 April 1995 Oklahoma City bombing, 11 March 2004 Madrid attack or 7 July 2005 London bombings (Brewin et al., 2008; Miguel-Tobal, Vindel, Iruarrizaga, González Ordi, & Galea, 2005; Pfefferbaum et al., 2002). However, there are also other devastating examples from the recent past like 19 December 2016 Berlin terrorist truck attack, 2015 Paris bombings and shootings or 22 May 2017 London concert bombing.

Although the methods or motivations of these terrorist attacks differ, the key result of all types of terrorism is basically the same: mass destruction, hopelessness and extensive fear in the target population (Mukherjee et al., 2014). Such acts of

extreme violence provide terrorist groups this opportunity, since only one attack at only one time could create an atmosphere of alarm in the whole society and deplete people's sense of security and safety (Abrahamson, 2014; Morley & Leslie, 2007; Weinberg, Besser, Zeigler-Hill & Neria, 2016). Compared to dying from motor vehicle accidents, cancer or heart disease, dying in a terrorist attack has much low probability, yet they carry disproportionate fear (Parkes, 2014). This was proposed to be due to the nature of the event, prolonged exposure and recovery time, destruction of normal routines, and threat of recurrence (Galea et al., 2003; Pfefferbaum et al., 2002). Moreover, criminal investigations and trials which continue for some time after the event have the capacity to prolong the emotional trauma of the society (Pfefferbaum et al., 2002).

In addition to the grotesque nature of terrorist attacks which is itself a potent psychological stressor, and its being intentionally done by another human being; people's sense of safety could also be damaged by the lack of confidence in state and its institutions in the aftermath (Fullerton et al., 2003; Morley & Leslie, 2007; Mukherjee et al., 2014). This is exacerbated especially in countries with chronic state of instability due to the destruction of governmental structure that is the consequence of continuous violence provoked by extremist groups (Marsella, 2004). When people cannot be provided with basic security in nations confronting terrorism threat, the disruption of normal routines and community functioning are also inevitable (Marsella, 2004; Mukherjee et al., 2014). All those points give information about why the effects of terrorist attacks have more broad and prolonged psychological consequences compared to other community-wide disasters.

Another point concerning the effects of terrorist attacks are mentioned as its being one of the most powerful generators of psychiatric illness and disruptors of personal and community functioning (North et al., 1999). Although they are attempted on a relatively small number of people, they have a powerful effect in terms of generating indirect victims that may last even after two years after the attack (Crenshaw, 2000; Galea et al., 2003; Pfefferbaum et al., 2000). This power mostly

arises from the fact that possible future attacks are usually expected by nearly the whole population (Silver, Holman, McIntosh, Poulin, & Gil-Rivas, 2002). Besides, terrorism may target important places, symbols, or leaders which disturb the communal meanings ascribed to those targets (Parkes, 2014). Therefore, they have widespread devastating impacts on the communal stability and mental health. Although geographical proximity to the site of the attack was found to be an important predictor of symptom development in the indirectly affected population, which shows that those closer to the attack site suffered worse consequences than those who were in remoter locations (Blanchard et al., 2004); the degree of identification with the victims substantially spread the stress to the whole country (Shalev, Tuval, Frenkiel-Fishman, Hadar, & Eth, 2006; Schlenger et al., 2002; Schuster et al., 2001). This is explained in the literature with the term “communal bereavement” that is observed as a societal level distress due to people’s membership in the affected community where they feel sorrow for people that they have never met (Catalona & Hartig, 2001). Although the post-disaster environment is important for a community’s recovery (Hobfoll et al., 2007), this communal distress was heightened due to the nature of terrorist attacks, which has the possibility to produce long-lasting effects in the aftermath like ongoing terrorism threat, economic slowdown or feelings of insecurity that the state fails to ensure (Galea et al., 2003; Pfefferbaum et al., 2002; Rubonis & Bickman, 1991; Ursano et al., 1994). These, in return, has possible secondary stressor effects and thus create again a mass of indirectly affected population. Further, the unpredictable nature of these attacks makes it difficult for communities to plan the scope of treatment and arrange funding beforehand to meet the needs of the society (Pfefferbaum et al., 2002; Ursano et al., 1994). This leads to problems in providing sufficient medical or psychological relief resources in the aftermath (Galea et al., 2003). In addition to that, social resources of people are also affected by terrorist attacks much more than other community-wide disasters due to the fear and suspicion permeating the crisis environment, which limits interpersonal contact and support (Hobfoll et al., 2007; Pfefferbaum et al., 2002). Considering the fact that terrorist events lead to more

serious psychological problems; diminished treatment availability and social resources could prolong and exacerbate the existing community stress (Stein et al., 2004).

The Conservation of Resources (COR) model was found to be very useful in terms of explaining the psychological effects of terrorism (Hobfoll, Canetti-Nisim, & Johnson, 2006; Hobfoll et al., 2009). According to this model, terrorism brings psychosocial and economic resource loss, which in turn, is stated to be responsible for the development of PTSD or depressive symptoms. Initial resource loss was also found to be an important factor for ongoing psychological difficulties. Those who have fewer resources during the pre-disaster period were reported to become the most affected ones in the initial aftermath of terrorism. In the aftermath of terrorist attacks, as secondary stressors place further demands, those people with the initial loss also experience more adverse impacts and have difficulties in recovery (Hobfoll et al., 2009).

Generally speaking, the psychology of terrorism literature could be divided into two categories: (1) literature regarding the psychological effects of one-time only terrorist attacks; and (2) literature regarding the psychological effects of ongoing terrorism. In the next sections, both of these literature findings will be the focus of attention.

1.8.2 Psychological Effects of One-Time Only Terrorist Attacks

Although there is now an interest in the psychology of terrorism, its dramatic increase began with the tragic and well known 9/11 terrorist attack, where two major airplanes crashed into the World Trade Center in New York City, U.S.A.; and it was concluded with the collapse of the twin towers (Delisi et al., 2003). In addition to that, two other airplanes were hijacked and one of them crashed into the Pentagon, while the other went to the Pennsylvania field. These major terrorist attacks resulted in approximately 3000 deaths (Delisi et al., 2003). A vast amount of studies was conducted in the aftermath of 9/11; and it can be said that the psychology of terrorism is largely composed of them (Ranstorp, 2009).

Studies regarding 9/11 were carried out both in the immediate aftermath and in the long-run for follow-up, which mainly focused on the effects of different exposure levels to terrorist attacks (Blanchard et al., 2004; Schlenger et al., 2002). They used various tools or instruments to assess symptoms related to traumatic stress. Although the conditions mostly assessed in the aftermath were acute stress disorder (ASD) and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), the trauma response could go well beyond them (Danieli, Engdahl, & Schlenger, 2004). Hence, other commonly exhibited traumatic stress-related disorders like depressive disorders, anxiety disorders, somatization disorder, alcohol and substance abuse became also a major focus of those studies; and screening procedures for their presence were performed (Danieli et al., 2004; Norris et al., 2002). Apart from assessing probable psychiatric diagnosis, nonspecific distress (also named as “substantial stress” or “global distress”) which refers to the elevation of various stress-related psychological and psychosomatic symptoms were also taken into account (Rubin et al., 2007; Schuster et al., 2001; Schlenger et al., 2002). Investigators assessing continuous measures of ASD or PTSD typically compared their sample’s scores to those of a control group or published norms and cut-off points (Norris et al., 2002). Additionally, they examined how much they are correlated with the severity of exposure or assessed certain risk factors. Most frequently used questionnaires were Impact of Events Scale (Silver et al., 2002), PTSD Checklist (PCL) (Schlenger et al., 2002), Stanford Acute Stress Disorder Scale (Blanchard et al., 2004), and Trauma Screening Questionnaire (Brewin et al., 2008). Moreover, Global Severity Index of the Symptom Checklist-90 and Brief Symptom Inventory were the tools used to measure nonspecific distress levels (Schlenger et al., 2002; Silver et al., 2002).

Though they seem varied, these studies basically pointed to the same conclusion: Post-traumatic symptoms occurring in the immediate aftermath were prevalent and negative, but over time (around six months), they showed a decline for even the most affected people (Galea et al., 2003). Yet as it is for other traumatic events, psychological effects of terrorist attacks showed persistence for some people. More specifically, Galea et al. (2002) demonstrated that, two months after the 9/11 attack,

within the representative sample of NYC Manhattan residents, 7.5% and 9.7% displayed attack-related PTSD symptoms and depressive symptoms, respectively. Silver et al. (2002) found PTSD symptoms for U.S. residents outside NYC two months following the attack to be 17%; and this rate declined to 6% in the 6-month follow-up.

In regard to the indirectly affected population, it can be argued that the investigation about the effects of traumatic events on this population became especially an area of interest after 9/11. This was suggested to be resulting from the data which began to show similar psychological repercussions in both directly and indirectly affected populations (Galea & Resnick, 2005; Silver et al., 2002). For instance, Galea et al. (2003) showed that although probable PTSD was found to be higher in direct victims after one month from the attack, the rates were substantially higher for the indirect victims as well. Since terrorism is a national threat, many U.S. citizens, owing to their identification with the direct victims, perceived those attacks as they were directed at themselves; and thus showed similar stress reactions (Schuster et al., 2001). Additionally, pervasive fear of future terrorism, and fear of harm to loved ones were also commonly observed findings (Rubin et al., 2007; Silver et al., 2002). It is internally known in the affected community that those attacks could target anyone, and thus similar fears were observed in more than half of the people from the general public in Silver et al. (2002) and Rubin et al. (2007)'s studies, while the latter also showed that they continued even after six to seven months following 2005 London bombings. It was found that those who are closer to the attack site suffered more adverse psychological consequences than those who were in more remote locations. This was partly due to the fact that a target city's citizens continue to be exposed to the reminders of the event following the attack like visual, auditory or olfactory cues related to the disaster (Brandon & Silke, 2007).

This interest on indirect victims after 9/11 mostly resulted from the fact that researchers came to realize the negative impacts of the media. Although it was mentioned that media could be mobilized as a channel to provide protective information to the affected community (Freedy et al., 1992), after 9/11, it was stated

to be almost impossible not to be affected by news displaying and spreading repetitive pictures of violence to millions for almost eight hours a day (Parkes, 2014; Schuster et al., 2001). It was shown that the amount of TV exposure was an important correlate of probable PTSD (Schlenger et al., 2002). When the event in question includes national threat; media coverage is much higher, bringing significant indirect exposure (Pfefferbaum et al., 2000). Parkes (2014) describes the maladaptive function of media as “bringing dramatic and horrific events into the living rooms of the general public” (p.85). Referring to the 9/11 terrorist attacks in U.S.A., Parkes (2014) emphasized the effect of televisions and stated metaphorically that they made two aircrafts crash into every home, leaving everyone alerted, felt horrified, and at least to some degree, traumatized. Especially, in a state of fear and alarm, negative information becomes even more salient than positive ones (Breckenridge & Zimbardo, 2007). Newspapers and websites, through using negative headlines to attract attention, also contribute to the public anxiety rather than providing objective accounts of risks (Abrahamson, 2014; Parkes, 2014).

In terms of the positive consequences following one-time only terrorist attacks, there are limited information compared to its adverse impacts, since studies mostly begin their investigation for the purpose of observing traumatic stress reactions (Vázquez, Pérez-Sales, & Hervás, 2008). This creates an illusion of as if there are no growth outcomes regarding terrorist attacks. Considering that one of the main aims of terrorism is to create an atmosphere of fear, destruction and hopelessness in the community (Mukherjee et al., 2014), it was found important to discuss the relevant positive research findings. After 2005 London bombings, 80% of a demographically representative sample was reported to experience a partially positive change in their self-perception; whereas 45% observed a positive change in their ways of seeing the world (Rubin et al., 2007). Park, Riley, & Snyder (2012) demonstrated that six weeks following the 9/11 attack, 73% of the nationally representative sample reported that they felt closer to their loved ones, 53% mentioned a change in their life priorities, and 86% felt closer to other Americans.

Likewise, Butler et al. (2005) found that two months following the 9/11 attack, within the sample including both direct and indirect victims, moderate or greater levels of growth were reported in the areas of appreciation for life (around 47%), relating to others (around 36%), personal strength (around 30%), and spiritual change (27%). Furthermore, Bonanno, Galea, Bucciarelli, and Vlahov (2006) found that even those with the highest level of exposure showed high levels of resilience. In their whole sample, which was recruited from around the New York area, overall displayed 65% resilience after six months following the 9/11 attack, which was defined as having zero or one symptom of PTSD. In addition to those, Vázquez et al. (2008) points out that since terrorism is commonly a national threat, enhanced altruism and emotional sharing within the community are common results promoting the social cohesion. After 9/11, it was reported that a significant amount of the general population contributed to the direct victims through giving money or clothes to charities, donating blood or volunteering for recovery organizations (Smith, Rasinski, & Toce, 2001). In regard to this point, it was noted that community-wide disasters like terrorism forms a cohesion and cooperation environment, which is a trigger of community-wide growth (Schaefer & Moos, 1998). This growth in the larger circle is stated to further promote growth in the individual members of the affected community.

Although most of these studies give valuable information regarding the psychological consequences of terrorist attacks both for the immediate aftermath and for the long run, there are some arguments regarding their results. To begin with, the fact that different studies use different diagnostic and threshold criteria was criticized to affect the resultant percentages and thus decrease the ability of readers to compare or generalize those findings (Silver et al., 2002; Vázquez et al., 2006). Moreover, many of those large scale mental health detection studies were conducted via telephone interviews (Galea et al., 2003; Miguel-Tobal et al., 2005; Rubin et al., 2007). Although proven to be an eligible method to reach diverse communities (Felton, 2004), it was notified that they are actually not suitable for all cultures, and thus may show cultural bias (Aker et al., 2008). It was found that

people had difficulty in understanding and processing the questions in Turkey, where their results were also influenced by social desirability.

Apart from those, in the current literature regarding terrorism, psychosocial functioning criteria of DSM is usually excluded although other symptom-based criteria like intrusion or avoidance symptoms are included. Vázquez et al. (2006) points out to this fact and comments that although excluded, this criterion is in fact an important factor for people's help-seeking behavior. In addition to those, they also criticized the assessment of "substantial distress" or "symptoms of acute distress". While the former is defined by researchers as "feeling upset by remembering what happened, repeated disturbing memories, thoughts or dreams, difficulty concentrating, trouble falling/staying asleep, or feeling irritable/angry" (Rubin et al., 2007), the latter points out to posttraumatic reactions in the immediate post-event period. Since those definitions are mentioned to be normal responses to abnormal events and disappear soon for most people, they actually do not suggest a critical clinical condition requiring psychological interventions (Shalev, 1996; Wessely, 2004). Consequently, most of those studies were criticized for overestimating the percentages of probable psychiatric disorders (Hoffman, Diamond, & Lipsitz, 2011). In the following part, additional problems of terrorism literature regarding those one-time attacks will be discussed combined with the literature findings related to the psychological effects of repeated terrorist attacks.

1.8.3 Psychological Effects of Ongoing Terrorism

Psychology of terrorism literature is not solely composed of studies regarding one-time only attacks. But, a vast amount of literature focuses on terrorist attacks that were executed on repeated intervals, which is usually labeled by the term "ongoing terrorism". This term has emerged mostly from the non-western literature, the data of which come mostly from Iraq and Israel. Whereas Iraq studies were conducted during which there were 2.368 attacks in 30 days (Freh, Chung, & Dallos, 2013), studies of Israel were mostly conducted during the period of Al-Aqsa Intifada (the Second Palestinian uprising), where there were 132 suicide bomber attacks during a

period of four years (Shalev et al., 2006). Both of them included large number of civilian casualties combined with a chronic atmosphere of fear, insecurity and disrupted human life (Bleich, Gelkopf, Melamed, & Solomon, 2006; Freh et al., 2013). Under such states of ongoing terrorism, the overall community was stated to be living a continuous sense of helplessness and anxiety (Ben-David & Cohen-Louck, 2010). It was mentioned that when the community resources are available, symptoms of the affected community usually decline over time (Shalev, 2004). However, economic losses and disruption of services that continue for a long time has become secondary stressors for those communities (Hobfoll et al., 2007; Shalev, 2000). Considering these environments of continuous terrorism, it was argued that the studies related to psychological repercussions after 9/11 or similar ones focusing on one-time only attacks have limited relevance and are incomparable (Shalev et al., 2006). Ongoing terrorism environment was suggested to create a serious setback for symptom alleviation; and affect both the severity and duration of psychological symptoms (Bleich, Gelkopf, & Solomon, 2003; Shalev, 2000; Silver et al., 2002). As a matter of fact, several studies reported that PTSD symptoms showed persistence under ongoing terrorism contexts (Bleich et al., 2006; Hobfoll et al., 2009).

Furthermore, it was argued that during states of ongoing terrorism, the symptoms generally labelled as “posttraumatic” could actually be seen as “peri-traumatic” since the terror threat still continues (Shalev et al., 2006). While in the case of one time only events, the threat actually passed and symptoms like avoiding dangerous places or remaining vigilant to danger signals could be seen as inappropriate, they become adaptive under states of ongoing terrorism since they have a purpose of self-protection (Hoffman et al., 2011). Though these symptoms are the criteria for PTSD according to DSM-V, what actually makes them diagnosed as “Post-Traumatic” is that a sense of extreme threat still continues although the dangerous event has actually passed (Whalley & Brewin, 2007). This is rarely the case after terrorist attacks, and even more impossible under ongoing terrorism. Thus, it is understandable that the community remains alert to possible danger signals in the

environment; and using checklist assessment or structured interviews to assess PTSD was criticized for misclassifying and exaggerating many normal cases as PTSD (Hoffman et al., 2011). Moreover, using labels like “probable PTSD” or “clinically significant PTSD-like symptoms like it is done in terrorism studies still imply that those behaviors belong to PTSD pathology and do not soften the results. In their article, Hoffman et al. (2011) analyzes each criterion of PTSD in DSM-IV and discusses that all of them are actually normal and adaptive responses to the abnormal situation of ongoing terrorism containing imminent threat. They further argued that those symptoms actually disappeared during the time when the missile attacks decreased.

Although these behaviors are adaptive in their essence and reflect signs of a peri-traumatic period, they lead to a deteriorated sense of freedom for citizens living under continuing violence. They may prefer not to use public transportation, avoid crowded places and thus limit their daily living (Bleich et al., 2003). According to Hobfoll et al. (2007), the first principle of trauma intervention laying the groundwork for forthcoming ones is to promote a sense of safety in the community. When it is provided in the aftermath of disasters, post-trauma reactions demonstrated a gradual decline over time. However, under ongoing terrorism, this basic principle cannot be established. Freh, Dallos and Chung (2012) argue that most of the studies after one-time terrorist attacks focus on the recovery from trauma and tried to spot if people could return to their pre-disaster level of functioning; or observed how well the interventions worked in the “aftermath”. But in fact, people living under ongoing terrorism expect future terrorist attacks which leads to prolonged anxiety (Bleich et al., 2003). Thus, the “aftermath” term actually becomes unsuitable (Hobfoll et al., 2007).

In addition, proximity effect was also stated to become irrelevant under states of ongoing terrorism, which means that the terrorism threat does not stay limited to the cities near the attack site, but it spreads nearly to all citizens no matter whether they are near or remote to the attack site (Shalev et al., 2006). Television broadcasting that is exposing the whole country to violent attacks communicate the idea that “it

could happen anywhere” (Ursano et al., 1999). They became a traumatic reminder of past attacks by damaging the perception of safety and thus contributing to a common national fear (Schuster et al., 2001). These, in turn, refutes the result that people nearer to the attack site have more serious psychological problems, which was found to be a common result after 9/11 (Blanchard et al., 2004). In fact, Bleich et al. (2003) showed in their study that 60% of Israeli citizens felt that their lives were in danger. Regarding this issue, Hobfoll et al. (2009) argued that during states of ongoing terrorism, the effects of indirect exposure could even be more severe than direct exposure due to the ambiguity of future threat and the severe burden brought by the possibility of losing loved ones.

These differences between the two distinct environments of terrorism may provide an explanation for the different results observed between U.S.A or Europe literature and that of Israel or Iraq. While Shalev et al. (2006) and Bleich et al. (2003) found that the PTSD symptom intensity, PTS responses and general distress levels were higher than that found after the 9/11 studies in the Israeli community of both directly and indirectly affected populations (around 21-27%), Freh et al. (2013) found markedly higher levels in the directly affected population of Iraq (76%). Although symptoms on the one hand showed more persistence over time under ongoing terrorism (Bleich et al., 2006), it was suggested that people may also show adjustment to their current threat environment, employ more effective coping strategies and help-seeking behavior which may bring better adjustment or resiliency in the long run (Shalev & Freedman, 2005). This may result in symptom decline over time as Freh et al. (2013) also concluded in their study. Additionally, results regarding ongoing terrorism indicated that there was no difference between the directly or indirectly affected samples in terms of post-trauma reactions (Freh et al., 2013; Shalev et al., 2006). However, authors also commented about the difficulty of finding a control group since almost everyone in Iraq somehow heard or witnessed bombing (Freh et al., 2013).

Another difference between the results was reflected in terms of community’s resistance and resilience levels, which were found to be lower during ongoing

terrorism threat (Hobfoll et al., 2009) compared to 9/11 (Bonanno et al., 2006), around 22% in contrast to 65% in a sample of both direct and indirect victims. It was explained in terms of resource loss, which was observed to be more dramatic during chronic terrorism exposure and thus people's resistance and resilience were depleted (Hobfoll et al., 2009). Similarly, results regarding posttraumatic growth is also in contradiction to the literature about the concept. Hobfoll et al. (2007) found that under ongoing terrorism, PTG was related to lower levels resilience and higher levels of chronic distress. This was explained with the cumulative terrorism threat leading to prolonged sense of vulnerability, and damaged social interactions due to lack of trust and reciprocity in the environment. In addition, prolonged terrorism may become a setback which impairs people's constructive efforts like making meaning out of the events or building new psychic structures (Hobfoll et al., 2007). All of those in return, was argued to become obstacles for PTG to show its protective effects. It was mentioned that during states of ongoing terrorism, PTG may become a way of emotion-focused coping that people employ to force themselves into believing something positive for the present and future that is actually not likely (Hobfoll et al., 2007). Though, it was also shown that when the meaning making aspect of PTG is translated into action, i.e. "action growth"; when people act on their beliefs and not stay at the cognitive-level growth, then PTG was able to reflect its beneficial effects. This was stated to be originating from the finding that PTG outcomes depend on the type and severity of the trauma (Stasko & Ickovics, 2007). Terrorism, and especially ongoing terrorism, is put into the category of traumatic events that are above the threshold, from where on conventional ways to conceptualize PTG cannot show its protective effects due to the cumulative stress and the depletion of resources. Only through action-based growth, victims' self-efficacy was enabled to be reconstructed, which is in fact an important predictor for PTG (Hobfoll et al., 2007; Stasko & Ickovics, 2007).

Furthermore, in ongoing terrorism context, initial use of denial coping strategy was found to be correlated with PTG (Butler et al., 2005). This is explained by the fact that the victim should be able to control the amount of information to process

regarding the traumatic event and block those that he / she is not ready for. This was suggested to bring successful processing of the information. Later on, this denial strategy was found to be turning into acceptance and positive reframing of the event, which was found to give rise to PTG in the long run. This was also mentioned to be the time where trauma-related stress symptoms decrease and PTG outcomes become more visible (Butler et al., 2005).

Overall, these data demonstrate that one-time only terrorist attacks and ongoing terrorism differ on several aspects with respect to their psychological repercussions. In order to comprehend the essence of terrorism and also those variations much better; coping processes, appraisals and social support systems of victims in the aftermath of terrorist attacks will be covered in the following sections.

1.8.4 Coping Processes in the Aftermath of Terrorist Attacks

In the aftermath of terrorist attacks, several coping strategies were found to be used both by direct and indirect victims in order to deal with the harm or threat of terrorism. Qualitative study of Freh et al. (2012) revealed that direct victims of ongoing terrorism in Iraq used strategies like relying on religion and God, social support, and avoidance. In the nationally representative sample from Israel, it was found that victims checked on the safety of acquaintances, talked to people about what can be done and also about feelings related to the attacks, and turning to God; which were also found to be useful strategies (Bleich et al., 2003). The same results were found after 9/11 following 3-4 days after the attacks in Schuster et al.'s study (2001). In the former study, also acceptance, searching media for information related to the attacks, and the use of humor were reported as strategies that were found useful by the victims. In the latter study, making donations was also found to be a prevalent coping mechanism.

The longitudinal study of Silver et al. (2002) found that active coping and acceptance in the immediate aftermath was protective for ongoing stress. On the other hand, they showed that early giving up responses, denial and self-destruction predicted later PTS reactions and ongoing global distress levels. Similarly, Liverant

et al. (2004) found that denial, behavioral and mental disengagement from the event, and focusing on and venting emotions which they named as dysfunctional coping styles were found to be correlated with increased anxiety scores of indirect victims after two months following 9/11 attacks. Focusing and venting on emotions were also found to be predictive of anxiety scores four months after the attack. Dickstein et al. (2012) demonstrated that while substance use, denial, disengagement and social support were found to be correlated with the occurrence of psychiatric symptoms; acceptance or positive reframing was found to be protective factors for victims living under ongoing terrorism of Israel. While the latter was employed by almost all of the Israeli citizens in the sample, at least one of the former dysfunctional strategies was employed as well.

Although 9/11 studies and some studies on ongoing terrorism support the existing literature, where emotion-focused coping strategies predict poorer adjustment to the threat of terrorism, ongoing terrorism literature seems to be also suggesting the opposite. For example, avoidance that is generally claimed to be a symptom of PTSD and a dysfunctional coping style, was found to reflect a survival value since public places generally become a target of terrorist attacks and carry unsafety signals (Hoffman et al., 2011). Additionally, data regarding ongoing terrorism revealed that while problem-focused coping strategies like looking for suspicious objects or identifying suspects is correlated with poorer outcomes and emotion-focused coping strategies like denial or social support seeking were related to worse outcomes similar to the 9/11 literature, there are also opposite findings regarding the beneficial effects of emotion-focused coping under states of ongoing terrorism (Cohen-Louck & Ben-David, 2016).

Since the ongoing terrorism threat includes a prevailing state of unpredictability and uncontrollability, emotion-focused coping was found to show beneficial outcomes for the victims (Maguen, Papa, & Litz, 2007). Gidron, Gal and Zahavi (1999) found that victims of ongoing terrorism in Israel who employed problem-focused coping styles had more adverse psychological reactions compared to those who used emotion-focused coping styles or denial. This was explained by the “goodness-of-fit

hypothesis” which is proposed by Lerner, Baker, & Lerner (1985). This hypothesis emphasizes the importance of the fit between the person and the environment, which is a point also mentioned in the coping theory of Lazarus and Folkman (1984) as well, who discussed the effects of unpredictable and uncontrollable situations. According to this hypothesis, what predicts the usefulness of a coping process is the context of the coping; and if this context includes a situation like ongoing terrorism which leads to appraisals of uncontrollability, then the better “fit” for this situation was found to be emotion-focused coping (Lerner et al., 1985; Maguen et al., 2007). Rather than focusing on attempts to change the problem, i.e. terrorism, which is outside the range of personal control, i.e. problem-focused coping, focusing on one’s psychological symptoms and trying to eliminate them is sometimes found to be more useful under such situations (Gidron et al., 1999). Zeidner (2006) states that problem-focused coping strategies under ongoing terrorism is hard to establish since it is almost impossible to protect oneself from the threat of terrorism or remove the source of the threat since it can happen anywhere and anytime.

What these data suggest is that there is no one absolute recommendation regarding the effectiveness of coping strategies and above all the context of the victims should be considered. The data of Zeidner’s study (2006) support this assumption, which showed that both emotion and problem-focused coping strategies were positively correlated with adaptive outcomes for indirect victims in the context of Israel’s ongoing terrorism. Probably the best solution is offered by Cohen-Louck and Ben-David (2016), who emphasize that what is important in a state of ongoing terrorism is the use of multiple and diverse coping styles rather than using an absolute single one, since the demands of the context show variations over time.

This information demonstrates that there is no best coping strategy working for every victim. However, it is known that there is a continuous interaction between cognitive appraisals and coping processes. Hence, it was found useful to analyze the data regarding victims’ appraisals in the terrorism context in order to further

conceptualize the coping processes. To this aim, the next section will cover some findings related to these cognitive appraisals.

1.8.5 Cognitive Appraisals in the Aftermath of Terrorist Attacks

According to Maguen et al. (2007), both types of coping processes are used in times of terrorist attacks. However, it is the primary and secondary appraisals that determine which coping would be beneficial for that given person; and there is no absolute solution to suggest which type works best for all victims under states of terrorism. It was revealed that terrorist attacks create a fear of future attacks and thus form threat appraisals with personal relevance (Maguen et al., 2007; Zeidner, 2006). These primary coping appraisals which indicate the affected community's sense of threat following terrorist attacks is shown to be correlated with higher stress levels, more emotion-focused coping (Zeidner, 2006), PTS reactions and PTG (Dekel & Nuttman-Schwartz, 2009). On the contrary, secondary appraisals which is measured by a victim's sense of personal control on the situation is found to be negatively correlated with the above mentioned variables (Zeidner, 2006). Information regarding these two appraisal processes demonstrated that they affect people's preferred coping behaviors (Maguen et al., 2007). To these processes, media has an additional effect, which was shown to elicit strong emotions like anxiety and intensified people's primary appraisals of threat leading to avoidance behaviors (Maguen et al., 2007). In addition to those, Bleich et al. (2003) demonstrated that despite high levels of PTS reactions and a low sense of safety, Israeli citizens also had positive appraisals like optimism regarding their own and country's future and also a sense of self-efficacy regarding their functioning in a probable future terrorist attack.

To sum up, it is recognized that appraisals affect coping processes which in turn affect the former leading to a continuous bidirectional effect. In states of terrorism threat, both of these systems were reported to be fundamental in order to understand the essence of victims' psychological experiences much better. Another such

system that is worth mentioning is the social support systems of victims in the aftermath of terrorist attacks.

1.8.6 Social Support in the Aftermath of Terrorist Attacks

Social support was found to have strong protective effects regarding the mental health consequences in the face of disasters (Kaniasty & Norris, 2004). This was suggested to be resulting from both the effects of social support on appraisals and thus successful coping strategies and also from its essence of being in itself an interpersonal coping strategy (Carpenter & Scott, 1992). In their meta-analysis, Brewin et al. (2000) found the lack of social support, which is both a peri-trauma and post-trauma factor as the best predictor of PTSD in trauma-exposed adults. This effect was also reflected in studies concerning one-time only and repeated terrorist attacks (Bleich et al., 2006; Galea et al., 2003). Although social support was shown to have significant positive effects on the victimized person or community under terrorism, it was also shown that it has detrimental effects and contribute to psychological distress (Dickstein et al., 2012; Dekel & Nuttman-Schwartz, 2009). Hobfoll and London (1986) explained this by the “pressure-cooker” effect of social sharing. This denotes the affected community’s reluctance to talk about the psychologically disruptive event after a while; since sharing becomes a consistent reminder of the event and contributes to members’ psychological distress. In addition, although following natural disasters there is a formation of “altruistic community”, where social cohesion and cooperation environment is formed; this is not the case in the aftermath of terrorist attacks (Kaniasty & Norris, 2004). Mostly, it was stated that what follows terrorist attacks is a community under suspicion and separation, to which authorities and media also contribute (Kaniasty & Norris, 2004).

Certainly, examining the social support literature even briefly gives an idea about how to be a victim under states of ongoing terrorism threat. These experiences were attempted to be explained during the previous sections, where various psychological reactions and processes, various victims, various types of traumatic events were

examined in detail. Keeping all of those points in mind, in the following part, a certain type of victim group that is college students, who are the participant of the current study, as indirect victims will be examined.

1.8.7 Effects of Terrorist Attacks on College Students

According to the literature, samples composed of youth were found to show more severe impairments than adult samples (Norris et al., 2002). Studies regarding both terrorism (Bonanno et al., 2007; Boscarino, Adams, & Figley, 2004) and traumatic events (Brewin et al., 2000) in general showed that younger age (18-29) is a significant risk factor for developing PTSD, depression and subsequent mental health visits. Liverant et al. (2004) found that indirectly affected college students who are miles away from the attack site after 9/11 showed elevated levels of anxiety symptoms and used several dysfunctional coping styles like denial or mental and behavioral disengagement, which affected the former variable adversely. These effects seemed to decrease over four months following the attack for many participants. The study of Murphy, Wismar, and Freeman (2003) which was conducted after 9/11 attack, emphasized that indirectly exposed college students displayed various stress reactions, and those students that were in later years of college experienced even more elevated distress. Graduating and leaving the academic setting, and entering into a new life stage filled with the worry of potential terrorist attacks were reported to be possible factors affecting their stress levels.

