

FAMILY, SCHOOL AND NEIGHBOURHOOD INFLUENCES ON THE
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF YOUTH: GÜZELYAKA CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

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The aim of the master thesis is to understand how neighborhood, family and school influence on the educational attainment of young people. Within the scope of this work, I conducted thirty two in-depth interviews with youth living in the Güzelyaka *gecekondü* (squatter) neighborhood in Ankara. *Gecekondü* neighborhoods are residential areas where rural migrants might initially or permanently move when they come to the city in order to improve their life standards. However, many of them have to survive here against conditions such as poverty and the insufficiency of social services during the early years of their migration. Nevertheless, families can develop survival strategies based on self-help networks like kinship and *hemşehri* (people with same geographic origins) connections. Throughout this master thesis, I discuss how young people's interactions within the disadvantaged neighborhoods, school climate around the neighborhood, family background, conditions at home and parental involvement influence the educational attainment of youth

The research revealed that despite the specific conditions of *gecekondü* neighborhoods and heterogeneity amongst working class families, there is little variation in educational attainment of the youth. The main reason for this low level of educational attainment is the poverty they experienced or are still experiencing at home. While such poverty may compel them to take up positions in the labor market participation early in life, the influence of peer groups also discourages school attendance, as the environment is one in which schools provide neither a good quality education, nor a competitive educational environment.

Furthermore, poverty, the disadvantaged nature of the neighborhood and the strength of the family network among the residents all serve to reproduce the inferior value of

education in their life. On the other hand, family practices regarding education vary with the transformation towards a nuclear family life, improvement in household income and with increasing length of stay. Early migrant families who have better life standards are more likely to encourage their children to stay in school in order to find regular income jobs than are newcomer families who need a supplement to the family budget since they are exposed to the worst conditions in the neighborhood. The younger parents among early migrant families are more involved in their children's schooling, and provide personal space for their children, enabling them to adequately complete school work.

Keywords: Educational Attainment, Youth, *Gecekondu* Neighborhoods, Family, School, Poverty, Güzelyaka Case Study

ÖZ

AİLENİN, OKULUN VE MAHALLENİN GENÇLERİN EĞİTİM DÜZEYLERİNE ETKİSİ: GÜZELYAKA ÖRNEĞİ

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Bu çalışmanın amacı gecekondu mahallelerinde yaşayan gençlerin eğitim düzeylerine ailenin, okulun ve mahallenin etkisini incelemektir. Bu amaçla Ankara'nın Güzelyaka gecekondu mahallesinde otuz iki gençle derinlemesine görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Gecekondu alanları daha çok yoksullukla mücadele eden ya da yoksulluğu hayatlarının belirli dönemlerinde yaşamış çalışan sınıfların ikamet ettiği, kaliteli kamu hizmetlerinden yoksun olan yerleşim yerleridir. Diğer yandan, bu mahallelerde akrabalık ve hemşerilik temelindeki güçlü ilişkiler mahallede yaşayan ailelerin dezavantajlı koşullara karşı durma stratejileri geliştirmelerine yardım etmektedir. Bu tez boyunca gençlerin yaşadığı dezavantajlı mahalle ile olan etkileşimi, mahalle çevresindeki okulların ve ailelerinin gençlerin eğitim sonuçlarını nasıl etkilediğini tartışmaya çalıştım.

Bu çalışmada gecekondu mahallelerinin kendine özgü yapısı ve çalışan sınıfın kendi içindeki farklılıklarına rağmen gençler arasında çok belirgin eğitim seviyesi farklılıkları görülmemiştir. Bu durumun temel sebepleri ailede yaşanmış ya da halen yaşanmakta olan yoksulluk özellikle gençlerin okulu erken bırakmalarına, mahalledeki arkadaş grubu ile olan etkileşim okulda daha fazla devamsızlık yapmalarına, kaliteli eğitimden yoksun olan mahalle çevresindeki okullar gençlerin rekabetçi eğitimin dışında olmalarına yol açmaktadır.

Bununla birlikte, yoksulluk, dezavantajlı mahalle şartları ve güçlü aile ilişkileri birlikte düşünüldüğünde gecekondu mahallelerinde oluşmuş kültür eğitimin ikincil durumunu yeniden üretmektedir. Ancak, aileler mahallede daha uzun kaldıkça,

yaşam standartları iyileştikçe ve çekirdek aile yaşamına doğru yaklaştıkça ailelerin eğitim pratikleri değişmektedir. Erken gelen göçmen aileler arasında genç ebeveynler okula daha düzenli dâhil olmakta, çocuklarına daha çok kişisel çalışma ortamı ayırmaktadırlar.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Eğitim Düzeyi, Gençlik, Gecekondu Mahalleleri, Aile, Okul, Yoksulluk, Güzelyaka Örneği

*Aileme
Ve
Ülkeme*

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

Inequality in educational attainment can be regarded as one of the main sources of most social problems. Obviously, youth unemployment, child labor and gender inequality are largely associated with the lack of equity and quality of education. At the same time, extending educational opportunities to all population groups increases the possibilities of greater income, higher living standards, while it ameliorates the quality of society. Education is positively associated with human development (Dyer, 2008:436).

For two decades, international organizations have been putting special emphasis on education campaigns such as girls' education. In 1990 in Jomtien, Thailand, the Education for All (EFA) campaign was set up to achieve universal education. However, ten years later in Dakar, Senegal, EFA goals were revised due to the failure to achieve targets which had been declared during the "World Conference on Education for All" in Jomtien, 2000.¹ In addition, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGS) defined elimination of gender disparity in school and sustaining universal primary education as key solutions to the elimination of extreme poverty (UNESCO, 2008). Many developing countries have improved their educational indicators in the last two decades even though they have not been able to catch up completely with the goals of EFA (Buchmann and Hannum, 2001). The World Bank is another international organization that strongly emphasizes the significant role education plays in reducing poverty rates and increasing the annual economic growth rate. However, opponents of this idea argue that educational expansion leads social

¹ The EFA project included the following goals: (1) full participation in primary school, (2) elimination of gender disparities in school, halving the adult illiteracy rate, and maintaining life-long learning for different age groups (UNESCO, 2008).

groups to be more competitive for social status; therefore, it results in social fragmentation (Bonal, 2007:91).

In the Turkish case, achieving universal education has been a means of building consensus among the public, government, media and civil society for the last ten years. Since 1997, eight-years of primary education has become compulsory; girls' education campaigns have received more and more public attention; and TV channels have organized education campaigns for the Southeast Anatolia region, which is the least developed part of Turkey. All efforts have certainly led to the improvement of the educational indicators. Nonetheless, Turkey, which is among the largest twenty economies around the world, ranked only the 84th in the Human Development Index in 2008. Turkey's social development is lagging behind economic development. One of the reasons for the gap between human and economic development is that the educational opportunities fall short. Since the rapid urbanization process during the second half of the century, the quality of education has been increasingly more unequally distributed within the urban areas. In particular, the families in the *gecekondu* settlements of urban metropolitan areas are one of the most vulnerable social groups because of the deprivation of good quality education in their neighborhood schools.

The aim of this master's thesis is to explore how family school and neighborhood influences on the educational attainment of people between the ages of 18 and 30. In the first part of the chapter, I will discuss how the mutually reinforcing relationship between education and poverty on the macro level can be explained. Then I will emphasize the reasons we need more micro analysis of the poor's educational attainment in Turkey. Finally, I will formulate research questions in a detailed way and I will try to give an outline of the study.

1.2. Education and Poverty: Comparison of Macro Analysis

To begin with, four main approaches can be considered relevant regarding the role of education in poverty reduction in Turkey. These are human capital, capability, class based and popular education approaches, each of which has its strengths and

weaknesses². I will try to examine each approach by asking three important questions in order to understand the relationship between education and poverty: 1) What is the contribution of the approach on the relationship between education and poverty? 2) What makes the approach distinct from the other approaches? 3) What are the main counter-arguments against the approach?

1.2.1. Human Capital Approach (HCA)

This approach is mainly concerned with the economic return of education. In this context, it is expected that there is a direct association with expanding educational opportunities and individual earnings and economic growth in the country concerned. The highest possible paper qualification, such as a bachelor's degree, is essential for increasing the income of the poor (Hall and Midgley, 2004: 146).

The main strength of this approach is that it underlines the important role education plays in economic development with the purpose of adopting a knowledge-based economy. This approach also emphasizes the necessity to develop the skills of individuals. In the same vein, the education of the poor population is accepted as a way to provide them with the necessary skills for developing survival strategies in underprivileged conditions.

However, its sole concern with the role of economic reasoning in human behavior is one of the shortfalls of this viewpoint (Robeyns, 2006). Here, education is conceptualized only for success in strict competition in the market whether it is pro-poor or not. According to this approach, the role of education is simply reduced to a means of competition among members of society, such as getting higher scores in classroom that will help the individual earn more in the future.

1.2.2. Capability Approach (CA)

The difference of this approach from the human capital approach is that it goes beyond the economics perspective and explains the link between education and

² It is a difficult task to develop a typology that includes different perspectives since some may be left outside the analysis. For instance, some scholars also incorporated "right based approaches" and "basic needs approaches"; however, in doing this, they excluded "class based analysis" and "popular education approaches" (Tilak, 2002; Robeyns, 2006).

poverty based on capabilities, rather than personal assets such as income and family resources. Capability is defined as “the ability of human beings to lead lives they have reason to value and to enhance the substantive choices they have” (Sen, 1997:1959). This perspective involves a different conceptualization of poverty, one which is not limited to income deprivation. To illustrate, even people who have higher incomes might be deprived because of long-standing health problems or illiteracy, which leads to a significant decrease in their quality of life. There are two differences between the human capital and capability approaches. Firstly, education is not merely a tool for economic development in the capability approach. The indirect aim of education is to achieve social development in society. In this sense, increasing the number of educated people in a given society can resolve gender inequality and increase the quality of public debates, thereby leading to a more democratic society (Sen, 1999). Secondly, education also helps improve other capabilities, especially in terms of health (Sen, 1999). For instance, a woman’s expanding education results in decreased fertility and mortality rates. That is, education is not merely restricted to commodity production; it also provides freer and more worthwhile lives (Sen, 1997:1960).

Despite the fact that the capability approach is more comprehensive than human capital analysis, the capability approach has been criticized for operationalization and universality. The first criticism is about its lack of operationalization:

The approach only outlines what is important when evaluating social arrangements and people’s well beings and freedom, but to apply it concrete cases one needs to supplement this framework with additional social theories related to the topic one is analyzing (Robeyns, 2006:67-68).

A similar argument is emphasized by Unterhalter (2003:9). Although the capability approach is sensitive to the background factors individuals possess (not only income but also inefficient resources for schooling such as buildings or equipment as well as regional differences), he claims that further historical and sociological knowledge is required, especially on the issues of gender inequality in policy recommendations

and practices (Unterhalter, 2003:9). Moreover, there have actually been more debates about the capability list compiled by Martha Nussbaum, who is another important figure in the capability approach. Her approach, which has departed from Sen's (1999) analysis, suggests that a universal list of capabilities should be in primacy among the goals of government policies. However, Unterhalter (2003) finds fault with the essentialism of the universal list of capabilities, as it does not consider cross-cultural differences and advocates the flexibility of the capabilities suggested by Sen (1999).

1.2. 3. Class Based Analysis

In class based analysis, whether it adheres to Weberian or Marxist tradition, the unit of analysis obviously differs from those in previous approaches based on individuals. There are some arguments worth considering in Marxian class analysis that concentrate on education for the impoverished although those debates have addressed mainly the antagonistic relationships between working class and state. The approach perceives public schools simply as “ghetto for underprivileged groups” (Hall and Midgley, 2004:149); therefore, schooling is seen a means of reproducing and legitimizing certain class differentiations. There is a well-known agreement among scholars for this approach in that education of poor children in public schools is colonized by the power of middle class. Whitty (2001:287) argues that

Instead of seeing failure as the result of a deficit in working class homes, materially and culturally, it invited us to entertain the notion that working class failure was a relational outcome of middle class power to define what counts as knowledge and achievement.