Several reasons could be given to explain why younger age is a risk factor for subsequent psychopathology. First of all, as it was mentioned, traumatic events bring losses. These losses include the loss of loved ones, the loss of roles or the loss of meaning, but for the case of youth, maybe more importantly the loss of future (Calhoun & Tedeschi, 1998). Such events may disrupt people's basic assumptions regarding the future, confuse people about how to move toward that future; and thus create massive anxiety. Moreover, these ages were reported to belong to a time period of identity explorations where one discovers who they really are (Arnett,

2000). Although Erikson (1963) described this entrance to a new life as a passage to adulthood, in contemporary societies, this time period of 18-25 is actually referred by the term “emerging adulthood”, where the major part of identity work occurs (Arnett, 2000; Steinberg & Morris, 2001). During this time, people finish their education, look for carrier alternatives, have relationships, and so not completely settle into the adult life. These explorations that make up one’s identity take place in three areas which are love, work, and worldviews (Arnett, 2000). Considering the fact that traumatic events become a turning point in people’s lives and result in profound changes in person’s identity (Berntsen & Rubin, 2007; Janoff-Bulman, 1988), the danger of this age period that is “role confusion” could be the case (Erikson, 1963). The inability to develop a stable sense of identity grounded on those three areas could disturb young people’s lives (Erikson, 1963).

After this brief literature review regarding the possible psychological effects of terrorism on indirectly victimized college students, who will be the sample of the current study; the subsequent section will cover an analysis of the current terrorism situation in Turkey that is also the context of this study.

1.9 The Situation in Turkey

Turkey, as a country being located in a juncture between Europe and the Middle East, has always become a target of terrorist groups (Yavuz et al., 2004; Cline, 2004). The major problem regarding terrorism during the years of 2000s was Al Qaida, which conducted several operations in other countries and in Turkey as well (Cline, 2004). Psychology literature regarding Turkish terrorism which is in fact very limited considering how often it affects the country, mostly centers around the attacks of Al-Qaeda in 2003 (Eşsizoglu et al., 2009). This terrorist group targeted synagogues, British Consulate General, and HSBC bank during a 5-day period. Vehicle bombings were used, killing more than 60 and injuring 750 people (Cline, 2004; Rodoplu et al., 2004). Results showed that the prevalence rates for PTSD and depression were 35.6% and 23.5%, respectively (Page, Kaplan, Erdogan, & Guler,

2009). Many direct and indirect victims were also found to be affected by those devastating events.

Although psychology of terrorism literature is limited in Turkey, it is confusing since Turkey has always been familiar especially with the term ongoing terrorism that is prevalent in the non-western literature, since the situation has almost always been like that in the southeastern region of Turkey (Criss, 1995). Over the years, this situation spread to the metropolitan areas like Istanbul or Ankara since this became a means for terrorist groups to attract attention and make their voices heard (Cline, 2004). Though the situation was more silent in metropolitan cities after the 2003 Istanbul bombings, attacks increased both in number and duration between the period of 2015-2017 (Cumhuriyet Istanbul Bureau, 2016; Montague, Rosen, & Williams, 2016). Not a stranger to such terrorist attacks from the past, Ankara, as the capital city, also witnessed several brutal attacks, beginning from October 10th 2015 (Türk Tabipleri Birliği, 2016). At that day, two suicide bombers from ISIS, a religious extremist terrorist group, carried out the deadliest terrorist attack in Turkish modern history (Arslan, 2016; Yeginsu & Arango, 2015). The group targeted “Labour, Peace and Democracy” rally which was arranged for asserting nationwide peace, especially in the southeastern region of Turkey. The attenders of the rally were various Turkish non-governmental organizations, labor unions, Turkish leftist parties, and other supporters of peace (Toksabay & Solaker, 2015). At this event, two consecutive attacks were carried out in front of the Ulus railway station, one of the headquarters of Ankara, resulting in a death toll of almost 100 civilians and more than 200 injuries (Türk Tabipleri Birliği, 2016).

Even though Ankara could not turn back to its normal life after the March 10 attack; on February 17th 2016 it was shaken by another terrorist attack. Also known as “Merasim Sokak Patlaması” which denotes the street name the attack took place in, was carried out by TAK, which is an extension of the Kurdish nationalist separatist group PKK (Letsch, 2016a). This street was located at the center of Ankara, Kızılay, where the Presidency of Turkish General Staff, Turkish Land Forces Command, and military housings are located. A terrorist car was exploded while the

Turkish military cars were crossing the street (Letsch, 2016a). This time the target was military as it was expected from the ideology of the stated terrorist group (Criss, 1995). This attack resulted in approximately 28 deaths and 60 injuries, mostly military personnel but also civilians who were nearby (Letsch, 2016a). Not so much time after this attack, on March 13th 2016, the most crowded main street of Ankara, Kızılay was hit by another attack known as “Güvenpark Saldırısı”, which takes its name from the well-known park near the street. Terrorist group was again TAK which chose car explosion as their method of violence (Letsch, 2016b). This brutal attack happened near a bus stop killing almost 38 civilians and leaving 125 injured (BBC Europe Bureau, 2016; Letsch, 2016b).

Finally, on July 15th 2016, a different type of terrorist attack took place. It was in fact a coup attempt conducted by a state terrorist group called “FETÖ” (Yavuz & Koç, 2016). This time, the terrorist group was not labelled as an outsider or extremist, but included an insider, i.e. Turkish military academy. The most affected city was again Ankara since it includes nearly all state and military buildings (NTV Turkey Bureau, 2016). The whole operation began with the military trucks’ shutting down the passages of Bosphorus bridge in Istanbul; and taking the head of military academies hostage (Adams, 2016); NTV Turkey Bureau, 2016). Then, military airplanes bombed many different areas in Ankara like the Turkish parliament and one of the headquarters of Security General Directorate. During this time, a manifesto was read in public television which was informing Turkish society that military forces took over the government and a curfew was declared. Air planes flew all night and their sounds were paired with explosions (Adams, 2016; NTV Turkey Bureau, 2016). Turkish president called out to Turkish citizens over his phone and invited them to get together and defend the state. After that, civilians began to fight military forces for nearly the whole night, which resulted in around 240 death toll and thousands injured (Yavuz & Koç, 2016).

These were the attacks which affected the capital city. During all of those times, terrorist attacks were happening in several other regions of Turkey by various extremist groups, breeding devastating results (Cumhuriyet Istanbul Bureau, 2016).

Although the Eastern region is still under a state of ongoing terrorism, this situation was calmed down in metropolitan cities after the attack in a famous night club of Istanbul on 2017 New Year (Cumhuriyet Istanbul Bureau, 2016). Ankara, on the other hand, has not witnessed an attack after July 15th.

Apart from them, after July 15th coup attempt, government declared state of emergency abbreviated as “OHAL” (Kandemir & Jones, 2016; 2016/9064 Sayılı Bakanlar Kurulu Kararı, 2016). This emergency declaration was an attempt to reconstruct the state and democracy security after the coup attempt (Kandemir & Jones, 2016). Although began with a transitory period of three months, it was extended and it still continues (Olağanüstü Halin Uzatılmasına Dair Karar, 2017).

These information concerning Turkey point out to several differences between this context and those that were covered above like that of U.S.A., Europe, Israel or Iraq. These incompatibilities will be discussed in the following section.

1.9.1 Problems of Adapting Terrorism Literature to Turkey

In the light of these information, it can be argued that Turkey’s situation was neither similar to that of U.S.A and Europe nor to that of Israel or Iraq. To begin with, the problem of defining terrorism becomes even more complicated for Turkey due to several reasons. This is firstly due to the fact that, while targets of terrorism include both civilian and non-civilian communities (police officers, soldiers); the perpetrators pursue divergent motivations and use various methods to declare those motivations (Cumhuriyet Istanbul Bureau, 2016; Montague et al., 2016).

Apart from that, the importance of detecting and providing necessary help was highlighted to be important (Schuster et al., 2001). Compared to those who were provided help, people without psychological help were reported to have more difficulty in terms of working through the traumatic experience (Sprang, 2001). Additionally, considering that showing acute stress symptoms is a risk factor for developing PTSD in the long run (Blanchard et al., 2004), conducting large scale mental health scanning and interventions as early as possible was reported to be

crucial (Delisi et al., 2003; Schuster et al., 2001). Aker et al. (2008) argues that it is important for Turkish mental health providers to provide assistance and psychoeducation in the aftermath of terrorist attacks. However, they suggested those interventions be preventive and not corrective. Unfortunately, the disaster management system of Turkey was reported to focus mostly on the responses in the aftermath; and that there is inadequate preparedness in the society (Gülkan & Karanci, 2012; Karanci, 2013). What those terrorist events in Turkey showed was that there were no combined, state-funded and well-organized mental health services like Project Liberty (New York) or Project Heartland (Oklahoma City), which provided help to 1.2 million and 9345 Americans, respectively (Donahue, Lanzara, Felton, Essock, & Carpinello, 2006; Pfefferbaum et al., 2002). The interventions that were provided by limited number of Turkish organizations had no pre-existing plan about how to manage community health after terrorist attacks, since disaster guidelines in Turkey were suitable for natural disasters like earthquakes (Gülkan & Karanci, 2012). Although this was also the case after 9/11, many experts worked rapidly to create a plan for that specific occasion, applied it and assessed its impacts (Donahue et al., 2006).

As it was mentioned before, every country should be evaluated in their own terms since the definition of terrorism, and the response of communities vary significantly from each other (Hoffman, 1998; Page et al, 2009). The existing literature regarding one-time terrorist attacks are not directly comparable to the condition of Turkey. Although the situation of Eastern societies seems more similar to Turkey, still it was argued that psychological reactions given to community disasters change significantly across different countries (Page et al., 2009). Thus, ongoing terrorism literature, too, cannot be easily translated into Turkish culture, since there is a continuous threat environment with discontinuous attacks. Considering the social and cultural characteristics of Turkish community, like its Muslim culture, inclusion of various ethnic groups, importance attached to social support systems, and its biases regarding mental health and mental health services; the results need to be compared with caution (Page et al., 2009). In addition to the current state of

terrorism threat, there are also factors that complicate the situation and make it incomparable due to the state of emergency Turkey has been going through.

Aside from those, although there are a few published studies regarding the psychological effects of terrorism on emerging adults (Bonanno et al., 2007; Boscarino et al., 2004; Murphy et al., 2003), the information is not sufficient to allow for a generalization and create a concrete base which will allow researchers to develop research hypotheses. Those that exist in the literature used measurement tools that are designed to assess psychological symptoms reported in DSM-V (Hoffman et al., 2011; Norris et al., 2002). However, it is known that assessing psychological effects using those criteria provides insufficient information since having probable PTSD or significant distress in fact reflect normal and adaptive responses when the situation involves a continuous threat (Hoffman et al., 2011). When the studies are conducted in this way and observe symptoms, it was found hard to understand what people actually experience and what meaning they give to their current situation. Moreover, considering the unique situation Turkey is going through right now, it seems important to discover rather than test some pre-existing knowledge. There was a need to investigate the mental representations of those events in the minds of emerging adults, who are indirect victims of terrorist attacks and who are exposed widely to the attacks through various media channels or stories from their social circles. Especially under states of ongoing terrorism, consequences are usually summarized by numbers. Those are numbers of death or injured, or those that are affected (e.g. Delisi et al., 2003). However, it was argued to be important that instead of degrading people again to percentages by using statistical techniques; their experiences and adaptations to this new reality should be learnt. Especially, indirect victims like the participants of this study are usually forgotten and also known in the literature as “silent” or “hidden” victims. Their coping mechanisms are also mostly unknown (Liverant et al., 2004). Hence, it was argued that their experiences should be made more visible at least in the psychology literature.

1.10 The Research Question and The Aims of the Current Study

In light of the information provided above, it was proposed that there is a need to investigate the experiences of college students who have been vicariously exposed to the terrorist attacks in a Turkish context. Since the current situation of continuous terrorism threat and uncertainty is new to Turkey and the literature review reflected the scarcity of studies on the impact of ongoing terrorist attacks in Turkey, it seemed important to understand the experiences of Turkish college students. Moreover, due to the limitations of using conventional tools that are based only on symptomatology as given in the DSM-V, it seems appropriate to use a qualitative approach to capture the experiences of the youth. Thus, it is proposed that in order to understand the experiences fully, the focus should be on understanding how youth adapts to this new reality, what psychological processes they have been going through, what meaning they have given to these experiences and how they have coped with the situation. An in-depth qualitative evaluation is likely to reveal important aspects of the experiences of these “silent”, indirect victims of terrorist events. In the pursue of these information, a broad research question was asked: “What are the psychological impacts of indirect exposure to ongoing terrorist attacks on Turkish youth?”

Following this research question, the aim of the current study is to investigate the psychological experiences of 3rd and 4th year college students, who are about to graduate and enter into a new phase of their lives, and who have consistently been indirect victims of the ongoing terrorism threat in Turkey, and specifically the terrorist attacks in Ankara.

Based on this ultimate aim of this study, the study sought to understand the following aspects of their experiences:

1. To understand the initial psychological reactions (feelings, thoughts, behaviors) of indirectly victimized college students
2. To understand the psychological processes of meaning making and adopting since the recent terrorist attacks

3. To investigate the long-term psychological reactions (feelings, thoughts, behaviors) of indirectly victimized college students
4. To understand the coping mechanisms of indirectly victimized college students under ongoing terrorism threat
5. To understand mental representations and meanings of indirectly victimized college students regarding the ongoing terrorism threat

CHAPTER 2

METHOD

2.1 Ontological and Epistemological Position of the Researcher

Before passing onto the main methodology part, the ontological and epistemological position of the researcher which guided the whole research process will be discussed very briefly. This was thought to be a helpful way to integrate the readers more to the study, and allow them to make interpretations.

To begin with, ontology deals with the question of what is real and includes different positions depending on the answer given to this question (Willig, 2013). For the current study, the “critical realist” ontological position is embraced. This means that there is an objective external world and truth, but people can only know a minor part of the whole reality (Howitt, 2000). This achieved reality would carry the subjective perspective of the researcher. Since how things really are could not be separated from researcher’s subjective world or meaning system; the final analysis would not reflect the one and only objective reality of the research topic, but only one interpretation of it (Willig, 2013).

On the other hand, epistemology deals with the theory of knowledge and attempts to answer the question of what we know and how can we know (Willig, 2013). As an epistemological position, I adopt “contextual constructionism” (Madill, Jordan, & Shirley, 2000). According to this position, there is not only one way to reach the knowledge. Both the researcher and the participants of the research are conscious human beings continually trying to make sense of the world around them and thereby creating their own reality (Madill et al., 2000). Hence, the results will vary depending on the context in which the data was collected and analyzed. According to this epistemological position, the subjectivity of the researcher has a significant

place since he / she is an essential part of knowledge construction process (Madill et al., 2000). For this reason, it is essential that the readers are informed about the characteristics of the researcher and this construction process (Willig, 2013). This information is included in the “Reflexivity” section at the end of the methodology part.

2.2 Methodology

In order to reach the aims of the current study, qualitative design was found to be the most appropriate design. Although qualitative methodology has a long history in the fields of sociology and philosophy; in recent years, there has been a growing interest in using them to investigate psychological constructs (Smith, 2008). According to Howitt (2010), human beings construct social reality as they strive to make sense of the world around them. They ascribe meaning to their lived experiences. Qualitative researchers try to discover these meanings through their methods which provide them with rich and detailed understanding of the individual experiences. They try to establish the meaning from the viewpoint of individuals and interpreting records about them (Howitt, 2010). To this aim, qualitative researchers do not have the intention of constructing hypothesis based on prior theories, but create broad research questions which point to a certain direction where the information is suggested to be lying (Willig, 2013). Especially, if the social situation at hand is a complex one, qualitative design was stated to give valuable information and pave the way for discovery (Howitt, 2010). As stated before, the current study tries to capture the essence of lived experiences of indirect victims under the state of ongoing terrorism threat. Since phenomenological approaches of qualitative methodologies give researchers the opportunity to explore these real life experiences more openly and in a more naturalistic way, it was found to be an appropriate design. Considering that emerging adults living in Ankara are familiar with the current situation of Turkey, it was expected that information regarding their experiences and meanings they attach to those experiences will come from them rather than from some pre-set assumptions. In order to discover the real life experiences, which is also the main focus of the current study, qualitative

researchers use semi-structured interviews, which give participants the opportunity to talk freely and explain their own perspectives (Willig, 2013). As participants do this more openly and freely, they also provide researchers the chance to observe the relevant information emerge from the data. Within the scope of the qualitative design, more specifically, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis was used as the method of qualitative data analysis. Information regarding this analysis will be discussed later on in the “Data Analysis” section.

2.3 Participants

A purposive sampling method was employed to create a rather homogenous sample that is consistent with IPA guidelines (Smith & Osborn, 2003). The sample size was also consistent with the guidelines since the idiographic approach of IPA posits the in-depth exploration of each individual’s experience; and so large sample sizes are usually not recommended. Generally, samples composed of 1-15 participants are suggested to be useful (Smith & Osborn, 2003). Since enough saturation was accomplished, after the 10th interview, recruitment process was terminated. The final sample comprised of ten participants, who were 3rd and 4th year undergraduate students from various departments studying at Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey (see Table 1).

Five of them were female and five of them were male. Their age range was between 21 and 25. While six of them were living inside the campus, at METU dormitories with their friends; three of them were living with their friends at home in different districts of Ankara (Ayrancı, Kızılay, 100.Yıl) and one of them was living with her family (in Dikmen).

Three of the females in the final sample reported that they had been going to psychotherapy several years ago (either two, four or five). While two of them mentioned that they were diagnosed with depression, one of them reported that she had symptoms of major depressive disorder and general anxiety disorder. All of them reported that they have recovered. In addition, one male in the study reported that he has the diagnosis of attention-deficit disorder and is still using drugs related

to it. Apart from that, two of the males answered the question related to their previous traumatic experiences by saying that they have lost their loved ones. One of them explained that he lost his grandfather and the other said his father. The remaining information and further details about the participants could be found in Table 1. All of the information provided in this table were collected at the beginning of the interview. In order to ensure confidentiality, the names of the participants were modified both in the table and in the remaining part of the study.

2.4 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

In order to create a certain amount of homogeneity as consistent with IPA guidelines (Smith & Osborn, 2003), which provide a more reliable basis for examining the similarities and differences (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014) across different participants, the below criteria were applied. More specifically, participants were required:

- a) To be indirect victims who did not experience any of the terrorist attacks directly or not having passed from the attack site in the immediate hours after the attack
- b) To be in Ankara during the attacks of October 10th, February 17th, and March 13th
- c) To be indirect victims who experienced the attacks vicariously, i.e. through various media sources or word of mouth
- d) Not to have a friend or a relative who died or was injured during the terrorist attacks.
- e) Not to be in Ankara or Istanbul on July 15th coup attempt.

Table 1
Sociodemographic and Psychological Information of Participants

Name of the Participant	Gender	Age	Department	Residence	Religious Belief	Socioeconomic Status	Previous Psychological Support	Psychiatric Diagnosis	Other Traumatic Event
Arda	M	23	Aerospace Engineering	METU Dormitory	Moderate	Middle	None	None	Loss of a loved one (grandfather)
Duru	F	25	Electrical And Electronics Engineering	Home with friends (Kızılay)	None	Middle	2 years ago	Depression	None
Anıl	M	24	Electrical And Electronics Engineering	METU Dormitory	None	Middle	None	None	None
Leyla	F	24	Molecular Biology and Genetics	METU Dormitory	High	Middle - High	5 years ago	Major Depressive and General Anxiety Disorder	None
Ezgi	F	21	Food Engineering	Home with family (Dikmen)	Moderate	High	4 years ago	Depression	None
Tolga	M	22	Industrial Engineering	METU Dormitory	Moderate	Middle	None	None	Loss of a loved one (Father)
Okan	M	23	Electrical And Electronics Engineering	Home with friends (Ayrancı)	None	Middle – High	None	None	None
Doruk	M	23	Electrical And Electronics Engineering	Home with friends (100.yıl)	Low	Middle	None	Attention-Deficit Disorder (use of drugs)	None
Selen	F	21	Mechanical Engineering	METU Dormitory	Low	Middle	None	None	None
Melis	F	22	Food Engineering	METU Dormitory	None	Middle	None	None	None

The final criterion (f) was added as an inclusion criterion after the 1st interview. Before this 1st interview, not having a direct contact with the attacks on 15th July was proposed as an example of indirect victimization. However, the first participant who was in Ankara on that particular day, commented that she was affected by that event more than the others because of the helicopter sounds, explosions, and the thoughts of becoming the target of those attacks. Those descriptions were found more similar to the experiences of direct victimization. Since the effects of coup attempt night was extensive, intense and wide-ranging, it was found to be hard to distinguish if it was a direct or indirect victimization. It was decided that adding it would complicate the results by disrupting the homogeneity of the sample and be in contrast to the study aims. Thus, it was added as an exclusion criterion from the 1st interview on. Also, the interview of this 1st participant was not analyzed and not included in the results of the current study.

Furthermore, the second interviewee was also eliminated from the analysis since it was learnt during the interview that she lost a relative during the events on July 15. This was also putting her into the category of direct victimization and thus she was eliminated from the final analysis as well.

2.5 Materials

Sociodemographic question form was used which was established beforehand by the researcher and her supervisor (see Appendix A). It included questions regarding participants' age, socioeconomic status, the residence in Ankara, with whom they live with, where their family lives and their previous mental health history.

Further, semi-structured interview questions were used to gather information on the indirect trauma victimization experiences of participants. It was recommended to be an appropriate method to collect extensive and detailed information regarding the lived phenomena of participants; and most widely used method of data collection in both qualitative analysis and more specially in IPA (Smith & Osborn, 2003; Willig, 2013). In order to guide the researcher during the interview, the research questions were created beforehand which targeted the research aims and the research

question. This was also included in the researcher's interview guide (see Appendix B).

In addition to those, psychoeducation material was used. Its content was adapted from Turkish Psychological Association, Trauma Unit, standard psychoeducation package (Türk Psikologlar Derneği, 2016).

2.6 Procedure

After obtaining ethical approval from the Middle East Technical University Human Subjects Ethics Committee, two pilot interviews were conducted in order to test the interview questions. Based on this, some questions were refined and the study interviews were started. Word of mouth was used as the recruitment method. To this aim, social media and networks were used. A social media group of METU students was used in order to announce the research and sought participants. This announcement notice included information regarding the purpose of the study, procedure of the interviews, inclusion criteria; and invited people to take part in it. All participants were given a supermarket card with 50 Turkish Liras spending limit as a reward of participation to the study. This approach was taken in order to increase the inadequate interest regarding the study. Interested participants contacted the researcher via telephone number or social media account. Through these means, the researcher gave information regarding the interviews, answered the questions of interested parties and made an appointment for the interview time with those who were willing to take part. At that time, the researcher greeted the interviewee in front of the Social Sciences Building at METU. The interviews took place either in the supervisor's (Prof. Dr. A. Nuray Karancı) or in the assistant room in this building, which were selected because they had a comfortable and private atmosphere and gave the researcher opportunity to conduct the interview without any interruption.

When the interviewer and the participant met, first informed consent was obtained. It included the explanations regarding the aim and process of the study, ethical considerations and confidentiality principles (see Appendix C). After the

participants gave their consent to take part in the study and be recorded during the interview, the tape-recorder was activated. Then, some basic demographic information was gathered with pre-set questions in the form. This was applied verbally in order to begin building rapport.

After gathering those information, a semi-structured interview was conducted in accordance with IPA guidelines (Smith & Osborn, 2003). However, the essence of qualitative analysis and its data collection method of semi-structured interviews comes from its flexibility. For this reason, participants were encouraged to talk freely about topics they found important; and the order of questions was open to change. Thus, the researcher directed the interview process based on the material coming from the participants and shaped the questions accordingly. Overall, the interviews lasted between 31 and 82 minutes. The average time for all interviews was 52.20 minutes.

After the interview was done, the interviewer made a summary of what the participants talked about during the interview; and she also answered the questions of participants regarding the study or their experiences. Based on the participants' material, a brief psychoeducation was given to all participants. The psychoeducation material of Turkish Psychological Association, Trauma Unit (Türk Psikologlar Derneği, 2016), was also given in printed form to the participants at the end of the interview (see Appendix D). Participants were also provided with contact numbers of the researcher and some other relevant numbers, if they would demand psychological help in the future. These numbers belong to Ayna Clinical Psychology Support Unit, which is an extension of METU Psychology Department located in the METU territory and where both the researcher and her supervisor work as clinical psychologists. Other contact numbers included the number of Turkish Psychological Association, who provided free support to those in need after terrorist attacks; and also METU Counselling Center. All of these relevant information was included in the brochure that is given to the participants (see Appendix E).

2.7 Data Analysis

Unlike other qualitative analysis methods, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), which has its roots from health psychology, is broadly applied in the psychology field. In time, it spread to various areas of psychology like clinical and social psychology (Howitt, 2010). It is a phenomenological method of qualitative analysis, which focuses on individual perspectives and aims to understand how people make sense of their experiences (Creswell, 2009).

The fundamental principles of IPA reach out to Edmund Husserl's phenomenology and Heidegger's hermeneutics (Howitt, 2010; Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). While the former principle that is grounded on Husserl's phenomenology allows for the investigation of people's lived experiences, i.e. phenomena; the latter that is based on Heidegger's hermeneutics means that its focus is on how people make sense of those experiences (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). However, IPA extends the second principle and claims double hermeneutics, which integrates researchers in the analytic process more. This means that IPA embraces researchers' making sense of the people who try to make sense of their experiences. Thus, IPA researchers have an active role during this interpretative process (Smith & Osborn, 2003). They try to enter into the personal world of participants, look from their perspective, explore the experience in detail and try to capture the meanings they give to those phenomena. In addition to those principles, there is a final aspect of IPA which concerns symbolic interactionism (Howitt, 2010). Through putting the meanings people take out of phenomena at the center, symbolic interactionism supports that these meanings can only be obtained through social interactions since they are the places where people construct meaning. This certainly attach significant value to social communication (Howitt, 2010).

The qualitative method of IPA has the features of being "idiographic, inductive and interrogative" (Smith, 2004). Its idiographic approach implies that it begins to investigate the research question through an in-depth analysis of one individual and continues with the same analysis in the second one. Moreover, IPA is inductive

which means that it does not claim to test hypothesis, but to create broad research questions. Through asking questions concerning this aim, it has the intention of collecting extensive data and contributing to the literature through interrogation, which points to its last feature (Smith, 2004). This means that IPA questions the existing research by analyzing complex or novel phenomena (Smith & Osborn, 2003). Through the establishment of all those features, it tries to reach its ultimate aim of examining the phenomena at hand and how they are established in the imaginary world of individuals.

The current study aims to investigate a novel situation that Turkey has been going through for almost two years, through the lens of young college students. Until now, there is no known study about this issue and thus only broad research questions and aims were posed to investigate this topic. Instead of numerical data, experiences of indirect victims are the focus of attention, and IPA is known to be a suitable method for this type of an exploratory study. It was especially found to be an appropriate method of inquiry because it has especially been proven to be useful when researchers are concerned with complexity or novelty (Smith & Osborn, 2003). The current study also used semi-structured interviews, which was proposed to be a suitable method in IPA guidelines (Smith & Osborn, 2003).

Using this method, the researcher transcribed the recorded interviews verbatim. Data were analyzed following IPA guidelines of Smith and Osborn (2003). The analysis began after the interview of the first participant. Its transcription was read several times in order to gain an adequate level of familiarity. Then, the researcher took notes on the left margin of the transcript, and used the right margin for emerging themes. This theme abstraction process was done in an interpretative manner as it was recommended by the guidelines (Smith & Osborn, 2003). Afterwards, superordinate and subordinate themes were formed for the first case and a table demonstrating those themes and their connections were created. The observations, feelings, and notes of the researcher during the interview were also included in the analysis. When this procedure was applied to the first case, researcher passed on to the second case and followed the same procedure. Finally,

cross-case comparison was done to make sense of the repeated themes and a table is formed for the recurrent themes across all cases. These themes were supported by examples of key sentences from participants' transcripts. All the analyses were conducted by the researcher, who took a qualitative research course during her graduate education, where she was also trained specifically about IPA.

2.8 Trustworthiness of the Study

Qualitative research has some standards which help researchers generate credible and rigorous results. These standards of quality constitute the trustworthiness of a qualitative study. They can be organized in the following way: (1) subjectivity, (2) reflexivity, (3) adequacy of data, and (4) adequacy of interpretation (Morrow, 2005). All of these markers of quality were attempted to be attained by the researcher as much as possible and they will be summarized.

Preliminarily, it was assumed that interpretations could never be separated from interpreter's perspective and thus the researcher would always be involved in the process of attaining knowledge in this study (Creswell, 2009; Fischer, 2009). From the moment the research idea was adopted to the part the results are reported, researcher was always an active participant of the process. In other words, the subjective position of the researcher was acknowledged, embraced; and it was used as a part of data analysis (Fischer, 2009).

The second standard of qualitative research is reflexivity and it can be defined as "thoughtful and conscious self-awareness" (Finlay, 2002, p. 532). In order to allow the readers to get involved in the whole research process and help them develop alternative readings of the data, it is necessary that researchers become transparent and report their own processes as a part of reflexivity (Fischer, 2009). During the research process; personal experience, sociocultural background, and assumptions of the researcher regarding the research topic was tried to be bracketed out in order to be open to the emerging themes and to avoid influencing the data. Researcher either questioned or owned the influence of own subjective position, but either way, all of these were reported in the next section called "Reflexivity".

In order to be aware of one's subjective position during research, several strategies have been suggested (Elliott, Fischer, & Rennie, 1999; Finlay, 2002; Patton, 2002). These suggestions were tried to be followed in this study. First of all, self-reflective notes were taken during the whole research process from beginning to the end that carry researcher's understanding of the world and these were disclosed in the results section. Besides, the emerging themes were supported by several direct quotations from the interviews. In an attempt to create a ground for the readers, relevant information and observations about the participants were also incorporated to the reports (Elliott et al., 1999). Additionally, during the data analysis, the supervisor (Prof. Dr. A. Nuray Karancı) and a peer, who is also a clinical psychologist and using IPA, were consulted. They gave feedback to the researcher regarding the transcripts and themes.

Apart from those, the researcher was an insider of the research topic and being an insider was mentioned to improve the trustworthiness (Morrow, 2005). However, this may also affect the interpretations fallibly. Thus, in order to ensure trustworthiness, the researcher asked for clarification from the participants and requested feedback during and after the interview.

Third standard to ensure trustworthiness is the collection of adequate data (Morrow, 2005). To this aim, triangulation was employed, where multiple data sources were used. Researcher used interview contents, her reflexive notes, and participant checks. Finally, to ensure interpretation adequacy, researcher tried to get immersed in the data and gain a deeper understanding of participants' internal world by reading the transcripts several times, listening to audio-records and re-reading her reflexive notes (Frost, 2011; Morrow, 2005). In the final part, adequate number of direct quotations were tried to be given with their relevant interpretations.

2.9 Reflexivity

By accepting the position that perspectives could never be ruled out, the subjective position of the researcher and its impact during the whole research process were accepted. In order to allow the readers to take out their own interpretations,

reporting on researcher's reflexivity was reported to be an important factor during qualitative analysis (Creswell, 2009). In order to better capture the experiences, the subjective position, the background, own experiences and understandings of the researcher were attempted to be bracketed out, i.e. set aside, during the whole research process as suggested in qualitative reports (Creswell, 2009; Morrow, 2005).

In order to invite the readers to my research process and allow them to understand the interrelation between my own personal experiences and this process, I tried to be self-reflexive from the moment I decided on this very topic. In order to do this in a proper way, I kept self-reflexive notes, where I wrote down my thoughts and feelings during the whole research process. Below, I will partially disclose these notes to the readers. The ones that I felt or thought during the interviews will be narrated during the results part.

Preliminarily, I am an insider in this topic. I am a 26-year old Turkish citizen and I have lived for my whole life in Turkey, either in Istanbul or Ankara. So, I am also familiar with the concept of terrorism and became an indirect victim of it for many years. When I was a child, PKK terrorism was widespread in the Eastern region of Turkey and it also spread to where I live, Istanbul, from time to time. Likewise, when I was middle school, there were some prominent attacks in Istanbul performed by Al-Qaeda, from which I especially remember the one happened to the HSBC building since my mother could have been around the attack site that day. Although neither I nor anyone I know have been personally affected by those attacks, we have all lived the devastating effect of those attacks since that attacked HSBC building was not renovated for a long time, which carried the terror signs. These were the attacks that I could remember although there were many enduring attacks happening all over Turkey. However, the "I could have been there" or "somebody I know could have been there" effect was so significant that only those attacks created significant impacts on me.

Since the problems of Turkey are not resolved, the history began to repeat itself. The previous two years was like a repetition of past days for metropolitan cities. Like many of the residents, I was indirectly victimized by the attacks as well, which happened both in Istanbul and Ankara. For the attacks in Istanbul, I felt that my memories with my friends or my family in those target places were damaged; and for the attacks in Ankara I felt this damage in addition to the powerful fear of direct victimization. Like many of the participants in this study, I was affected mostly from the Güvenpark and Gar attacks, most probably due the close connection and similarity that I felt towards the direct victims and I felt that myself or somebody I know could have been there. My workplace is also located near Güvenpark, from where I walk almost every day for the last year; where I felt fear from time to time, especially if there is a warning related to a possible terrorist attack. On July 15th coup attempt, I was neither in Istanbul nor in Ankara, so I did not feel that tragic night. This could have been the reason I was only able to comprehend after the 1st interview that it was actually an example of direct victimization.