Similarly, Bowles (1976) asserts according to outcomes of a study that creativity and critical imaginations are central elements of pedagogy in middle class schools, while recitation and obedience are prevalent elements of working class schools (cited in Gök (1998:2)). Furthermore, deprivation of resources renders working class pupils more vulnerable to the pressure of work. Lynch and O'Neil (1994:320) clarify that the “lack of money which underpins their sense of powerlessness and isolation excludes those most of all”.

The main argument of the Marxian class analysis of the relationship between education and poverty is the impossibility to escape poverty with education, whereas the critics of this argument maintain that in this approach education is oversimplified as a means of reproduction of poverty. Hickox (1982) points out that Poulantzas's moral/mental division of occupations and Althusser's view of education as an ideological apparatus of the ruling class assure us of the inefficiency of education, just as Illich's perception of education as a modern church does. At this point, one of the most influential criticisms comes from Weberian tradition, which implies that education helps the poor climb the social ladder. The main contribution of Weberian analysis here is that it disagrees with the immobility of poor people with educational attainment. The intergenerational link and their educational achievement become the core of the analysis in social mobility studies. How parents' educational attainment and class background reinforce their children's class and educational success, or lack thereof, is the basic relational concern. The analysis considers the possibility of social mobility via education for disadvantaged social groups, yet does not fail to take into account that the poor still have difficulty in climbing the ladder of social mobility. Lannelli and Paterson (2005) showed in their recent study on social mobility in Scotland how social mobility works against the poor. They write, "People from more advantaged social classes have higher chances of embarking on a long educational career and gaining higher level qualifications than those from less advantaged classes" (Lannelli and Paterson, 2005:3). They further state that if middle class pupils are not able to access higher education, other available resources such as their social network and family incomes help maintain their class position, whereas if poor people drop out school, they are faced with an immense lack of opportunity to expand their class position.

1.2.4. Popular Education (PE): Radical Education / Critical Pedagogy

Radical Education is a socialist education movement mainly inspired by the works of Pablo Freire, a Brazilian exile and minister of education.³ For him, oppression is

³ Popular education can be seen as a combination of Marxian analysis and post development school. Especially, post development school is criticized for not having enough practical dimensions or too much emphasis on abstract discussion of subject instead of discussing basic concepts such as distribution of educational opportunities and class (Brown et al, 2006:5). However, as Sideway (2008:18) emphasized that post development theorists such as Escobar (1995) criticized the taken for granted development models, but he is not against the idea of change and possibility

reproduced and internalized during “banking education”⁴; for this reason the only way to prevent the oppression of the underprivileged is to change the “banking education system”. This analysis differs from previous ones in that education is seen as a driving force for social change. The alternative pedagogy, believed to be the only way to escape from the violence of oppression, departed from both Neo-Marxist tradition and previous theoretical standpoints mentioned above. The main characteristic of alternative education is to develop the *concientizacao* of oppressed groups. The term *conscientizacao* involves “praxis” based upon its definition of “learning to perceive social, political and economic contradictions and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality” (Leeman, 1999:1). Another characteristic of alternative education is based upon rejecting all kinds of authority both in the classroom and curriculum. Fierre explains that:

The democratization of the content and method of teaching incites inquiry, creativity and critical thinking which impels the emergence of consciousness and the content unveiling of reality (cited in Hendriks, S. (1998:3)).

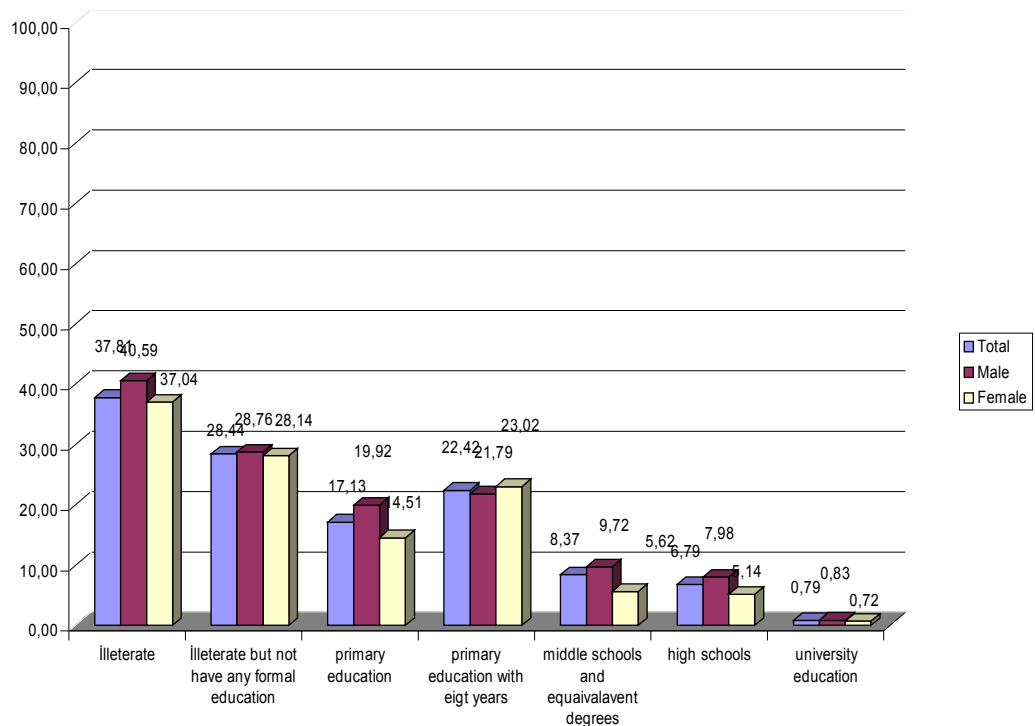
One of the benefits of radical analysis is that there is greater emphasis on how curricula and schools should be reconstructed on behalf of oppressed groups. For instance, without restructuring public schools in favor of pupils, it is almost impossible to break the intergenerational reproduction of poverty. Otherwise, the cultural analysis of poverty continues to find legitimization on the basis of the failure of poor pupils. Thus, poverty is continually reduced to a problem of specific geographical areas and truancy is seen as the deficit outcome of break-up families. In addition, while there is enormous idealization of social change through educating those oppressed, the term “oppressed” does not exactly highlight the difference between class and oppressed (Coben and Llorente, 2003).

⁴ He recalled current education systems banking education which was mainly based upon tests and only for job preparation. He mainly inspired Marxian works on education. Education system follows emphases how education means of reproducing certain class differentiation.

Table 1: A Typology of Different Viewpoints on the Relationship between Education and Poverty in Turkey

	Inside the system (Capitalist Development)		Outside the system (Capitalist Development)		
	Human Capital Approach	Capability Approach	Class Based Analysis		Radical Education (RE)
			Weberian Tradition	Marxian Tradition	
Key Words	Efficiencies of Economy	Human Freedom	Mobility with Education	Reproduction Class Differences	Education as a Means of Social Change
Unit of Analysis	Individual	Individual	Class	Class	Oppressed
Poverty	Can be Reduced	Can be Reduced	Can be Reduced	Cannot be Eradicated	Can be Eradicated
How Education Relates to Capitalist Modernization	Adopting	Reformer	Conflict	Conflict	Conflict
The Role of Education	Means	Means and Ends	Means	Means	Means and Ends
The Main Educational Problems Related to Poverty	Opportunity Cost of Working	Capability Deprivation	Difficulty in Mobility	Class Differences	Oppression and Marginalization

Table 1 shows the typology of different theoretical approaches regarding the relationship between education and poverty. Each approach has been criticized, but it is helpful to incorporate the contributions of each approach to the exploration of the research problem rather than reject or accept any one approach against another. The human capital and capability approaches are more representative and dominant in defining the role of education in poverty reduction. Figure 1 shows that the poverty rate at an individual level decreases with the increasing level of education in Turkey, something that might be seen as evidence of the change education fosters in poverty reduction, similar to what the human capital and capability approaches argued.



Source: Turkstat (2008): Education and Culture Indicators

Figure 1: Poverty Rates in terms of Level of Education in Turkey

On the other hand, poverty is the biggest barrier to the education of children. For the poor, the opportunity cost of schooling is much higher than joining the labor market at an early age. The household income of poor families in the low income deciles are mostly based on casual occupations or low-income regular jobs. Therefore, these families undergo great difficulty in sending their children to private educational institutions. In this sense, poor children have much more difficulty than children who come from higher income families. Tilak (2002:198) argues that if the poor have the access, they could still easily become dropouts if they are called upon to support the family budget. Even if they remain in the classroom, they rarely succeed in education. What is more, if they do succeed, it is likely that there would not be enough financial assistance for them to continue their schooling at the higher levels (Tilak, 2002:198).

The relationship between education and poverty should not be investigated from a perspective that limits the role of education to a means of poverty reduction. As Stromquist (2001:40) states, “It is not that families are poor because they have no

education, it is rather that they have no education because they are poor” (Stromquist, 2001:658). In this regard, it is important to understand how the poor experience educational inequalities.

1.3. Significance of the Study

There are three significant dimensions of the research regarding the debates in sociology of education and the previous studies about the similar issues in Turkey.

1.3.1. Educational Attainment of Young People

In Turkey, structural problems in the educational system could be one possible reason that human development lags so far behind economic development. According to the PISA results, the difference among the quality of schools is greater in Turkey than in other OECD countries, and students’ achievement is the second lowest after Mexico among OECD countries (PISA, 2003). In addition, the Turkish educational system faces a weak association between schooling and the labor market, a high percentage of illiterate adults, regional disparities in quality of education, and low level of public expenditures in education. From early childhood education to university education, there are large inequalities in society. School dropouts, child labor and unemployment are common among poor families as emphasized in previous studies (Mete, 2004:6).

Among the different age groups, young people’s educational attainments need special emphasis. For the last decade, the young population has seemed to provide a window of opportunity for the development of Turkey (Behar, 1999). On the other hand, very recent studies emphasize that there are 4.4 million young people who are neither in school nor in the labor market (UNDP, 2008). In addition, the majority of young people are not satisfied with their education, as they believe education does not result in a job in the labor market (World Bank, 2008). Youth unemployment and their school-to-work transition have become major policy issues, as well as economic opportunities that keep pace with the demographic transition of the country. For those reasons, it is important to examine various aspects of young people’s school experiences, including their own attitudes about education, how they assign value to school, and the driving forces behind their education level.

1.3.2. Micro Level Analysis: *Gecekondu* Neighborhoods

A disadvantage neighborhood is characterized by weak social ties, poverty, and deprivation of basic services (Ainsworth (2002), Wilson (1987), Newman and Small (2001) Crowder and South, (2003)). When compared to the disadvantaged neighborhood as described thus, a *gecekondu* neighborhood is also a type of disadvantaged neighborhood with working class families, most of who struggle against poverty. However, *gecekondu* neighborhoods have very strong community ties based on the extended family network, as well as *hemşehri* (people with the geographic origin).

Gecekondu housing in Turkey initially appeared after the 1950s, when rapid rural to urban migration began. As per the literal meaning of *Gecekondu* ‘that which landed by night’, rural migrants solved their housing problem in the urban areas by illegally occupying state owned lands. Rural migrants from the same place of origin settled in the same neighborhoods. These places are dynamic to this day because old migrants move out when they improve their life standards as new rural migrants move in (Pınarcıoğlu and Işık, 2008). For instance, in Ankara, the capital city and second largest city in Turkey, *gecekondu* neighborhoods are still concentrated with rural migrants trying to survive against poverty, even though the number of the *gecekondu* settlements has been decreasing.

Over the last fifty years *gecekondu* neighborhoods have been transformed through local politics, migration patterns, and urban renewal projects. In recent years, with changing spatial formation in cities which result in increasing social distance among the social classes, as well as ongoing migration, some social groups in *gecekondu* neighborhoods are experiencing new poverty; breaking the cycle of poverty is much more difficult for newer migrants than it was for early migrants (Buğra and Keyder, 2003). However, in *gecekondu* neighborhoods, the poor still enjoy the benefits of their networks based on kinship and *hemşehri* (people with the geographic origin) ties (Erder, 2002) as well as extended family support systems (Kalaycıoğlu, 2005). In this way, *gecekondu* neighborhoods are similar in their shared concentration of poverty and deprivation of basic services; on the other hand, the poor have strong solidarity among extended family-*hemşehri* (people with the geographic origin)

groups. Regarding those characteristics of the *gecekondu* neighborhoods how does young people's interaction with the neighborhood and peer groups influence their educational attainments? How their families also interact with the neighborhood peer groups are important questions that need to be answered.

1.3.3. Social Capital, School and Working Class Families

Gecekondu neighborhoods involve a variety of social groups in terms of their length of stay, their income level, the density of their social networks, and their ethnic background. Two different groups populate the *gecekondu* landscape: newcomer families struggling against poverty and early migrants who experienced poverty but they have relatively better life standards than those in the former group. In spite of the heterogeneity in the place, all families are working class. At that point, working class families and their involvement in the school becomes a controversial issue. McNeal (1999) defines parental involvement in schooling as social capital, like family-school, family-children- family-family relations. In addition, Dika and Singht (2002) classify reproduction theories which follow the analysis of Bourdieu, arguing that working class families have a lack of cultural and human capital; because schools are middle class institutions, working class' inadequate social capital reproduces the existing inequalities. On the other hand, structural functionalists like Coleman argue that working class people can utilize their social capital regardless of their social background. In that case, internal differences among the working class, such as their length of stay, their life standards and generational differences, are important in understanding how parents are involved in the schooling in different ways.

1.4. Detailed Explanations of the Research Question and Planning of the Chapters

The goal of the master's thesis is to discuss how neighborhood family and school influence the educational attainment of young people who live in the Güzelyaka *gecekondu* neighborhood. In the second chapter, I will start with methods used in the research and I will discuss justification of the sample and limitation of the study. Then, in the third chapter, I will briefly discuss the main structural problems of education in Turkey, and I will try to delineate the structural inequalities to which the poor are subjected.

For the following three chapters, I have divided the research question of the thesis into three sub-research questions. In the first chapter, I will tackle the question of how a school itself influences the student's educational attainment. In the fifth chapter, I will discuss how interaction with the neighborhood influences on the youth's educational attainment. In the sixth chapter, the focus will be on the families in the neighborhood. *Gecekondu* settlements are heterogeneous in terms of living standards, and it has been observed that every family may not experience poverty with the same time period or in the same context. The differences in social capital, the family's migration story, as well as their ethnic background, bring about such heterogeneity in the experience of poverty. Some of them, especially newcomer families, try to survive against poverty, but a few families, mostly early migrants, enjoy higher living standards.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

2.1. Introduction

From November 2007 to July 2008, I conducted field research in the Güzelyaka *gecekondu* neighborhood. I conducted in-depth interviews with thirty two young people who are between 18-30 years old, living in the neighborhood. This chapter covers the research design process of this field study, and mentions the design and the methodology of the study in three parts. In the first part I will discuss sampling, the sampling site, and the interview technique. I will give detailed information on the field research in the second part. Lastly, I will try to show the limitations of the study.

2.2. Research Design and Methodology

I used qualitative research method, which is the appropriate method for the Güzelyaka case because of three advantages in using it. First of all, the educational attainments of young people are a complex issues that both results from structural problems in education and the interaction of youth socialization in neighborhood, in the family, and in the school. Therefore, using qualitative techniques for data collection in the neighborhood is an advantage in the first place because it enables the researcher and the reader to see how the structural problems combine with actual neighborhood experiences. Hence, qualitative techniques here can make the researcher more capable in the field, where the existing data may not be accurate enough to point to what is actually happening in the neighborhood. Second, Neighborhood-level statistical data on these issues are insufficient in Turkey, but it should also be underlined that is difficult to conduct large sample size surveys within the scope of this study because it requires more time and more finance. Third, since the study is a case study and, unlike quantitative mode of analysis, it does not intend to make generalizations to larger populations, e.g. *gecekondu* neighborhoods in

Ankara, qualitative analysis is a much more appropriate in this study. In fact, in all *gecekondu* neighborhoods, neighborhood effect would not be the same as it occurs in Güzelyaka neighborhood. On the other hand, the research findings in this study will help further studies to understand and compare basic mechanisms in the *gecekondu* neighborhood.

First of all, as Johnson (2002) discussed, in depth interview is the appropriate method in order to get insights about personal experiences, feelings and opinions, and provides the best forum to ask sensitive questions. The interpretative methods help the researchers to relate the beliefs, phenomena and events by actively probing the conversations. I think it is the appropriate method to discover emerging trends, to generate new ideas, to talk freely regarding detailed information about young people's experiences in education, and to understand their attitudes, values and choices. Furthermore, open ended questions help the respondents feel comfortable and allow them to feel that they are taking part in less formal. Second, the observations during the field study are beneficial and complement to the in-depth analysis. In this study, observations in the field helped me grasp everyday life experiences of the young people. In order to decrease the social distance between the researcher and respondents and to develop empathy for them, I involved myself in their daily life. I became friends with some of them and I spent time together with them in the coffeehouses, in the Internet cafés, and in *Demetevler*. Friendship networks in the neighborhood were very helpful as they allowed me to visit the families frequently. All these observations helped me to communicate with them without restricting myself to structured questions on how they experienced education, or to observe their study environment more closely. Finally, the life course approach relates that this is an appropriate way to understand specific periods of life span that "must be viewed dynamically as the consequences of past experiences and future expectations" (Alwin et al, 1998: 119). Therefore, the approach helps us to understand most of the young people's lives during the specific time periods when they were in the school, when their parents struggled against poverty, and when they were unemployed. I believe that through in depth interview techniques, a life course approach and observations, I was able to reflect the voices of young people who live in the *gecekondu* neighborhood.

2.3. Sampling Procedures

The sample is composed of thirty two young people between 18-30 years old who live in Güzelyaka neighborhood (See Appendix II for detailed sample profile). The ratio of female interviews to male interviews is 17:15. There are several reasons why I made interviews with this specific young age group. First of all, transition from childhood to adulthood also represents a typical time for school to work transition, and that's why the fresh memories of young people offer a better understanding of the educational attainment, in poor families and in disadvantaged neighborhoods. Second, studies on young age groups point to a controversial issue in Turkey. There are two research waves about youth issues in Turkey for the last decade. The first wave of the studies in the last decade emphasized that the young age base of the population pyramid in Turkey might provide a 'window of opportunities' for the development of Turkey (Behar, 1999). On the other hand, recent reports focus upon the school to work transition of young age population, and results show that one of the barriers to development in Turkey is a very high youth unemployment rate, decreased satisfaction with education amongst the youth, and a weak link between achievement in school and obtaining suitable work (UNDP, 2008 and World Bank, 2008). Thirdly, Yumul (1999) argues, young people experience the transition in different ways according to their family background, their education and their marital status. Hence, it is difficult to define youth as one single age group that encompasses all. Instead, I prefer to confine the boundaries of young age group to ages between 18 and 30, which gives me the chance to listen to various people's accounts that do not form a single and homogeneous view of experience with education. So, I had the chance to listen to the experiences of married, unemployed people as well as university students.

I used snowball sampling technique, a non-probability sampling method, in order to choose the respondents from several age groups from among those who were in school at different periods as well as from ethnically different groups. The non-random selection of the young people helped me to find the specific segments that live in the same neighborhood such as the respondents who left school, who are university students, who are currently working and who are unemployed (For the details about the people please see Appendix II). In addition to this, I tried to

conducted interviews with local authorities such as the headmen of Güzelyaka neighborhood, and the director of Ayşe Tokur primary school in Güzelyaka neighborhood in order to get general information about the schools in the neighborhood.

2.4. Justification of Sample Site

The Güzelyaka neighborhood is one of the *gecekondu* settlements in *Yenimahalle*, Ankara. There are several reasons why I chose the neighborhood level study to conduct my field research in Ankara. First of all, I believe that I have some personal advantages conducting interviews in Ankara. I was born in Ankara and four generations of my families have lived here I have traveled through almost all parts of the city. I am familiar with the growth of the urban life in different neighborhoods of Ankara. Second, I previously participated in two separate field research studies in which I visited many neighborhoods of the city. Third, being one of the big metropolitan cities of Turkey, Ankara has transformed rapidly in the last fifty years. Neighborhoods have grown increasingly more segregated and the gap between local opportunities has been widening among neighborhoods, and socio economic background of resident has become more homogenized within the neighborhoods. That is why a field study in Ankara might shed light on the transitions of the neighborhoods.

The *Gecekondu* neighborhoods are also undergoing change in the influence of spatial transformation of urban life in Ankara. There are three reasons why I selected *gecekondu* neighborhoods among other neighborhoods in Ankara. First of all, *gecekondu* districts are one of the most disadvantaged neighborhoods. The housing conditions and social services are very weak compared with other neighborhoods. Secondly, rural migrant families frequently settle here when they come to city and most of them are trying to survive in the face of poverty. Some of them have improved their living standards as their time in such neighborhoods grow and they find regular income jobs. Interviews in the *gecekondu* settlements give me insights not only into the relationship between education and poverty, but also allow me to directly ask my research question that is about neighborhood disadvantages. Finally,

I could compare the families that have dissimilar socio-economic backgrounds, though they live in the same disadvantaged neighborhood.

The Güzelyaka neighborhood is my research site. The most important reason is the unique characteristics of Güzelyaka neighborhoods, since it is one of the oldest *gecekondu* neighborhoods. The place has been one of the oldest *gecekondu* neighborhoods. Many rural migrants move here when their neighborhoods are under urban renewal projects in Ankara. Second, the place is very close to the middle class neighborhoods of Yenimahalle and Demetevler while connected to the city centers via urban rail transportation in these districts, too. Finally, I thought that Güzelyaka is the most appropriate neighborhood among the *gecekondu* settlements in Ankara as my personal networks in the neighborhood has made it easier to conduct interviews there.

2.5. The Interview Process

After choosing the research problem, I started to conduct pilot interviews with young people who are living in different *gecekondu* neighborhoods around Ankara. In the pilot study, I talked with ten workers in the cleaning industry in the public sector. Their places of residence varied from *Abidinpaşa*, *Kayaş*, *Uyanış* and *Altındağ*, all of which are *gecekondu* neighborhoods in Ankara. In these interviews, they told me their own past experiences about the involvement of their families in their schooling, exploring their attitudes towards education, and examining the influence of their peer groups on their school years.

I used a semi-structured interview technique. I identified the questions under four headings (Appendix I): (1) questions on socio-demographic background; (2) questions on the family background, poverty experience and its influence on the schooling life; (3) questions about the years of schooling and the perception of education (4) the questions on the interaction with the neighborhood and with Ankara.. I started with the same questions for all respondents. During the interviews, I asked additional questions depending on the interviewee's sex, school achievement, family life, and interaction with the neighborhood. I conducted interviews with the young males, and one of my friends, a PhD student in Middle East Technical

University, conducted interviews with the young females. The interviews took from forty minutes to two hours. We primarily interviewed in houses. However, I sometimes had to carry an interview in the coffeehouse, in the Internet café, and even in a car. In those cases, I paid close attention to these face to face interviews, and attempted to keep the conversation away from distractions such as people interrupting the interview or unwanted noise. For some of the interviews, I did not use tape recorder. In some instances, they were kind not to say anything about the tape recorder but their attention was disrupted. In those cases, I turn off the recorder and continue to the interview. I basically tried to create friendly and comfortable environment for the respondents and avoided overly formal conversations with them.