During the interviews, I have passed through a different phase. I was thinking and feeling more or less similar to the participants I interviewed. This was partly because we were from the same age group and social environment; and partly because we were all indirect victims of ongoing terrorist attacks that happened in Ankara. I believe this helped me to understand them better and gave me the opportunity to communicate with them more easily since we were speaking the same language. As I talked with them and analyzed the interviews, I discovered the changes in my inner and relational world due to the terrorist attacks, which I did not discover or name them beforehand. Thus, the interviews were a time of discovery for me, as well. The topics that occurred during the interviews, which were more foreign to me, I analyzed with my supervisor and tried to make sense of them. Observing the psychological distress and sustaining changes even in the indirectly victimized people was making me feel sorrow for the youth. I felt that the previous years were like a time that none of us will ever forget. But as I observed the positive changes participants mentioned, I felt hopeful and retained my belief in the growth

of people. In times that I felt more desperate, I talked to my thesis supervisor, who always retained her hope and belief in growth; and who influenced me in significant positive ways. Despite these, the data analysis stage was maybe the hardest time for me. I was reading the interview transcripts and analyzing them in-depth for several hours; and this process lasted for a long time like this. Exposing myself to these contents was making me feel mostly sad and angry; and also making me think about existential matters. Thus, I felt the urge to stay away from the interviews and then compelled myself to return back.

To conclude, during these two years, I felt many feelings like fear, anger, helpless, hopeless or sad. But most importantly I felt much desperate which came the hardest to me. I had the chance to attend some educations or debriefing meetings that were done both by my supervisor or other Ayna Clinical Psychology Unit psychologists, where I could both observe and learn about providing post-attack psychological support. But back then, I had no therapy experience, so I could not use this in the post-attack period. Hence, I began to read and this study became the result of this, which was also somehow coping for me with the current state of terrorism.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

In this part, the analysis carried out with the data from the ten interviews will be provided. In order to better illustrate the emerging themes, readers will be provided with the quotations of participants taken from the interviews. During this process, the pseudonym for their names will be used.

The analysis of ten interviews resulted in four superordinate themes. An overview of the superordinate and their subordinate themes are presented in Table 2. The superordinate themes that emerged in the final analysis were:

1. Evaluations about Terrorism and Turkey
2. The Characteristics of Events
3. Psychological Impacts
4. Coping

It is worthy to note that the below themes and interpretations are only one way to approach the collected data. Considering the fact that the researcher is also an indirect victim living in Ankara, Turkey, so she is an insider, this must have contributed to the interpretation process despite attempts to be self-reflexive, use multiple perspectives and attempts to bracket out own perspectives. Indeed, as reported earlier, the researcher argues the position that perspectives could be never ruled out entirely.

In the following section, the superordinate and subordinate themes will be presented. Additionally, their related excerpts from the participants will be provided as detailed as possible in order to allow the readers to conceptualize them properly and allow them for alternative readings of the data.

Table 2. <i>Summary of Superordinate and Subordinate Themes</i>	
Superordinate Themes	Subordinate Themes
Evaluations about Terrorism and Turkey	Evaluations about reasons and aims of terrorism Evaluations about Turkey's past, present and future Views on the solution of terrorism problem
The Characteristics of Events	The targets of a terrorist attack The nature of terrorism The development of an insecure environment Social polarization becoming more evident
Psychological Impacts	Heightened feelings and triggers Thinking about existential issues Temporarily suspending life Relatively long-standing changes in the inner world Relatively long-standing changes in the relational world
Coping	Immediate attempts to calm down Attempts of re-adaptation Togetherness Avoidance Holding onto a positive future The passage of time

3.1 Evaluations about Terrorism and Turkey

The first superordinate theme is called *evaluations about terrorism and Turkey*. It emerged from the accounts of participants, where they discussed the current and future situation of Turkey in relation to terrorism. While they were explaining how they were affected, their views on the situation of Turkey and terrorism entered into the picture frequently; and this indicated that they are in fact closely connected to each other.

This superordinate theme has the following subordinate themes which will be discussed in the next section: (3.1.1) evaluations about reasons and aims of terrorism; (3.1.2) evaluations about Turkey's past, present and future; and (3.1.3) views on the solution of terrorism problem.

3.1.1 Evaluations about the Reasons and Aims of Terrorism

The first subordinate theme is *evaluations about reasons and aims of terrorism*. This theme represents the thoughts of nine participants regarding why and for what purpose terrorist attacks happen in Turkey and why they spread to metropolitan cities like Ankara during the previous years. The reasons they provided concerned mostly the political status of Turkey. The view that attacks have spread to Ankara due to wrong political decisions; and they are a reflection of terrorist groups' reactions towards those decisions was quite pronounced. Melis explained this in the following way: "Politics, wrong diplomacy... I think the reasons for all these is the politics". It was observed that participants came to this conclusion mostly through considering their previous experiences related to terrorist attacks. They said that there was a connection between the timing of the attacks and the political imbalance in Turkey. They mostly pointed out that the attacks in Ankara or Istanbul mostly happened around election times, during which the political condition was unsteady.

In addition to explaining the reasons from a wider perspective, participants also evaluated the situation from the perspective of terrorist groups as well. In general, they said that such groups advocate specific sociopolitical ideologies. Thus, these

attacks are a reflection or a means to convey those ideologies. By referring to this point, Okan said “When communities are suppressed, they may choose terrorism as a method of expressing their ideologies”.

However, even if these points are taken into account, it seemed like these explanations were not enough to explain the method used by terrorism, i.e. exploding oneself on the pursue of ideologies. Thus, participants gave some extra explanations about specific psychological factors that may have contributed to terrorists’ motivation in conducting the bombing. They thought that the self-bomber is a person who is full of hatred and who “has nothing to lose in life”. In the below quotation of Doruk, the history of communities and people’s resulting emotions are illustrated:

The fact that the U.S.A. entered into Iraq and killed people there. These groups could be formed because of the hatred brought by those events. I do not approve of a Muslim carrying out such actions... We say Turks, but there are both good and bad Turks. I think this results from the human nature and not religion. Terrorism develops due to the strong emotions of human beings, their inner nature... I think that people are deceived and dragged into terrorism.

In addition to the reasons, participants also provided some explanations regarding the aims of terrorism. They said that the ultimate aim of terrorism is to threaten or damage the government. In the pursue of this aim, they also mean to create a society of fear and to widen the area of threat by killing limited number of citizens. Selen referred to this in the following way: “I can definitely say that it spread fear. The attacks have succeeded in this. But this is the nature and ultimate aim of terrorism.”

3.1.2 Evaluations about Turkey’s Past, Present and Future

The second subtheme is *evaluation of Turkey’s past, present and future*. This theme represents participants’ thoughts regarding the past and current sociopolitical state of Turkey and their expectations for future in relation to terrorist attacks.

Participants mentioned that in the past, there were no such attacks in where they lived and that Turkey was a more peaceful country. In fact, they evaluated this from their own point of view. As the next quotation of Tolga illustrates, there was terrorism before, but as citizens living in metropolitan cities, they were experiencing those events always from a significant distance: “When I was a child, we were happy. We were peaceful... There was PKK terrorism but it was in the mountainous areas. Back then, terrorism was not spread into metropolis”. However, it did spread to metropolis and they have started to live with a life threat throughout some time. The next quotation of Duru illustrates how distant fearful news turned into a personal one. She pointed out that during the previous years, citizens began to pay more attention to terrorism news across the nation: “You know we used to hear news like there was an explosion in front of the mosque in Baghdad... The situation in Turkey is in fact like that right now. Continuously, we hear news around the country reporting the death of some people”.

Although, there are terrorist attacks in European cities in these days as well, participants evaluated the situation of Turkey in a more different way. They mainly think that the terrorist attacks here are more pervasive, ongoing and intense. They reported that what is worse is that in such a state of disseminative fear, the government falls short in protecting its citizens and thus the threat atmosphere continues. Leyla reported it in this way: “Although the duty of the government is to ensure the life safety of its citizens, it cannot and I do not think that I have security here”. When these two factors of being under threat and not protected combined, participants mentioned that citizens of Turkey now live under a constant state of pressure.

In addition to Turkey’s past and present, another aspect of this subtheme is about participants’ expectations regarding the future of terrorism in Turkey. Although there have been no attacks anytime soon around the interviews, still all of the participants thought that the events have not passed and that terrorist attacks are going to continue. They mostly based their arguments on the current state of political environment and on their observations of the events in the Eastern region.

Since the attacks and conflicts have not stopped in Turkey, this was showing that the situation has not calmed down.

Apart from all of these, during the interviews, all the participants mentioned several other problems of Turkey like economy, unemployment, insecurity as a woman, and various political problems. They said that those problems add to their feelings of insecurity and to their expectations of a bleak future in Turkey.

3.1.3 Views on the Solution of Terrorism Problem

The third subtheme is called *views on the solution of terrorism problem*. It communicates participants' offered suggestions for the solutions of terrorism in Turkey. Mostly, they pointed out to the necessity of government's and security forces' significant actions aiming towards terrorism, since they believed that they are the only ones who have the necessary power. In relation to this, Selen told "I do not believe that terrorism is going to end. Will the civilians get hurt? I think this is up to the government". They also think that political agreements against terrorism are almost impossible to actualize. Therefore, the solutions they offered mostly concerned using technological security services in order to prevent the attacks before happening. However, the participants thought that it may be too little and too late to perform some actions to stop terrorism since it has become already much widespread around the country.

Since they place the responsibility mostly on the government, they think that the citizens have no power to change the current situation. One of the participants who think like that, Anıl expressed "I do not think that the solution is on our hands... I am aware that I have nothing to do at least alone". Just like Anıl, many of the participants said that although they cannot do something to prevent this alone, as citizens of Turkey they can do something by gathering together and reacting. They think, maybe then, they can make the necessary institutions hear themselves and act towards this problem. However, they believed this collective action was hard to form because people are afraid of getting together due to previous events including both terrorist attacks and various other previous problems of Turkey.

3.2 The Characteristics of Events

The second superordinate theme is termed *the characteristics of events*. This theme communicates the features of terrorist attacks that were underlined during the interviews. These mentioned features made the events psychologically more intense than other adverse life event and so made them stand out as important milestones in participants' lives. This superordinate theme consists of the following subordinate themes: (3.2.1) the targets of a terrorist attack; (3.2.2) the nature of terrorism; (3.2.3) the development of an insecure environment; and (3.2.4) social polarization becoming more evident. In the following parts, each of these subthemes will be explained along with participants' quotations.

3.2.1 The Targets of a Terrorist Attack

The first subordinate theme is called *the targets of a terrorist attack* and it was mentioned by all of the participants. It communicates the idea that terrorism's targeting certain people, especially people like themselves or places made participants affected in more adverse ways. All of the participants disclosed that due to those specific targets, they thought they could be the targets of terrorism in the future, as well. Though, they also imagined the painful possibility of losing their loved ones in an attack, since their families mostly live in different cities and they perceive those places to be safer than Ankara, all of them mostly focused on their own security. Selen referred to these thoughts with the following sentence: "Would this happen to me? Would this happen to my family? There are actually people who experienced the attacks personally. They were all people like us".

The targets that affected participants adversely had certain characteristics. What seems to be affecting all of them the most was those people who were perceived to have similarities with themselves. As the media released the names of the victims and published their stories, they started to realize how similar they are with those people. They were the same age, they went to similar high schools or universities, they were living in the same dorm or they had a sister or brother just like them.

Focusing on those similarities forced them to think the possibility of their own victimization. The below quote of Duru illustrates this point:

I saw how parallel Ozancan's life was with mine. He went to a science high school upstate just like me, and then continued studying electrical and electronical engineering... Again just like me. On that particular day, he was waiting for the bus to return back to campus. I mean, this is my everyday routine.

This similarity affect was even more significant for the victims who were the students of METU. Partly due to this, the Güvenpark bombing was stated to have the most devastating effect for eight of the participants. One of them was Doruk who said that "when friends from the university died, you begin to realize how much your life is in danger. If he was able to die, I can die as well". Those targets' being at a young age was adding to the psychological impact of the event, because they thought it was as if they have "lost everything at the beginning of life".

In addition to the people as targets of terrorism, the places that became the target were also reported to have a significant psychological impact on participants. This was especially the case for Kızılay, which became the target twice during the previous two years. Since Kızılay is the central point of Ankara, it was most of the participants' everyday route to come to the campus, return from there, meeting with their friends or hanging out alone. They have been there many times and so they thought they could have been there at that day, as well leading to a realization of their own vulnerability. Regarding this point mentioned by nine of the participants, Leyla told "If this explosion did not happen in the evening, but in the morning, I would have been there". Additionally, they were all familiar with Kızılay and learning that a familiar spot became a crime scene also affected them negatively. Melis explained this effect in the following way: "While I was in Kızılay square, it was awful to imagine it being filled with blood. You can walk around there and life goes on as it is. But a few weeks or months ago, there were dead bodies lying all over the place. There was blood on the roads". But this was not just the case for Güvenpark explosion. Some of the participants also thought of going to the peace rally in Ulus railway station. Later on, they changed their minds but still after the

explosion, the possibility of having decided to go and being there came to their minds again reminding them of their own vulnerability.

In addition to the types of people targeted and the sites of the attacks, there was another major factor that has in fact caused all of these thoughts and made the events show their adverse psychological impacts on all of the participants. It was that the attacks targeted their own city, which is the capital city of Turkey, which was supposed to “be safer” than other cities. Before, when they were just children, they thought Turkey was a better place and that there was no threat environment like today. Although there were continuous attacks in the Eastern region of Turkey, they began to realize the threat when their own and loved ones’ lives started to be in danger, i.e. for the last two years. Until then, terrorism was something that was unfamiliar to them, something that was happening only around the borders of Turkey, namely the East. To these ideas, Tolga referred in the following way: “There was a saying...When the bombs explode away from you, you do not care. But when it begins to come towards you, you begin to ask yourself what is going on. I believe this is what happens in Turkey right now”.

Similar to Tolga, Okan also talked about the effect of distance in terms of appraising the threat:

Since I was living in Bursa before, I thought terrorism was something that would only happen in the East. I never faced it myself before. This time, it’s happening so close to me it really scared me... I think the distance really matters. Before when I was not experiencing the attacks, I thought it would never come nearby.

This effect of remoteness was in fact explained by the participants as well. As they began to think more about terrorism, they realized how a long history it has in Turkey and that only today it spread to metropolis by making them face the devastating reality. In the below quotation of Anil, these thoughts are illustrated:

When we turn back and look at the past, it can be seen that the Middle East was always boiling. But when this does not reach out to Ankara or Istanbul or Bursa, you are not that interested. It does not attract your attention. Humans are selfish creatures. At least, I think this way.

3.2.2 The Nature of Terrorism

The second subordinate theme is called *the nature of terrorism*. It includes the specific features of terrorist attacks that affected the participants adversely. These are mentioned by all of the participants, who also added that these features make it harder for them to make meaning out of the events and accept them. Firstly, all of them said that it is sudden and unexpected. The fact that bombs exploded while people were in their daily routines, talking with other people, looking at their phones or thinking about daily concerns; when they were not expecting death and not ready for it made the attacks harder to bare for the participants. Tolga mentioned this feature of being sudden and unexpected for the case of Ulus attack by saying “You gather together for a purpose. You dance the halay. You talk and make jokes in a regular way, you meet other people. But then all of a sudden somebody comes and explodes oneself. Then it is blood bath all over the place”. Since it is sudden and unexpected, participants acknowledge that it can find anyone at any one. What determines who the victim will be is determined just by pure luck. Additionally, eight of them said that the event’s characteristic of including brutal and violent death make it hard for victims to comprehend it. They mostly compared this death with dying in natural ways like from old age or diseases; and said that they are not afraid of dying but are afraid of dying in pain during a terrorist attack. Their being affected from brutality mostly emerged due the photos they encountered in the media like “burnt skulls” or “split off legs and arms”. Ezgi explained this nature of terrorism in the following way: “I think I am afraid of dying. I especially do not want to die in pain... In fact, what was going through my mind was: Did they suffer a lot? When the bomb exploded, which part of them was hurt first? Destina’s hairs were split”.

Another characteristic of terrorism that had an adverse impact on all of the participants was that terrorists convey their ideological messages through hurting innocent people. Since civilians are not the ones who terrorist groups actually aim at, but use them as “pawns”, participants argued that they have died for no reason and during an event in which, they had no fault. Generally, they said that it was

easier to comprehend when soldiers die at a terrorist attack. This was why they did not feel that badly for the soldiers who died at the Merasim attack, except for one person who had a soldier in his family. They explained that soldiers choose their professions by accepting the fact that they can die at the war field and thus accepting their death was easier for them. In the below quotes, Melis explained her thoughts regarding the nature of terrorism choosing civilians as a way to convey their messages.

Only innocent people were killed. They were not soldiers who died out there. They were just civilians. People who had something to do there. We also had martyrs from our school... The duty of a soldier is that. One chooses to become a soldier by knowing that he is going to combat. That person had already taken that risk.

The final point regarding the theme *nature of terrorism* was related to the methods that are used during the attack. The fact that the attacks were carried out by another human being, usually in the way of self-bombing showed them the evil side of human beings and made the event hard to comprehend compared to other hard life events. The words that participants used during the interviews were also showing this side, which were “inhumane”, “ensanguine”, or repeating the word “explode oneself” several times. In relation to this, Melis said “The fact that one person could do such thing to another one is weird”. Similarly, in the below excerpt, Doruk explains his horror due to the Reina night club massacre that happened in Istanbul. The fact that the terrorists kept on killing people without reminding if they are in pain or if they are screaming made him question the human nature.

You kill someone, you do not care about it and go on killing everybody with a gun. I think this is more terrifying... The feloniousness and the brutality of that man scares you. You begin to think what that kind of a man would do more... You see the death of someone and despite of that you go on killing. You hear those people screaming... When you realize how brutal the human beings could be, you begin to feel even more afraid.

3.2.3 The Development of an Insecure Environment

The final subtheme of the second superordinate theme is *the development of an insecure environment*. This theme represents the prevalent feelings of insecurity

reported by all of the participants following terrorist attacks that happened in Ankara. Although the attacks stopped for a while and everything seemed to have returned to their normal state, this feeling of insecurity still seems to prevail. They started to feel there are no forces that can protect them in the country and so they are vulnerable to external threats as citizens of Turkey. Anıl disclosed her beliefs in the following way: “I have no idea who is behind all of these but I am certain of only one thing that I do not trust anybody anymore. I have no trust for any institution or establishment... I do not feel secure”.

There were some factors that were contributing to this insecurity and they were basically related to their feelings of distrust. These factors were: lack of trust towards the government, security forces, people, media and METU authorities. Each of these factors will be briefly explained in the following part.

The first factor that was mentioned by all of the participants and that have contributed significantly to their feelings of insecurity was their ever-increasing levels of distrust towards both the government and their security forces. Since they consider the concrete actions towards terrorism should have come from the government but did not come, they think citizens stayed unprotected. In relation to this point, Selen said “Government is in fact there to prevent these attacks and protect us. But if you ask me, they have failed to do this”.

In a similar manner, seven participants revealed that they feel unprotected since security forces of the country, i.e. police officers and soldiers, fall short in establishing security. They thought that those forces cannot even protect themselves, since they were also targets of terrorism and victimized in the past. This was especially emphasized for the Güvenpark explosion. That one was originally aimed at the police, but when the perpetrators were noticed by them, they exploded the bomb in front of the bus stop and thus killed the civilians. Further, bombings hurt civilians in places where police officers lined up to protect them, but they failed to do this. Participants pointed out to this fact for the Ulus rally bombing, where this rally was protected by police and also for the Reina massacre, where

there were security forces waiting all around the night club but did not notice the terrorists. In addition to those factors, during the interviews, previous experiences like “Gezi parkı” incidents were named as factors leading to this distrust towards the police. In the below quote from Tolga, this distrust leading to insecurity was described:

How can that person pass through the police line-up and explodes oneself? That is why I do not go to rallies or soccer matches anymore. Only because I do not believe in security. Because if there would be security, there would have been no explosion on that day... For example, during the Reina massacre... The terrorist gets into the club freely, rakes everybody, gets out and no police officers came in... I do not trust the police any more... I believe the they cannot protect us anymore.

In addition to the government and security forces, nine of the participants were also feeling distrustful towards other people. This was also felt during the interviews. Three of them asked me if they could talk freely and ensured that some of their accounts would not be used in the publications. Further, one of those three also ensured that she was not listened by anybody else during the interview. In addition to that, participants told that they were feeling insecure in the crowds, suspecting other people and analyzing their outfits if they fit to the terrorist schema. Although the previously mentioned accounts were resulting more from the sociopolitical situation of Turkey, this latter was basically arising from the fact that terrorist attacks were carried out by other people. This makes everybody a potential suspect, because as reflected by Tolga “you may never know who the bomber might be”.

Similarly, three of the participants added that they were also feeling bad when the police look at them and feel bad since they think that person may be thinking that they are the terrorists. Okan described this state in the below transcript:

When you step off the Kızılay minibüs and walk towards the footbridge, police officers stare at you... This creates guilt feelings in you. You think “is there something wrong on my outfit” or “I have worn loose fitting clothes today, I have a wide coat, I wonder if the police would think that I have a bomb inside.

In addition to those, the fourth factor that was sustaining the perception of an insecure environment was the media as denoted by eight of the participants. Since each terrorist attack was followed by media blackouts, they could not reach information, felt that the information is kept hidden from them and thought that they were deceived. Due to this media blackout, they usually followed the social media, which is full with falsified news. Thus, they felt that they cannot reach concrete and reliable information during a state of complete uncertainty. Tolga defined these beliefs regarding the media insecurity in the following quote:

The most problematic thing in our country is that immediately media blackout occurs... This makes us stay uninformed about everything. Suddenly, the media stays unplugged, you just know that there was an attack and two days later you learn that the death toll is 24. But still, you cannot be sure if they say the truth or if they lie. You cannot trust the media... The transparency is of vital importance... There should not be any lies, there should be reliable sources... In that way, I can only trust.

The final factor contributing to the environment of insecurity as mentioned by three of the participants was the actions of METU authorities. Although it is a factor, it seems like this insecurity was contaminated from the distrust towards other authorities like the state. This was suggested, because the way participants were describing the METU authority was holding many similarities with the way they described the state authorities. Mainly, participants said that they were / are feeling secure in the METU campus. In fact, they described it as the “safest place” in Ankara and appraise it as their “home” even if they do not live in the METU dormitories. During these attacks, there were some terror warnings related to a possible attack in the METU campus. After that, the security appraisals of three participants with regards to the campus were shaken though they were transient and lasted for a few days. After that time, their appraisals were re-constructed. The rest of them remained unaffected from these warnings and did not believe in their reliability. However, after these warnings, the security measures were increased by the METU authorities. Participants appraised these measures as unnecessary and as signs that the authorities do not think the good of the METU students, but try to

limit their lives. Some of them even defined those measures as the declaration of “OHAL” in METU campus. Anil explained these thoughts in the below excerpt:

Those warnings in relation to METU campus still continue. But I find the security measures taken in the campus irrelevant. They are like an interference in students’ lives... If someone really wants to give a damage to the school, they may go through the woods or change their identities and enter easily.

Similar to Anil, Arda was also thinking that these measures are unnecessary since there is no way to protect the campus with these methods. He said that “Now, they have increased the security measures, they control the cars so-and-so but they do not really mean anything. If someone would put a bomb in the car, I do not believe that any of the security staff would notice it”.

Although this distrust was observed regarding the METU authorities, still participants retained their views that the campus is the safest place. This appraisal of safety as denoted by the participants was not resulting from the security measures of the authorities as it can be seen above, to which they still felt skeptical; but from the safety that the people of METU and the campus environment create. When this is considered with all the factors above that participants felt insecure towards, it can be seen that the appraisal of security is not related to objective enforcements but subjective feelings. Melis clarified this situation in the following way: “Maybe it is due to the security atmosphere the students create... I think it is due to the campus life... Or maybe it is because we perceive the campus like our home. It might also be a part of the METU culture”.

3.2.4 Social Polarization Becoming More Evident

The final subordinate theme related to the characteristics of events is called *social polarization becoming more evident*. This theme was prominent across eight of the ten interviews and it reflects that terrorist attacks happened in Ankara revived the existing realities of social polarization for the participants. Although they did not realize so much before, they began to see that there are many people who think opposite to themselves. Duru explained her experiences by saying “I wondered if I

kept myself hidden in a jar and lived there. Where were those people and where was I?”. These newly-recognized people were those who support the ones who are responsible for the attacks or those who talk badly after the deceased. Participants said that there were people who were calling the deceased as terrorists or judging them and saying they deserved to die because they were drinking alcohol. Though they started to recognize this polarization in the community and reacted to it, they were somehow again recreating it through limiting their contact with those who think dissimilarly. In the below transcript, Okan emphasizes this re-emergence of polarization:

Seeing politics that is made after decedents made me lose my trust in the people of this country. Because there came an ideological identity before death.... I think seeing all of these augmented even more the already existing social polarization. Unfortunately, I believe the Ulus attack had an effect like this.

3.3 Psychological Impacts

The third superordinate theme is termed as *psychological impacts*. It consists of immediate and relatively long-standing impacts that participants talked about during the interviews, which occurred due to the terrorist attacks that happened in Ankara. This theme consists of the following subordinate themes: (3.3.1) heightened feelings and triggers; (3.3.2) thinking about existential issues; (3.3.3) temporarily suspending life; (3.3.4) relatively long-standing changes in the inner world; and (3.3.5) relatively long-standing changes in the relational world. In the following part, each of these themes will be narrated with their regarding quotations. The psychological impacts that are mentioned in the following parts are reported by most of the participants. However, it was observed during the interviews that those with a history of mental illness or previous trauma like the death of a family member differed from other participants in terms of the intensity and broadness of these impacts, although the content was basically the same for all of the participants. A detailed analysis of the contents within the superordinate theme *psychological impacts* can be found in Table 3.

Table 3.

A Detailed Examination of Psychological Impacts

Heightened Feelings and Triggers

Sadness

Anger

Despair

Fear

Guilt

Disappointment

Hopelessness

Thinking about Existential Issues

Temporarily Suspending Life

Relatively Long-Standing Changes in the Inner World

Alienation

Early Maturation

Enhanced Compassion

Changes in Future Plans

Revising Belief System

Relatively Long-Standing Changes in the Relational World

3.3.1 Heightened Feelings and Triggers

The first subordinate theme is called *heightened feelings and triggers*. Participants referred to have experienced many different feelings after the terrorist attacks and this theme contains all of these feelings along with their triggers. Especially in the immediate aftermath, they reported heightened feelings which interfered with their ability to continue on with their daily lives. Although some of these feelings were short-lived, some of them still exist to some extent. These feelings were sadness, anger, despair, fear, guilt, disappointment, and hopelessness. Out of those, participants mentioned that sadness, guilt and disappointment were mainly felt during the immediate aftermath of the attacks; but anger, despair, fear and hopelessness still remains. All of those feelings will be explained along with their triggers in the subsequent part. For a detailed review of these triggers, see Figure 1.

Sadness: In the immediate aftermath of the attacks, one of the most prominent feeling that was reported by all ten participants was sadness. This sadness was heightened when the media released the names and life stories of the deceased. After that, they began to look at the social media accounts of the victims, found their previous pictures, and entered into their lives. Firstly, all of them felt sad about the death of those people whom they have never known, but had lives just like any other person. Okan described this with the following words: “One had a child and died. Another just began university and his dreams were interrupted. As you enter into their lives, your sadness reaches to the top.” As they kept on learning more about their lives, looked at their pictures, listened to their relatives talk; they began to feel as if they knew those people themselves. Nine of them reported that their sorrow was multiplied when they learned that people from METU died in the attack as well. This effect of METU was partly due to their similarities and partly due to thinking as if they knew that person. Arda told that “there is a bond between the people from METU. Because of that bond, you feel worse... You feel sorrow as if you have lost one your relatives”. Thus, they were reacting as an insider of this pain and sorrow; and as if they have lost one of their own relatives. In the below transcript, Duru explained these feelings:

Especially after the Güvenpark attack, I was feeling like I was in a funeral. The identities of the deceased were visualized in my mind one by one. It was as if I knew all of them... Constructing the identity of that person in your mind and finding similarities with yourself was making me very sad. It is the person who died, not a number. Not really a number...

Similarly, as they got into their stories more deeply, thoughts regarding “they could themselves have been there” also emerged in all of them. But, instead of this fear of death, eight of them emphasized again and again that, what was reported to be more saddening was to think about the condition of their parents after they died. If they died in a terrorist attack this way, they thought their families could not bear it. Leyla told that “I felt sad the most for my family who will be devastated after me”.

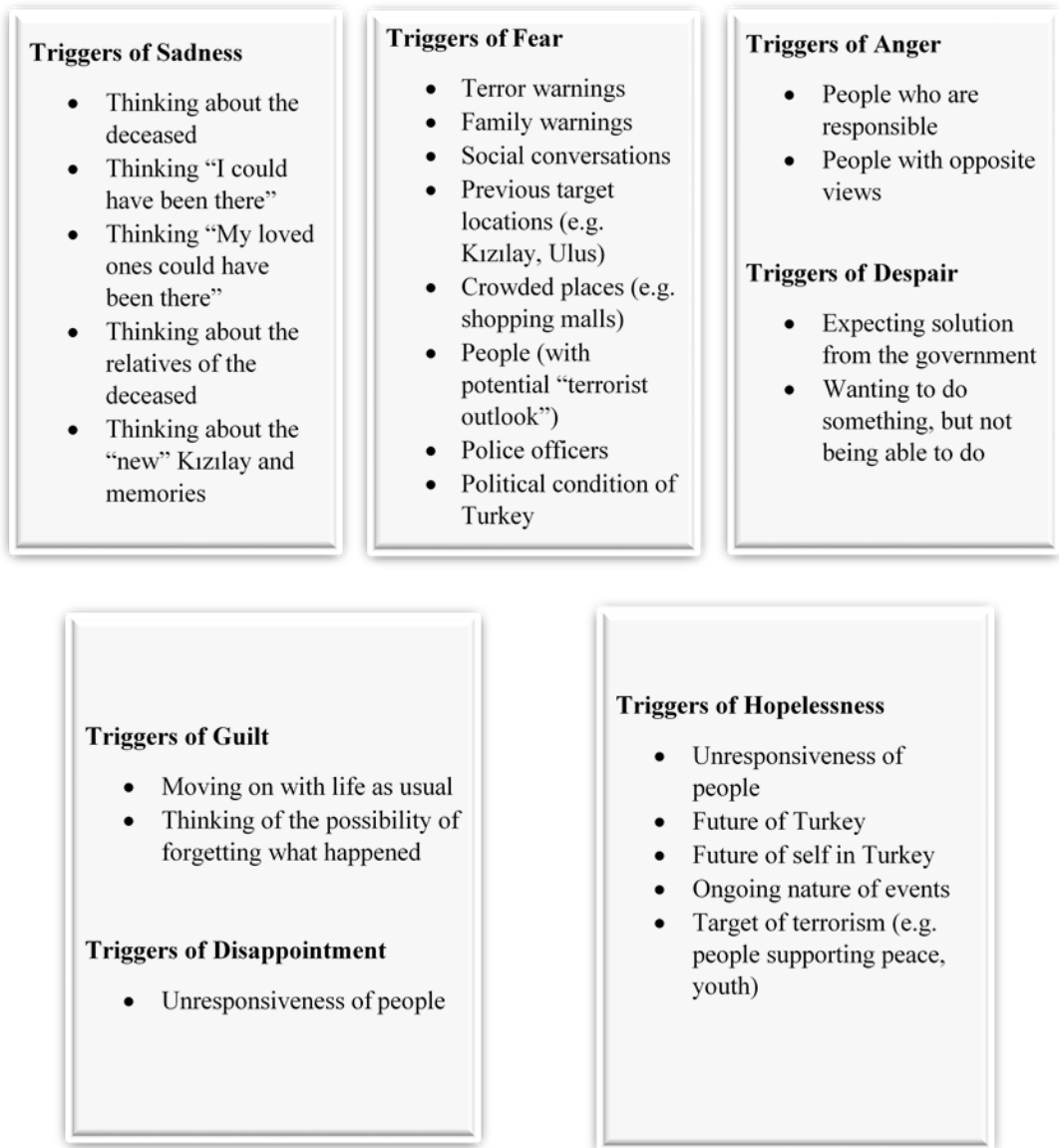


Figure 1.
Summary of Triggers

Additionally, the possibility of losing their loved ones also caught all of them, which also resulted in an intense phase of sadness, as well. With regards to this, Ezgi said “I was thinking what would happen if the same thing were to happen to my loved ones... What would I do if my father, my mother or my loved ones would be there... I mean how would I ever cope with this?” Finally, apart from those people who died, there was also the factor of Kızılay as the target, which seemed to

be affecting nine of them more deeply. Since it is the central point of Ankara, they had memories there and they used to have positive images about Kızılay. However, when it became a crime scene with many losses, they told that their connection with that place and their memories were damaged. In the below quote, Tolga explained his sadness related to this:

At the same time, we heard from people that Kızılay is ruined. Since Kızılay is my everyday route, that event affected me in fact even more... You get upset because your memories in there comes to your mind. I do not know... There was a lady foddering the birds. I wonder what happened to her.

Anger: In addition to feelings of sadness, another prominent feeling mentioned by all of the participants was anger during this immediate aftermath which is reported to be not diminishing over time and even showing an increase. On the one hand, this was towards the people or institutions who are responsible for those events by conducting them personally or by failing to protect people. Arda described it as “anger... to all the people who are responsible for all of these and not doing their jobs”. Additionally, participants said that they were also feeling anger towards people who do not think alike, which became more transparent after the recent event. Doruk told that “all those people died and you still support the ones who are responsible... That is the reason of my hatred... In fact, my hate towards that group escalated”.