2.6. Limitations of the Study

The interviews were not very easy to conduct in all cases. In particular, it was very difficult to conduct interviews with Kurdish youth migrants who live in the worst conditions in the neighborhood. For instance, during one of the interview with a Kurdish girl, my friend and the respondents were under constant surveillance of the respondent's mother-in-law. In that case, it was difficult to conduct interviews with the girls among the newcomer families who have Kurdish origin, as they live more closed community life and their distance to the other residents are larger compared with the social distances among other residents in Güzelyaka.

Secondly, I intentionally restricted my fieldwork to the interviews with the young age people instead of talking to their parents and their teachers, as well. For instance, it would have been beneficial to interview with teachers of the primary and secondary schools around the neighborhood, as my intention is to understand the school climate according to attitudes, opinions and experiences of the youth. In other words, it is important to understand how schools are perceived outside the school walls among the young people. On the other hand, it would be better to talk to teachers around the neighborhood. In that case, I believe that the focus on the experiences of young people about the evaluations of the teachers and parents is the beyond the scope of the study even though it would be better research question. In addition, contextual variables related to the school such as curriculum, exam systems, class management and organizations are beyond the scope of the school.

Instead, I just talked with the director of the primary school around the neighborhood in order to see the general picture about the school.

Lastly, residential mobility, or out of migration residents who improved their life standards, towards better improved neighborhoods of the city is the third limitation of this study. This is because better off families whose children are more likely to get better results in school had already moved out of the neighborhood to live in more developed neighborhoods such as *Batıkent*, *Keçiören*. For this reason, I was not able to interview those people who had lived in the neighborhood for a long time yet moved out before I started my field study, and I could not observe their children's education attainments.

CHAPTER III
EDUCATION INDICATORS IN TURKEY:
STRUCTURAL PROBLEMS AND SOCIAL INEQUALITIES

3.1. Introduction

Turkey is among the twenty largest economies in the world, but the country's rank in the UNDP human development index is very low. The role of education is critical because Turkey has undergone a dramatic demographic transition and if the young population from different socio-economic backgrounds benefits from a good quality education, the gap between human development and economic development might decrease.

However, educational opportunities are distributed unequally among social groups, the geographical regions, urban neighborhoods, between rural and urban areas, as well as males and females. From the 1950s onwards, educational reforms have not been independent from the political competition between secularist elites and conservative liberals. This has led to poorly established and temporary educational reforms. The education system in Turkey therefore needs to be transformed in order to be more inclusive, efficient and of higher quality.

This chapter focuses on the structural problems of education and how they help reinforce social inequalities in Turkey. Thus, I will employ data regarding educational indicators for the country. In the first part, I will show the recent increase in education level. Then, I will discuss the structural education problems, namely differences in education levels between generations, unequal distribution of quality of education, and weak association between schools and the labor market. Later, I will discuss the inequalities in access to education, early age labor market participation, financing education and returns of education.

3.2. Educational Expansion

The level of education in Turkey has been increasing significantly for several decades. According to Table 2, enrollment rates in all levels of education have been increasing substantially for the last ten years. Net enrollment rates for primary education between 2007 and 2008 are very close to the universal rates.

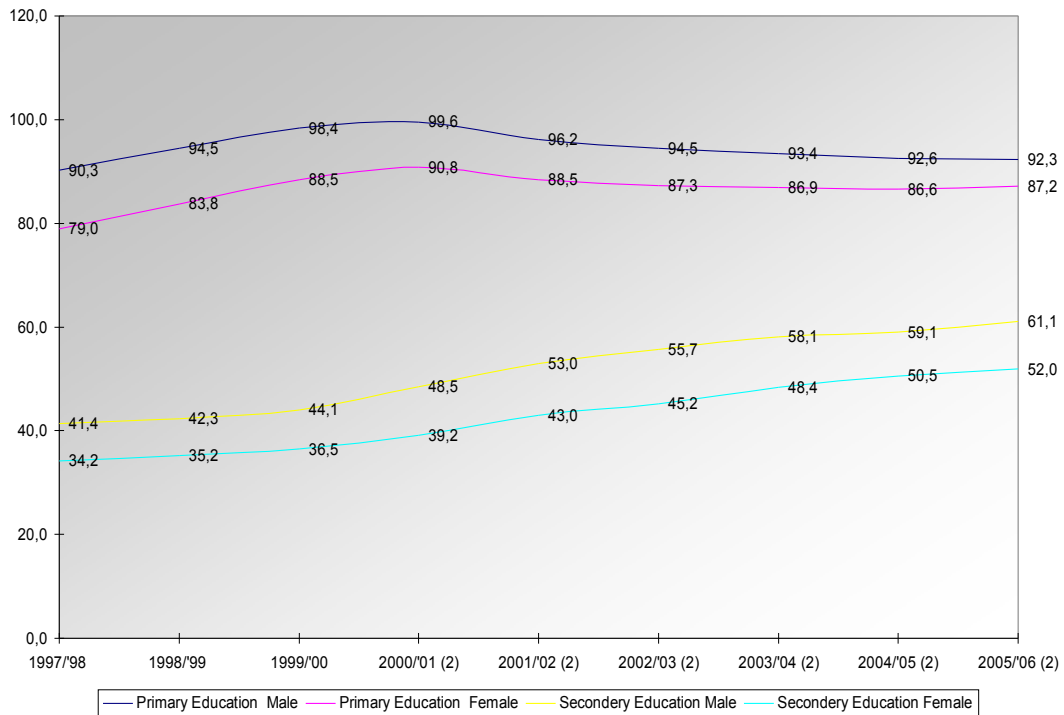
Table 2: Enrollment Rates in Primary and Secondary Education

Primary Education						
Years	Gross Enrollment Rates			Net Enrollment Rates		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
2000–2001	100,93	106,32	95,31	95,28	99,58	90,79
2001–2002	99,45	104,19	94,51	92,4	96,2	88,45
2002–2003	96,49	100,89	91,91	90,98	94,49	87,34
2003–2004	96,3	100,31	92,14	90,21	93,41	86,89
2004–2005	95,74	99,48	91,85	89,66	92,58	86,63
2005–2006	95,59	98,83	92,24	89,77	92,29	87,16
2006–2007	96,34	99,21	93,37	90,13	92,25	87,93
2007–2008	104,54	106,41	102,57	97,37	98,53	96,14
Secondary Education						
Years	Gross Enrollment Rates			Net Enrollment Rates		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
2000–2001	60,97	69,67	51,84	43,95	48,49	39,18
2001–2002	67,89	76,94	58,38	48,11	53,01	42,97
2002–2003	80,76	93,36	67,52	50,57	55,72	45,16
2003–2004	80,97	90,8	70,67	53,37	58,08	48,43
2004–2005	80,9	89,53	71,88	54,87	59,05	50,51
2005–2006	85,18	95,07	74,88	56,63	61,13	51,95
2006–2007	86,64	96,24	76,66	56,51	60,71	52,16
2007–2008	87,55	94,04	80,7	58,56	61,17	55,81

Source: Turkstat (2008), Education and Culture Statistics, retrieved from www.turkstat.gov.tr

Even though Turkey has experienced positive educational expansion for the past few decades, there are three important points that should be highlighted concerning enrollment indicators. First of all, transfer rates from primary to secondary school are very low for both boys and girls. Figure 2 below shows that net enrollment rates for primary education for boys and girls fluctuate between 80 and 100 percent, but net enrollment rates for secondary school vary from 40 to 60 percent. Each year, there is

almost 50 percent variation in the net enrollment rates from primary to secondary levels of education. Secondly, the transfer rate is lower for girls than for boys; hence the gender gap in secondary school is higher than the gender gap in primary education.



Source: Turkstat (2008), Education and Culture Statistics, retrieved from www.turkstat.gov.tr

Figure 2: Net Enrollment Rates for Primary and Secondary Education According to Sex

Thirdly, the discrepancy between NER (Net Enrollment Ratio) and GER (Gross Enrollment Ratio) sheds light onto the differences between the total number of enrolled children in schools and the number of enrolled children who are of school age. These ratios are critical because they show that the number of students who delayed education or repeated a year in school is quite large at the secondary level. One out of three students in secondary education has either delayed the enrollment or repeated a year.

Table 3: The Frequency Distribution of Children who is Outside the Official School Age with Respect to Gender?⁵

Primary Education		Secondary Education	
Male	Female	Male	Female
6,2	4,2	31,2	24,0
6,2	4,3	34,8	28,1
4,7	3,3	34,3	27,2
6,3	4,7	30,4	24,4
7,7	6,4	31,1	26,4
6,3	5,0	40,3	33,1
6,9	5,7	36,0	31,5
6,9	5,7	34,0	29,7
6,6	5,5	35,7	30,6
7,0	5,8	36,9	32,0
7,4	6,3	35,0	30,8

Source: Turkstat (2008), Education and Culture Statistics, retrieved from www.turkstat.gov.tr

3.3. Structural Problems in Education in Turkey

Even though school enrollment rates have improved in the last decade, the education system in Turkey has ongoing structural problems especially when we consider the large differences education levels among generations, unequal quality of education among schools and the weak association between school achievement and the labor market.

Large differences in the level of education among generations

From the 1970s onwards, literacy rates have improved extensively due to increases in the education level of young people and changes in the population rates in different age groups. However, adult illiteracy is still one of the major educational issues in Turkey. Table 4 indicates those six million adults, or the fifteen percent of total adult population, are illiterate in Turkey. Moreover, literacy rates are much lower for female than male adults. To illustrate this, it is helpful to compare the literacy rates over the last thirty years: In 1975, the youth literacy rate was 68,3% for females and 80,3% for males, while the rate is 94,4 percent for females and 96,4% for males in 2007 (UNESCO, 2008). In fact, though literacy rates have seemingly improved for the adult female population over the years, the gender gap in literacy rate has been larger than fifteen percent (UNESCO, 2008). Two important reasons for this high discrepancy in the rates of decline appear to be meaningful: First, the education system has not been successful in its attempts to increase the rate of girls' access to

⁵ I take the rate as $(1-(NER/GER))*100$ for both females and males who enrolled in primary and secondary education.

education in comparison to boy's access. Secondly, literacy campaigns have not been doing well enough to incorporate women in reading and writing courses.

Table 4: Literacy Statistics in Turkey

	Year					
	1975	1980	1985	1990	2004	2007
Adult Literacy Rate (%)						
Female	45,1	49,8	64,2	68,5	79,6	81,2
Male	77,5	81,4	87,6	89,8	95,3	96,2
Youth Literacy Rate (%)						
Female	68,3	75,2	86	88,4	93,3	94,4
Male	80,1	84,7	90,9	92,5	95,6	96,4

Source: UNESCO (2008)

1. The years are selected according to the availability of data. Between 1990 and 2000, these indicators are unavailable.
2. The data has been selected from 1975 in order to observe literacy rates.

The distribution of illiteracy also gives some insight into the failure in education policy regarding adult female literacy. First of all, the difference between the literacy rates of those living in urban areas and those in rural areas is considerable. Whereas the adult female literacy rate is 69, 2 percent in rural areas, it is 83,4 percent in urban areas. Besides, urban areas display a smaller gender gap in illiteracy: while the gender gap in the adult literacy rate is 12, 7 percent in urban areas, it is reported to be 21,8 percent in rural areas (MONE, 2003). High illiteracy rates in mostly rural areas and for female population also overlap with the effects of regional differences within the country. It should be emphasized that illiteracy rates are higher among adults who live in the eastern part of Turkey (33 %), whereas this rate is 11 percent for the Marmara region (Turkstat, 2008). These indicators reveal that most of the illiterate population lives in rural areas and the eastern part of Turkey, further linking female literacy to this combination of rural and regional deprivation.

Unequal distribution of quality of education

According to Table 5, In 2004 Turkey's ranks the 77th in the Education Development Index (EDI) among 177 countries (World Bank, 2008). The EDI index is composed of literacy rates, enrollment rates and gender gap in enrollment. Although it has limitations in terms of the index components, countries' human development index is more or less parallel with the education development index, as Table 5 shows below:

Table 5: Countries Ranked According to Value of EDI (Education Development Index) and EDI Components, 2004

Countries	Human Development Index (HDI)	Education Development Index (EDI)	Total primary Net Enrollment Rate (NER)	Adult literacy rate	Gender-specific EFA (index GEI)	Survival rate to grade 5
United Kingdom	16	1	1	9	14	18
Finland	37	3	11	1	29	4
Germany	22	7	32	3	4	14
Sweden	6	9	24	4	20	18
Republic of Korea	26	10	6	30	6	43
Hungary	36	21	54	7	5	49
Mexico	52	48	4	61	64	63
Azerbaijan	98	52	96	24	36	44
Brazil	70	72	68	70	71	83
Turkey	84	77	84	74	102	60
South Africa	121	78	71	82	67	86
Kenya	148	98	106	96	85	101
India	128	99	52	107	107	93

Source: World Bank Edstat (2008)

No matter how inadequate the indicators are, these school enrollment indicators may be used to elaborate more on Turkey's low educational development and offer some potential explanatory factors, such as uneven distribution of good quality education and poor resource allocation in education.

In spite of increasing public awareness and NGO efforts to promote educational standards, one of the structural problems in education is poor resource allocation. Even though the share of public education expenditure in GDP increased after 1994, the percentages are still lower than the allocations for education in the national budgets of low- middle developed countries and middle-upper developed countries (Mete, 2004:6). Turkey has the lowest educational expenditures when compared with other countries (See Table 6).

Table 6: Public Expenditure per Student in 2004

	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	% of GDP
Turkey	11,8	14,8	44,7	4
Slovenia	30	25,7	26,4	6
Senegal	18,7	32,2	26,7	5,4
Spain	18,6	23,6	22,7	4,3
Uganda	11,3	34	18,6	6,4

Source: World Bank Edstat (2008)

Second, not all students have equal opportunity to benefit from similar quality of education. According to OECD Program on International Student Assessment (PISA) results, Turkish students have the lowest scale of performance on mathematics, reading and science scores compared with students in other OECD countries. Turkish students in the lowest three scales for mathematics exams constitute 75 percent of the entire student body, while among OECD countries the average number of the students in the lowest three scales only comes up to 47 percent (PISA, 2003). Even though these rates improved slightly in 2006, and the percentages of Turkish students who are in the first scale surpassed some EU countries like Italy and Spain, showing that the majority of Turkish students have the lowest score outcomes and only a few students (2,1 %) are on the first scale (Berberoğlu, 2005:5). One of the striking observations is that the amount of variation in the mathematical performance of Turkish students is the largest one in OECD countries (PISA, 2003). Similar to Germany and Hungary, the sharp differences in school quality might explain much of the variation in students' mathematics and reading scores. In other words, the reason behind the extreme highs and lows in students' school performance is the type of school in which they are enrolled. Berberoğlu (2005:6) tried to classify secondary schools in Turkey and suggested two main categories: (1) vocational schools together with general high schools which are low quality secondary schools; and, (2) Science High Schools and Anatolian High Schools which are high quality secondary schools. Students' average performance in mathematics in the first type of school is one standard deviation below the average mathematics performance of students in OECD countries. On the other hand, students who attend the second type of school are doing better in general than students in OECD countries.

However, the type of school students are enrolled in may not be the main reason for the variation in performance. PISA (2006) statistics showed that socio economic backgrounds of students can explain the variation between students' performance better than the variation explained via different school type. PISA results show that there are sharp differences between the quality of education for students who come from poor families and those who come from families who are better off. Vocational schools in particular have serious quality problems (Aydagül, 2006:32) and most of the students in these schools are from low income families As Table 7 shows that vocational schools are the most preferred schools by students who belong to the lowest income group, and 79,4 percent of students in vocational schools come from families who are among the two lowest income groups. The percentage of students from lower income families in general type of schools is 55,2 while for Anatolian High Schools, their percentage is 19,4.

Table 7: Students in Different Type of Secondary Schools (%) and Their Family Income

School Type	Income Groups				
	First %20 Income Group	Second %20 Income Group	Third %20 Income Group	Fourth %20 Income Group	Last %20 Income Group
General High School	13,5	41,7	20,1	12,9	11,9
Anatolian High School	1,8	17,6	19,4	22	39,2
Vocational and Technical High School	31,2	48,2	12,8	4,7	3,1
<i>Imam Hatip</i> High School (High schools with religious curriculum)	32,2	45,3	12,7	5,1	4,6
Private High Schools	0,9	9,2	12,5	9,6	67,9
Total	16,3	33,3	15,7	11,0	23,8

Source: Turkish Youth Speaks Up: Youth's Opinion on Turkey's EU Accession and Membership Process retrieved from <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2005/09/16/guncel/agun.html>

Educational opportunities are also unequally distributed between urban and rural areas and among different geographical regions. According to Table 8, there can be two key observations regarding urban-rural differences in the quality of education provided. First, students' scores on reading, science and mathematic exams depend on where they live. All three mean scores increase regularly from small towns towards large cities. Secondly, the variation in the scores, or standard error (SE), is the highest in small towns and large cities. In small towns, variation in mathematics performance among students is 14, 32 while in large cities it is 13, 53. On the other

hand, the variation in the score in towns is 7, 95 and 10, 93 in cities. In the smallest place or smallest level of heterogeneity and in the largest place or largest level of heterogeneity the variation in the learning outcomes of the students are largest in all sorts of residential areas in Turkey.

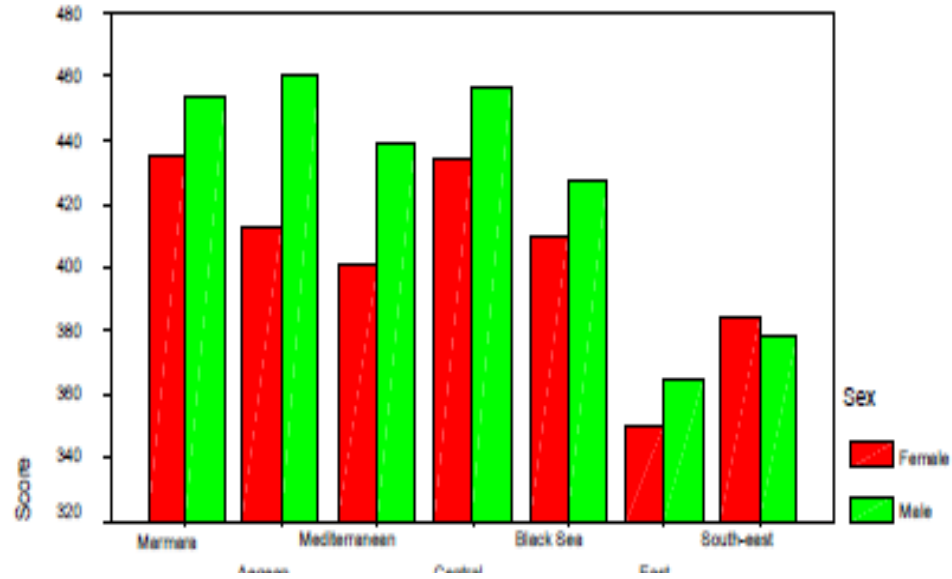
Table 8: Urban-Rural Differences of Student’s Learning Outcomes

Category	%	Reading		Mathematics			Science	
		(SE)	Mean	(SE)	Mean	(SE)	Mean	(SE)
Village	2.58	(c)	c	(c)	c	(c)	c	(c)
Small Town	11.19	(2.22)	419	(13.62)	401	(14.32)	396	(12.76)
Town	36.48	(3.93)	444	(8.39)	418	(7.95)	423	(6.84)
City	29.01	(3.20)	452	(8.94)	426	(10.93)	427	(9.50)
Large City	20.75	(3.05)	481	(9.84)	457	(13.58)	451	(11.53)

Source: PISA (2006): OECD for International Student Assessment)

Note: c in the table means not available

As Berberoğlu (2005) indicated, educational quality changes noticeably between the Eastern and Western parts of Turkey. According to students’ learning outcome data in PISA (2003), students’ math and reading performance varies greatly between the east and the west of Turkey, as shown below. Regional disparities in development level also affect the students’ learning outcome, and students in the eastern part of Turkey appear to be least successful.



Source: Berberoğlu (2005) and PISA (2003)

Figure 3: Mathematics Exam Results of Turkish Students from Different Geographical Regions

Weak association between school and labor market

Another structural problem found in the Turkish education system is the weak cooperation between school and work life. There is a marked incompatibility between what vocational education offers and what the labor market demands. One reason is the absence of a clear differentiation between the curricula of vocational schools and general schools (Aydagül, 2006:42). According to (Aydagül, 2006), vocational high schools have efficiency and quality problems, sources of complaint from students and teachers, while their graduates constitute an inadequate supply for labor market demands. Furthermore, debates on the coefficient problem⁶ in the university entrance exam and *imam hatip* high schools (high schools with religious curriculum) play a major role in the vocational education policies (Aydagül, 2006:32-33). Most graduates from vocational schools have to attend additional training courses related with their jobs to meet the basic requirements of their occupation due to inadequate education in their vocational secondary schools (Aydagül, 2006:33). Moreover, in Turkey, training opportunities besides formal education are very limited. Only İŞKUR (Turkish Employment Center) provides a

⁶The scores of graduates from vocational schools are multiplied with lower coefficients in the University Entrance Exam (ÖSS) when they apply for major areas unrelated to their high school vocational program.

few training courses and the kind of courses offered here mainly focus on teaching how to read and write (World Bank, 2008).

Even though reforms for improving vocational education have been considered with regard to the EU accession process, it still has status and quality problems compared with other types of schools. The weak association between schools and the labor market shapes the perception of youth about school in more negative ways. Almost 40 percent of young people believe that education has no significant role in finding a job, as Table 9 shows.