Despair: As it was mentioned above, participants were feeling both sad and angry during the immediate aftermath. Nine of them said that they wanted to do something to alleviate both their own and society’s pain, but as they realize they cannot do anything to change the current situation, they felt desperate. Since they think these problems arise due to political conflicts and so the solutions should be implemented on a wide-ranging national level, they believed they had no personal control over this process. Duru described this state in the following way: “There is nothing that I can do... I feel like the control of our lives are in somebody else’s hands”. According to some of them, this desperation was mostly related to their age. Since they are young and still students, they believe that they have limited power in what could be done. Okan described this like that: “Especially when you are young,

some things happen out of your control and you see that you cannot interfere with it. I now feel like I have reached my limit in what I can do for this country”.

Fear: Another feeling that was mentioned by all ten participants was fear. Since the terrorist attacks happened to people like them in their everyday routes, and since they can hit anybody at any time with its violent power; participants told that they had the fear of victimization. This fear was mentioned to be more prevalent in the immediate aftermath of the attacks. As reported by Doruk, its amount was high and its range was wide: “Fear out of tiniest things. It is like you become very skittish and wary of everything”.

Although the event stayed in the past, there were some factors especially back then, which fueled this fear again and again. Seven of them reported that one of these factors was the consistent terror warnings, which regenerated the sedated feelings of fear, by being a consistent reminder of the attacks. Ezgi said that “They were making you feel tense. If we plan going there at that day, we cannot leave home. It was like imprisonment”. In addition to the terror warnings, their families were also warning them to be careful. This was also the topic of conversations in their social circles, who also consistently warned them to meet at safer districts. All of these also became a source of fear for six of the participants. Anil told that those warnings “continuously make you think about the attack and keep the thoughts alive”.

Apart from these warnings, there were other reminders of the attacks that were regenerating the fear. They were either related to the previous targets of Ankara attacks like Kızılay, Ulus and crowded places like shopping malls; or the people who have the potential outlook of a terrorist. One interesting fear-inducing factor, which was reported by seven of them, was the existence of police officers. Duru explained this fear in the following way: “I feel the most tension when I see police crowds... I get tensed when my bag is searched... That security measure prompts me to remember the event... and that always reminds me that yes there could be another attack any time and that is why they are here”. This was interesting, because police were supposed to be the forces that should protect people from attacks and

thus create feelings of security. But, related to the previously mentioned themes, they fail to create that appraisal of security. Since they became targets in the past, participants' fear seemed to have generalized towards them, as well. Doruk explained this condition like this: "PKK made several attacks targeting police officers or places where police are settled. That is why when I see a police, I try to avoid and do not go any closer, especially if there is a police crowd. It makes you feel tensed". Final finding that was also different as a source of fear for six of the participants was the political condition of Turkey. Since in the past, the timing of the attacks was close to the political instabilities, they also become a source of fear. These participants said that they followed the agenda of Turkey and tried to manage their daily behaviors accordingly. In relation to this, Anıl said that "we were afraid of and tried to be careful around the election times".

As it can be seen, there were many factors that remind participants of terrorist attacks. Due to all those factors, though feelings of fear was mainly short-term, it still continues with more or less amounts, regenerated again based on some of the reminders. In the below quotation, this regeneration of fear through danger signals is explained by Melis:

It was just the previous day when we were in the shopping mall. In one of the cabins there was a box and the employee began to ask whose is that, where did it come from, what if it is a bomb. Even when we find an ownerless bag or a box lying in that way, we worry about what is inside.

Guilt: In the accounts of the six participants, it was felt that there was the guilt of moving on with their lives despite of what happened and despite of people who died. They felt like they were forgetting what happened when they were returning to their routines. They felt an urge to do something to change the current situation, but they believed they had no power. Ezgi reflected her feelings at that time like this: "Actually I blamed myself at first. I said to myself how selfish are you that you move on with your life. People still suffer, children or their parents have died. I blamed myself like this at first. But afterwards, I do not know I guess I forgave myself and I moved on". As it can be seen in this quote, as well; these feelings of guilt have disappeared over time.

Disappointment: Another feeling that was reported by five of the participants was disappointment. It emerged in the immediate aftermath while they were observing the reactions of people in their environment. As they did this, they realized that people were moving on and they acted as if nothing has happened, although participants' own feelings were still intense. This disappointment mostly felt towards METU teachers and students since inwardly they expected them to react more strongly. The fact that their teachers were coming to class after the attack and not even mentioning it was hard for them to accept. In the below quote of Anıl, these feelings were reflected:

You expect them to be at least more responsive with regards to community problems. They may have come the lecture, may do the lecture but could have talked about these events... Their acting as if nothing has happened and their moving on in the lecture from where they left previously was absurd. It was as if they were ignoring what happened.

In addition to creating disappointment, this unresponsiveness also led to a sense of hopelessness in these participants, because they expected their teachers to show guidance and become “a light for hope” by showing at least some responses.

Hopelessness: The final feeling that became apparent during nine of the interviews was hopelessness. Participants were mainly hopeless with regards to their own future, but this was closely connected to their hopelessness for the future of country. The most dominant factor leading to this appraisal of Turkey was the fact that the events kept on for some time, and did not end. Doruk explained these feelings with the following words: “Since the state of country gets worse day by day, you expect it is going to be like this forever... In relation to my future... I am not that hopeful anymore. I mean you used to have goals so-and-so, but seeing such things force you to think a bit more pessimistically”. Apart from the effect of pessimistic views on Turkey's future and its concomitant hopelessness, there were some other factors mentioned in the interviews that triggered this feeling. One of them was the Ulus Railway Station bombing. Since terrorism targeted the rally which was supporting the nationwide peace, participants said that this attack damaged the idea of peace. Tolga referred to this effect like this: “People went there for peace... But then

somebody comes there and while people were dancing the halay and the atmosphere was like a festival, that person explodes himself. This destroys everything, no peace, no nothing has been left. It was all set to zero". The final factor that emerged to be triggering the feelings of hopelessness was the death of young people. Since they are perceived as the future of Turkey and carry a hope within themselves; when terrorism targets the youth, they also somehow kill a part of that hope and future. Okan reflected this point in this way: "The fact that the life of an 18-year old boy was stolen. You think that they could have contributed to the world. They could have graduated from METU, keep on enlightening their environment. But they are not with us anymore, and for no reason."

3.3.2 Thinking about Existential Issues

The second subordinate theme belonging to *psychological impacts* is called *thinking about existential issues*, which was a running theme across nine of the ten participants. Apart from the feelings and triggers mentioned above, prominent thoughts were also permeating the inner world of the participants in the immediate aftermath. They said that since the attacks came even closer and affected those people who are just like them; they begin to think that they could die at such attacks as well. These ideas turned into more general questions and examinations about the reality of death. Okan explained this in the following way: "Before you notice that there is the reality of death, you live as if you are going to live forever. But when that possibility of death arises, when you see that somebody dies by pure luck and for a meaningless cause, you begin to think whether death would visit you as well". These prevalent thoughts about death brought by itself the sense of meaninglessness in life for five of these participants. Their past efforts, future plans and their ordinary duties of today have suddenly become empty efforts in the face of death, because they began to acknowledge that they can die anytime and at anywhere. In the accounts of Selen, this sense of meaninglessness sounded like this: "We make efforts for nothing. Our families raise us, send us to school and we die for nothing. Meaningless... There are people who lose their lives, there are bombings, we have no security. What are we doing here?".

3.3.3 Temporarily Suspending Life

The third subordinate theme is called *temporarily suspending life*, which emerged from participants' explanations regarding their postponing daily duties and just focusing on the terrorism agenda in the immediate aftermath. Due to their heightened feelings and focusing on existential thoughts, most of them said that they could not concentrate on their school works though it lasted only for several days. Thus, they gave themselves some time to let their feelings and thoughts flow freely until they are a little bit settled. In relation to this, Arda told "if we had urgent duties at that time, they were hindered a little bit. But besides from that, when you look in general, there were no large or long-term effects". In addition to this reluctance to keep up with their existing duties, they were also blocked academically since they were feeling fear from the outside world and did not want to leave their homes for some time. This was mostly the case for those who were living outside the campus and for those who were afraid of coming to school due to terror warnings.

3.3.4 Relatively Long-Standing Changes in the Inner World

The fourth subordinate theme belonging to *psychological impacts* is called *relatively long-standing changes in the inner world*. Although the previous themes were representing impacts that were more short-lived, this theme reflects those that were more enduring. During the interviews, participants narrated that they were observing some changes in their inner worlds after the terrorist attacks. These changes emerged as alienation, early maturation, enhanced compassion, changes in future plans, and revising belief system. All of these inner-world changes will be explained below along with the relevant quotations from the participants.

Alienation: To begin with, participants seemed to have alienated from both other people and from the city they live in. This alienation was understandable in their accounts representing a change in their perspectives compared to before. They were perceiving people and the city differently and feeling as if they do not belong to the same community with those people or that they do not belong to the city like before.

Eight of the participants reported as being alienated from other people in the aftermath of terrorist attacks. They feel that they no longer belong to their social circles, country or the world. This alienation seems to have resulted from the incongruity between their expectations from people and the actual reality. As they observed people's reactions towards the death of other people, these changes became more apparent. People were acting as if nothing happened and they were not showing any reactions. These outward sights were quite different and foreign to what they have been living inside. Melis explained these feelings in this way:

It was weird that life was still going on. There were many people who died out there. Many people got hurt. But then life was going on as it was, everybody was walking, they were laughing. People's acting as if nothing has happened, their forgetting and moving on was weird.

Similar to Melis, Leyla was also feeling the same way. She said that "if something happens to me, they will do the same thing. Everybody is going to forget. Maybe it will be remembered annually or maybe they will not remember at all". Since this was not limited to their social circle and it is also the case for Turkey as well, where people stay silent after deaths, keep on living in an indifferent way or curse the deceased; they began to question their citizens as well. Selen indicated that "either people do not see the reality or we began to look differently. I do not think we have a place in this country. It is like they do not let us live". Thus, they began to think that human beings are in fact selfish and inhumane creatures; and do not put importance to issues until their own or their loved ones' lives are in danger. Finally, this alienation was also generalized to human beings in general. Since they observed the hatred of terrorists through brutal terrorist attacks, they began to think that the world actually consists of such people and that they knew the world better. However, one participant said that his thoughts regarding humans did not change, because he always knew that there are some people in this world who live in hatred. The exact words of Arda was: "It did not affect how I see the world, because I have always perceived the world as a bad place for so long."

In addition to being alienated from other people, during the interviews, it was also seen that six of the participants also felt alienated from the city, Ankara, and

especially from Kızılay. They explained that before the attacks, Kızılay was quite a familiar location for them, they were spending time there, they had memories there, and they had positive images when they think of it. However, since two of those attacks happened in Kızılay, they began to form more negative associations for it. Their memories seemed to have faded away and they do not feel the same feelings of belongingness towards it. In the below quotation, Tolga reflects how he cannot relive his memories again since the atmosphere of Kızılay has changed and how he does not feel safe there as before:

I mean everybody has a memory in Kızılay. Some have broken up with the beloved, some have made up, some have met a friend... In Kumrular there were various cafes, sweet little stores where we used to eat food. I remember those and I cannot do these things anymore. This is very hard for me. I cannot walk freely in the middle of Kızılay anymore. I cannot sit inside of Güvenpark, under those trees anymore. Because there are police officers everywhere.

Similar to Tolga, Duru also admitted similar feelings with regards to Kızılay. She especially mentioned how she saw Kızılay before and how she sees it right now. Since police officers closed down a huge area of Güvenpark, which is actually an important sign of Ankara, she feels that the park, which used to belong to the citizens, does not belong to them anymore. In the below quote, her thoughts are illustrated:

When I first came to Ankara, I very much liked it. It was not like a metropolis to me, it was like a small and familiar place, where I liked doing the same things over and over again... I was feeling safe in Ankara... But now, streets appear to me very crowded, and this crowd makes me feel tense... I feel like the guest of the government... Right now, one half of Güvenpark belongs to the police, and the other half became a place used for memorials... Now Güvenpark is a place where we die, where we got beaten up... I do not think that it belongs to us anymore... Ankara seems darker to me.

Considering these points, it was observed to be important that people have a sense of belongingness to the city, or specific places of that city may feel alienated. All of the participants who talked about alienation, also mentioned such feelings. Compared to them, one participant said that she was not influenced from Ankara

attacks and the attacks did not change her routine since she did not create a connection with the city and did not like or spend time in Kızılay. The exact words of Leyla were: “I did not like Ankara anyway. I came here because of METU. So, I still do not like it. Ankara has never become a place that is familiar for me.”

Early Maturation: Another relatively long-standing change in their inner worlds that was mentioned by seven of the participants was early maturation. They said that especially due to facing and thinking a lot about death at a very early age, they have matured during these two years. They said that if they would grow up in a different city, they would be a very different kind of person during their 20s. They would have different lives and different concerns, which would not be related to the political agenda of their country. In the below quotation of Anıl, he disclosed this personal change by comparing the youth of this country with those in other countries:

If you look at them, those people have no concerns like these. At one place, they were discussing about pineapple pizza so-and-so... In 2015, I was 22 years old. How many people are there around this world to face death like this at the age of 22... Of course, I mean developed countries. This, in fact, forces you to think more and makes you more mature. And as you think more, you become a more pessimistic person.

Although mentioned to be more psychologically demanding and make them more concerned people, three of them also said this maturation had also positive effects on their lives. One of those effects is that they have started to appreciate the value of life more. They said that they feel lucky to be alive and try to live their days to their fullest. With regard to this point, Okan told that “I believe I would value life a little less... Now I try to live accordingly since it is not for sure if I am going to die tomorrow”. Further, they began to realize they are exaggerating and worrying a lot about insignificant problems. After seeing those events and thinking about death, they gradually began to re-appraise the importance they attach to their problems. Ezgi defined this transformation in the following quotation:

I have always believed that pain make you a more mature person. Maybe I was more like a child last year. I saw sufferings and I grew up a little more

this year... I was a child. I was exaggerating different problems. This year, I am not exaggerating those little things anymore... Except death, I believe there is a solution for everything.

Enhanced Compassion: Another personal change that was reported by eight of the participants was their enhanced compassion for those who suffer. They realized their abilities of empathy has strengthened. They were thinking or feeling from the perspective of those people who lost a close one, because they believed that they could have also lost their own loved ones, as well. In a way, they were living their suffering in a more collective way. Selen described this personal state in these words: “I can say that those things influence me more deeply. The fact that those people are subjected to violence or cruelty... Those cruelties affect me more”. This compassion was also felt during the interviews. They were telling some stories as if they knew the relatives of the victims themselves and observed the whole process. In the following transcript, Ezgi described the search process of victims’ families as if she personally experienced it:

They go to the hospital, get into morgue, check their bodies. Some are missing, missing reports are released, they cannot be found. Then, they lose their hopes. Finally, they find their dead bodies in the hospital... That waiting is more devastating I think, that uncertainty...

Changes in Future Plans: Another point that was explained to be the personal effect of the terrorist attacks on participants is the changes in their future plans. Six of them mentioned that their future plans could be interrupted mostly by death or various other problems like sociopolitical changes and so they perceive their future as indefinite. This possibility of death emerged during the interviews while they are talking about their future plans. With the words of Leyla, it sounds this way: “I have obviously efforts that I have made for years. I do not think that these are going to be wasted. I will have a good life. If I will not die or something”. Since they perceived the future as indefinite and can be interrupted by an unexpected death any time, four of them said that they are now making more short-term plans and try to live accordingly. Although some of them see their future as indefinite and think they may die somehow, it was observed that they still make long term plans. These plans were mostly constructed on the basis of ensuring security whether they prefer to

stay in Turkey or not. Four of the participants who plan to stay in Turkey aimed towards living in places that have low possibility of facing terrorism. On the one hand, these plans included moving to safer regions of Turkey for two of them. In relation to this, Ezgi said that “If you were to ask me two years ago, I would definitely say that I wanted to live in Ankara when I graduate... Now, I want to move to a small and peaceful place, I want a small city, where people are warm-blooded”. On the other hand, the remaining two participants who preferred to stay in Ankara told that they want to construct a safe place in this unsafe environment. Anil described this as creating “a bell glass” (i.e. *fanus*), in which he and his future family will be able to live far away from terrorism threat.

However, there were also other participants who are planning to leave the country due to security concerns. While two of them were considering this anyway, four of them have decided on this after the ongoing attacks. Of those participants who want to leave, it was also seen that they want to move away from here just permanently and desire to come back if the current unsecure state will alleviate somehow. The accounts of participants who want to leave the country showed that they also want to move their families nearby when they construct a life there. In the below excerpt of Arda, he discussed his decisions regarding future plans:

Frankly, I do not want to live in this country anymore. It is not for sure if we are going to have a future... It makes me think to go abroad if I can. To a more peaceful country... In fact, I was willing to go abroad before. But, since these events happen, I am wanting even more... You think of going abroad, forming a new life there and maybe taking your close ones there with you and saving them from this place.

Revising Belief System: The final point regarding the relatively long-standing changes in the inner world is related to participants’ revision of their belief system after having indirectly experienced the attacks. These revisions mostly concerned their religion. Six of the participants who said that they believe in Islam to some extent explained that due to the religious extremist terrorist group ISIS and due to the concept of political Islam, they questioned Muslim religion and Quran. This questioning involved trying to understand how a Muslim would commit such

violent actions in the name of God and religion. After this questioning, four of these participants came to the conclusion that they do not believe in the same religion as those groups, and that the religion of those groups is not actually Muslim, but something else. The accounts of Leyla can be given an example related to this point: “I follow the path that I am familiar with... Because I do not think that I am one of them. Their version of Islam and mine are completely different. I argue to the point that their God is not the same as my God”. Although the four out of these six participants were thinking this way, the remaining two said that after this questioning, they have put some boundaries with religion. Melis said that “I began to think that religion is being used to convince people... It’s being used that much shook my belief. Because this meant that it is transformed into something that can be used as a weapon”.

In addition to the participants’ questioning of their religious beliefs, another less common result of these events was seen as an increase in their beliefs of fate. Two of the participants said that they started to believe in fate since their belief system remained limited in explaining the reasons of why some people become the targets of terrorism just by pure luck. In relation to this, Okan told that: “I believe I became a more fatalistic person... Because things do not always go as you planned or imagined. If this thing is going to happen, it will find me anywhere”.

3.3.5 Relatively Long-Standing Changes in the Relational World

The fifth subordinate theme is called *relatively long-standing changes in the relational world*. It refers to the accounts of eight participants which are related to changes in their relational lives as a result of the ongoing terrorist attacks. To begin with, these eight participants referred to a changed frequency of communication with their loved ones compared to before. This had both good and bad sides. On the one hand, it made them feel good to talk to people, with whom they have not talked for a long time. These were mostly their old friends or relatives. They disclosed that this was closely related to their fears of losing those people they know. On the other hand, this increased frequency of communication also had a downside as denoted

by seven of them. Participants narrated that they were mostly experiencing this with their parents; and their conversations became dominated with concerns about fears and warnings. Since their families live mostly in distant cities, which are perceived to be more secure, these warnings were mostly concerning the participants. Those warnings became a consistent reminder of the attacks and threat, thereby they are appraised as not being helpful. Okan explained this in the following way: “On the one hand, there is a daily talk. You say nice things and then hang up. On the other hand, there is telling ‘be careful son, don’t go into crowds’ and then hanging up. This creates a fear in you unavoidably”. Although they thought that these warnings are not helpful, they were still showing empathy to their families since they thought that it is normal to feel that fear for the loved ones in this current situation. Duru states these thoughts in this way: “I want them to reach me more easily. I mean I did not use to care about it that much. I did not care things like my phone ran out of battery or when I did not inform them when I go out. I think now we communicate more often”.

In addition to communicating more often, it was seen in the accounts of four participants that they have also experienced a changed level of intimacy in their relationships. This was also resulting mainly from their fears of losing that person. Since they started to think that death is in fact unexpected and sudden, they said that they were spending more time with their loved ones and sharing with them more. However, this change in intimacy was a double-edged sword. It was also affecting some of their relationships negatively. Two of the participants said that they put some distance with people around them since they started to evaluate the value of relationships. As one of the participants experiencing this, Tolga explained it in the following quote:

Some people asked me if I am okay. I realized that people cared about me and I felt precious. I began to spend more time with those people... Because I know they care about me and I care about them too... I used to have 30 friends and I dropped this number to 10 or 4-5... Some people who should have guessed I was in Kumrular at that day did not even call me... I figured out who my true friends really are.

Similarly, three participants said that they put some boundaries, too; but with people who had opposite sociopolitical views. Since the events made polarization more apparent, they mentioned that they were able to see things more clearly now. In the below quote, Melis narrated her experiences related to this:

I eliminate my friends accordingly and maybe I judge... All in all, you prefer to be with people who are similar to you or with whom you share same ideas. But these events, these sufferings of people, their getting hurt... I think due to my anger towards all these, I eliminated people even more and chose my friends accordingly.

3.4 Coping

The final superordinate theme is titled as *coping*. It represents the methods participants used both in the short and long-term period after the terrorist attacks to deal with their experiences. This superordinate theme consists of six subordinate themes which are: (3.4.1) immediate attempts to calm down; (3.4.2) attempts of re-adaptation; (3.4.3) togetherness; (3.4.5) avoidance; (3.4.6) holding onto a positive future; and (3.4.7) the passage of time. All of these subordinate themes will be elucidated in the following sections. These methods were attempted to soothe their feelings, might this be sadness, anger, despair, fear or any other. They were methods affecting them both in a positive and a negative way.

3.4.1 Immediate Attempts to Calm Down

The first subordinate theme that was prominent in the accounts of all participants was named as *immediate attempts to calm down*. As the name implies, this coping method was used in the immediate aftermath of the attacks. During this first phase of intense fear, uncertainty and distrust; participants explained that their first response was returning to their safe place, i.e. home or METU campus-dormitory. Those who were already at home preferred to stay there. Although they were not at the attack site, at that moment it seemed like the outside world was appraised as dangerous and thus they sought a safe place since they needed to feel safe. Although the home of Duru was located in Kızılay, she still wanted to return back there after the Kızılay bombing, which she could not make sense of: “Going back

home, to Kızılay, seemed nonsense. Some people called me and offered their help for taking me from the campus. But, somehow, I just wanted to go home. I cannot explain this. I thought I would be safe at home". Thus, even though the home was in a place regarded as unsafe still the home seemed to symbolize safety.

In addition to ensuring their own safety, they also wanted to notify their parents and to check on the safety of their loved ones by reaching out to their phones. They narrated that hearing a familiar voice during this panic phase was helping them to feel safe and relieving their sense of loneliness. Arda explained this in the following statements: "I immediately grabbed the phone, as I knew it from previous bombing, I called and texted everyone".

While they were trying to ensure the safety of themselves and their loved ones, they also tried to gather information regarding the event from the media. Because of the media blackout that occurred in the immediate aftermath, they could only do this gathering through foreign media channels or through the social media. Although the news was upsetting, getting information seemed to help them in dissolving the state of uncertainty.

3.4.2 Attempts of Re-adaptation

The second subordinate theme is called *attempts of re-adaptation*. This theme represents the efforts of six participants to return to their daily lives. In the following days of the attacks, while they were still showing heightened emotions, they realized that life was going on and that they had to return back to school, to attend their lectures and to keep on studying. However, they said that they were still thinking about the event, could not concentrate on their duties, needed some time to feel stronger and that it was still too soon to restart minding about daily responsibilities. On the other hand, their responsibilities kept on coming back, to which they had to return. But they reacted to this return and refused adaptation. With regards to this, Tolga told "on that day and the following day, there were lectures. I came to the class, but frankly I wished that lectures would not happen. For at least 2 or 3 days, we should have condemned or protested it and not had any

classes”. But, despite their refusal, they were somehow forced to return back since they had exams, to which they had to study and attend. Although they refused to adapt at first, they realized that everybody around them was adapting and they did so as well. Gradually, all of them told returning to their routines were in fact making them feel better because through this way, they were able to distract their minds from the country’s agenda. In that way, they were able to get out of the intense effects of their initial emotions and see that they can function like before without the interference of those emotions. Thus, although perceived to be demanding, these responsibilities helped them to normalize their lives by adapting to their old routines again. The below quotation of Ezgi represents her attempts and the positive results of this adaptation:

I studied since the school work was very demanding. You know, in fact those demands keep you busy and you like them in a way. You do not have time to think about these things... Of course, nothing is forgotten, those families stay affected but everybody has to move on with their lives somehow... At first I was thinking more about these. But this made me worse. Then, as I began to concentrate on other things, I felt better.

3.4.3 Togetherness

The third subordinate theme belonging to *coping* is called *togetherness*. This theme emerged from participants’ accounts related to coping with these adverse events through the help of their loved ones or their community by being together. This was employed both in the immediate aftermath and in the long-term period. During the immediate period of panic and unsafety, nine of the participants said that they got together with their friends and talked about the agenda. They said that it was a reason why they preferred to go and stay at home or dorm. In the long run as well, they used their friends, families, and other loved ones as a source of support. They learned new information about the attack, they shared their feelings and concerns. Ezgi said that “I feel stronger, more peaceful, and protected when I am with people I love”. In a similar way, Doruk told “You feel sad and share this sadness... This helps you to restrain your anger inside. It does not diminish, but at least you can talk about it and this keeps you away from doing something with your anger”.

Additionally, eight of them narrated that being with people who think or feel alike relieved their sense of loneliness and normalized their reactions during this period. In relation to this effect of social support, Arda told “you know that person feels like you. It makes you feel good to know there are other people who feel just like you”. This effect of similar people was also felt during the interviews, where all of them were continuously talking with “we” language instead of “I” and generalizing their accounts to other people and to the Turkish community while they were describing their psychological reactions. Some examples could be given as “everybody had the same fear”, “I think the whole country has post-traumatic problems” or “we live in a strange state of fear and tension”. This was thought to have two functions for the participants. Firstly, since these terrorist attacks are a community disaster, they were observing similar reactions in the people around them. The fact that they narrate in this “we” language was thought to be coming from their normalization needs. They were feeling and thinking various things which are unfamiliar to them and seem to be needing an affirmation that these are normal reactions. Thus, being with their friends who think, feel and react similarly found to have this advantage for the participants. In this quotation of Ezgi, this effect can be seen clearly: “I wondered if I have become paranoid. But, when I talked to my friends, I noticed that they were also thinking in a similar way. Everybody is suspicious and they all think about what will happen next”.

However, although being with their friends was reported to have several benefits for them, four of them also verbalized that support from their friends was not always helpful. On the one hand, it was a reflection of their sense of despair. Since they cannot do anything to change the current situation, they said that all they could do was to talk with their friends. However, during these talks, they were just talking about the same things over and over again, which lead to no conclusions or solutions. Leyla explained this detrimental effect in this way: “It did not help me to sit and talk about things you cannot find a solution for... I cannot think of anything, but if there is anything we can do and it really comes to your minds, say it and we can do it together. If we cannot this, we should just shut up”. Similarly; sharing

feelings, thoughts or new upsetting information about the event were emphasized by three of them to be strengthening their already heightened emotional reactions. Due to these, they were feeling more sorrow, remembering that the environment is dangerous and feeling a higher urge to leave the country. In addition to that, eight of them narrated that being with people who do not think alike was not helpful, as well. While they were feeling an emotional turmoil inside; observing that people do not share the same state and judge their reactions made them feel misunderstood and lonely. With regards to this, Duru told “they said they do not care about my mental health at all. So, we had an argument...Their not understanding me, their expectations from me...I wanted to shout ‘People died, we can die; but you are still talking about a cable’”.

In addition to the support from their social circle, another path was observed in the accounts of six participants with regards to the theme *togetherness*. This was concerning being together with the whole community and feeling united. During the interviews, they were repeatedly emphasizing the importance of getting and standing up together. They were narrating that since these attacks concern the whole community, everybody should react as if they have lost their loved ones, because this is in fact what could happen in the future. They even emphasized, in order to reach this “collective mind”, citizens should listen the outcries of the relatives of the deceased. Okan was one of those who was strongly urging the importance of collective mind. He was also reacting to those who want to leave the country by saying: “It turns into an inequality, such that people who can afford should go, but people who cannot will die here... What happens if I go but my friends die here? We must face it together”. As it can be seen in this quote, they were emphasizing that every citizen should make an effort and work together to overcome this depressing condition of Turkey. In fact, they were somehow able to create this collective mind by being together with the community, especially METU community, which was delineated as giving them strength. This was especially reflected in their accounts regarding the memorial of Berkay Baş and Ozancan Akkuş. Although they said they were afraid of that crowd during the day of the

memorial, they felt an urge to be there and it made them feel good to be there. They saw many people were out there, having left their different ideologies aside and just came together to show respect and react to these deaths. This created a sense of togetherness in the participants. In the below quotation of Selen, their thoughts regarding the togetherness in the memorial day was reflected:

What pushed me there was to stand in silence for those people. We are just like them and we do not want this to be re-lived anymore. It was great to see that stance of our university. The fact that there was such a ceremony, that everybody got together... Though we had opposite views, there were so many people there... We have all got out of our views and stood in silence for the deceased... You tell yourself that I am not alone... I thought we are not alone and if something happens again we can stand together, we can defend our rights together.

3.4.4 Avoidance

The fourth subordinate theme belonging to *coping* is termed as *avoidance*. This theme stands for the participants' attempts to avoid fear-inducing places and people, limiting their actions that disturb them or keeping distance between themselves and their distressing thoughts or feelings regarding the terrorist attacks. These avoidance attempts were twofold, which are named as behavioral and emotional avoidance.

To begin with, nine of the participants disclosed that they avoided certain places and changed their daily routes on the basis of their appraisals of security. These places were the ones that induced fear by reminding them of previous attacks and carrying certain signals of terrorism threat like crowds, Kızılay, shopping malls or police officers. They also reported that they preferred to stay more at their homes or at the METU campus. Further, it was also found that they have made some changes in their daily routes, like using a less crowded and remote street or getting on the bus on less crowded hours. Doruk summarized this process in the following way: "How did we get used to this process... By staying away from crowded places... By not going to night clubs, by avoiding those places and by not going to Kızılay. By going to lectures and returning to home immediately... avoiding police officers when we see one". Although these avoidance behaviors diminished their bombing-

related thoughts and fearful feelings by ensuring safety; they were expressed to be limiting their lives. They said that they could not go to places they used to go and shaped their lives based on not how they want, but how terrorism and its concomitant fear directs.

Though these avoidance behaviors appeared after each attack, they were just permanent for some participants and disappeared after some time has passed. But still, eight of the participants continue to live to some extent with these behaviors. Those who used them temporarily also reported that depending on the danger signals coming from the environment, like political elections or terror warnings, they kept on following these avoidance “rules”. Only Okan said that he did not avoid anywhere and did not shape his routines although he was feeling the same fears as the other participants. He explained this in the following way: “I did not make much of an effort to stay away from that place, that crowd or so-and-so. I think this is not something that you can take precaution”. As it can be seen in this quote, he somehow accepted his fate as mentioned above; and understood the fact that terrorism can find anyone at any time, and so it cannot be avoided.

In addition to these, seven of the participants also expressed that they started to avoid the media, as well. Although they were following it very often during the initial stages after the attacks, all of them disclosed their realization of its detrimental effects on their psychological wellbeing. Thus, in order to protect their mental health, they said that they slowly began to avoid it. In the following quote, Tolga explained his opinions regarding the effects of media:

There were very explicit images... Like the split off legs and so... they affected me very badly. I think people should not have shared this much. It is okay to share them to some extent, so that people realize something and become aware. But this should be done carefully. They should not be shared to that degree.

Final finding regarding the avoidance, which emerged during the interviews is emotional avoidance as a coping method. It was seen in the accounts of three participants, who displayed an incongruence between their affects and thoughts; and

it felt that they were somehow blocking their disturbing feelings. To begin with, this was seen in the way of laughing while Doruk and Duru were explaining their disturbing thoughts. The following sentences of Duru, which she told while laughing, could be given as an example to illustrate this: “Before, I used to sit in Yüksel street and watch people get about. Now, I do not sit there anymore in Yüksel, because when I do, I think those people can die”. She also added that while she was feeling deeply sad during the first weeks for the deceased, in time they turned into numbers instead of people with life stories; and she began to look in a more “rational” way and feel more psychologically relieved. Further, Leyla showed different pattern in terms of emotional avoidance. She confessed by referring to the deceased from METU that “They are not people who are close to me... It is not something related to me. We are important. We cannot sit and feel sad for those people that much”. However, she also said that she was badly affected for several weeks after the attack happened in Beşiktaş, İstanbul. She narrated that she thought about the relatives of the victims, looked at their pictures for a long time and felt “deeply sad”. In addition to this incongruence that was displayed by Leyla, it was also observed during the interviews that she was avoiding emotional questions and changing the subject to other topics rather than talking about terrorism.