Table 9: Challenges Youth Identified during School to Work Transition

Lack of Jobs	25%
Lack of information about job availability	19%
Inadequate preparation in school	25%
School preparation not relevant to available jobs	17%
Inability of networks	3%
Lack of second chance opportunities	7%
Inability to start own business	3%

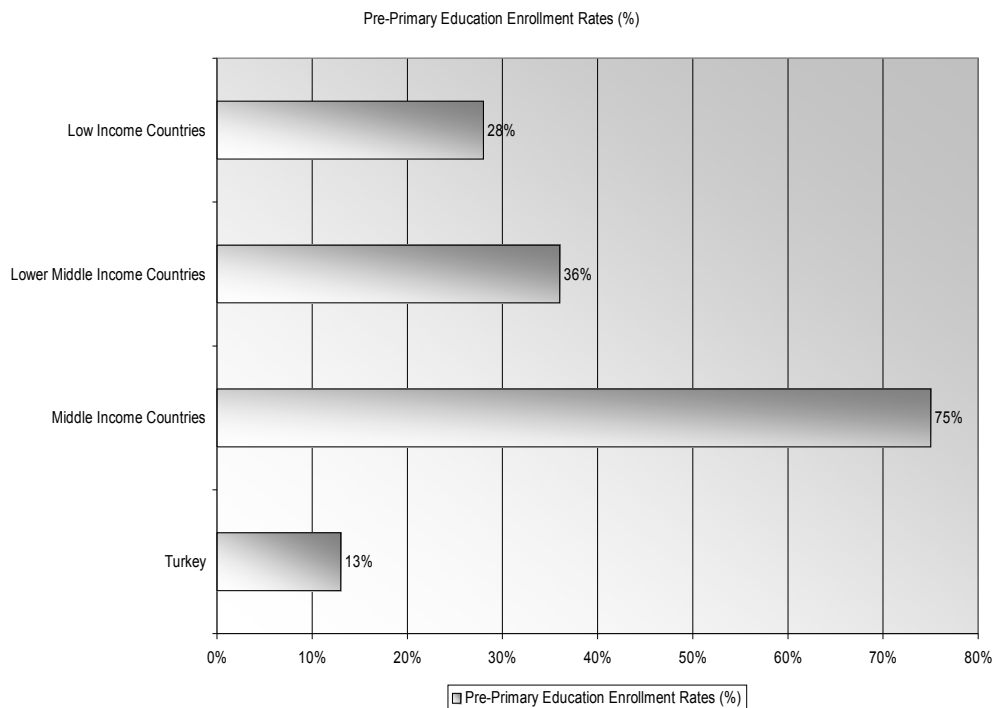
Source: World Bank (2008:4)

3.4. Inequalities in Every Level of Education

Besides structural problems in education system, inequalities are embedded in every stage of schooling. In this section, I will try to discuss these existing inequalities from pre-primary school to university education.

Access to Education

Before starting primary school at the age of seven, every child needs extra support from their parents in order to start to acquire communication and learning skills. Children's performance in school depends on their early childhood education. (Kaytaz, 2005:6) argues that one year investment in early childhood education reduces secondary dropout rates by 2, 28 percent; therefore returns from investment in early childhood education will be greater and much more beneficial to the individual and the society. However, in Turkey enrollment rates in pre-primary education are the lowest among low income, lower-middle income and middle income countries as indicated in Figure 4.

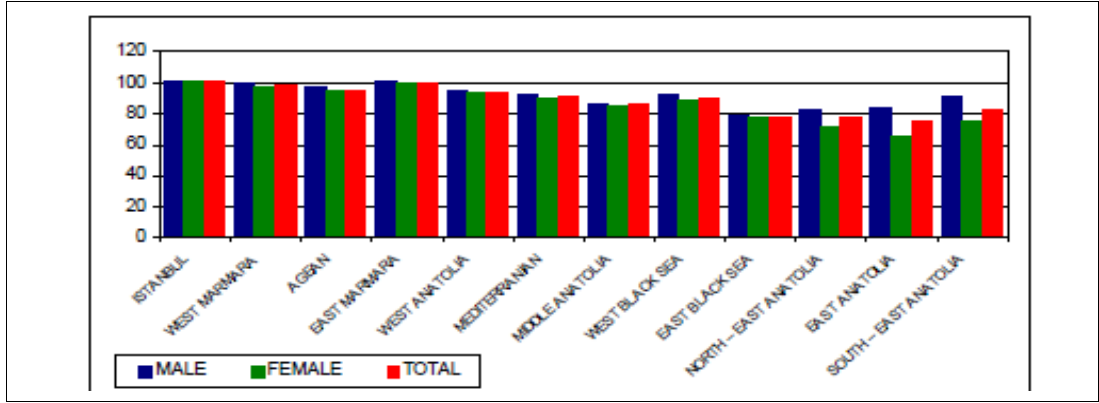


Source: World Bank, Edstat (2008)

Figure 4: Enrollment Rates for Pre-Primary Education

According to UNDP Youth Report (2008:44), “among 1.4 million babies born every year in Turkey, approximately 20% receive early childhood education and most of those children live in big cities with relatively better economic standards”. While 90 percent of the highest twenty percent income group’s children can benefit from early childhood education, this rate is only 24 % for the lowest income groups (Kaytaz, 2006:11). Regarding the profiles of the children who live in big cities with better living standards, it can be argued that early childhood education is a privilege of the top twenty percent income group, and it is a luxury investment for the poor households.

Besides low enrollment rates in early childhood education, it should be also pointed out that access to primary education reflects regional inequalities in the country. The percentage of girls who have no access to primary school are far higher than 20% in Eastern part of Turkey, both in the South East Anatolia and the North East Anatolia regions, as Hoşgör’s findings in 2004 indicate below:



Source: Hoşgör (2004)

Figure 5: Enrollment Rates of Students from Different Regions in Turkey

In order to reduce these discrepancies in educational opportunities between provinces and between regions, the Turkish government, NGOs and international organizations have been developing policies such as conditional cash transfers to poor families to send their daughters to school; a hundred percent tax credits for private institutions that invest in education; and, the mobilization of children around the country to see their peers experiences⁷

School Dropout and Early Age School to Work Transition

According to Table 10, the majority of people in labor market are primary school graduates, with rates of 61 % for males and 48 % for females.

Table 10: Education Level of Labor Market Statistics in 2005

	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Total
Male	61%	23%	10%	100%
Female	48%	17%	15%	100%

Source: World Bank Edstat (2008)

According to the World Bank (2008:21), economic returns of university education are greater because labor market demands for university education is much higher than the supply of education system; thus it reflects the large wage gap between secondary education graduates and university graduates.

⁷ *Haydi Kızlar Okula! (Come on Girls! To School!)*, The Girls' Education Campaign 2001–2005 retrieved from <http://www.unicef.org/turkey/pr/ge6.html>

Even though the economic return of higher education is high, children of the poor tend to leave school at early age due to the high opportunity cost of schooling instead of working. Assaad and Dayioğlu (2002) found that at least 20% of fourteen to seventeen year-old boys are working instead of staying in school. For girls, school dropout is related more to the family pressure that requires them to help with household chores and fits them into the traditional role of mother. They are supposed to help their mothers in household chores even when they attend to school. According to UNDP Youth Report (2008) on Turkey, parental pressure on girls to leave the school is nine times higher than on boys who expressed the same reason for the school dropout. On the other hand, leaving school to earn money is twice as attractive for boys than for girls (UNDP, 2008:32). Similarly, Mete's analysis of Household Income and Consumption Data proves that 53, 15% of the students who do not attend secondary school come from poor families (Mete, 2004:17). In addition, compulsion for school-to-work transition at an early age also shapes the perception of education for young people in poor families. According to the results of the World Bank (2008), one third of the young people drop out of school because of the necessity of earning money to contribute to household income. Half of the participants in the survey are unwilling to continue education and sixty percent of these young people come from poor families.

Financing Further Education

From 1990 onwards, education has rapidly become more selective and more privatized. It can be assumed that education in public schools is still freely accessed in Turkey, yet the declining value of education has become more harmful than before, especially for lower income groups. A significant majority of the pupils are separated from a few most successful students through highly competitive entrance exams. Increasing number of entrance exams starting from primary school until after the university graduation confines the measurement of educational system quality to selecting the correct answer in a short time and familiarizing oneself with multiple choice exam questions. The learning process of 'test based education system' lets public schools diminish quality of education, because private tutoring courses have been replacing public education, as those private tutoring programs focus on preparing students for entrance exams. Thus, this process has created the *dershane*,

(private tutoring course) which is considered necessary to be successful in the exams and to compete with other students. In their last year of high school education, most students skip courses at school for months on end by obtaining absence permission notes from physicians in order to follow the courses in *dershane* (private tutoring course). Most of the time teachers give students free hours to study from the handouts and tests that are distributed in the *dershane* (private tutoring course). For the poor families, *dershane* (private tutoring course) is not a feasible way for their children's to receive an education. The annual price for an average *dershane* (private tutoring course)⁸ ranges between five and seven times of minimum wage in Turkey. Under these circumstances, “*Dershane* (private tutoring course) is in, public schools are out”, and the statement of *dershane*'s (private tutoring course) popularity works against poor pupils.

3.5. Conclusion

Even though enrollment rates have improved in Turkey for the last decade, quality of education is not distributed equally for all people around the country. The most disadvantaged groups are people who live in rural areas in the eastern part of Turkey as well as in poor families. Gender is an important aspect of such inequality, too; girls are usually more disadvantaged than boys. If quality of education is not provided more for all people, the opportunity to strengthen the economy as a result of the demographic transition will be lost, and young people who do not receive similar quality and level of education will face problems such as low quality of life and intergenerational transmission of poverty.

- Difficulty in adaptation to the knowledge economy
- The gap between economic development and human development may be aggravated.
- Education might be devalued more than before.
- The relationship between education and social mobility will be weakened or the role of education in poverty reduction will be weakened.

⁸ Average annual *dershane* (private tutoring course) prices changed between 3000 YTL and 5000 YTL according to Hurriyet daily newspaper's market research retrieved from <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/egitim/anasayfa/6896676.asp?gid=171> . The minimum wage is 608,40 YTL according to the data of http://www.csgeb.gov.tr/page.php?page=asgari_1

CHAPTER IV
SCHOOL EFFECT AND SCHOOL CLIMATE
IN THE DISADVANTAGED NEIGHORHORHOOD

4.1. Introduction

Young people in disadvantaged neighborhoods do not have enough resources and opportunities compared with those in other neighborhoods. Their families lack economic resources, while public services in poorer neighborhoods do not compare to those in middle class neighborhoods. During the transition from childhood to adulthood, the disadvantage of growing up in an underprivileged neighborhood influences the educational attainment of youth from poor families. In this chapter, I will examine how schools affect the educational attainment of the youth in the *Güzelyaka gecekondü* neighborhood.

First, I will discuss the local context and cultural characteristics of the *Güzelyaka gecekondü* neighborhood. Secondly, I will discuss the neighborhood poverty in *Güzelyaka* case. Thirdly, I will focus on the level of education and the value youth in *gecekondü* neighborhoods assign to education. Finally, I will discuss how schools affect the educational attainment of the youth in the *Güzelyaka gecekondü* neighborhood

4.2. Local and Cultural Neighborhood Context

To understand the effect of schooling on the education attainment of the youth, we need to look closely at certain aspects of *gecekondü* neighborhoods. *Gecekondü* neighborhoods have some similarities and dissimilarities compared with the poor neighborhoods in urban areas. Even though it is difficult to describe one type of poor neighborhood, those neighborhoods mentioned in neighborhood effect literature are associated with rising unemployment (Ainsworth,2002), Newman and Small, (2001), high dropout rates from school (Crowder and South, 2003) and weak collective

efficacy⁹ (Gannon-Rowley et al, 2001). In his seminal work "The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy", Wilson (1987) argues that

The social isolation and disorganization experienced by inner-city residents result in several major social problems, including a prevalence of delinquent subcultures, the weakening of basic institutions, and the lack of social control — all of which contribute to the high rate of educational failure in inner-city neighborhoods (cited in Ainsworth, 2002:118).

According to Wilson (1987), those neighborhoods have crumbled due to the flight of the middle class; these places are disconnected from the urban centers, have weak social ties and are poverty stricken.

A comparison of *gecekondu* neighborhoods with other, "ordinary" disadvantaged neighborhoods reveals that *gecekondu* neighborhoods have the specific characteristics. By using the Güzelyaka *gecekondu* neighborhood to identify these, we can point out two specific local and cultural features of the disadvantaged neighborhood: First, there are strong community relations based on extended family, *hemşehri* (people with the geographic origin) and kinship ties; second, poverty in Güzelyaka can be considered as transient, as are many dwellers.