3.4.5 Holding onto a Positive Future

Fifth subordinate theme that was found to be used as a coping method by five of the participants is called *holding onto a positive future*. It represents participants’ motivating themselves towards imagining a positive future for themselves and/or for the country in the times of devastating ongoing terrorist attacks. This was both thought-wise and action-wise. In terms of thought-wise relying on a positive future, they focused on their thoughts that the situation of Turkey will be better in the future. They mentioned that although bad things happen over and over again during the last years, it does not imply that the future of Turkey will be the same. Thus, they retained their hope, but for this to occur it seemed to be important that a certain amount of time should have passed after the attacks. These thoughts were observed not to occur during the immediate aftermath. In relation to this positive future

belief, Anil said that “in many countries, in many places of the world, in many times, these events have been experienced... I think what Turkey has been going through right now does not imply that bad things should be expected in the future as well”. As it can be seen in this quote, these participants somehow motivated themselves with the thought that everything is going to be okay. In addition to these beliefs, as it was mentioned in the previous parts, some participants considered leaving the country and constructing a life in more peaceful cities and countries. These thoughts were also suggested to have a beneficial effect on participants in terms of holding onto the idea of a positive future, even if the state of the country would not be stabilized. In order to clarify this point, the following quote of Selen could be given as an example, where she discussed her ideas related to leaving the country: “My mind always thinks on the background and says ‘Am I really safe here?’... That is why I am thinking of running away and leaving. The idea of leaving and getting rid of everything could be a factor that soothes me”.

Among these participants, four of them experienced this change action-wise, which means that they acted on their thoughts and strived to move towards this idea of positive future. They mainly implied that although they do not have the power to change anything today since they are students; they have one power in their hands, i.e. studying. Thus, they believed in their ability to gain power by studying harder today so that one day in the future they could make Turkey a better and a peaceful place. Thus, they returned to their work, motivated themselves to become stronger in order to gradually attain that positive future. In the following quotation of Arda, these opinions are reflected: “I need to do something here today so that maybe one day I have the power to change all of these, or in order to prevent things that may harm my loved ones, to help them in a way... You begin to focus on your hope of graduating and doing something for Turkey in the future”. These points were also reflected by two participants at the end of the interview. They disclosed that participating in the study and taking an action this way made them feel helpful, less powerless and that they hoped the results of this study would contribute to positive changes for the community.

3.4.6 The Passage of Time

Final subordinate theme under the theme *coping* is called *the passage of time*. All of the participants said that the most helpful thing during all this time was in fact the passage of time. In order to define this, Ezgi referred to the Turkish saying “time is the cure for everything”. According to the participants, time helped the intensity of their thoughts and feelings to diminish. This was in part resulting from the decrease in terror warnings, news in the media and daily conversations related to terrorism. Also, as time went by, they said that they began to accept the current insecure status of Turkey and that they have to live with it. Selen referred to this acceptance coming through time in the following way: “I got used to the fact that this danger is part of my everyday life. That we have to cope with it and that it will always stay still at some point in our minds, as long as we are here”.

In addition to these, another vital factor contributing to the healing effects of time was that there were no new attacks for a long while. Thus, they were somehow believing that maybe the attacks were finally over. The below transcript from Anıl reflects this effect of time:

There have been no such events for some time and they are forgotten... Since there are no recent events, you do not expect new ones in the future. But during that period, where attacks were happening again and again, you were trying to be more cautious. So, I can say that I feel more at ease right now.

Similar to Anıl, Leyla was also referring to a similar effect of time:

Because a certain amount of time has passed, you do not stop and think about it. There should be many warnings for you to think... Apart from that, I am not affected by any other thing... They disappear as time goes by... People were talking; you were hearing them talk. Then, they gradually begin not to talk about it, they get used to.

This healing effect of time was also felt during the interviews. All of them reported that they did not talk about these issues for a long time and they thought they forgot, but as they were talking, they understood how much they were and are still affected. They realized that they have made some changes in their daily routines based on

threats; and they have changed in ways that are more relatively permanent. At the end of the interview, they said that the interview made them remember all those times in a concrete way. Some reported that it was good to remember what happened and some said it was bad. However, they believed that although the passage of time helped them in terms of providing psychological relief; still their fear continued and that if another attack happens, they expect to show the same psychological reactions since this was what they have experienced during the process of ongoing terrorist attacks.

3.4.7 Final Words regarding Copings Strategies

After explaining the general findings about coping that emerged from the interviews with the ten participants, it seemed important to add some final points. Although there were common coping attempts that have worked for all of the participants in terms of relieving their emotions, it was seen that the most important point is that the fit of that specific coping method to that person. It was seen that they discovered in time what is helpful and what is not helpful for them; and following this evaluation, they used various techniques. In addition to the ones that were discussed above, which were common for many participants, there were various other methods they employed as well. One of those strategies was aimed towards distracting their minds from the agenda of Turkey through activities like doing sports, reading books, playing video games, walking alone in nature, spending time with cats and dogs, listening to music, watching movies. Although they were aiming towards distracting their minds, they were also focusing more on the event, read about terrorism and tried to make sense out of the event this way since it became a major part of their lives. Further, bringing help to the relatives of the deceased and praying for the souls of the deceased in addition to praying for the safety of their loved ones were also reported. There were also others who found spending time with children helpful, because they gave them happiness through their innocence and providing hope regarding the future by showing that “there are still good things despite the evil”.

3.5 Explanation of the Interrelationship between the Superordinate Themes

In this part, the relationships between these superordinate themes will be explained very briefly. In the below figure, how these themes seem to affect each other is represented (see Figure 2).

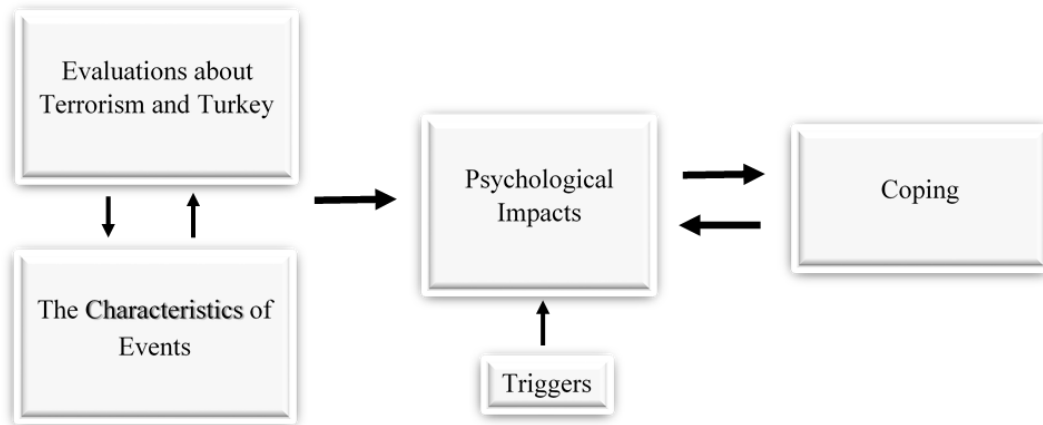


Figure 2.
Interrelationships between the Superordinate Themes

As it can be seen, there is an interrelationship between the themes “evaluations about terrorism and Turkey” and “the characteristics of events”. How people evaluate the current situation especially have an effect of the subordinate themes “the development of an insecure environment” and “social polarization becoming more evident”, which in return affect their evaluations. Since they put the responsibility mainly on the government and its security forces, they begin to develop distrust towards these institutions. Since they are the main figures that construct civilians’ appraisals of security, a general appraisal of an insecure environment occurs and contaminates their appraisals towards other figures like the METU authorities. This insecurity, in return, seems to affect their evaluations. Moreover, the terrorist attacks have in itself the possibility of creating this environment with its “targets” and “nature”, which can be seen in participants’ mistrustful appraisals towards other people and the media. The media blackouts happening in Turkey adds to this insecurity and affects their evaluations again

negatively. Apart from that, it was seen that participants' evaluations and the characteristics of events affect both short-term and more long-lasting psychological impacts. Although, the events have passed, due to the prevailing insecure environment and due to the ongoing effects of triggers, these impacts re-emerge. Finally, it was found that the impacts affect how participants coped with the event and its aftermath. In time, as they evaluated the effectiveness of these coping methods and observed their impacts, they have changed their coping styles in ways that will benefit them in better ways. Thus, an interrelationship between impacts and coping was found in the analysis, as well. In the discussion part, these findings will be discussed along with the relevant literature findings.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

In this part, the findings that emerged from the qualitative analyses of the interview data from the ten participants will be discussed by referring to the relevant literature and their implications for clinical applications will be offered. In general, the findings were largely in accordance with the existing literature. However, the qualitative methodology enabled the elaboration and understanding of the commonly reported findings in more detail. Also, the interpretative nature of this methodology provided the opportunity to establish connections between the reported themes with the help of the participants' accounts. In the next part, all of these emerging themes will be discussed in an attempt to illuminate the reported results.

4.1 Findings about “Evaluations about Terrorism and Turkey”

The first finding of the study was about the participants' evaluations about terrorism and the ongoing situation of Turkey. These evaluations elucidated that they mainly attribute the reasons of ongoing terrorist attacks to the political instability of Turkey. In addition to that, they also talked about the motivations of terrorist groups and the perpetrator who conducts the act of self-bombing. In fact, these points reflect the attempts of participants to make sense out of the events, which is stated to increase people's sense of control and predictability (Holloway & Fullerton, 1994). Furthermore, participants also talked about some evaluations of Turkey's past, present and future. They mainly pointed out that there were attacks in the past, as well. But, they have targeted the eastern regions of Turkey. Although it has spread to their own city; and the citizens are fearful for future attacks, they said that the government falls short in protecting its citizens; so they live in a constant state of pressure. According to Ursano et al. (1994), following traumatic events, both

individuals and communities struggle to understand who caused the event. These evaluations were generally done through gathering information from the environment and processing them. As it was mentioned by the participants as well, they followed the current political agenda and reached these conclusions. In a sense, through their efforts to give meaning and understand the attacks, they also seemed to have developed an interest in politics.

The above accounts are in fact related to the participants' appraisals as proposed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984). They said that appraisals reflect people's evaluations about the stressor. These evaluations comprise thoughts regarding personal control of the stressor, i.e. if there is anything to be done to protect oneself and loved ones from harm. Although the participants' primary appraisals reflect an appraisal of threat both to themselves and to their loved ones; their secondary appraisals show that they perceive no control over the problem. Since all the participants pointed out to the government who they believed has the primary control to solve the problem, it can be argued that they appraise the situation as reflecting a lack of personal controllability. Although they said that there is also the need for community protest, which illustrates a wish for some degree of personal control; this was mainly evaluated to be almost impossible to do because of the fear people experience. This point again reflects their secondary appraisals of personal uncontrollability.

Similarly, these secondary appraisals also concern the source, from where the solutions to the terrorism problem are expected (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Ursano et al., 1994). After people construct some meaning regarding the disaster, they also have some initial ideas about who caused it and who should offer the solutions. In this case, it is expected from the government since the situation is related to political issues. Hence, they expect significant moves from the government. Since these moves do not occur, they said that Turkish citizens keep feeling insecure and unsafe; and live under a constant state of pressure. Considering these points, the widespread effects of terrorist actions make sense, because generally the events that are out of personal control are appraised to be more distressing and psychologically overwhelming for the communities (Ursano et al., 1994). Finally, under the

category of this superordinate theme, participants also offered their expectations for the future of Turkey's terrorism. Since the attacks have lasted for some time, they think that they are going to continue in the future. The fact that they still continue in the eastern regions was a sign showing that the situation has not been resolved yet. As it was noted in the literature, people's secondary appraisals also predict their expectations regarding the future possibility of direct victimization by the attacks (Ursano et al., 1994). Since they have a lack of personal control in a problem to which no concrete solution is offered by the responsible authorities, they also think that they could be victims as well. This may contribute to their ongoing distress reactions.

4.2 Findings about “The Characteristics of Events”

The results regarding the characteristics of events mainly displayed that the targets, nature, environment of insecurity and social polarization had a significant effect on how participants appraised the terrorist attacks. These appraisals were in return demonstrated to be leading to various psychological impacts and coping strategies. In the below parts, these themes will be discussed mostly along with this perspective.

4.2.1 Findings about “The Targets of a Terrorist Attack”

This subordinate theme was representing participants' thoughts about the wide variety of targets, including civilians like themselves and thus the possibility of being at the crime scene at the time of the attacks. They made it clear that the damage to those targets made them think that they themselves or their loved ones could be targets of terrorism, as well. These targets included both people and places. On the one hand, it affected them adversely that people similar to them, especially those from their own university have died. On the other hand, their familiar spot and the central point of Ankara, the capital city of Turkey, being the target was the source of these thoughts. These results are consistent with the findings in the literature. Fullerton et al. (2003) reported that following terrorist attacks, through observing the media accounts regarding the victims and thinking about them, people

could enter into the process called “identification” with the direct victims of the attack. This effect was observed in the findings with regards to psychological impacts of 9/11 attacks, where people who identified and felt connected with the direct victims showed more posttraumatic stress symptoms than those who did not (Blanchard et al., 2004; Schuster et al., 2001). What is meant by this process is especially mentioned by the participants themselves, who said that they “put themselves into their shoes”. This identification was proposed to be resulting in overwhelming thoughts of “It could have been me”, which make them to become the “as if” victims of the disasters (Dixon et al., 1993; Fullerton et al., 2003). What leads to this process of identification and its concomitant thoughts was emphasized to be the similarities of the indirect victims with the deceased (Dixon et al., 1993; Saari, 2005). As it was also reflected in the accounts of the participants, this identification could take different forms depending on who the imagined victim will be. This may be the people themselves, which leads to “the identification with the self” (Ursano, Fullerton, Vance, & Kao, 1999). This can also be seen in the accounts of participants like “If he died, I can die as well”. Additionally, this identification could also concern the loved ones in the form of “It could have been my friend or family member”, which is reflected in the accounts of participants like “Would this happen to my family?”.

These effects seem to be related to the primary appraisals of threat (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Since people that are similar to themselves die in the violent attacks, they also start to think that their lives are in danger, they are vulnerable and they could die in a future attack. Similarly, to these appraisals the attacks targeting their frequently visited spots, namely Kızılay contributed significantly. It was mentioned that until life-threatening events come closer and so appraisals of personal life threat are generated, people tend to believe in the “illusion of invulnerability” (Janoff-Bulman, 1992). According to the theory of shattered assumptions proposed by Janoff-Bulman, although bad events happen around the world, people tend to believe that they will not happen to themselves or their loved ones. Thus, generally they do not expect those events to come closer to themselves.

About this point, Parkes (2014) mentioned that people form attachment towards some symbolic places and they appraise them as their secure base. But when terrorist attacks target and destruct those places, these appraisals of security are also damaged; which in return bring the damage to one's own security. In this way, a place once appraised as a secure environment becomes contaminated with threat appraisals (Hobfoll et al., 2007; Parkes, 2014). As it was also reflected in the accounts of participants, although over the years they were observing the terrorist attacks happening in Turkey, they were happening in the eastern regions, not in places they visited frequently. Thus, they did not think of the possibility that they could affect them personally as well. Of course, until the attacks spread to the city in which they live, Ankara. In relation to this, Kaniasty and Norris (2004) expressed that in fact each disaster evolves gradually over time. However, this evolution is ignored by the citizens until to the point, where it cannot be ignored anymore, i.e. until the personal threat enters into the equation.

In addition to these, the results showed that the METU students being among the victims; and its resulting identification process were more overwhelming for the participants due to the mentioned "METU bond". As it was mentioned by Ursano et al. (1999), this identification process entails emotional involvement with the deceased. It seems that there is already an emotional involvement between the students of METU, who have not ever met each other. This could be explained by the concept of "sense of community" proposed by McMillan and Chavis (1986). According to them, there is an emotional connection between members of the community who share a same history, same territory and similar experiences with each other. This sense of community between the members of this kind is perceived as a sense of home or of family, where people feel identified with the group as a whole and its individual members. The effect of this sense of community could be observed in the accounts of the participants, who referred to the deceased from their university as "brothers" or "friends" although they have never met them. Thus, this sense of community could be the factor that made them affected more adversely.

4.2.2 Findings about “The Nature of Terrorism”

The second subtheme was the nature of terrorism, about which participants mentioned several characteristics regarding the nature of terrorist attacks that make them psychologically affected more. These characteristics include that the event is sudden and unexpected; which means that the attack can find anyone at any time; it includes brutal and violent death of innocent people; and done by another human being showing the evil side of human beings.

These results are in accordance with the literature showing that the events that are sudden and unexpected become more traumatic for people. This was explained by the fact that in such events the victims are unprepared for the event (Janoff-Bulman, 1992). Although participants narrated that after the first attacks, new ones were expected; still these subsequent ones had similar effects on them. In relation to this point, it was explained that although people expect future events during ongoing traumatic events, still it is hard for them to psychologically prepare themselves for subsequent ones (Janoff-Bulman, 1992). They can never know exactly when the next event is going to happen, which intensifies the appraisal of unexpectedness. Furthermore, due to the tendencies for avoidance probably future imminent attacks are suppressed.

Apart from that, similar to the accounts of participants, current knowledge also reflects the negative impacts of terrorism, which have a brutal and violent nature and use the act of self-bombing, during which a person intentionally harms innocent people. These kinds of actions were proposed to reflect that there are evil and ruthless people around this world (Janoff-Bulman, 1992). Shalev (2004) states that even observing the nature of terrorist attacks through the media, which include “disfigured bodies” or “extreme brutality”, makes these observers imagine the unthinkable. These sights are in contradiction with their internal assumptions regarding the people and the world. Thus, it was noted that such attacks become a threat to one’s assumptive world even though they do not threaten their lives. In addition to that, seeing that innocent people are killed is also in contradiction with

people's core assumptions since generally human beings are inclined to believe that there is justice in this world and that nothing happens to the innocent people (Saari, 2005). However, this nature of terrorist attacks makes them turn back to their assumptions and reevaluate them on the basis of these new information. As it was also seen in the accounts of the participants, it was hard for them to acknowledge the fact that people were just killed for other people's fights and that they were used as pawns.

4.2.3 Findings about “The Development of an Insecure Environment”

This theme communicates participants' increased sense of insecurity which was brought about by the terrorist attacks. They think that there are no forces that can protect them and that they are vulnerable to external threats as citizens of Turkey. This is in fact a characteristic feature of disasters in general, and especially of terrorist attacks in the affected community (Fullerton et al., 2003). Inherently, human beings have an inclination to believe that the world is a safe and secure place; and they do not question the possibility of mortality (Janoff-Bulman, 1992). They do this because they want their environment to stay safe, controllable and predictable (Holloway & Fullerton, 1994). However, traumatic events shatter these core assumptions about the world by forcing the victims to face their own fragility; and show them that the sense of security is itself a fragile concept (Janoff-Bulman, 1992; McFarlane & van der Kolk, 1996). Further, since disasters like terrorism do not usually have a clear resolution, citizens can never feel absolutely sure that the events are finally over and that they can feel safe again (Kaniasty & Norris, 2004). Although the participants of the study were not direct victims, it was mentioned that the prevalent and immediate broadcasting of violent and graphic images has a significant effect in terms of generating unsafety over the whole society (Shalev et al., 2006).

As it was mentioned by the participants, some factors were contributing to this sense of insecurity. One of those factors was the government, since they thought that the government cannot protect its citizens by taking concrete actions against

terrorism. It was mentioned that the concept of state is mainly dependent on the people's needs of safety since living in the nature without any laws, rules or institutions of the government is stated to be "very insecure" (Buzan, 1983). Thus, the very foundation of the "state" evolved from human beings needs of protection from various external threats like physical injury or death. Considering this, it is very understandable that disasters like terrorist attacks, which include infiltration of external threats into the country, damage the confidence of citizens towards institutions (Fullerton et al., 2003). Perhaps due to these factors, the most prominent theme that emerged from the accounts of the participants was their sense of insecurity towards the government. Furthermore, the recovery environment and the reactions of government in this period was also mentioned to have a vital importance (Silver et al., 2002). In such situations, the literature emphasizes the significance of reconstructing public safety. So, it is imperative for the government leaders to stay calm and not to give overreactions to the threat through excessive security measures or emphasizing the danger repeatedly in their accounts (Parkes, 2014). Emphasizing threat and horror was noted to become factors that increase the public fear, which could augment the psychological impacts in communities. Thus, it seems that the aftermath period of the attacks could have also contributed to the participants' sense of insecurity due to increases in security measures along with beliefs regarding their inefficacy.

The second factor contributing to the sense of insecurity as citizens in Turkey was the distrust towards the security forces of Turkey. This was mentioned to be due to the beliefs of the participants on their lack of efficacy to prevent the attacks from happening. In addition to the feelings of fear towards police officers that contribute to this insecurity which will be discussed in the following sections; the path towards "distrust to security forces" seems to share a similar pattern with the government. Since they are the "security forces" of Turkey and their duty is to protect the citizens, participants expect them to establish security, in which they have failed several times in the past. With regards to this point, Danieli et al. (2004) also reported that following terrorist attacks, questioning the efficacy of necessary

institutions responsible for security is a very common response observed in the community members.

In addition to those, participants also referred to their mistrust towards other people. They told that they were suspicious of other people in the crowds and thought that they could be terrorists. This result is closely connected to the nature of terrorism, which includes violent action of one human being towards another, leading to increased suspicion within the community members (Pfefferbaum et al., 2002). Janoff-Bulman (1992) mentions that intentional harm from another human being show to the victims that there are evil people in this world. This is in contradiction with people's core assumptions which states that the world is a benevolent place. Thus, again such a realization leads to a shattering of assumptions and the victims start to look at the world in a more malevolent, unsafe and distrustful manner (Janoff-Bulman, 1992).

Another source of insecurity as mentioned by the participants comes from the media. They said that media blackouts that appear in the immediate aftermath give a sense of distrust since they felt that necessary information was kept hidden from them. This blackout was stated to direct them towards the social media, which is unfortunately full of false news and they cannot completely rely on what they read or hear. With regards to this point, Kaniasty and Norris (2004) mentions that the inconsistent messages spread out through the media or its exaggerating the already existing threat cause increased sense of threat in the community. Although the media blackouts were sometimes used and suggested to ensure that the community remains calm and undisturbed, it was reported to have downsides as well, like enhancing the threat environment produced by terrorism and by being a reflection of undemocratic actions (Dettmer, 2002).

Final factor that was mentioned by the participants regarding mistrust leading to feelings of insecurity is about the METU authorities. As it was mentioned in the results part, this mistrust is very similar to that felt for the government. This final factor seems to be important in the sense that it gives information about the concept

of sense of safety. To begin with, as it was reported above in relation to the government, the increase in security measures which was decided by METU authorities were not found to be helpful either. Additionally, considering the accounts of participants, it was seen important that the sense of safety is a subjective feeling and do not have any connection with objective security measures. Participants told that they sustained the idea of safety in the campus owing to the social environment of METU campus. This point is in accordance with the knowledge in the literature. It was emphasized that defining safety is a complicated issue and that the feeling of safety is not the same thing as actually being safe (Buzan, 1983). Feeling safe within the campus and around people from METU could be related to the above mentioned concept of sense of community (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). According to the authors, people who have a sense of community construct an emotional safety environment within their boundaries of the group and that this appraisal of security is beyond the concept of physical security.

4.2.4 Findings about “Social Polarization Becoming More Evident”

The final subtheme of the characteristics related to the attacks is related to the social polarization. During the interviews, participants reported that after the terrorist events, they began to realize that there are people in the community with opposite sociopolitical views to themselves. This is in fact a widely reported characteristic and inevitable consequence of terrorism since threatening situations set the stage for community conflicts (Kaniasty & Norris, 2004; Parkes, 2014). These polarizations and hatred towards the outgroup were stated to be resulting from human beings' inherent needs to protect themselves and their loved ones (Parkes, 2014). In relation to these, participants said that there are people in the community that support those who are responsible for the attacks and who talk badly after the deceased, to which they strongly protested. As Parkes (2014) puts it once the social polarization starts on one side of the community, it usually triggers the other pole of the community, as well. This was also evident in the participants' accounts. In fact, by staying on the other side, they were recreating this polarization, as well. Furthermore, since terrorism of Turkey mostly originates from social disintegration and internal threats,

these consequences are even more likely to occur. Since the self-bomber is a human being inside the territories of the country, anybody could be the perpetrator, which was also mentioned by one of the participants. Such suspicions of the community were reported to result in polarizations and hatred in the community, as well (Parkes, 2014). Terror management theory could provide a useful explanation for this polarization. According to the theory, when people are reminded of their own mortality, i.e. mortality salience, they tend to show more negative evaluations and judgments towards the members of the outgroup; and those who do not support their cultural worldviews (Pyszczynski, Greenberg, & Solomon, 1997). Since the concept of being a part of a group and a wider culture provide people with stability and meaning in life, they are protective of their own group in the face of death. Hobfoll et al. (2007) reported that this effect of mortality salience is in fact commonly the case following disasters leading to in-group and out-group divisions in the affected communities.

4.3 Findings about “Psychological Impacts”

The data of this study were collected during the period May-June 2017. This means that more than a year has passed from the previous terrorist attack that happened in Ankara. Further, from the last terrorist attack that hit metropolitan cities, namely the Reina night club attack in Istanbul which had also an effect on the participants, almost six months have passed. However, it was seen that in addition to the more transitory effects, many of the effects of these terrorist attacks were still prevailing for these participants who were not directly involved in those attacks. In relation to this, it was reported that community-wide disasters could lead to significant psychological impairments in the whole population, and also those who were not the direct victims, but exposed to the event through various media channels. The main factor that has contributed to the psychological impacts seems to be the participants' appraisals of personal threat, i.e. the thoughts of “I could have been there”. Janoff-Bulman (1992) also points out to the fact that appraisals are the crucial factors which make an event traumatic and in order to understand the impacts; the meaning and the interpretation of victims are a prerequisite. In general,

those disasters that include appraisals of high perceived threat, low controllability and lack of predictability carry the potential to generate more intense and enduring adverse psychological impacts (North et al., 1999); all of which could be seen in the accounts of the participants. To this, the ongoing nature of the attacks could have contributed, as well (Shalev, 2000). Further, Galea et al. (2003) reported that the societal environment in the aftermath is of significant value for recovery of the community to occur. However, as participants also mentioned, the uncertainties, ongoing threat, insecure environment, and the continuation of “the state of emergency” nationwide were governing the aftermath period of the attacks. This could have complicated the resolution of psychological impacts.

As it was mentioned, although the content of the reported impacts was mainly similar across the participants, it was observed that those with previous mental health problems or previous traumatic history reported those psychological impacts in a more intense and detailed manner. In this regard, several studies reflected the rates of stress symptoms following communal traumatic events are higher for people with a previous history of trauma or psychopathology (Blanchard et al., 2004).

Although the importance of considering the individual person and the context is emphasized to understand the impacts of disasters since they depend on the person-context relationship (Ursano et al., 1994); many common psychological impacts and triggers were reported by the participants of this study. This could have occurred since the topic concerns a community-wide disaster and since the methodology of this study necessitates a certain amount of homogeneity within the sample. In the following parts, all of these common findings will be discussed.

4.3.1 Findings about “Heightened Feelings and Triggers”

All of the participants reported heightened feelings, especially for the immediate aftermath period. Literature also illustrates that following terrorist attacks, various feelings could be observed in the whole community, which are mentioned as normal and adaptive responses if they are experienced temporarily (Hobfoll et al., 2007;

Ursano et al., 1994). Although these feelings are explained to be mostly transitory, some people continue experiencing them, mostly due to the reminders or “triggers” of the traumatic event which make them remember the memories related to the event and their accompanying feelings (Horowitz, 2011). The participants of this study did not directly experience the terrorist attacks, however despite of that they told triggers like thinking about the deceased, seeing Kızılay, remembering the sights of the violent attacks (to which they were exposed through the media), and seeing security measures were working as triggers for them.

In the literature, these heightened emotions are explained by the appraisal processes of participants. According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), depending on the primary and secondary appraisal processes, the person determines the degree of threat that the problem constitutes. As long as the situation is appraised as threatening and out of personal control, various emotions like sadness, fear or anger are likely to result (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; McFarlane & van der Kolk, 1996). It was mentioned that these initial intense reactions could be controlled and decreased through reappraisal processes, which includes an appraisal that the event is not that threatening anymore. However, this seems to be not the case for the participants since the problem continues to be perceived as threatening, because the future expectancies of the terrorist attacks were high. Horowitz (2011) provides another explanation for these heightened feelings following traumatic event. He explained that they result from the victims’ realization of the incompatibilities between the realities brought by the event and the information in their existing belief system in relation to the self, others and the world. Each realization of incompatibility brings with itself intense emotions.

Sadness: By referring to the immediate period after the attacks, participants mentioned that they were feeling sorrow. This feeling was mainly rooted in the targets and nature of terrorism. It began with their thoughts regarding the deceased, especially those from METU. At first, they felt deeply sad for those people who have lost their lives but with whom they have never met. As it was stated by Fullerton et al. (2003), terrorist attacks usually generate feelings of bereavement

which spread around the nation. This national level of sorrow is called as “communal bereavement” by Catalona and Hartig (2001), which means “widespread experience of distress among persons who never met the deceased” (p. 333). This extensive bereavement was stated to occur especially if the traumatic event concerns the failure of an institution like government or religious community to perform essential duties. For Turkey, this could be translated into the participants’ beliefs about the governments’ failure to ensure safety. As citizens of Turkey, participants could also have felt this way since they thought they or their loved ones could be hurt due to these failures. Additionally, since participants mostly perceived the victims as their close ones due to their sense of community and the process of identification, thoughts regarding their own and their loved ones’ possible victimization in the future may have generated these grief-like reactions especially after the Güvenpark attack. Janoff-Bulman (1992) pointed out to the fact that when traumatic events hurt our close ones, due to our emotional attachment, we feel the effect of the traumatic event more intensely. The emotional attachment within the community of METU could have worsened the psychological effects, which they referred to as “the bond” within the members of METU. Through putting themselves into their shoes, they may have lived at least for a short-term period “as if” losing their loved ones.

Finally, they felt sad about the target site of the attacks, i.e. Kızılay, to which they had an attachment and had many memories at that place. Their descriptions and their feelings of sadness were again similar to a state of grief. It was like they have lost a secure and valuable place, which turned into a dangerous place. Kaniasty and Norris (2004) reports that the damage to the familiar and symbolic places could bring with itself a loss of attachment towards those places. These grief-like feelings of participants could have resulted from this loss. As Horowitz (2011) puts it grief can be defined as “the phenomena of subjective experience and behavior that occur after psychological recognition of a loss”. This description reflects both the recognition of participants’ possible loss of their loved ones and their loss of their own city.

Anger: In addition to sadness, another commonly reported feeling that still exists to some extent is anger. This anger was reported to be towards those who are responsible for the occurrence of these attacks; and also towards those who think opposite to themselves. Fullerton et al. (2003) mentioned that these increased feelings of anger are commonly reported in the affected population following terrorist attacks. Similar to the results of this study, they noted that feelings of anger were targeted mostly to the people who conduct the attacks or to those people who could not prevent it due to their lack of preparedness (Fullerton et al., 2003). This might be the mayors, police officers or other leaders of the community who were supposed to deal with the problem of terrorism. The main idea behind this anger was related to the disruption of safety (Holloway & Fullerton, 1994). Since the sense of safety is a basic value of human beings due to its relation to core assumptions; those who are responsible for its lack are usually blamed. This type of blaming others when the situation is in fact out of personal control was reported to be helpful for the victims and they are related to low levels of symptom development (Solomon & Smith, 1994). The other end of this anger was resulting from the characteristic of terrorism that makes the existing social polarizations in the community more apparent, which was discussed above along with the terror management theory.

Despair: Participants mainly mentioned that they were feeling desperate especially in the immediate aftermath, which was connected to their inability to change the current situation. They seemed to have an urge towards problem-focused coping, but this was impaired by their sense of uncontrollability of the current situation since it was mainly caused by reasons that are outside of their personal control. The sense of despair was generated partly from the fact that traumatic events happen due to reasons that are outside of personal control and that they cannot be predicted (Herman, 1992). Further, it is also related to the fact that there is no way to stand up or run away from the existing situation; and one has to live with the feelings that were generated by the event as it was also mentioned by the participants.

Fear: The most prominent feelings of the participants that still continued to some extent was narrated to be fear, i.e. the fear of victimization in a future terrorist attack. This finding is in accordance with the literature which states that these fears could be observed nationwide for a long time after the attacks (Fullerton et al., 2003; Silver et al., 2002). In addition to the fear of harm to the self, the fear that future attacks could hurt the loved ones, especially family members were also among the reported findings, as it was also reflected in the accounts of the participants (Fullerton et al., 2003). The main factor contributing to this feeling was stated to be the sense of vulnerability (Bushnell, 2003). Since man-made disasters communicate the idea that a new and life-threatening danger entered into one's safe community, this terror becomes especially consolidated in the entire population (Holloway & Fullerton, 1994; Marshall et al, 2007). The nature and targets of terrorism were seen to have especially significant roles in this fear. The fact that terrorism targets certain people and symbolic places; and leads to damages to bodily integrities and security seem to have contributed to this sense of vulnerability. Along with this sense of vulnerability, there were also the factors of loss of personal control, increased uncertainty in the environment and threat to life, which were all made apparent by the attacks (Holloway & Fullerton, 1994).

Although not personally affected by the terrorist attacks, and although the percentage of being harmed by a future terrorist attack has a low probability of occurrence; some reasons were offered for these widespread fears (Marshall et al., 2007). The proposed explanation is about the "relative risk appraisal". According to this, people evaluate the risk through their intuitive judgments based on their affective responses, rather than carefully considered objective judgments. According to this, events that are unfamiliar and inflict terror have the ability to create an overestimation of future risk in the community. Since terrorist attacks are violent, kill innocent people and uncontrollable; and since the people cannot know when and where it could target themselves or their loved ones; they tend to exaggerate the future risk (Lerner & Keltner, 2000; Marshall et al., 2007). This in

return leads to intense psychological impacts spreading well beyond those direct victims.