First of all, in the same neighborhood, migrant families who lack both schooling and economic resources have strength of social networks based on kinship and geographic origin. They can get help from their neighbors in finding jobs from either relatives or *hemşehri* (people with the geographic origin). Duben (2002) defines the principal behind such networks as the "family code", in which a kind of family relation is established of with those who are not actually family members. For instance, Sedat, a twenty-five year old male technician, found his job with the help of his friend's brother, while Ahmet, a twenty-three year old male technician, benefited from the help of his father's friends. Besides, it can be argued that the social ties and social organizations are dynamic among migrants even though recreational areas are

⁹ The term collective efficacy is used by Gannon-Rowley et al (2001) in lieu of collective solidarity.

restricted to the front yard of the schools, squatter houses, streets and parks. People frequently come together in traditional wedding ceremonies such as henna nights (the traditional Turkish version of the bachelorette party), wedding celebrations and traditional circumcision celebrations, especially in the summer. In addition, different generations and neighbors come together in the *Bahçe* (the front yard of the *gecekondu* or the apartment) during summer evenings.

Secondly, poverty is transient in the case of *gecekondu* families. *Güzelyaka* is a disadvantaged neighborhood, yet the residents are part of self-help networks and enjoy informal ties of social solidarity within and outside the neighborhood. Even though poverty abounds in the neighborhood, these families have developed survival strategies based on kinship and *hemşehri* (people with the geographic origin) ties (Erder, 2002) and extended family support systems (Kalaycıoğlu, 2005).

As Buğra and Keyder (2003) point out, however, many newcomers are at risk for the intergenerational transmission of poverty. In *Güzelyaka*, newcomers, especially ethnic migrants, are more vulnerable to becoming caught up in this vicious circle than other residents. For instance, Kurdish newcomers are significantly different than other residents in terms of both socio-economic indicators and the strength of social ties. The early migrants are more likely to have regular income jobs¹⁰, and be house owners, while newcomers are generally renters who work in casual jobs. Kurdish migrants are more closed to the outside and they live in more crowded houses. By contrast, newcomers from the Central Anatolian cities of *Kırşehir*, *Yozgat* and *Kayseri* participate in community life in *gecekondu* and benefit more from opportunities provided in the neighborhood such as health care services and employment irrespective of their cultural and religion background i.e The *Alewi*, *Sunni*.¹¹

To conclude, *gecekondu* neighborhoods have been reshaped with the spatial formation of districts in Ankara. Despite extended family networks and kinship

¹⁰ Although all unskilled workers can not be lumped together, the distinction between regular income and casual work is important as emphasized by Ayata and Ayata (2002).

¹¹ The Alewis do not face difficulties in participating in urban life as pointed out by Ayata et al (2006). Source: <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2007/03/26/guncel/agun.html> out.

support systems help dwellers survive against poverty, *gecekondu* neighborhoods are more concentrated with poverty as middle class families have moved to the suburban areas in Ankara

4.3. Neighborhood Poverty

As Comim and Kuklys (2002) argue, poverty is experienced in the larger social surroundings as well as in the household, and that system-level poverty determines the social capabilities of the individual. The neighborhood influences the life chances of the residents whether they are poor or not. For instance, Montgomery and Ezeh (2005) indicate that the poor in the non-poor areas are able to receive better health services, such as improved maternal health care, than the non-poor who live in disadvantaged neighborhoods.

In *gecekondu* neighborhoods, the neighborhood infrastructure is inadequate. In Güzelyaka, basic infrastructure, or services like local health care, schools, and private transport services are available. There are three local health centers and three primary schools in the vicinity. However, there is neither natural gas service nor a local high school. Moreover, the quality of infrastructure is poor compared with middle class neighborhoods. Ismail, a thirty year old man who works as a director in a spice selling company, explains the problem: “Before, we wished we had a primary school close to our homes because we wanted our children to go to a school closely. Now, we have the school, but there's still more to be done. There is no enclosed school yard for children to play at the school; there is not enough money to our school.” Likewise, respondents commonly suggest that Güzelyaka is the only place that does not benefit from government investments, specifically the municipal investments. They argue that Güzelyaka is the only place left that has not received natural gas service, Also, when it snows, icy roads disrupt the traffic. The residents believe that the local headmen, the *muhtar*, “belong to a different party than the mayor, and the conflict between the two hurts investment prospects and, arguably the services available to the neighborhood”.

The residents also indicate that recreational areas for socializing in the neighborhood are highly insufficient, which restricts families to their homes. It should be noted that

the construction of a football pitch and a park has just started as part of a broader urban renewal project. Şebnem, a nineteen year old female university student, complains about the absence of social facilities: "Place is important. Children should be able to live in better surroundings, in a good place. They should be able to spend their time in parks and recreational areas made available to them. If they have such good quality places, their schooling would be better." Similarly, Hatice, a twenty-eight year old housewife, adds, "If you compare it with other neighborhoods, Güzelyaka is less developed. It is true that there are no places for families and youngsters to meet. For instance, there is no small jogging track."

To conclude, *gecekondu* settlements have both positive and negative aspects, from opportunities that spring from the small group solidarities to deprivation of basic services. The people's dependency to their disadvantaged neighborhood which involves both limited resources and mutual help and strength of extended family networks shapes their perceptions, attitudes and expectations about the future. In this case, it creates its own values and culture system.

4.4. Youth and Education in Güzelyaka Neighborhood

Regarding to strength of social ties, transient poverty and neighborhood disadvantage, it is critical to focus on the importance of the youth's level of education and value assigned to education in the Güzelyaka neighborhood.

4.4.1. Educational Attainment of Güzelyaka Neighborhood Youth

There were fourteen primary schools, ten secondary schools, and six university degree holders among the interviewees in the 18-30 age groups. First, the university graduates were investigated in terms of the type of university attended and current employment status in the labor market. Among the six university graduates, two had attended a two-year vocational school. One female respondent graduated from the department of art history, and in the five years since she has been working in her father's the grocery store. Another university graduate has been attending part-time evening courses in a university, which requires extra tuition payment, while the other respondent was able to study at university after taking the ÖSS (university entrance exam) for the seventh time. One male respondent had a degree in communication and is now working in a small company as an accountant.

The case study shows that young people who are successful in school might not be able to break out of the cycle of disadvantage without further financial support. Moreover, there were five dropouts among the respondents. One of them could not complete the compulsory primary school education, and the other four respondents had to leave school at the secondary level. Four out of five dropouts come from newcomer families who may experience more unfavorable economic conditions than early migrant families do.

Regarding the educational profile of the young generations in Güzelyaka, children from the newcomer families may not be able to compete in schools as equals with those from early migrant families. As Herran and Uythem (2001) argue, educational failure is a cumulative process, since early experience with underprivileged conditions puts children at risk of a poor educational trajectory, as in the case of early migrant families, who have since improved their income level. Yet, when children were not yet at schooling age, poverty in the early migration years influenced their potential educational attainment.

4.4.2. Value of Education of Youth

I will mention the value of education among young people through two questions: (1) How do they perceive education? (2) What importance do they assign to the yields of education?

To begin with, young people believe that effort and intelligence play a more significant role than family background in their school achievement. Almost all respondents stated that attending school depends solely on a student's own eagerness. Many respondents express this attitude by using the same phrase: *çocuğun içinden gelecek* (means the child must first have a desire to go to school). When they discussed the reasons behind their poor performance in school, none of them referred to their poor living standards as an excuse. They claimed that their lack of success was their own fault. They stated, for example, that "they could not understand what the teachers were teaching in the classroom", and "they did not pay enough attention in class". In the same way, they stated that the poor can be successful if they are intelligent enough and if they study harder. During the

interviews, I encountered such attitudes quite often: "How come some kids from Eastern Anatolia are able to rank highest in the university entrance exam (ÖSS)? It does not have anything to do with poverty; otherwise, they would not be on the top". Furthermore, it should be pointed out that they believe that they have more educational opportunities today than their parents had before, and the access to these opportunities is easier to come by for poor people today than previous generations. For instance, they stated that the government provides poor students in primary school with free books, and state agencies provide lots of scholarship opportunities. Moreover, state funds are used to organize girls' education awareness-raising campaigns such as *Haydi Kızlar Okula!* (Come on Girls! To School!), and *Egitime 100% Destek* (100% Support for Education) to promote education in society.

Young respondents attach importance to education because of its economic returns as well. To understand how young people value education, they were asked to name three important things when asked about the importance of education. Their answers to the question showed that young people believe that education is crucial in order to find a good occupation and have a satisfactory income. It is important to note, however, that the role of education in self development and achieving higher social status matters less than the concerns of employment and income for them. Three points come up in the interviews pertaining to the interviewees' attitude towards the economic returns of education. First, they believe that higher education does not always offer economic returns for them. For instance, Fatih, a twenty seven year old man who works as a janitor at a university, stated that "being a university graduate is important so that I can be the strongest candidate for a janitor's position. But, if I am to be a cleaner, why do I need to continue my education?" Similarly, Devrim, a twenty-seven year old male university student, emphasized that "twenty years ago people could find jobs as civil servants even though they had only completed primary school; today it is very difficult even for university graduates." Second, the rising competition for educational credentials leads to a perceived hierarchy among jobs and divides them into "guarantee jobs", which actually mean "working for the public sector" and other jobs. Yusuf, a twenty-five-year old man who works as a truck driver, expressed common perceptions about "guarantee jobs": "If you are going to become a doctor or a teacher or a lawyer, then ok, you should continue to school.

Otherwise, for instance, if you are going to be an electrical engineer, forget it. There are too many electrical engineers in the country." Because of credential competition, respondents believe that university education is not an automatic passport to high-income jobs. Third, young people legitimize their decision towards early labor market participation through their low educational aspirations. The common idea among the residents, no matter how old they are, is that "university graduates are left out on the streets", and "they are unemployed". A fragile link between jobs and higher education and the risk of no economic return from education raise the concern of "devaluation of higher education" among youth people. (Stromquist, 2001:50). Filgueira, (1983) argues that "if no other social mechanisms for equalization are obtained, problems of over education result in devaluation of educational credentials, and competitions for education 'goods' emerge" (cited in Stromquist (2001:50)). It should be pointed out that in Turkey the image of education is not the same as the 'diploma disease' in developed economies, as the number of university graduates is the smallest among OECD countries (OECD Education at Glance, 2008). However, the February 2001 economic crisis played an especially critical role in the devaluation of higher education because white-collar are unemployed for the first time. Under these conditions, poor families have tended to encourage their children to find paid jobs as soon as possible. In this study, five of the ten young secondary school graduates chose to go to vocational secondary school in order to get a job as soon as possible.

4.5. The Effect of Schooling in the Disadvantaged Neighborhood

In general, schools in disadvantaged neighborhoods do not provide a good quality education. Before discussing this point, it is important to discuss the findings of research on the effects of schooling.

4.5.1. School Effect Research

Research on the effects of schooling reveals discordant findings in two dimensions: the family versus school debate and the development level of the country. The family versus school debate started with Coleman's studies in "Equality of Educational Opportunity" in 1960s. He found that school results in little improvement in the performance of students with the underlying reason of their family background.

There are two important research traditions in the school versus family debate: namely, status attainment research and effective school research. The first approach states that “students do not enter schools on equal footing, but in a state of relative advantage or disadvantage” (Wenglinsky: 1997:198). In other words, status attainment research argues that the effect that the school has is strongly associated with the student’s background. Students from poor families have lower chances of success when they enter school. Contrary to the first approach, effective school research claims that schooling has a uniform effect on students no matter what the student’s background is.