Although it was mentioned that concerning the Israeli situation, some amount of habituation to the feared stimuli could be attained by the citizens (Brandon & Silke, 2007), some factors related to the nature of terrorist attacks seem to be preventing the participants to show the same effects. According to Brandon and Silke (2007), the nature of terrorism by being at unexpected locations and changing target every time; the processes of habituation and adaptation are unlikely to occur. In fact, what they mentioned was the opposite of this pattern, namely an increase in the emotional reactions in the following events. Since habituation effect is not generalized to different contexts or to the changes in the nature of the fearful attack; the effects in the following attacks seem to continue.

As participants reported, the triggers were still sustaining this fear. These triggers consist of mostly previous targets of terrorism. This effect of triggers could be explained by the fear network concept of Foa and her colleagues although it is mostly used for direct victims (1986; 1989). According to their theory, in the fear network of victims; there is information regarding the feared stimuli, the response of the victim and the meaning of stimuli and of responses. This network involves information depicting that the stimuli or responses are dangerous. When the victim confronts with the feared stimuli, this fear network becomes activated; and the proposition signaling the threat of that stimuli occurs along with various responses. It seems that due to the terrorist attacks, a similar network was constructed for triggers, which include threat information and make them remember the actual events. According to the theory of Foa et al. (1986), for fear to decrease, the person must split the association between the propositions of threat and stimuli elements. However, in this case, there are continuous threat signals from the media that terrorist attacks still continue, targeting similar people, attacking to different locations or targeting police officers or soldiers. It was mentioned that the warnings made through the media or the government increase people's appraisals regarding the threat (Marshall et al., 2007). They consistently show that the threat is ongoing

and that the future risk is high. Thus, the information gathered from the environment is in fact still signaling a real danger which is compatible with their propositions and thus seems to be sustaining them.

Guilt: In addition to these feelings, participants also mentioned that they were feeling guilt while moving on with their normal daily routines since people died and there are still many people who suffer due to their losses. They mainly thought that it was selfish to laugh or act as if nothing has happened. These feelings of guilt are also among the widely reported findings. Silver et al. (2002) showed that self-blame was found in the indirectly affected population following the 9/11 attack; which was positively correlated with posttraumatic stress symptoms. This guilt was mostly referred to in the literature as “survivor guilt” (Horowitz, 2011; Janoff-Bulman, 1992). Although this feeling was argued to have various sides, the participants mostly referred to the part of it which includes not being able to be helpful to the victims, not being able to change the situation, and seeing their life was in order although the lives of many were damaged and they still suffer.

Disappointment: Participants said that after the attacks, they expected at least some amount of reaction from their teachers and their fellow students. However, this expectation was not completely fulfilled. This feeling seems to be related to their need for social support, especially from the perceived leaders of their own campus community. In relation to this point, Kaniasty and Norris (2004) mentioned that the inadequate levels of perceived social support could lead to feelings of disappointment in the aftermath of disasters. According to them, the support of secondary victims generally decreases similarly to primary victims, which cause a sense of disappointment since the victims are not able to get the necessary support they need as they anticipated it to be. This decrease in perceived social support was reported to add to the negative impacts of the disaster. As participants also noted, these lack of reactions of their community had a worsening effect on themselves, as well. It was mentioned that the reactions of the community by being on the side of justice and order are of vital importance for the resolution of traumatic event (Herman, 1992). However, the lack of these reactions or showing the opposite

reactions have the potential to constitute factors for secondary traumatization and may bring further negative emotional reactions.

Hopelessness: Finally, participants mentioned that they were feeling hopeless towards both their own and their country's future which still continues. To these feelings, the death of people who support peace and the death of young people contributed significantly. In fact, the former of these harms the idea of hope for their own country by destroying the possibility of peace; whereas the other reflects the possibility of losing one's life and thus generates hopelessness towards one's own future. In fact, terrorism's damaging citizens' sense of hope is the core characteristic of it (Ursano et al., 1994). Losing hope was mentioned to be related to people's shattered world assumptions following disasters since their previous ways of understanding the world that provide them with coherence cannot be applied any more (Janoff-Bulman, 1992). Moreover, it is also related to the fact that previous coping repertoires fall short in providing ways to deal with the event since the event is unpredictable and new, to which victims are not prepared for (Hobfoll et al., 2007).

4.3.2 Findings about “Thinking about Existential Issues”

Participants mentioned that especially during the immediate period following the attacks, they were thinking a lot about death since they realized the possibility of their own death only after these attacks. It was seen that the uncontrollable and unpredictable nature of death through terrorism seem to have a significant effect on this. In relation to this, Janoff-Bulman (1992) mentioned that especially violent events that damage people's physical integrity have the power to face people with the possibility of death; and thus one's own vulnerability as a human being. Although the participants were not directly involved in the attacks personally, they were able to observe this violent nature of terrorism through the media accounts, which could have contributed to their realization of their own mortality. Similarly, Calhoun and Tedeschi (1999) also emphasized that traumatic events make people enter into a stage, where they focus on issues regarding death, meaning and

purpose. In the literature, it was also reflected that exposure to disasters is a time of increased self-awareness as a human being and its accompanying existential concerns (Scott & Weems, 2013). Although they may begin with the concerns related to death, it may lead to other existential constructs like meaninglessness of life, which was also reported by the participants. This meaninglessness was described to be related to the end of one's existence in the world. In this state, people may feel that their daily concerns like the significance of life, future or the matters of the world lose its meaning in the face of death (Calhoun & Tedeschi, 1998). Participants also said that their expectations regarding the future and their efforts to build a future lost their meaning since the possibility of death was raised and they realized that they can die anywhere at any time.

4.3.3 Findings about “Temporarily Suspending Life”

Following the terrorist attacks, participants narrated that they postponed their duties for a while and just focused on the current agenda. They followed the news, talked with their friends and whenever they tried to return to their academic works, they had hard time to concentrate on these topics. On the one hand, this seems to be related to the previous theme. Since they were thinking a lot about death during this time and its concomitant meaninglessness of life, these daily tasks seemed to have lost their meaning and became empty efforts since they can die, as well. On the other hand, this could be related to their preoccupation with the new information that entered into their belief system that is in contradiction with their existing beliefs and thus generate heightened feelings. It is known that following collective traumas, in addition to the upheaval in emotions, also disruptions in daily functioning and increase in mental ruminations are observed at least for several weeks in the community members (Hobfoll et al., 2007; Pennebaker & Harber, 1993). The intense feelings they have been living through during the first weeks is in fact an adaptive response of human beings which make them think about the traumatic event. However, as long as this occurs, information regarding the traumatic event stays in the active memory since the realization of the event necessitates the processing of this new and incompatible information (Horowitz,

2011). This might be a reason for participants' postponing the work related to school since they said that, back then, the only thing they can think of was the information about the trauma. In relation to this, Marshall et al. (2007) reported that following terrorist attacks, people may show malfunctioning behavioral symptoms like poor concentration at work. This was in fact shown after 9/11, where people around the nation were suffering from disturbing memories, thoughts and feelings about the attack; and had difficulty concentrating on their daily duties several days after the attack (Schuster et al., 2001).

4.3.4 Findings about “Relatively Long-Standing Changes in the Inner World”

In addition to these more transitory effects, participants also narrated several relatively long-standing changes that they have felt in themselves. One part of these changes were concerning the modifications in their inner worlds; and the other was about their relational world which will be discussed in the last section.

What the participants referred during the course of the interviews was in accordance with the accounts of Horowitz (2011), who emphasized that traumatic events lead to significant changes in the inner world of victims since they necessitate some modifications of their existing belief systems and requires new adaptations to the world. After these modifications, he said that the internal working models and the current reality of the world around the victims become more congruent.

Alienation: This effect of terrorist attacks was represented in the participants' accounts, where they reported a significant change in their perspectives towards the way they see other people and their city. These changes that the participants explained seemed to be related to the concept of shattered assumptions proposed by Janoff-Bulman (1992). Although she constructed her theory on the experiences of direct victims, literature represented that the core assumptions of vicariously exposed victims could also be shattered following disasters through the process of identification (Dixon et al., 1993; Ursano et al., 1999). This is found to be related to the increased sense of vulnerability that is generated following traumatic events (Liverant et al., 2004). According to this theory, traumatic events shatter victims'

fundamental assumptions about the world (Janoff-Bulman, 1992). As it was stated in the introduction part, these core assumptions are related to the world is a benevolent and meaningful place; and that self is worthy. Normally, people do not question these fundamental assumptions; sustain the feelings of safety and security in the world they live in. However, traumatic events have the power to make them return back to these fundamental assumptions and question their validity. Janoff-Bulman (1992) describes this process as “the injury is to the victim’s inner world”.

To begin with, participants said that they started to see people as selfish creatures, because they do not seem to be affected from the death of other people and accept it as another simple reality of life. This change in perspective was also related to how they see human kind as a whole. Observing the cruel nature of the human beings and seeing their hatred through the act of self-bombing was a major factor which generated these ideas. This was proposed to be resulting from the concept of “disillusionment” proposed by Janoff-Bulman (1992). It can be seen in their accounts that they believe that the world is a secure place, where people care for each other and do not stay silent to death of another person. Also, it seems that they believe that in the world, there is no way one person could kill another person violently and intentionally. However, since they observed these events, their previous beliefs changed and that they realized that one part of the world lives unresponsive and it is full with hatred. They begin to perceive the world and people with more pessimistic views and abandon their prior optimistic views. In fact, this was mentioned to be a more accurate view of the world to some extent, although they are experienced as psychologically disturbing (Janoff-Bulman, 1992).

In addition to their change in perspective towards people, it was also observed that there was a change in how they see Ankara, and especially Kızılay right now. They generally said that before they felt more peaceful and safer in Ankara; and it was more familiar for them. However, after the attacks these positive memories in Kızılay and its positive associations for them seemed to have turned into more negative ones. They began to think of it as a place where people die and which represents danger. This change in their perspectives could be explained by the term

“place attachment” proposed by Brown and Perkins (1992). According to the theoreticians, the attachments people form towards some places are an essential part of both their individual and communal identities. This means that through such attachments, they define who they are as a person and also as a community. For attachments to occur, there should be basic inherent safety; and these places carry this safe place aspect for people in addition to carrying their previous experiences shaping their lives. Normally, these attachments provide people familiarity, stability, and predictability; i.e. people know what to expect from their environment. This stability, in return, contributes to a sense of stability for one’s sense of self (Brown & Perkins, 1992). However, significant disruptions in this attachment that is caused by factors like terrorism may disrupt this familiarity or stability, which leads to a disturbance in their sense of identity. Thus, when the places they have attachment are damaged, an essential part of their sense of self becomes somehow damaged, as well. Through this, they may observe a change in their perspectives in which these places are seen as not a desired place to live anymore, but filled with insecurity and distrust (Kaniasty & Norris, 2004).

Early Maturation: Another aspect of personal change that was reported by the participants is early maturation. It was stated to occur due to their confrontation with death and its accompanying thoughts. They stated that they began to think about these existential concepts at a very early age, which made them become more pessimistic people. With regards to this, Janoff-Bulman (1992) discussed about similar results of traumatic events. She said that facing one’s mortality and several losses in life creates a state of maturation. This leads people to get out of the previous understandings of life, which entails the illusion of invulnerability. Whereas this confrontation is usually expected as a person grows older, traumatic events have the power to accelerate this process and make the person face the reality of death earlier, leading to earlier maturation. Considering that emerging adulthood is a time of gradual explorations related to one’s roles in life, the realization of death and one’s vulnerability may bring a sudden change in this sequence. This might have brought a sudden disruption in previous assumptions

related to the world. Since one's identity was mentioned not to be not stable during this time, and search for a coherence; already existing confusions seem to have enhanced in the participants. As also one participant suggested, through facing these realities people may get out of the "childhood consciousness" and experience a sudden change in appraisals of safety (Janoff-Bulman, p.72). Following traumatic events, people may start to expect that bad events happen around the world and these events can find themselves, as well.

Although traumatic events create a psychological confusion and disequilibrium in people since they do not fit with the existing belief system; in the long run, they and their accompanying thoughts about death could bring a higher level and positive side of maturation through the process of rebuilding of shattering assumptions (Calhoun & Tedeschi, 1999; Zoellner & Maercker, 2007). This was also mentioned by the participants as the positive side of this maturation, where they began to see that they appreciate the value of life more; and began not to exaggerate little worries anymore. These positive, namely post-traumatic growth outcomes were in fact mentioned by Calhoun and Tedeschi (1998), as well, who name those as changes in philosophy of life following traumatic events. They said that facing with one's vulnerabilities lead people to pursue much smaller pleasures in life and gain a sense of what is really important in life. The positive side of this early maturation could have resulted due to the positive reappraisal coping processes which was defined as "regular, effortful use of benefit-related information" (Zoellner & Maercker, 2006, p.645). It was mentioned that efforts to see the threat in a positive light and try to find a positive interpretation of the events could result in these growth outcomes. Although this maturation has the capacity to change people in a positive way, it was reported that this growth is an ongoing process of struggle with the adverse realities evolving over time (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1998). Thus, this may be an explanation for why some participants evaluated it in a more positive way, while others evaluated more negatively.

Enhanced Compassion: Another personal aspect of change as reported by the participants is their enhanced sense of compassion towards other people. They

mentioned that they began to empathize with other people's sufferings and feel that they can connect to their pain more than before. This was also observed in the interviews and the way they told the imagined stories of the deceased relatives' made the interviewer think as if they have themselves lived those sufferings. Considering this point, this enhanced compassion is very much likely to have occurred due to their identification with the victims and their relatives. This point was also mentioned in the literature, where Figley and Kleber (1995) pointed out to this through empathy perspective by saying that those indirect victims aim to understand what direct victims have been going through. However, this understanding requires the process of identification, during which they may undertake the experiences of those direct victims and begin to live them vicariously. This offers some explanation for why the process of identification and its resulting imaginations bring similar reactions in the indirect victims. In fact, the reported accounts of participants related to their increased empathy for the deceased and their families or friends are reported as a common outcome following disasters (Fullerton et al., 2003). Figley and Kleber (1995) talked about "the transmission of trauma" from primary to secondary victims, where the sufferings of one person spread to the other people in the community who start to feel beyond just observers, but become like an insider of the pain. Although it is perceived as including emotional burden to the person, Calhoun and Tedeschi (1999) referred to this process of feeling the sufferings of others as a part of positive growth outcomes.

Changes in Future Plans: Another personal change that was reported by the indirect victims is the changes in their future plans. Firstly, they said that they started to perceive their future as indefinite and start to make more short-term plans, since they cannot know when death is going to find them. This point was in fact in accordance with the theory of Janoff-Bulman (1992), who states that due to the shattering of the illusion of invulnerability, following traumatic events people may start to think that they may die suddenly, today or tomorrow; and that the world suddenly becomes a more dangerous place including the higher likelihood of death. Thus, this shattering of world assumptions; its accompanying feelings like despair,

hopelessness, and the cognitive catastrophizing were mentioned to be factors leading to a sense of foreshortened future (Hobfoll et al., 2007). Additionally, participants said that they began to construct their future plans on the basis of security, which included for most of them leaving the city or the country. As it was stated above, when places that people have formed an attachment towards got damaged due to disasters, this may also damage their attachments, since the positive meanings and sense of safety that were used to be a part of these places lose its essence (Brown & Perkins, 1992). Thus, they may start to change their ideas about a possible future there and decide to change their locations (Kaniasty & Norris, 2004). As participants also talked about their possible future plans in another city; following disasters people may struggle to form a new attachment with a new place that will be replaced with the old one (Brown & Perkins, 1992). In relation to this point, Calhoun and Tedeschi (1998) suggested that the significant role of traumatic experiences in people's lives forces them to revise their life narratives and thereby update their future plans. Since the future plans of emerging adults were mentioned to be not completely set yet; and it is a time of explorations in those plans, as well (Arnett, 2000); these substantial changes do not appear as unexpected.

Revising Belief System: The final aspect of personal change that was reported by the participants is their revisions regarding their belief systems. Some of them told that the attacks carried out by religious extremist terrorist groups made them question their religion since according to their own version, Islam does not allow such actions and assign a sacred value to killing innocent people. As a result of this questioning, some have experienced a loosening of their ties with their religion; while others came to the conclusion that terrorist's interpretation of Islam does not reflect the true Islam. Another aspect of revision occurred in a small minority of participants who told that their belief in fate was strengthened due to the unfair deaths of innocent people. Calhoun and Tedeschi (1999) noted that following traumatic events, people may experience spiritual changes, which involves both religious beliefs and more general ways of understanding of the universe. They explained that due to the unfair nature of the traumatic events, people may begin to

question the validity of their previously held spiritual beliefs. This may be particularly salient for terrorism in Turkey since some of them are conducted by religious terrorist organizations. This could be an explanation for why some of the participants experienced a loosening of their religious beliefs. However, it should be taken into account that almost all of the participants told that they are not completely devoted to their religion. Thus, different and somehow more reliable results could be observed in a more devout sample. Further, the unfair nature of events could also make people believe in fate. As it was also explained by those participants, they could not find any explanation for the death of those innocent people except for fate.

4.3.5 Findings about “Relatively Long-Standing Changes in the Relational World”

Final aspect in relation to the relatively long-standing changes due to terrorist attacks that participants reported was concerning their relational world. They evaluated these changes from both positive and negative aspects. To begin with, they said that their frequency of communication was increased with their family members, friends and relatives. Although they narrated it is good to talk with people whom they did not talk for a long time; they also said that especially their increased communication with their family members remind them of the attacks; and generate negative feelings in themselves. According to Kaniasty and Norris (2004), although social support has a fundamental positive effect in terms of generating psychological relief; social environment also has the effect of “stress contagion” where sharing of emotions could exacerbate the psychological reactions of the affected community. Listening to others may become an extra emotional burden to those already affected and thus they may limit their contact.

Further, they also talked of a changed level of intimacy with their close ones. Since they realized the possibility of death and the vulnerability of their close ones; they started to become more attached to these people. Further, they said that they started to re-evaluate the value of their relationships; and this either removed the distance

or oppositely put a distance with their friends. This point that was reflected by the participants is in fact an aspect of posttraumatic growth as reported by Tedeschi and Calhoun (2004). These theoreticians mentioned that facing with the human beings' vulnerabilities make people rethink about their priorities in life. As a result of these considerations, it was widely reported that people tend to experience a change in these life priorities and begin to spend more time and effort on their more intimate relationships.

4.4 Findings about “Coping”

The final superordinate theme communicates the attempts of participants to cope with the effects of terrorist attacks. They were used both in the immediate aftermath period and in the long term; and they served various purposes. Sometimes, they targeted various emotions and aimed to sooth them; and at other times they became ways to focus on the future and changing the problem in that future. Although some common themes have emerged related to the coping methods; as it is also mentioned in the literature, the use of coping processes display an idiosyncratic nature, where different people employ different ways of coping that works for them. They have their own coping repertoires that they have established over the years. Besides, they generally show a tendency towards using some coping processes more often and thus the way of coping reflects people's dispositional preferences (Miller, 1992).

4.4.1 Findings about “Immediate Attempts to Calm Down”

Participants mentioned that their first response after learning about the terrorist attacks was to go to their safe place, reach to their closest ones in order to check for their safety, and gather information from the media. It was reported that since people seek safety by their very nature, in times of stress and danger, they prefer to go to places that they are familiar with and where they feel safe and secure (Holloway & Fullerton, 1994). It was mentioned that during the times of uncertainty, people turn to each other and use each other for support. This was mostly used as a way of gathering information (Kaniasty & Norris, 2004). Studies

conducted both after one-time only and repeated terrorist attacks indicated that the most commonly reported immediate reactions of the community were to reach their close ones, check their safety and actively gathering information from the media (Bleich et al., 2003; Schuster et al., 2001). These methods were reported to be helpful, especially in terms of providing them a sense of psychological relief in this immediate time of increased distress. As it was noted, in events that are out of personal control, people turn to their emotions and attempt to deal with these emotions, which is a better “fit” for these situations.

Since the sense of safety of people are damaged, for recovery to occur, it is important they feel safe and secure again (Holloway & Fullerton, 1994). Therefore, it is both an essential and an adaptive response that they stay at their safe place with their loved ones. According to Hobfoll et al. (2007), the first principle of all psychosocial interventions should be about promoting a sense of safety in the affected community. This was stated to be an adaptive and an innate psychophysiological response of all human beings that target disturbing feelings of anxiety and fear. It was emphasized that even if the threatening situation still persists, when subjective sense of safety is established, there is a significant decline in the adverse psychological reactions of the victims (Hobfoll et al., 2007).

4.4.2 Findings about “Attempts of Re-adaptation”

Participants also mentioned that during the initial days, they refused or had hard times to return back to their daily routines. This was mostly resulting from their emotional turmoil, where their minds were still focused on the event. They were feeling sad, angry, despaired and so on. In addition to that, moving on with their previous life was creating guilt feelings. Although in time, they returned to their normal routines, these initial stages were described to be psychologically difficult. This time period was described as “the reaction stage” by Saari (2005), which is the stage following the initial shock after disasters. During this stage, it was revealed that victims show heightened emotions and they are still trying to process the event and try to give meaning to it.

Participants mentioned that in the following days and weeks, as they tried to adapt to their daily routines, their heightened feelings were soothed and they thought less about the event, which worked better for them compared to focusing on the event. In relation to this point, it was emphasized that although these initial emotional reactions are necessary to help the victim process the traumatic event; in time, regulating this emotional arousal and returning to their routines assist them to re-establish a sense of self-competency, which is especially important since it was significantly damaged by the event (Horowitz, 2011). This self-competency can protect the victims from feeling captivated by their own emotions.

4.4.3 Findings about “Togetherness”

Participants mentioned that both in the immediate and in the long-term period, they preferred to be with their friends and share their feelings and thoughts. They said that this helped them to feel stronger and soothe their emotions. Also, they added that being with people who think or feel similarly decreased their sense of loneliness and helped them to normalize their reactions. Social support is one of the most examined concept in the disaster literature and show significant beneficial effects on the affected population. According to Kaniasty and Norris (2004), it has a protective value in the face of negative impacts of the disasters. Especially in the immediate aftermath, it was mentioned that the boundaries constructed by those people become a safety shelter which leave people that are dangerous in the outside world (Holloway & Fullerton, 1994). These positive effects of social support were reported for the long-term, as well. As Parkes (2014) put it, community disasters mostly create a social cohesion, where people seek each other’s support and this make people closer to each other as people who are suffering from the same problem. As it was also reflected in the results section, this aspect of experiencing the same problems could be observed in the accounts of all participants, who used “we” language instead of “I”.

In accordance with the accounts of participants, literature denotes that the positive effects of social support lie in its benefit of being a coping resource in itself and of

normalizing participants' own psychological reactions and provide them with coping resources (Nuttman-Schwartz & Dekel, 2009). Knowing that one's disturbing psychological reactions is also experienced by others provides people an emotional relief; and this process of normalization is also one of the essential first steps of recovery (Hobfoll et al., 2007).

However, despite these positive effects of being with other people, they also emphasized that it had downsides, as well. They told that talking with people with opposite views; or discussing the event and their feelings were increasing their despair and enhancing their already heightened emotions by making them remember the event over and over again; or learning new and upsetting news about it. This sense of despair could be related to the participants' needs for problem-focused coping, but since they cannot achieve this due to the nature of the event, they were somehow forced to use emotion-focused coping strategies through friends, with which they were not satisfied. Although social support was delineated as both a problem-focused and emotion-focused strategy (Carpenter & Scott, 1992); the way participants described here seems closer to the latter one since it is mainly used to target emotions. In relation to this point, it was reported that when people experience an emotion, most of them prefer to talk about it, which was also observed after the terrorist attacks (Rime2010). However, according to Kaniasty and Norris (2004), social environment has the effect of "stress contagion" where sharing of emotions could exacerbate the psychological reactions of the affected community. Listening to others and learning new and sometimes misleading information about the event may become a "pressure-cooker", i.e. an extra emotional burden to those already affected; and so they may choose to limit their contact (Hobfoll & London, 1986). This occurs since sharing increases event-related negative emotions; and thus sustain the emotional arousal instead of eliminating it since the memories related to event are regenerated during the conversations (Rime, 2010).

Finally, it was commonly reported by the participants that they felt the need to become united with the community and overcome this problem by standing up

together. It was reported that following threat, people are more inclined to gather with their community, and experience an adherence to their groups and close ones (McFarlane & van der Kolk, 1996). This was suggested to provide them a sense of meaning following traumatic events. This safety and supportive environment provided by the social environment was named as “the trauma membrane” (Martz & Lindy, 2010). This need of the participants was satisfied significantly through by being together with the METU community in the memorial of deceased students; where they said their sense of loneliness was diminished and they felt stronger. The sense of connecting to other people and to the community in large, and this enhanced solidarity environment was revealed to be a common result and to have protective effects (Kaniasty & Norris, 2004). They help victims’ integration of the event and soothing of their emotions (McFarlane & van der Kolk, 1996). Considering that the METU students have a sense of community with each other, being together with this community and feeling belongingness seem to have become beneficial for the participants. Finally, in the literature, the importance of rituals was highlighted (Bushnell, 2003). On the one hand, they are the ways of the community to say goodbye and show respect to the deceased. However, more importantly they are vital for the moving forward of the community, for enhancing their collective efficacy and for generating itself again through the collective feelings of hope, solidarity and trust (Bushnell, 2003; Hobfoll et al., 2007).

4.4.4 Findings about “Avoidance”

The fourth subordinate theme under the category of coping was reported as avoidance, which comprises of participants’ attempts to avoid certain places or people based on their fears. In fact, following terrorist attacks, avoidance behaviors are among the commonly reported findings and they concern mostly specific triggers that make people remember the memories related to the event leading to intense emotions (van der Kolk & McFarlane, 1996). Since the information regarding the feared stimuli signal a real danger in the fear network, they attempt to avoid it (Foa et al., 1986). Thus, people may start to shape their lives along with the principle of ensuring their physical and emotional safety. Although it is not an

abnormal response and in fact a response to real danger, it was mentioned that these behaviors limit their social lives by forcing them to change their daily routes (Marshall et al., 2007). These new ways of living with avoidance and its accompanying limitations to their social lives were also reported by the participants.

Another common finding that was reported by the participants was their avoidance of the media, since they thought that especially media images worsened their psychological states. Although it was found to be beneficial to gather significant information about the attacks in the immediate aftermath, later on, these beneficial effects have decreased significantly. Literature points out to this double-sided nature of media, as well. Though it was reported to be assuring for people since it allows for information gathering and learning strategies about what to do, its detrimental effect of prolonging the adverse psychological responses was also recorded (Fullerton et al., 2003). The reactions and publicity in the media were shown to lead the community under threat to a state of continuous and intense fear (Dettmer, 2002). Through showing violent images and broadcasting them with negatively salient headlines were exaggerating the perceived risk and being a consistent reminder of the attacks (Parkes, 2014; Schuster et al., 2001). Thus, the accounts of participants about their reluctance to follow the news “to protect their psychology” was in fact in accordance with the literature.

The final aspect that was reported by the participants was emotional avoidance, which was observed in a relative minority of them. During the interviews, it was observed that they were avoiding some of their feelings although the content of their thoughts were visible and signaling mostly sorrow and fear. With regards to this point, Horowitz (2011) stated that each discrepancy that is realized between the information regarding the traumatic event and the existing belief system generates intense emotions, which could be threatening and overwhelming. This situation could make the person feel like he / she loses control over own emotions. Consequently, the person may attempt to avoid these emotions as a defense mechanism in order to decrease the anxiety. However, this is dysfunctional since it also limits the cognitive processing of the event. As it was also observed in some

participants of this study, this process of avoidance may lead to a blocking of affect. In such cases, there may be the words without feelings, meaning that the thought and emotion component may become split off from each other (Horowitz, 2011). This was mostly observed in the participants with a prior mental health problem. Thus, this avoidance could be their previously used coping strategy that they have found to be helpful in the past in terms of soothing their emotions.

4.4.5 Findings about “Holding onto a Positive Future”

The fifth coping strategy that was reported by the participants was holding onto a positive future. It was seen that they motivated themselves through the possibility of a possible positive future and some of them worked harder to reach that positive future. These accounts of participants seem to be related to the concept of hope, which was denoted by Schaefer and Moos (1998) as a personal factor that leads to growth outcomes. It was reported that despite the devastating events, many people retain their hope in the face of such adversities and these are in fact the people who experience growth outcomes in the long run (Hobfoll et al., 2007). Through their hope, people were stated to focus on possible positive outcomes in the future and may attempt to reach those through making revisions in their goals and behaviors; and through modifying their responses given to the traumatic event (Schaefer & Moos, 1998). In the long run, as they accept the current reality of trauma and live with it, these attempts could turn into taking concrete actions towards those positive outcomes. This was in fact what some of the participants did by focusing on their future and acting towards it. These actions seem to have a similarity with what was reported by Hobfoll et al. (2011) about action-based PTG. In relation to this, it was mentioned that sense self-efficacy is a necessary component which is also a great predictor of growth (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1999). This was also reflected in the results of this study. Those participants who believed to have their own personal control over the future of the country said that they began to focus on this future; and work towards it. It was mentioned that the heightened emotional reactions could be decreased and controlled through such constructive actions, because they

make people regain a sense of predictability and controllability (Hobfoll et al., 2007).

4.4.6 Findings about “The Passage of Time”

The final factor that was reported by the participants as helpful was the passage of time, which helped them attain some level of acceptance of the country’s problem and decreased their initial heightened psychological reactions. To this, they reported the diminished number of reminders and lack of new attacks contributed significantly. With regards to this point, Brandon and Silke (2007) mentioned that the psychological effects of terrorist attacks in the U.S. population disappeared due to “simple passage of time” and due to the fact that no new attacks happened. Similarly, Shalev et al. (2006) also pointed out that when the events do not recur, people generally show a tendency towards symptom resolution. Similarly, it was mentioned that over time, some level of acceptance occurs, which was suggested to be coming from the integration of information related to the events with preexisting belief system (Horowitz, 2011). Zoellner and Maercker (2006) revealed the importance of acceptance in growth outcomes, especially if the situation contains unchangeable life-events.

As it can be seen in the impacts part, there were changes in the participants which were observed both in the short-term that are more transitory and long-term that are more or less permanent. Considering these points with the effects of time, it can be said that revising the inner world and beliefs regarding self, others and the world is a gradual process; and it necessitates significant amount of cognitive work (Horowitz, 2011), even for the indirect victims.

4.5 Overall Relations between the Themes

In general, the results displayed that the theme “evaluations about terrorism and Turkey” represents the secondary appraisals of participants, where they locate the responsibility for the attacks and the institutions from which the solutions are expected. On the other hand, the theme “the characteristics of events” are mainly a

reflection of their primary appraisals, which denotes that they appraise a future threat that concerns themselves and their loved ones. The targets are similar to them, the nature of disaster is itself threatening, the environment is insecure and they cannot rely on citizens since they are polarized towards each other.

Further, it was seen that these two distinct types of appraisals have an effect on the psychological impacts that they have experienced both in the short and in the long-term. It was found that the immediate effects were mostly transitory for the participants, but especially fear is still triggered by the reminders of the attack, mainly due to their secondary appraisals. On the contrary, the long-term effects were more prominent and closely linked to a deeper matter that is their shattering of world assumptions and their rebuilding process.

These psychological impacts were found to have a connection with the coping strategies of the participants. Depending on their thoughts and feelings, they seemed to have determined their psychological needs and acted based on these. In times, these became handling their emotions, i.e. emotion-focused coping; and in other times, it concerned dealing with the problem, i.e. problem-focused coping. But mainly, the most prominent factor that provides psychological relief and acceptance of the situation was found to be the passage of time, which could have eased the process of rebuilding of shattered assumptions. Besides, coping methods, in return, seem to have determined the negative and positive psychological impacts that the participants experienced during this process. Further, it was also found that the appraisals of the participants had an effect on their methods of coping. Since the problem is appraised as threatening but out of their personal control, they mostly focused on handling their emotions by using their resources at hand.

All in all, these results supported the general findings in the literature showing the connection between appraisals, psychological effects and coping methods. Through a detailed analysis of indirect participants' accounts, these connections were attempted to be made more visible to the authors.

4.6 Clinical Implications

After providing the results and their discussions along with the information in the literature, their clinical implications will be depicted in this part. Although the current study was applied on a small number of participants, the results of it represented that terrorist attacks have the ability to generate various psychological disturbances in people who are not directly involved in the attacks, but only exposed to them vicariously. Though the psychological effects have settled to some extent, terrorism is a still prevailing problem of Turkey and it can be argued that further attacks may target civilians again. Since everybody has the potential to form identifications with the direct victims and thus become a possible silent victim of the disasters; it is possible that further attacks may affect many people. Considering the fact that it is not possible to know how much devastation subsequent events will cause and how many people will be psychologically affected; planning necessary interventions that could reach the whole community before such attacks seems to be important. In order to establish these, a well-organized system in the area of disaster preparedness is important in order to intervene as soon as possible to avoid enduring psychological consequences. Since such events could affect a considerable number of people, number of trained professionals should be enlarged. Considering that existing psychosocial intervention plans concern mostly natural disasters, adapting them to the situations of ongoing terrorism seems necessary.

As it was mentioned by Hobfoll et al. (2007) and TENTS guidelines (2008), these psychosocial interventions should be implemented on multiple layers, i.e. individual-, group-, and community-level. Whereas all the members of the affected community should be informed about the nature of the event, possible psychological reactions, beneficial ways of coping and places to seek help; those suffer from more intense psychological difficulties should be detected and encouraged to seek professional help. In order to reach the community, the use of media and internet could assist these processes. Since youth use especially social media resources, this information could be published there with the help of reliable organizations. Moreover, considering the polarization environment, the

psychosocial interventions should be done by professional organizations who will be able to remain honest, empathic and neutral.

The results of this study could give some preliminary ideas about the content of possible future psychosocial interventions. These suggestions are in fact in accordance with the guidelines of Hobfoll et al. (2007), which were provided for mass casualty events. To begin with, the results revealed the significance of enhancing the safety, which was in fact the first principle of the mentioned authors. Constructing “a relative sense of safety” under continuous threat was reported to be correlated to lower risks of developing subsequent PTSD. Thus, establishing such environments and enhancing these actions should be promoted in the affected community. With regards to this, the media should boost the perceptions of safety instead of displaying continuous threat signals and the community could be recommended to limit their media exposure. Since media had an effect of augmenting the psychological reactions, this is also important in terms of “promoting calmness” in the community, which brings us to the second principle of Hobfoll et al. (2007). Considering that participants experienced various heightened feelings and they could not make sense of these, attempts to normalize these reactions should be included as a part of psychosocial interventions. This could be established through psychoeducation, which will include providing victims concrete information about possible psychological reactions; mentioning that these unfamiliar and heightened emotions are normal reactions to the abnormal events which are experienced by many people; and that they generally dissipate over time (Hobfoll et al., 2007). This information will also help them to detect if their reactions fall into the normal range or if they need further psychological help. Besides, the results of this study reflected that terrorist attacks have the potential to create a sense of personal helplessness. Thus, it seems to be important that interventions should aim towards enhancing people’s sense of control and efficacy. This part actually corresponds to the third principle of Hobfoll et al. (2007) that is promoting a sense of self- and collective efficacy. In order to establish these, victims may be reminded of their existing resources and previous ways of coping or

shown alternative and active ways of coping with the current out-of-control situation. Furthermore, participants also mentioned the significant value of their relationships during this process. Since terrorist attacks are community-wide disasters and social support systems are especially rewarding for the Turkish community; enhancing these systems and forming group interventions with people who have a sense of community and who share similar experiences could be useful. These points regarding the effects of social support systems in fact is accordance with the fourth principle of Hobfoll et al. (2007) which is promoting connectedness. However, as it was also stated by the participants and the authors, the detrimental effects of the social environment need special consideration. Since group divisions are likely to occur following disasters; and differences in people's psychological reactions could lead to feelings of misunderstood; affected communities could be informed about such matters, as well. This should be generalized to the media, who should avoid enhancing these divisions through their accounts. Finally, another point that needs to be emphasized is that the attacks that happened in Ankara during the several years generated significant levels of hopelessness and despair in participants. Those who focused on hope seemed to have coped with it fairly well; thus it seems to be important that interventions targeting people's sense of hope is essential. This directs to the final principle of Hobfoll et al. (2007) that is instilling hope in the members of the community. Especially for the case of youth, it seems vital that they should be motivated towards positive goals in the future; and towards seeing positive aspects of the devastating experience.

Another prominent result of the current study was about participants' efforts to return back to their old routines, which seemed to have beneficial effects. This was also reported to be an essential ingredient of psychological adjustment by Hobfoll et al. (2007), as well. Through this way, participants were able to control their heightened emotions, observe that they can function like before and also return back to their social support systems. Although they reported that it worked better for them to return back to their daily routines, almost all of them said that they needed some time to process the event in order to do this. Thus, providing this necessary

time at least for a couple of days could be a useful strategy. During this time, rituals and memorials to acknowledge the deceased could take place. To this aim, awareness raising programs in the university level, targeting both students and the teaching staff could be applied since the reactions of especially teachers were found to affect the psychological experiences of participants.

In terms of the research area, it might be a good idea to make a detailed analysis and construct a model, which entails possible reactions of traumatic distress for different types of victims and the associated factors. This could widen and enrich the literature about the psychological effects of terrorism. Since the literature mostly discusses the trauma from the perspective of the direct victims and provide possible traumatic reactions for them, this point seems to be necessary. In this way, the detection people who need further psychological help could be done more easily.

For clinicians who work in the field, it is important that they at least talk about the current agenda of Turkey in order to not overlook the people who are affected and intervene if it is necessary. Similarly, it seems to be also important that all of the clinicians in Turkey are informed and trained about the basics of traumatic events and possible psychological reactions, since it is very much likely that further terrorist attacks or other disasters might hit Turkey again. Though it was mentioned that it is hard for the psychotherapists to work with the fear of harm from future terrorist attacks since it is not a fear that stays in the past, Hobfoll et al. (2007) offered that trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy and other evidence-based interventions are helpful for those communities, as well. Trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy was especially reported to have significant value in terms of promoting fear discrimination through working on fear networks, and teaching more adaptive cognitions and coping skills. Furthermore, it was generally mentioned in the literature that traumatic events like terrorism may deplete one's resources and thus also deplete one's capacity for growth. However, in this study, it was found that there were many positive results that were brought by these devastating events, which in fact show the strength of humankind. Though it was mentioned that traumatic events should have "seismic" effects on the person, and

shake the previously held beliefs to lead to growth outcomes (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004), which points seem to be lacking in the participants' accounts; still the cumulative stressful effect of ongoing terrorist attacks could have contributed to these growth outcomes. Since participants became aware of those traumatic growth outcomes while talking about them during the interviews; it seems vital that psychotherapists should intentionally listen to these positive outcomes and make the person aware of them.

4.7 Limitations

Considering the methodology and its requirement of a small sample, the results of this study should be evaluated with caution. Added to this, although the perspective of the researcher was attempted to be bracketed out, still these provided results are just only one way to interpret the collected data and thus carry the perspective of the researcher. Thus, it is accepted that another researcher could come up with different explanations. So, it is not possible to generalize these findings to all the vicariously exposed terrorist attack victims in Turkey. In order to do this, similar large-scale studies should be conducted by broadening the characteristics of the sample. These results should be re-tested besides the emerging adults, in a sample with more heterogeneity. However, these results might offer an idea and a basis of exploration for further studies, which could provide more generalizable results by using large samples and using quantitative measurement techniques. Moreover, some participants in this study had a mental health history. Although generally no difference was found in the content of participants' accounts, still the details they provided deepened the data; and thus for further studies this homogeneity within a qualitative study's sample could be established. Further, the process of data collection itself could have aroused the interest of people with certain characteristics, which could have affected some of the reported results. Also, during the data collection, the researcher has faced with the inability to find indirect victims since most of the students of METU that she contacted have experienced the night of coup attempt which was in fact direct victimization. In addition to these, just like other trauma studies, this study is based on retrospective data, and

thus the information that were provided by the participants are open to misremembering the event-related psychological experiences. Finally, considering the characteristic of the Turkish culture that people are less willing to talk about their weaknesses to other people, they may have provided answers shaped with social desirability bias.

4.8 Overall Contributions of the Current Study

Notwithstanding its limitations, the current study revealed that youth that are vicariously exposed to ongoing terrorist attacks could go through various psychological processes. Considering that the existing literature mostly focuses on the experiences of direct victims; the current study became an exploratory study towards a more hidden area of “silent victims”. The qualitative nature of the current study gave the opportunity to gain a more in-depth understanding of the existing knowledge in the literature; and especially about the process of identification. The fact that this type of victimization becomes more of a focus in the recent literature probably emerges from the effect of media. As it becomes more widespread, especially through the emergence of social media, the effects of community disasters spread accordingly; and observed in unpredictable communities. Though the observable reactions seem to have diminished over time, these attacks seemed to have become a significant traumatic experience for the youth in this study; and resulted in certain relatively long-standing changes. Since emerging adulthood is described as a time where the identity is not completely established and it is still a time of discovery about the world; these traumatic experiences including the observation of evil side of people, destruction of safety zones; and the polarized community seem to have a significant place for them. The effects of all these were observed both in their ways of perceiving themselves, the world and the human nature. These changes became perhaps more prominent since they are about to graduate and enter into a new life. Since the period of most of their discovery period, namely their university life, has passed in Ankara; these events became a turning point in terms of shaping their future and loosening their ties with the city they live in. However, this study was not limited to these adverse psychological

impacts of ongoing terrorist attacks and provided also a glimmer of hope. Although mostly perceived as a psychologically tough process, they displayed many areas of positive changes in their lives; mostly in their personal and relational lives. Although their world assumptions seem to have shattered, they employed several beneficial coping strategies to deal with this process and rebuild these assumptions.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC QUESTION FORM

- 1) Yaşınız:
- 2) Cinsiyetiniz: Kadın Erkek
- 3) Doğum Yeriniz:
- 4) Uyuşunuz: T.C. Diğer (Lütfen belirtiniz:)
- 5) Ait hissettiğiniz etnik kimlik:
 Türk Kürt Arap Azeri Fars
 Çerkes Diğer (Lütfen belirtiniz:)
- 6) Yaşamınızın büyük bölümünün geçtiği yer:
 Büyükşehir İlçe Merkezi Köy İl Merkezi Kasaba
Lütfen belirttiğiniz şikkı açıklayınız:
- 7) Medeni durumunuz:
 Bekar Evli
 Nişanlı Diğer (Lütfen belirtiniz:)
- 8) Öğrencisi olduğunuz bölümü / sınıfı belirtiniz:
.....
- 9) Çalışıyor musunuz? Evet Hayır
Evet ise açıklayınız:
- 10) Anne / babanız hayattı mı? Değilse, ne kadar süre önce kaybettiniz?
- 11) Ailenizin yaşadığı yer:

12) Ailenizin aylık kazancını düşündüğünüzde gelir durumunuzu nasıl tanımlarsınız?

Çok düşük Düşük Orta Yüksek Çok yüksek

13) Ankara'da ikamet ettiğiniz yer:

Ev (Semt:)

Diğer (Lütfen belirtiniz:)

14) Şu an kiminle yaşıyorsunuz?

Aile Arkadaş Yalnız

Diğer (Lütfen belirtiniz:)

15) Kendinizi ne kadar dindar bir insan olarak tanımlarsınız?

Çok Orta Az Hiç Kararsız

Diğer (Lütfen belirtiniz:)

16) Kendinizi hangi dine ait hissediyorsunuz? Belli bir mezhebiniz var mı?

17) Aşağıdaki terör olaylarının hangilerinde Ankara'daydınız?

10 Ekim 2015 – Ulus, Gar patlaması

17 Şubat 2016 – Kızılay, Merasim Sokak patlaması

13 Mart 2016 – Kızılay, Güvenpark patlaması

15 Temmuz 2016 - Darbe girişimi

18) Son yıllardaki terör olaylarında bir yakınınızı kaybettiniz mi?

Evet Hayır

Cevabınız evet ise lütfen açıklayınız:

19) Son yıllardaki terör olaylarında siz / bir yakınınız yaralandı mı?

Evet Hayır

Cevabınız evet ise lütfen açıklayınız:

20) Bu terör olayları dışında, yaşamınızda size zor gelen, travmatik diyebileceğiniz bir olay yaşadınız mı?

Evet Hayır

Cevabınız evet ise lütfen açıklayınız:

21) Bugüne kadar bir uzmandan psikolojik destek aldınız mı?

Evet Hayır

Cevabınız evet ise lütfen açıklayınız:

22) Daha önce psikiyatrik bir tanı aldınız mı?

Evet Hayır

Cevabınız evet ise lütfen açıklayınız:

APPENDIX B: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Türkiye’de son iki yıldır devam eden terör olaylarının nedeni ne sizce? Önlenebilir mi? Nasıl?
2. Bu iki yıllık süreçte Ankara’daki terör olaylarından en çok hangisi ya da hangileri sizi etkiledi? Neden? Hangi açıdan en çok o(nlar) etkiledi? Nasıl etkilendiniz?
3. Süregelen bir terör ortamında yaşamak sizi nasıl etkiliyor?
 - a. Nasıl hissettiriyor?
 - b. Neler düşündürüyor?
 - c. Bu tepkilerinizde / düşüncelerinizde / duygularınızda zaman içerisinde bir değişim oldu mu? Neler oldu? Bu değişikliğe ne(ler) neden oldu?
 - d. Bu süreçte değişmeyen tepkileriniz / düşünceleriniz / duygularınız oldu mu? Neler oldu?
 - e. İlk zamanlara kıyasla şimdi nasıl tepkiler veriyorsunuz?
 - f. Biraz daha açar mısınız?
4. Bu olaylar, sizi bir insan olarak etkiledi mi / değiştirdi mi? Nasıl etkiledi / değiştirdi? (Bu olayların öncesine kıyasla, nasıl bir insan olduğunuzu tanımlama konusunda / kendinizi tanımlamanızda bir değişiklik oldu mu?)
 - a. Psikolojik olarak etkiledi mi? Nasıl etkiledi?
 - b. Bu süreçte vücudunuzun verdiği tepkiler oldu mu? Neler oldu?
 - c. Bu terör olaylarının gelecekle ilgili planlarınızda / düşüncelerinizde bir etkisi oldu mu? Nasıl?
 - d. Akademik anlamda etkisi oldu mu? Neler oldu?
 - e. Dünya görüşünüzü etkiledi mi? Nasıl etkiledi?
 - f. İnanç sisteminizi etkiledi mi? Nasıl etkiledi?
 - g. Biraz daha açar mısınız?
5. Bu olaylar, ilişkilerinizi etkiledi mi? Nasıl etkiledi?
 - a. Aile ilişkilerinizi etkiledi mi? Nasıl etkiledi?
 - b. Arkadaşlarınızla ilişkilerinizi etkiledi mi? Nasıl etkiledi?

- c. Romantik ilişkilerinizi etkiledi mi? Nasıl etkiledi?
 - d. Sosyal hayatınızı etkiledi mi? Nasıl etkiledi?
 - e. Günlük hayatınızı etkiledi mi? Nasıl etkiledi?
 - f. Bu süreçte çevrenizle olan iletişiminiz nasıldı? Kimle / kimlerle iletişim kurmak iyi / kötü geldi?
 - g. Biraz daha açar mısınız?
6. Başka etkiler oldu mu? Neler oldu? Biraz daha açar mısınız?
 7. Bu süreçte yaşadığınız farklı etkilerden / duygulardan / düşüncelerden bahsettiniz; bunların en çok hangisi / hangileri sizi rahatsız etti?
 8. Bunları yaşarken, başa çıkmak için size ne iyi geldi / yardımcı oldu, güç verdi? Ne iyi gelmedi?
 - a. Zaman içerisinde size güç veren başa çıkma yollarınızda bir değişiklik gözlemlediniz mi? (Eskiden şunları yapmak iyi geliyordu artık gelmiyor dediğiniz / eskiden şunları yapmak iyi geliyordu artık geliyor dediğiniz?)
 9. Bu süreçte başka önemli bir değişiklik oldu mu, olumlu ya da olumsuz? Bu değişikliğe ne(ler) neden oldu? Biraz daha açar mısınız?
 10. Bu süreçte olumlu diyebileceğiniz değişiklikler oldu mu; kendinizde / ilişkilerinizde / hayatınızda? Neler oldu?
 11. Eklemek istediğiniz, önemli olarak gördüğünüz başka bir şey var mı?
 12. Bu görüşmede, bunları konuşmak nasıl geldi?

APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Bu araştırma, ODTÜ Psikoloji Bölümü, Klinik Psikoloji Programı yüksek lisans öğrencisi Deniz Okay tarafından, Prof. Dr. A. Nuray Karancı danışmanlığında yürütülen yüksek lisans tezi kapsamında hazırlanmıştır. Araştırmanın amacı, süregelen terör ortamında yaşamının gençler üzerindeki psikolojik etkilerini ve onlarla başa çıkma yollarını incelemektir.

Araştırmaya katılım tamamen gönüllülük esasına dayanmaktadır. Araştırmaya katılmayı kabul ederseniz, öncelikle sizden bir takım temel bilgiler alınacak; sonrasında da yaklaşık bir buçuk saat sürecek olan bir görüşme yapılacaktır. Bu görüşme süresince çalışmanın amacına uygun sorular sorulacaktır. Görüşme sırasında vereceğiniz cevaplar içerik analizi ile değerlendirilmek üzere ses kaydına alınacaktır. Araştırma sırasında vereceğiniz cevaplar gizli tutulacak ve sadece araştırmacılar tarafından değerlendirilecektir. Katılımcılardan elde edilecek bilgilerin analizi yapıldıktan sonra bilimsel yayınlarda kullanılacaktır. Görüşme sırasında verdiğiniz cevaplar yayınlarda kullanılırken isminiz değiştirilecek ve kimlik belirleyici bilgiler verilmeyecektir.

Araştırma, genel olarak kişisel rahatsızlık verecek sorular içermemektedir. Ancak, görüşme sırasında sorulardan ya da herhangi başka bir nedenden ötürü kendinizi rahatsız hissederseniz araştırmayı yarıda bırakıp çıkmak konusunda serbestsiniz. Böyle bir durumda çalışmayı uygulayan kişiye çalışmadan çıkmak istediğinizi söylemek yeterli olacaktır.

Çalışma hakkında daha fazla bilgi edinmek isterseniz çalışmanın yürütücüsü Deniz Okay (e-posta: deniz.okay@metu.edu.tr) ile iletişime geçebilirsiniz. Çalışmaya olan katkılarımızdan dolayı şimdiden teşekkür ederiz.

Yukarıdaki bilgileri okudum. Bu çalışmaya tamamen gönüllü olarak katılıyorum ve istediğim zaman yarıda kesip cevaplamayı bırakacağımı biliyorum. Verdiğim bilgilerin ses kaydına alınmasını ve bilimsel amaçlı yayınlarda kullanılmasını kabul ediyorum.

Ad Soyad

Tarih

İmza

___/___/___

APPENDIX D: PSYCHOEDUCATION FORM

Travmatik Yaşam Olaylarının Psikososyal Etkileri ve Baş Etme Yolları

(Türk Psikologlar Derneği, 2016)

Travmatik yaşantılar; ölüm, doğal afetler, kazalar, terör eylemleri, savaş gibi ölüm tehdidi, ciddi bir yaralanma ya da şiddete maruz kalmayı içeren durumları tanımlar. Travmatik olayların en önemli özelliği yaşamımıza ya da fiziksel bütünlüğümüze yönelik bir tehdit içeriyor olmasıdır.

Gündelik yaşamımızda da sıklıkla stres yaratan durumlarla karşı karşıya kalabiliriz. Ancak bunlar beklendik ve sıradandır; olasılıkları ve kontrol edilebilirlikleri yüksektir. En şiddetli ve üst düzey stres kaynaklarını içeren travmatik olaylar ise “normal” yaşantının / alışılmışın dışında kalan, beklenmedik, olasılığı ve kontrol edilebilirliği düşük durumlardır.

Travmatik olaylara farklı şekillerde maruz kalınabilir:

- Doğrudan
- Tanık olarak
- Olaydan haberdar olarak
- Olaya ilişkin ayrıntılara yineleyici ya da yoğun biçimde maruz kalmak

Hepimizin, yaşama ve kendimize ilişkin bazı temel inançlarımız vardır. Dünyanın genel olarak adil ve güvenli bir yer olduğuna; kötü olayların bizim başımıza gelmeyeceğine ve bir şekilde davranışlarımızla başımıza gelecekleri kontrol edebileceğimize inanırız. Ancak travmatik yaşantılar bu inançlarımızı derinden sarsar. Kendimizi adil ve güvenilir olmayan bir dünyada, tehlikelere açık ve incinebilir olarak algılamaya başlarız.

Travma Sonrası Stres Tepkileri Nelerdir?

Strese karşı bedenimizin gösterdiği fizyolojik tepkiler herkes için ortaktır: Kan basıncının artması, kalp atışlarının hızlanması, terleme, solunumun hızlanması vb. Stres hormonunun salgılanmasıyla birlikte ortaya çıkan bu tepkiler, yaşamımızı tehdit eden durumlarda, bizi tehdit kaynağıyla savaşmaya ya da ondan uzaklaşmaya / kaçmaya hazır hale getirerek bu durumla başa çıkmamızda yardımcı olur. Yaşanan stresin çok yoğun olduğu durumlarda, onunla başa çıkabilmek için salgılanan stres hormonu da aşırı miktarda olur. Tehdit karşısında organizma için yararlı olan bu hormon, fazla miktarda salgılandığı için, stres kaynağı ortadan kalktıktan sonra bile bir süre daha bedende kalır ve en ufak bir uyararla karşılaştığında bedenin daha önceki tehdit durumunda verdiği stres tepkilerinin benzerlerini üretmesine neden olur. Örneğin, bize yaşadığımız travmatik olayı hatırlatan herhangi bir şeyle karşılaştığımızda (o gün giydiğimiz giysiler, o anda yanımızda bulunan kişiler, olayın geçtiği mekan vb.), öyle olmadığını bildiğimiz halde, sanki olayı yeniden yaşıyormuş gibi hissedebiliriz. Bu şekilde hissetmek çok rahatsız edici ve korkutucu olabilir, bu nedenle de olayla ilgili yerlere gitmekten, olayla ilişkisi olan kişilerle karşılaşmaktan, olay hakkında konuşmaktan kaçabiliriz. Yani, olayın hatırlatıcılarından kaçırırız. Kendimizi sürekli tedirgin ve huzursuz hissedebilir, en ufak bir ses vb. karşısında irkilebiliriz.

Yaşanan stres günlük yaşamımızda duygusal (güvensizlik, kaygı, korku, üzüntü, suçluluk, öfke, çaresizlik, umutsuzluk), bedensel (gerginlik, aşırı yorgunluk, iştahsız ve uyku düzeninde değişimler), davranışsal (iletişim güçlükleri, yalnız kalma isteği, alkol / madde kullanımı, kaçınmalar) ya da zihinsel (odaklanma güçlüğü, kafa karışıklığı, unutkanlık, sürekli olayla ilgili düşünme) alanlarda bazı belirtilerle kendini gösterebilir.

Bu tepkiler, bazen çok yorucu ve zorlayıcı olabilir. “Acaba aklımı mı kaçıyorum?”, “hastalandım mı?”, “psikolojik bir bozukluğum mu var?” ya da “kontrolü tamamen kaybediyor muyum?” gibi kaygı verici sorular sormanıza neden olabilir. Bilmeniz gereken, bu tepkilerin normal olduğudur. Travmatik bir olayın

ardından, bu olaya maruz kalan hemen herkeste görülebilir. Bu belirtiler **anormal bir olay karşısında verilen normal tepkilerdir.**

Kayıplar

Travmatik yaşantılar, pek çok kayba neden olur. Yakın kaybı, sağlığın kaybı, umudun kaybı vb. O nedenle yas tepkileri yaşamamız normaldir. Yas süreci farklı duygu ve düşüncelerin baskın olduğu aşamaları içerir. Yaşanan kayıpların yasını tutabilmek, yas sürecinin normal akışına izin vermek, uyum gücümüzü artırır.

Neler İyi Gelir?

Travmanın ardından toparlanmak için kendinize zaman tanıyın. Bu dönemde, duygularınızda iniş-çıkışlar olması normaldir. Zaman içinde her şey daha iyiye gidecektir. Travmatik yaşantıların olumsuz etkileriyle başa çıkmak için yapabileceğiniz pek çok şey vardır. Öncelikli olarak temel fizyolojik ve güvenlik ihtiyaçlarınızı karşılamaya özen gösterin. Bu ihtiyaçlarınızı size destek olabilecek kişi ve kurumlarla paylaşın. Sosyal destekten yararlanmanız oldukça önemlidir. Aileniz, arkadaşlarınız ve diğer destek kaynaklarınızla bağlantıyı sürdürün. Olabildiğince eski rutininize, gündelik yaşam alışkanlıklarınıza dönmeye çalışın. Duygusal paylaşım, sizi zorlayan yaşantıların üstesinden gelmenizi kolaylaştıracaktır. Spor, egzersiz gibi fiziksel etkinlikleri arttırmaya çalışın.

Nelerden Uzak Durulmalı?

- Alkol / madde kullanımı
- Hekim kontrolü dışında ilaç kullanımı
- Sosyal ilişkilerden kaçınmak
- Duyguların ifadesine engel olmak
- Olayla ilgili hiç konuşmamak
- Bir tek olayla ilgili konuşmak

Ne Zaman Bir Uzmana Başvurulmalı?

- Yaşanan sıkıntı azalmıyor, giderek artıyorsa
- İş, okul, aileyle ilgili görevleri yerine getirmekte çok zorlanma
- Daha önceden psikolojik bir sorun yaşandıysa ve bunun etkisi devam ediyorsa
- Kendine ve çevreye zarar verme davranışı veya bununla ilgili rahatsız edici düşünceler varsa
- Aşırı hissizlik, gün içinde hatırlanmayan anlar varsa

Referans: Türk Psikologlar Derneği (2016, 19 Mart). *Travmatik Yaşam Olaylarının Psikososyal Etkileri ve Baş Etme Yolları*. Erişim tarihi: 30.01.2017, <https://www.psikolog.org.tr/index.php?Detail=1519>

APPENDIX E: CONTACT NUMBERS SHEET

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APPENDIX F: TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

SÜREĞEN TERÖR OLAYLARINI DOLAYLI DENEYİMLEMENİN ÜNİVERSİTE ÖĞRENCİLERİ ÜZERİNDEKİ PSİKOLOJİK ETKİLERİ: NİTEL ANALİZ

BÖLÜM 1

GİRİŞ

DSM-5'in tanımına göre travmatik olaylar; kişinin ölümle gerçek ya da olası bir yüzleşmesini, yaralanmasını ya da cinsel şiddetle karşılaşmasını içermektedir (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Buna tanıma karşın, Tedeschi ve Calhoun (1999; 2004) tarafından yapılan travmatik olay tanımı ise kişi ile olay arasındaki etkileşimi ön plana koyar ve bu tür olayları “sismik” olarak adlandırır. Sismik terimi ile kast edilen, travmatik olayların kişinin temel varsayımlarını sarsması şeklinde açıklanmaktadır. Sarsılan bu temel varsayımlar; dünyanın anlamlı ve iyi bir yer olduğu ve kişinin değerli olduğuna yöneliktir (Janoff-Bulman, 1992).

1.1 Travmatik Olayların Psikolojik Sonuçları

Bu özelliklere sahip travmatik olayların psikolojik anlamda olumlu ve olumsuz bir takım sonuçları bulunmaktadır. Olumsuz sonuçlar arasında, duygusal karmaşa, rahatsızlık verici düşünceler, problemlerli davranışlar ve tedirgin edici fiziksel tepkiler verilebilir (Calhoun & Tedeschi, 1999). Travma çalışmalarının en sıklıkla odaklandığı psikiyatrik rahatsızlıklar arasında travma sonrası stres bozukluğu, akut stres bozukluğu, majör depresyon ve anksiyete bozuklukları sayılabilir (Norris et al., 2002). Travmatik olayların en çok araştırılan olumlu sonucu ise travma sonrası

büyümedir. Travma sonrası büyüme kuramının önde gelen isimlerinden olan Calhoun ve Tedeschi (1999), bu sonucu, travmatik olayla baş etme sonrasında kişinin yaşadığı pozitif değişiklikler olarak adlandırmaktadır. Bu pozitif sonuçlar kişinin kendilik algısı, diğer insanlarla ilişkisi ve varoluşsal, manevi ya da tinsel alanlarda gözlemlenebilmektedir.

1.2 Travmatik Olayların Mağdurları

Travmatik olaylar, maruziyet düzeyi göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, direkt ve dolaylı olmak üzere iki farklı mağdur kitlesi yaratmaktadır. Travmanın direkt mağdurları, olayla yakından bir karşılaşma yaşayan kişileri kapsarken; dolaylı mağdurlar travmatik olayla direkt olarak karşılaşmayan ancak olayı duyan ya da farklı medya kaynaklarından yüzleşen kişileri içermektedir (Blanchard et al., 2004; Figley & Kleber, 1995).

1.3 Terörizm ve Terörizmin Psikolojik Etkileri

Terörizm, toplumsal bir travma olup bir insanın başka bir insana kasten uyguladığı şiddeti içermektedir. Bu sebeple de insan eliyle yapılan bir afet olarak adlandırılmaktadır (Fullerton, Ursano, Norwood, & Holloway, 2003).

Alanyazındaki bilgilere göre, kasten uygulanan şiddetin kişiler ve toplum üzerinde daha olumsuz psikolojik tepkilere yol açtığı belirtilmektedir (Galea & Resnick, 2005). Mağdurlar açısından bakıldığında ise, terörizmin toplumda çok sayıda dolaylı yollarla maruz kalan kitleler oluşturabildiği görülmüştür (Crenshaw, 2000). Buna ek olarak, tek seferlik olmayıp süregelen şekilde devam eden terörizme maruz kalan kitlelerde; psikolojik semptomların daha ciddi ve uzun süreli olabileceği çalışmalarla gösterilmiştir (Shalev, 2000).

1.4 Terörizmin Üniversite Öğrencileri Üzerindeki Etkileri

Genel olarak, erken yaşların farklı psikiyatrik rahatsızlıklar için bir risk faktörü olduğu belirtilmektedir (Boscarino, Adams, & Figley, 2004). Özellikle, mezun olup akademik ortamı terk etme ve yeni bir yaşama atılma ortamında potansiyel terör saldırıları konusunda kaygılanmanın stres seviyelerinde artışa sebep olabileceği

belirtilmektedir (Blanchard et al., 2004). 18 ve 25 yaşları arası gençler genel olarak alanyazında “gelişmekte olan yetişkinler” olarak adlandırılmaktadır ve bu dönemin bir keşif dönemi olup kimlik oluşumunun büyük bir kısmının burada gerçekleştiği söylenmektedir (Arnett, 2000; Steinberg & Morris, 2001). Travmatik olayların kişinin hayatında bir dönüm noktası olabileceği bilindiğinde, bu yaşlarda yaşanan travmatik olayların kimlik gelişiminde önemli değişikliklere yol açabileceği düşünülmektedir (Janoff-Bulman, 1988).

1.5 Çalışmanın Amaçları

Bu bilgiler doğrultusunda, bu çalışma Türkiye’de yaşanan terör saldırılarına dolaylı yoldan maruz kalan üniversite öğrencilerinin kısa ve uzun dönemde verdikleri psikolojik tepkileri (duygu, düşünce, davranışlar), olayı anlamlandırma süreçlerini ve bu süreçteki baş etme biçimleri hakkında bilgi edinmeyi amaçlamaktadır.

BÖLÜM 2

YÖNTEM

2.1 Çalışmanın Metodolojisi

Bu çalışmanın amaçları doğrultusunda, katılımcıların terör olayları hakkındaki psikolojik deneyimleriyle ilgili daha zengin ve detaylı bilgi edinmek için nitel araştırma yöntemi kullanmıştır.

2.2 Çalışmanın Örnekleme

Amaca yönelik örneklem yöntemiyle ulaşılan çalışmanın örnekleme, Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi’nin farklı bölümlerinde okuyan ve Ankara’da yaşayan 3. ve 4. sınıf öğrencilerini içermektedir. Örneklemin yarısı kadın ve yarısı erkek katılımcılardan oluşmakta olup yaşları 21 ile 25 arasındadır. Çalışmaya dâhil edilen

katılımcıların, kullanılan araştırma metodu dâhilinde homojen olmasına ve terör olaylarına dolaylı yollarla maruz kalmış olmalarına dikkat edilmiştir.

2.3 Prosedür

Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi, Uygulamalı Etik Araştırma Merkezi'nden alınan etik onay sonrasında ulaşılan katılımcılarla bire bir görüşmeler yürütülmüştür. Bilgilendirilmiş onam alındıktan sonra yarı-yapılandırılmış görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Her görüşmenin sonunda ise, araştırmacı görüşmenin bir özetini yaparak görüşmede katılımcıların anlattıkları doğrultusunda Türk Psikologlar Derneği (TPD) -Travma Birimi'nin materyallerini temel alarak kısa bir psikoeğitim vermiştir (Türk Psikologlar Derneği, 2016). Son olarak, tüm katılımcılara TPD'nin psikoeğitim materyali ile ileride psikolojik destek ihtiyacı doğması durumunda arayabilecekleri iletişim numaraları verilmiştir.

2.4 Veri Analizi

Çalışma kapsamında toplanan verilerin analizinde, yorumlayıcı fenomenolojik analiz (IPA) yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Yapılan görüşmeler, birebir deşifre edilmiş ve Smith ile Osborn (2003)'un IPA prensipleri kapsamında analiz edilmiştir.

BÖLÜM 3

SONUÇLAR

Yapılan 10 görüşmenin analizi sonucunda dört adet üst temanın oluştuğu görülmüştür. Bu üst temalar şu şekildedir: (1) Terörizm ve Türkiye'nin değerlendirilmesi, (2) olayların nitelikleri, (3) psikolojik Etkiler ve (4) baş etme biçimleri.

3.1 Terörizm ve Türkiye'nin Değerlendirilmesi

Bu üst tema, katılımcıların Türkiye'deki terörü nasıl değerlendirdiklerini içermektedir. Bu değerlendirmelerinin, terör olaylarından psikolojik olarak nasıl etkilendiklerini belirlediği gözlemlenmiştir. Bu üst temaya ait olarak ortaya çıkan üç adet alt tema olduğu bulunmuştur. Bunlar: (3.1.1.) terörün sebebi ve amaçları, (3.1.2) Türkiye'nin geçmişi, bugünü ve geleceğine ilişkin değerlendirmeler ve (3.1.3) terörün çözümüne ilişkin görüşlerdir.