Moreover, some studies emphasize a divergence between developing and developed countries in terms of the school effect. Heyneman (1983) argues that the role of schools is notably dissimilar in developing societies to the schools in advanced countries. He argues that when schools have more resources, pupils’ achievement depends less on family background and more on school. Instead of the pupil’s socio-economic background, he states that the effects of schooling mostly depend on the country’s level development. Heyneman (1983) supports his claim with his research in Uganda and he argues that the large variation in school resources is explained more by the students’ success rather than small variation of social class in Uganda (Buchmann and Hannum, 2001:86). Heyneman’s contribution should be discussed in terms of two points: First, disproportionate school resources lead to a variation in the student’s educational achievement level in any given country. Buchman and Hannum (2001) state that school equipment has different meanings for schools in developing and in developed countries. As schools in developing countries lack basic classroom supplies such as blackboards, notebooks and books, this lack of resources can diminish the success of the schools. However, for schools in developed countries, having expensive equipment such as laboratories and high quality computers has greater significance than having basic equipment (Buchmann and Hannum, 2001:86). The second point is related to the methodological progress in school effect research and its influence on survey results around the world. Jansen (1995) examined the studies about the school effect for three decades and he found different results in the school effect research, thanks to progress in the statistical methods; in the 70’s and 80’s production function models were used in the research, and after the 90s

multilevel models became the most preferred methods for analyzing the school effect. For instance, ten years after Heyneman's studies, Lockheed and Longford (1991) found that in developing world school-level differences contributed 32% while family and individual factors contributed 68% of the explained variance in student mathematics achievement in Thailand (cited in Liu,2006:36).

Regarding the macro level discussions on relevant theories and research findings, there are some reasons for the need to discuss the role of school climate in disadvantaged neighborhoods. Schooling does not simply reproduce certain inequalities; rather, inequalities among schools are related to the interaction of several factors such as schools, family backgrounds and everyday life experiences of students. Similarly, it is essential to understand how the school effect can be explained by the school climate, that is, the particular characteristics of the school arising from neighborhood poverty, as well as the physical resources of the schools.

4.5.2. School Climate

Schools in disadvantaged neighborhoods are not merely local representatives of the central educational system; they have their own characteristics that the schools in other neighborhoods do not have (Gephart, 1997). A Lupton (2006:659) states, "what was being described in these schools was not the norm elsewhere". Even though not every school in disadvantaged neighborhoods would be poor "the more socially disadvantaged the community served by a school, the very much more likely it is that the school will appear to underachieve" (Gibson and Asthana, 1998:11). That is why we need to understand the remarkable norms and values that describe the schools in disadvantaged neighborhoods. In doing so, Keefe et al (1990) define school climate as the relatively enduring pattern of shared perceptions - by teachers, students, parents and community members - of the characteristics of a school and of its members (cited in (Frymier et al, 2004:129). Concerning the schools around the Güzelyaka neighborhood, I argue that schools in disadvantaged neighborhoods make little difference in the educational attainment of students because of the three characteristics of the schools¹²; which are (i) the poor quality of education, (ii) pupil

¹² During the literature review and field study, I restricted the questions about the characteristics of the schools on the basis of subjective evaluations of the respondents rather than considering objective measures about school resources due to the scope of the research.

and peer group characteristics, and (iii) the characteristics of the school as they relate to neighborhood poverty.

First, the schools around Güzelyaka are not comparable to schools in other neighborhoods. Vildan, a twenty three year old housewife, stated that, "The primary school is of the lowest quality among its kind in *Yenimahalle*. I get informed about the school's situation through my nephews. The books in the primary school are different from the ones in other schools, and teachers sometimes follow different curriculum from the current one. In my time, there was not as much difference among the schools. Now, the difference is huge". Similarly, the director of the school underlined that "I cannot understand how schools change so sharply within six hundred meters. In our school, children do not have a good environment here". The variation in the quality of education among the schools in the neighborhoods becomes more pronounced when one looks at the performance of children who changed schools. Mahmut, a twenty three-year-old high school graduate, related how changing schools had affected his grades: "When we moved from *Etlik* to here, I was in the secondary school. I attended to the first half of the secondary school in *Etlik*, and the other half in Güzelyaka. When in *Etlik*, I was a repeat student with three failing classes; but in the second year of the secondary school, I received an honors degree in Güzelyaka." Regarding the quality of the school, one of the teachers in primary school evaluates the pupils' performance in the national exams and she says, "I have been here for eight years, yet there have not been more than eight students who were successful in OKS (High School Entrance Examination)." The common attitudes about the school quality among students, parents, and teachers show that there is a huge gap within urban areas, with the schools in squatter neighborhoods lacking quality education.

Second, concerning the school experiences of young people, the study showed that there are several points need to be mentioned about the peer and pupil characteristics of the schools around Güzelyaka neighborhood. Peer groups are very influential in respondents' school experiences, as most of them say that they like school since it provides the opportunity for socialization with their friends. They believe that school is the best place to spend time with friends. Fatih, a twenty seven-year-old man who

works as a janitor at a university, states, "When I started middle school, everything was good. I had lots of friends. We just had fun and never cared about courses. But when my courses have got harder, I was not able to improve my performance in class. My friends and I could not understand anything during our classes. We only cared about when the bell was going to ring. We dreamed about what we would do after class or in the evening. If you sit in class like a statue and listen to the teacher without moving in your seat at all, you cannot understand anything in class." Similarly, Mahmut, a twenty three-year-old high school graduate, blames himself and students like him; "our teachers were very nice people, but they could not do anything as the students were not enthusiastic to learn and did not want to ask questions. Why did they not want to learn? Because there were games, there was fun outside of school and they thought 'why do I need to waste my time in the school instead of playing outside?' Half of the students wanted to go to school to have fun during recess". The peer group characteristics that are described above may not be strikingly different from those in other neighborhoods. However, when peer characteristics are combined with a low quality school, the risk of dropping out increases. For this reason, many respondents hold their friend group at the school responsible for their school's underachievement. The respondents emphasize that because of the peer group, they cut class more often, and some of them repeat the year with their friends. On the other hand, it should be noted here that truancy and repeating a year are more common among young boys than young girls. There is only one girl who has repeated a year and there are almost no boys who did not cut class. When boys do it with their friends, they say they go to places where they can play billiards, or foosball, and visit hip downtown areas such as Tunalı Hilmi¹³ Street. According to them, the peer group in the school plays a significant role in teaching them new things about adulthood.

In addition to this, most classes in the school are mixed ability classes. There are only two young people who have been able to join an *özel sınıf* (advanced level class) in their school. The majority of the respondents do not attend special student groups. Some even claim that there is not a single successful student in their classroom. For instance, Yusuf, a twenty five-year-old male who works as a truck

¹³ Tunalı Hilmi Street is an old street and it is the socializing street for young people and lower and upper middle class people in Ankara. In the street, there are lots of branch of famous brands.

driver, and Seda, a twenty three-year-old female university student, state that "not one student in our classroom was successful; there was no such thing: A couple of students used to sit in the front of the class and devote their energy and time to the courses, and some students who sat in the back of the classroom spent time joking instead of listening to the teacher. Yet, there were no hard working students or "nerds" in our classroom. Every student was lazy. If your living standards were good, it did not matter if you were lazy or a "nerd", though. You can benefit from a good education. But poor students have to study in the worst classes of the worst schools". Lastly, after emphasizing the lack of competitive environment in the classrooms, it can be argued that discipline in class is another significant problem which influences students' school achievement. Almost all respondents complained about the lack of discipline in the schools in their neighborhood. One teacher confirmed the difficulty of sustaining discipline in her school. In his study in the disadvantaged neighborhoods of East London, Lupton (2006) likewise argues that the problems at school such as low attainment rates among pupils are strongly related with the difficulty in providing discipline.

Third, concentrated poverty in *gecekond* neighborhoods affects the school climate considerably. Instead of taking structural measures as a state policy for poverty alleviation, the state and the current government have opted to fight poverty through social benefits. According to the interview with the principal of a school in Güzelyaka, teachers in the school sometimes use their own social networks to find a job for their student's parents, to provide cash for poor families, or to help students in their school expenses. She states that they contact some big companies in order to help the parents of some children. Furthermore, they offer free courses to illiterate mothers during weekends every year.

4.6. Conclusion

With disadvantageous conditions at home and in the neighborhood, it would be fair to say that schooling does not make a positive difference for students since the school's characteristics are shaped by the neighborhood. In addition to macro level inequalities in terms of educational opportunities, deprivation in the neighborhood is also detrimental to the role of schooling. Schools have adapted to the disadvantaged

conditions in two ways. In addition to neighborhood disadvantage, the strength of social ties has resulted in a specific type of culture surrounding education in *gecekondu* neighborhoods. The youth's low level of satisfaction with education and their support of meritocracy illustrates that education is assigned less value. Second, the school climate in the disadvantaged neighborhoods detracts from equality in terms of educational opportunities.

CHAPTER V
THE ROLE OF INTERACTION
WITHIN THE DISADVANTAGED NEIGHBORHOOD

5.1. Introduction

In disadvantaged neighborhoods, lack of public places and poverty limit leisure activities and socialization. During the transition from childhood to adulthood, peer groups changes attitudes and values. Since school aged young people spend more time with their peers in streets than they do with adults, the risk of dropping out, truancy and repeating a year in school changes due to socialization with peer groups.

In this chapter, I will discuss how neighborhood based peer groups influence the educational attainment of youth in the Güzelyaka *gecekondu* neighborhood. I will start with local reference groups in education. Then, I will discuss how peer groups influence the educational attainment of young girls and young boys in different ways.

5.2. Local Reference Groups: Education, Skills and Jobs

In the *gecekondu* neighborhood, poverty and insufficient schooling are seen as almost coterminous. The poor are seen as deficient in education. Crane (2002) points out that "when the poverty rate is increasing five points, the odds of dropout are increasing" (cited in Rumberger, 2004:136). Large numbers of poor people and unskilled workers in the neighborhood also result in the lack of successful role models in education. In other words, the social circle of the young people generally involves low-skilled workers who have a secondary education at most. In Güzelyaka, the majority of migrants, whether they have casual or regular income, are less skilled.

Among the interviewees, there were no professionals working as doctors, engineers or teachers.¹⁴ Sibel, a twenty-five year old housewife, expressed her fear about the future of her child and the lack of successful role models in their environment: "My son only sees the repairmen and craftsmen around here. Last week we visited my mother in law. When I asked a girl there what job she had, she told me that she was a lawyer and my son heard about being a 'lawyer' for the first time. I think he should know more about life outside the neighborhood." Similarly, Vildan, a twenty--three year old housewife, states that people had started to send their kids to school at a time when she was a young girl: "But all those educated ones left the neighborhood now and we've fallen apart. In our neighborhood, people just don't care about education". Most interviewees complained that they did not know anyone who could help them with their homework at school or anyone who could advise them about their future, education or jobs. Mustafa, a thirty year old male technician, says: "There was not one single person who asked me what kind of job I would like to have in the future."

Young people in the disadvantaged neighborhood lack successful role models in education. This reinforces that role of the peer effect in the neighborhood for the educational attainment of youth.

5.3. Neighborhood Based Peer Pressure

The effect of the neighborhood based peer groups depends on young people's sense of belonging, which differs according to the individual's perception of the place and interaction with the neighborhood. Individuals perceive and interact with the neighborhood in specific ways, according to their ethnic background, age, marital status and level of education.

5.3.1. Neighborhood Perception

Neighborhoods are the place that is reconstructed and shaped by individuals' perception as well as their interaction with the place (Henderson, 2007). Not all

¹⁴ As Wilson (1996) pointed out, there is skill mismatch between a poor neighborhood and the labor market in the mainstream society. In the case of job requirements for the service sector, e.g. shopping malls, secondary education is believed to be the minimum threshold level of education for getting the job and getting out of the intergenerational transmission of poverty (Herran, and Uythem (2001) and Tilak (2007)).

young people perceive the neighborhood and their community in the same way. The