3.1.1 Terörün sebebi ve amaçları

Bu alt tema, katılımcıların terörün sebep ve amaçlarıyla ilgili görüşlerini içermektedir. Katılımcılar Türkiye'deki terörün sebep ve amaçlarını genel olarak politik konular açısından değerlendirmişlerdir.

3.1.2 Türkiye'nin geçmişi, bugünü ve geleceğine ilişkin değerlendirmeler

Bu alt tema, katılımcıların Türkiye'deki teröre yönelik değerlendirmelerini içermektedir. Katılımcılar, Türkiye'de geçmişte terörün olmadığını ve bu sebeple de Türkiye'nin barışçıl bir yer olduğunu söylemiştir. Ancak bugüne ilişkin değerlendirmelerinde, bu durumun değiştiğini, terörün büyükşehirlere sıçradığını ve bu duruma karşın herhangi bir güvenlik önlemi alınmadığını söylemişlerdir. Bu sebeplerle de, Türkiye'deki vatandaşların genel bir tehlike ve korku ortamında yaşamak zorunda kaldıklarını dile getirmişlerdir. Tüm bunlardan ötürü de, katılımcılar gelecekte terör olaylarının devam etmesini beklemektedirler.

3.1.3 Terörün çözümüne ilişkin görüşler

Bu alt tema, katılımcıların teröre ilişkin çözümlerini yansıtmakta olup bu çözümü temelde devlet ve güvenlik güçlerinden bekledikleri; bu sebeple de vatandaşların çözüme dair ellerinde herhangi bir güç olmadığını düşündükleri bulunmuştur.

3.2 Olayların Nitelikleri

İkinci üst tema, terör olaylarının kişilerin psikolojik olarak daha çok etkilenmesine sebep olan niteliklerinden oluşmaktadır. Bu üst temaya ait olarak ortaya çıkan dört

adet alt tema olduđu bulunmuştur. Bunlar: (3.2.1.) terör olaylarının hedefleri, (3.2.2) terörün doğası, (3.2.3) güvensizlik ortamının gelişmesi ve (3.2.4) toplumsal kutuplaşmanın belirgin hale gelmesidir.

3.2.1 Terör Olaylarının Hedefleri

Bu alt tema, Ankara'daki terör olaylarının hedef aldığı kişilerle ilgili bilgileri içermektedir. Bu kişiler, katılımcıların psikolojik anlamda olaylardan daha olumsuz etkilenmelerine sebep olmuştur. Hedef kitleler; kendilerine benzer hayatları olan kişiler olduğunda, ODTÜ'den kişiler olduğunda ve kendi şehirlerinde yaşayan kişiler olduğunda daha çok etkilendiklerini belirtmişlerdir. Zarar gören bu hedeflerden ötürü “ben de olabilirdim”, “gelecekte terörün hedefi ben de olabilirim” ya da “benim sevdiklerim de zarar görebilir” düşünceleri oluşmaya başlamıştır.

3.2.2 Terörün Doğası

Bu alt tema; terörün özünde sahip olduğu bir takım özellikleri barındırmakta olup katılımcıların psikolojik olarak daha çok etkilenmesine yol açmıştır. Bu özellikler, terörün ani ve beklenmedik olması; acımasız olup şiddet içermesi ve insan doğasının kötü tarafını gösteren intihar bombacılığı eylemini barındırması şeklindedir.

3.2.3 Güvensizlik Ortamının Gelişmesi

Bu alt tema, katılımcıların terör olayları sonrasında ülkede hissettikleri güvensizliği kapsamaktadır. Kendilerini Türkiye'de koruyan herhangi bir kurum olmadığını ve bu sebeple de dış tehditlere karşı vatandaşların savunmasız kaldığını aktarmışlardır. Bu güvensizliğe sebep olan bir takım faktörler görüşmeler sırasında ön plana çıkmıştır. Bunlar; devlete, güvenlik güçlerine, medyaya, insanlara ve ODTÜ yönetimine yönelik güvensizliktir.

3.2.4 Toplumsal Kutuplaşmanın Belirgin Hale Gelmesi

Bu alt tema; terör olaylarının toplumdaki var olan kutuplaşmaları belirgin hale getirdiğine yönelik katılımcıların görüşlerini yansıtmaktadır. Olaylardan sonra,

çevrelerinde kendilerine zıt düşüncelerde olan insanların olduğunu fark ettiklerini söylemişlerdir. Bu kişiler, olaylardan sorumlu olan kişileri destekleyen ya da ölen kişilerin arkasından hakaret içerikli konuşmalar söyleyen insanlardır.

3.3 Psikolojik Etkiler

Görüşmeler sırasında ortaya çıkan bir diğer ortak tema, Ankara'daki terör olayları sonrasında oluşan kısa ve nispeten uzun dönemli psikolojik etkileri kapsamaktadır. Bu üst temanın beş adet alt temadan oluştuğu görülmüştür. Bunlar: (3.3.1) artan duygular ve tetikleyicileri, (3.3.2.) varoluşsal konular hakkında düşünceler, (3.3.3.) hayatı bir süre durdurma, (3.3.4.) iç dünyada nispeten kalıcı değişiklikler ve (3.3.5.) ilişkisel dünyada nispeten kalıcı değişikliklerdir.

3.3.1 Artan Duygular ve Tetikleyicileri

Bu alt tema; katılımcıların terör olaylarının sonrasındaki özellikle kısa süreli dönemde yaşadıkları artan duygularını kapsamaktadır. Bu duygular; üzüntü, suçluluk, hayal kırıklığı, öfke, çaresizlik, korku ve umutsuzluk şeklindedir. Bu duygulardan ilk üçünün daha çok kısa dönemli olduğu bulunmuşken, diğerlerinin halen süregelmekte olduğu gözlemlenmiştir. Görüşmeler sırasında anlatılan bu duyguların birçok farklı tetikleyicisinin olduğu görülmüş olup bu tetikleyiciler duyguları tekrar harekete geçirmiş veya halen geçirmektedir.

3.3.2 Varoluşsal Konular Hakkında Düşünceler

Bu alt tema, katılımcıların patlamalar sonrasındaki ilk dönemlerde deneyimledikleri ölüm gerçeği ve hayatın anlamsızlaşması yönündeki düşüncelerini kapsamaktadır.

3.3.3 Hayatı Bir Süre Durdurma

Patlamalar sonrasında katılımcıların yaşadıkları kısa dönem etkileri kapsayan son alt tema ise artan duygular ve varoluşsal sorgulamalar sebebiyle okul işlerine odaklanmakta yaşadıkları zorlukları ve günlük rutinlerini askıya almalarını kapsamaktadır.

3.3.4 İç Dünyada Nispeten Kalıcı Değişiklikler

Psikolojik etkilere ait dördüncü alt tema, katılımcıların görüşmeler sırasında değindikleri terör olaylarından ötürü nitekim daha kalıcı değişikliklerden oluşmaktadır. Bu alt tema beş adet farklı içeriği kapsamaktadır. Bunlar; yabancılaşıma, erken olgunlaşma, şefkat artışı, gelecek planlarında değişiklikler ve inanç sistemini gözden geçirme şeklindedir.

İlk olarak, katılımcılar terör olayları sonrasında çevresindeki insanlara ve yaşadıkları şehre, özellikle Kızılay'a yönelik bir yabancılaşımadan bahsetmişlerdir. Yaşadıkları topluma, insanlara ve şehre yönelik artık eskisi gibi aitlik hissetmediklerini aktarmışlardır.

Bu değişikliklerin bir diğer alanı katılımcıların anlattığı erken olgunlaşma konusunu kapsamaktadır. Ölümle çok erken yaşta yüzleştiklerini ve başka bir şehirde yaşasalar 20 yaşlarında daha farklı ve temelde daha az kaygılı insanlar olacaklarını; ülkenin gündemi dışında başka kaygıları olacağını aktarmışlardır. Ancak, erken olgunlaşmanın pozitif yanlarını aktaran katılımcılar olduğu da görülmüştür. Ölümle yüzleşmelerinden ötürü, artık hayatın değerini daha çok bildiklerini, yaşadıkları için şanslı olduklarını düşünmeye başladıklarını ve günlerini dolu dolu yaşamaya çalıştıklarını belirtmişlerdir.

Katılımcıların görüşmelerinde göze çarpan hayatlarındaki bir diğer değişiklik ise şefkat artışıdır. Katılımcılar olaylardan sonra empati yeteneklerinde artış olduğunu; olayları ölenlerin yakınlarının gözünden değerlendirmeye başladıklarını söylemişlerdir.

Bir diğer değişim alanı, katılımcıların gelecek planlarında yaşadıkları değişikliktir. Katılımcıların gelecek planlarını temelde güvenliklerini sağlamak üzere yaptığı gözlenmiştir. Güvenlik kaygılarından ötürü, bir kısmı yaşadıkları şehri ya da ülkeyi değiştirmeyi düşünürken; diğerleri de Ankara'da kalıp daha güvenli bir hayat kurmayı planladıklarını dile getirmişlerdir.

İç dünyalarında yaşanan son deęişiklik alanı ise inanç sistemlerini gözden geçirmeyi kapsamaktadır. Katılımcıların, bir Müslümanın din veya Allah uğruna nasıl bu şekilde şiddet içeren eylemleri gerçekleştirebildiğini anlamakta zorlandığı görülmüştür. Bu sorgulamanın sonunda ise, ya “biz aynı dine inanmıyoruz”, “onlar Müslüman deęil” şeklinde bir sonuca vararak dinlerinin doğru şeklini daha iyi öğrenmişler ve baęlılıklarını sürdürmüşler ya da dinleriyle aralarına mesafe koymuşlardır. Buna ek olarak, görüşmelerde daha az sıklıkla görülse de, bir dięer inanç sistemi deęişikliği, kader inancında yaşadıkları artıştır. Masum insanların şiddet içeren olaylarda neden öldüğü konusunda mantıklı bir açıklama bulamadıklarından, bu tür ölümleri kadere bağlamaya başladıklarını aktarmışlardır.

3.3.5 İlişkisel Dünyada Kalıcı Deęişiklikler

Çalışmadaki katılımcıların Ankara’da yaşanan terör olaylarından ötürü yaşadıkları bir dięer psikolojik etki ise ilişkisel dünyalarındaki kalıcı deęişiklikleri kapsamaktadır. Bu deęişikliklerin ilk alanı ilişkilerindeki artan iletişimdir. Bu iletişim artışını genel olarak tanıdıkları kişiyi kaybetme korkularına bağlamışlardır. Bunun pozitif tarafı olarak, uzun süredir konuşmadıkları insanlarla daha çok iletişime geçtiklerini söylemişlerdir. Ancak bu iletişim artışının olumsuz bir yönünü de belirtmişlerdir. Bu olumsuz tarafı genel olarak ebeveynleriyle deneyimlediklerini aktarmışlardır. Onlarla telefonda daha sık konuştuklarını ancak bu konuşma içeriklerinin çok sayıda uyarı ve korku içerdiğini; bu sebeple de kendilerine terörü hatırlatarak korkuyu tetiklediklerini belirtmişlerdir.

İlişkisel anlamda yaşadıkları ikinci deęişiklik ise deneyimledikleri samimiyet deęişikliğini kapsamaktadır. Katılımcılar, sevdikleri kişilerle daha çok vakit geçirmeye başladıklarını ve hayatlarıyla ilgili daha çok paylaştıklarını söylemişlerdir. Ancak bu samimiyet deęişikliğinin bir dięer tarafı da çevrelerindeki insanlarla aralarına mesafe koymayı kapsamaktadır. Ölüm ihtimaliyle ilişkilerini tekrardan gözden geçirdiklerinden, deęmeyeceğini düşündükleri ya da kendilerine zıt görüşe sahip olan insanlardan uzaklaştıklarını aktarmışlardır.

3.4 Baş Etme Biçimleri

Görüşmeler sırasında ortaya çıkan bir diğer üst tema ise katılımcıların terör olaylarında sonra kısa ve uzun dönemde nasıl baş ettiklerini kapsamaktadır. Bu üst temanın altı adet alt temadan oluştuğu gözlenmiştir: (3.4.1.) sakinleşmek için ilk çabalar, (3.4.2.) yeniden adaptasyon çabaları, (3.4.3.) beraberlik, (3.4.4.) kaçınma, (3.4.5.) pozitif bir geleceğe tutunmak ve (3.4.6.) zamanın geçmesi.

3.4.1 Sakinleşmek İçin İlk Çabalar

Katılımcıların patlamalardan sonra gösterdikleri ilk tepki güvenli alanlarına gitmektir. Bu alanlar, ODTÜ kampüsü, yurtları ve evlerini kapsamaktadır. Bunu gerçekleştirirken, aynı zamanda ailelerini iyi olduklarına dair bilgilendirmiş ve tanıdıklarının iyi olup olmadığını kontrol etmişlerdir. Bunlara ek olarak, olay hakkında medya üzerinden bilgi edinmeye çalışmaları da verdikleri bir diğer ilk tepkilerdendir.

3.4.2 Yeniden Adaptasyon Çabaları

Katılımcılar olayların ardından ilerleyen günlerde normal hayatlarına dönmek zorunda olduklarını çünkü sınavların ve derslerin devam ettiğini belirtmiştir. Ancak bu dönemde hala güçlü duygular hissettiklerini ve yeniden eski düzenlerine adapte olmakta zorlandıklarını; tekrardan eskisi gibi güçlü hissetmek için zamana ihtiyaçları olduğunu aktarmışlardır. Ancak zamanla eski düzenlerine adapte olmak zorunda kalmışlardır. Bu adaptasyonun ise kendilerini daha iyi hissettirdiğini çünkü zihinlerini ülkenin gündeminden bu yolla uzaklaştırabildiklerini ve bunun da duygularının dinginleşmesine katkı sağladığını aktarmışlardır.

3.4.3 Beraberlik

Katılımcılar, kendilerine benzer düşünen ve hisseden insanlarla vakit geçirmenin patlama sonrası kısa ve uzun dönemde kendilerine iyi geldiğini; yalnızlık hislerini azalttığını ve verdikleri duygusal tepkileri normalleştirdiğini belirtmişlerdir. Buna ek olarak, genel olarak toplumla beraber olmanın ve birlik hissinin kendilerine iyi geldiğini anlatmışlardır. Ancak bunlara zıt olarak, insanlarla beraber olmanın

olumsuz yönlerini de vurgulamışlardır. Duygularını ve düşüncelerini paylaşmanın, olay hakkında yeni ve üzücü bilgiler edinmenin, var olan olumsuz duygularını daha da arttırdığını aktarmışlardır. Ayrıca, kendilerine benzer düşünmeyen ya da hissetmeyen insanlarla beraber olmanın kendilerini anlaşılmamış ve yalnız hissetmelerine sebep olduğunu; bu sebeple de iyi gelmediğini belirtmişlerdir.

3.4.4 Kaçınma

Katılımcılar, görüşmelerde sıklıkla kaçınma davranışlarından bahsetmişlerdir. Bu davranışlar, daha çok kısa dönemde var olsa da uzun dönemde de süregeldiği görülmüştür. Genel olarak belli yerlerden kaçındıklarını ve günlük rotalarını değiştirdiklerini belirtmişlerdir. Bu kaçınılan yerler genel olarak geçmişte patlama olmuş ya da gelecekte patlama olabilecek yerleri kapsamaktadır. Tüm bu davranışlar temelde güvende hissetme üzerine kurulmuş olsa ve kendilerine iyi gelse de aynı zamanda hayatlarını kısıtlamalarına sebep olmak şeklinde olumsuz bir yönü olduğu da vurgulanmıştır. Ayrıca, katılımcılar patlamalar sonrası erken dönemde olay hakkında bilgi edinmek adına sıklıkla medyayı kullansalar ve bunu olumlu olarak görseler de zamanla medyanın kendilerine kötü geldiğini fark ettiklerini ve bu sebeple de psikolojik sağlıklarını korumak adına medya maruziyetlerini kısıtladıklarını aktarmışlardır.

3.4.5 Pozitif Bir Geleceğe Tutunmak

Katılımcılar, patlamalardan sonra kendilerini pozitif bir gelecek düşüncesiyle motive ettiklerini ve bunun kendilerine iyi geldiğini aktarmışlardır. Bu pozitif gelecek hem kendi geleceklerini hem de ülkenin geleceğini kapsamaktadır. Şu anda ülkede olumsuz durumlar yaşansa da bunların gelecekte de olumsuz olaylar olacağını belirtisi olmadığını ve durumların düzelebileceğini söylemişlerdir. Ayrıca, kendilerini ülkeden kaçıp pozitif bir geleceği kendileri için yurtdışında kurmanın da bu şekilde kendilerine iyi gelen bir tarafı olduğunu aktarmışlardır. Buna ek olarak, katılımcıların bir kısmı kendilerini bu pozitif gelecek doğrultusunda eyleme yöneltmiştir. Ülkenin durumu kendilerini çaresiz ve güçsüz bıraksa da, öğrenci olarak ellerinde tek bir güç olup bunun da çalışmak olduğunu

aktarmışlardır. Bu sebeple de, ellerindeki bu gücü kullanarak gelecekte Türkiye’yi değiştirmek adına derslerine daha sıkı sarıldıklarını ve bu şekilde bir gün güç kazanarak Türkiye’yi daha iyi bir yer yapabileceklerini söylemişlerdir.

3.4.6 Zamanın Geçmesi

Son olarak, katılımcıların aktardığı üzere, kendilerine iyi gelen bir diğer araç ise zamandır. Zaman geçtikçe ve bu süreçte yeni patlamalar olmadıkça, terör olayları ve medyadaki haberler azaldıkça ve arkadaşlarıyla günlük konuşmalarında terör gündemi değiştikçe olumsuz duygu ve düşüncelerinin de azaldığını dile getirmişlerdir. Ayrıca, zamanın geçmesinin ülkenin durumunu kabullenmeyi de beraberinde getirdiğini belirtmişlerdir.

BÖLÜM 4

TARTIŞMA

4.1 Genel Değerlendirme

Janoff-Bulman (1992), insanların tabiatları gereği, dünyada yaşanan kötü olayların kendi başlarına gelmeyeceğini ve dünyanın güvenilir ve güvenli bir yer olduğunu düşündüklerini aktarmaktadır. Ancak travmatik olaylar mağdurları kendi kırılganlıklarıyla yüzleştirme gücüne sahiptir ve bu sebeple de sahip oldukları bu algının zarar görmesine sebep olur.

Bu doğrultuda araştırmanın sonuçları gözden geçirildiğinde, katılımcıların temelde medya aracılığıyla ölenler ve yakınlarıyla olan benzerliklerine odaklandıkları; bu durumun da, alanyazında özdeşleşme (“*identification*”) denen sürece sebep olmuş olabileceği düşünülebilir (Fullerton et al., 2003). Direkt mağdurlarla olan benzerliklerine odaklanan toplumdaki kişilerin “ben de olabilirdim” ya da “benim

arkadaşım veya ailemden biri de olabilirdi” şeklinde düşünceler içerisine girerek afetlerin “sözde” mağdurları olabileceği bilinmektedir (Dixon et al., 1993). Araştırmanın sonuçlarına göre katılımcılar tarafından da söz edilen “ODTÜ bağı”nın bu özdeşleşme etkisini daha da güçlendirdiği ve bu sebeple de ölen kişiler ODTÜ öğrencileri olduğunda daha negatif etkilendikleri görülmüştür. Bu durum McMillan ve Chavis’in (1986) “toplumsallık duygusu” (“*sense of community*”) kavramıyla açıklanabilir. Teorisyenlere göre ortak tarihi, ortak yaşam alanı ve ortak deneyimleri olan bir toplumun içerisindeki kişilerin aralarında hem bir duygusal bağ hem de bir özdeşleşme olmaktadır. Bu açıklamaya bakıldığında, ODTÜ öğrencilerinin arasında bu tür bir bağ olabileceği ve bu sebeple de daha olumsuz etkilenmiş olabilecekleri söylenebilmektedir. Son olarak, katılımcıların psikolojik olarak olumsuz etkilenmelerine yol açan bir diğer etken, yaşadıkları şehrin ve Kızılay gibi kendileri için önem taşıyan bir alanın zarar görmesidir. Hobfoll ve arkadaşları (2007) da bu konuda benzer bir etkiden söz etmektedirler. Teorisyenlere göre toplumlar bazı sembolik yerlere yönelik bağ kurarlar ve bu bağın temelinde o yerlerde güvende hissetmek vardır. Ancak araştırmanın sonuçlarıyla da benzer şekilde, bu yerler terörizm gibi olumsuz ve şiddet içerikli olaylarla zarar gördüğünde artık tehdit değerlendirmeleri içermeye başlar ve eski güvenli algılarını kaybederler.

Araştırmanın sonuçlarına bakıldığında temel olarak ilk iki üst temanın yani “Terörizm ve Türkiye’nin değerlendirilmesi” ile “Olayların Nitelikleri”nin katılımcıların birincil ve ikincil değerlendirmelerini temsil ettiği görülmektedir. İkinci üst tema, kişilerin terör olaylarına dair bireysel tehdit değerlendirmesi yaptıklarını; yani kendilerinin ve sevdiklerinin hayatlarını tehlikede gördüklerini yansıtmaktadır (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). İlk üst tema ise katılımcıların olayı değiştirmek adına temel olarak bireysel kontrolleri olmadığını yansıtmakta olup bu da ikincil değerlendirmeleri yansıtmaktadır. Bireysel ve süregelen bir tehdit içeren ve üzerinde kontrol olmayan bu durum, alanyazındaki bilgilere uyumlu bir şekilde, katılımcıların yaşadıkları psikolojik etkilere sebep oluyor gibi gözükmektedir (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Özellikle yaşadıkları artan duyguların bu durumdan ve

de insan olarak zedelenebilirlikleriyle yüzleşmeleriyle alakalı olabileceği düşünülmektedir (Janoff-Bulman, 1992). Bu duygular ile varoluşsal konular hakkında düşünceleri ve hayatlarını bir süre durdurmaları arasında süreğen bir ilişki olduğu görülmüştür. Travmatik olayların beraberinde, kişilerin var olan inanç sistemleriyle uyuşmayan yeni bilgiler getirdiği bilinmekte olup bu bilgilerin de kişilerin zihinlerini meşgul ederek günlük işlere konsantre olmakta zorluklar yaşatabildiği bilinmektedir (Horowitz, 2011).

Nitekim daha kalıcı olan değişikliklerin ise kişilerin kendi ölümlülükleri, kayıplarla ve hayatın gerçekleriyle erken bir yaşta yüzleşmelerinden kaynaklanıyor olabileceği düşünülmektedir. Janoff-Bulman'ın (1992) da belirttiği üzere, bu gerçeklerle yüzleştiren travmatik olayların kişilerin dünyayı eski algılayış biçimlerinde değişikliklere yol açabileceği bilinmektedir. Normalde bu tür yüzleşmeler kişilerin yaşları büyüdükçe gerçekleşse de travmatik olayların bu süreci hızlandırıp ani bir yüzleşmeye sebep olarak “erken olgunlaşma”ya yol açabileceği eklenmiştir (Janoff-Bulman). Gelişmekte olan yetişkinlik döneminin kademeli bir keşif dönemi olduğu düşünüldüğünde (Arnett, 2000), terörizmin dünyaya dair varsayımlarda özellikle bu yaşlarda ani bir sarsılmaya sebep olabileceği görülmüştür.

Buna ek olarak, Janoff-Bulman'ın (1992) varsayımların sarsılması üzerine kurduğu teori de katılımcıların diğer insanlara ve şehre yönelik yaşadıkları yabancılaşma konusunda bilgi vermektedir. Teorisyenin de aktardığı üzere, insanlığın kötü ve vahşi tarafıyla yüzleşen insanların dünyayı algılayış biçimleri değişebilmektedir. Katılımcıların da aktardığı üzere, olaylardan sonra dünyayı daha negatif, güvensiz görmeye başlamış ve önceki iyimser düşünce tarzlarını geride bırakmışlardır. Buna ek olarak, şehirlere yönelik yaşadıkları yabancılaşma ise “mekânsal bağlılık” (“*place attachment*”) kavramıyla açıklanabilmektedir (Brown & Perkins, 1992). Teorisyenlere göre travmatik olaylar mekânlara ait olan güvenlik algılarını sarsarak mekânlara yönelik düşüncelerde değişikliklere yol açabilmektedir. Mekânsal bağlılıkların bozulmasına yol açan şiddet içerikli olaylar, başka mekânlarla kurulmak istenen bağlılıklara sebep olabilmektedir (Brown & Perkins, 1992). Bu durum da, katılımcıların gelecek planlarındaki değişikliklerde gözlenebilmektedir.

Gelişmekte olan yetişkinlerin gelecek planlarının henüz tam olarak netleşmediği göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, bu durumun katılımcıların plan değişikliklerini desteklemiş olabileceği düşünülebilir (Arnett, 2000).

Tüm bu olumsuz değişikliklere rağmen, araştırmanın sonuçlarına göre, bir takım travma sonrası büyüme sonuçları da gözlenebilmektedir. Bunlardan ilki, katılımcıların aktardığı erken olgunlaşmanın olumlu sonucu olan hayatın değerini anlama yönündedir. Tedeschi ve Calhoun (1998) bu durumu bir büyüme sonucu olarak rapor etmiş ve bunun travmatik olaylarla baş etme sonrası yaşanan hayat felsefesindeki değişiklikler olarak aktarmıştır. Buna ek olarak, alanyazında da aktarılan bir diğer büyüme sonucu artan şefkatle ilgilidir. Bu durumun duygusal olarak bir yük olduğu belirtilse dahi insanların yaşadıkları acıları içeriden biri gibi hissetmenin de bir büyüme sonucu olduğu aktarılmıştır (Calhoun & Tedeschi, 1999). Alanyazındaki bilgiyle uyum gösteren bir diğer büyüme sonucu ise katılımcıların da aktardığı, terör olaylarından sonra var olan manevi ve dini inançları sorgulamak üzerinedir. Son olarak, katılımcılarda gözlenmiş bir diğer göze çarpan travma sonrası büyüme sonucu da ilişkisel alanlarına yansımıştır. Hayattaki önceliklerin ölüm gerçeğiyle tekrardan gözden geçirilmesiyle beraber sevilen ve değer verilen kişilere daha çok vakit ve emek harcamak ile daha samimi ilişkiler kurmak Tedeschi ve Calhoun (2004) tarafından rapor edilen bir diğer olumlu sonuçtur. Araştırmanın sonuçlarının da gösterdiği üzere, travma sonrası büyüme örseleyici olaylarla yüzleşmeyi ve baş etmeyi gerektirse dahi kişilerin eski yaşamlarına kıyasla daha anlamlı ve üstün bir yaşamı yeniden yapılandırmaları anlamına gelmektedir (Calhoun & Tedeschi, 1998).

Bu bölümde tartışılacak son konu ise katılımcıların baş etme biçimleriyle alakalı olan bulgulardır. Bu bulgular alanyazınla uyum göstermekte ve patlamalar sonrasındaki ilk dönemlerde kişilerin amacının güvenliklerini sağlamak olduğu belirtilmektedir (Hobfoll et al., 2007). Güven ortamı sarsıldığından bu tepkilerin normal olduğu aktarılmaktadır. Sonraki dönemde ise, kişiler normal rutine döndükçe bunun iyi geldiği ve duygusal tepkilerini kontrol altına alabildikleri görülmüştür. Travmatik olaylar mağdurların ve toplumun öz yeterliğine zarar

verdiğinden rutinlere dönmenin bu öz yeterliği yeniden düzenlemek gibi pozitif bir amaca hizmet ettiği düşünülebilir (Hobfoll et al., 2007). Ayrıca, araştırmanın gösterdiği bir diğer yaygın sonuç ise olaylarla baş etmek adına insanlarla ve toplumla olmanın katılımcılara iyi gelmesi yönündedir. Alanyazında da bu durum gösterilmekte ve özellikle terör olayları toplumsal afetler olduğundan insanlarla olmanın ve onların da benzer psikolojik durumlardan geçtiğini görmenin duygusal rahatlama sağladığı rapor edilmiştir (Hobfoll et al., 2007). Ancak bu sonuçlara rağmen, insanlarla beraber olmanın olumsuz yönlü etkisi de bu araştırmanın sonuçlarına paralel şekilde alanyazında belirtilmiştir. Bu olumsuz etki “stres bulaşması” (“*stress contagion*”) olarak adlandırılmakta olup duyguları paylaşmanın ekstra bir duygusal ağırlık yaratıp örseleyici olayla ilgili hatırlatıcı bir etkisi olabileceği belirtmiştir. Bunlara ek olarak, geleceğe dair umut beslemenin ve kişinin kendi gücüne yönelik inancının olmasının da katılımcılar için olumlu bir etkisi olduğu gözlenmiştir. Tedeschi ve Calhoun’a (1999) göre de, umut ve öz yeterlik travma sonrası büyümenin önemli yordayıcılarıdır. Son olarak, katılımcılar zamanın geçmesinin psikolojik anlamda olumlu etkisinden bahsetmişlerdir. Bu duruma, azalan hatırlatıcılar, yeni olay olmayışı ve kabullenme katkıda bulursa da, bir diğer sebep olarak bu süreçte travmatik olayın getirdiği yeni bilgilerin var olan inanç sistemine bütünleştirilmesi verilebilir. Horowitz’e (2011) göre bu bütünleştirme zaman alan ve kademeli bir süreçtir ve bu sebeple de zamanın bu şekilde bir katkısı olmuş olabileceği düşünülebilir.

4.2 Çalışmanın Sınırlıkları

Kullanılan yöntem gereği çalışmanın son örneklemini on kişiden oluşmakta olup bu kısıtlı bir sayıdır. Bu sebeple de, araştırmada rapor edilen sonuçlar temkinli bir şekilde değerlendirilmelidir ve bu sonuçları genellemek mümkün olmamaktadır. Buna ek olarak, nitel analiz yöntemi sebebiyle her ne kadar önlem alınmaya çalışılsa da sonuçlar araştırmacının bakış açısını yansıtmaktadır. Bunlara ek olarak, veri toplama işlemi belli özellikte kişilerin ilgisini çekmiş olabilir ve sonuçlar da bu özelliklerden etkilenmiş olabilir. Çalışmanın bir diğer sınırlığı ise toplanan verilerin geçmişe dönük bilgileri yansıtmamasıdır. Diğer travma çalışmalarında olduğu gibi, bu

çalışma da katılımcıların geçmiş anılarını yanlış hatırlamalarına sebep olmuş olabilir ve bu yüzden de sonuçlar dikkatli bir şekilde değerlendirilmelidir.

4.3 Çalışmanın Katkıları ve Öneriler

Sonuç olarak belirtmek gerekirse, bu çalışma terör olaylarından dolayı olarak etkilenmiş Türk gençlerinde olayların süregelen etkilerine dair bir keşif araştırması olmuştur. Sıklıkla rapor edilmiş ilk ve kısa dönemli etkilere ek olarak, özellikle araştırmanın örnekleme olan gelişmekte olan yetişkinlerin özellikle temel varsayımlarında olayların nitelik kalıcı etkiler yarattığı görülmüştür. Ancak tüm bunlara rağmen, araştırmada gençlerin terör olaylarından ötürü birçok olumlu sonuç da deneyimlediği görülmüştür. Dolaylı yoldan deneyimlemenin etkilerinin bu denli çok yönlü olabileceği ve birçok kitleyi etkileyebileceği göz önünde bulundurulduğunda afetlere müdahale sisteminin Türkiye çapında yapılandırılması ve genişletilmesi önem kazanmaktadır. Araştırma alanı konusunda da, bu araştırmada bulunan sonuçların büyük ölçekli çalışmalarla desteklenmesinin ve gelişmekte olan yetişkinler dışındaki kitlelerde de test edilmesinin önemi ortaya çıkmaktadır.

Araştırmanın sonuçlarından yola çıkarak getirilecek bir diğer öneri alanda çalışan klinisyenlere yönelik olacaktır. Özellikle gençlerin geleceğe dair olumlu amaçlara yönlendirilmesi ve olayların pozitif yönünü görmesi önem taşımaktadır. Buna ek olarak, terör olaylarının etkilerinin dolaylı yollardan da deneyimlenebileceği göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, Türkiye'deki tüm klinisyenlerin en azından travmatik olaylarla ilgili temel bilgilere sahip olması önem taşımaktadır. Son olarak, katılımcıların deneyimledikleri olumlu sonuçları çoğunlukla görüşme sırasında sorulduğunda ve konuştuklarında fark ettikleri düşünüldüğünde, bu tür pozitif sonuçlara terapi odasında odaklanmanın ve görmeye çalışmanın, bunları kişiye de göstermenin önemi anlaşılmaktadır.

APPENDIX G: TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU

ENSTİTÜ

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enformatik Enstitüsü	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü	<input type="checkbox"/>

YAZARIN

Soyadı : Okay
Adı : Deniz
Bölümü : Psikoloji

TEZİN ADI : The Psychological Impacts of Indirect Exposure to Ongoing Terrorist Attacks on a Group of Turkish University Students: A Qualitative Analysis

TEZİN TÜRÜ : Yüksek Lisans Doktora

1. Tezimin tamamından kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.
2. Tezimin içindekiler sayfası, özet, indeks sayfalarından ve/veya bir bölümünden kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.
3. Tezimden bir bir (1) yıl süreyle fotokopi alınamaz.

TEZİN KÜTÜPHANEYE TESLİM TARİHİ: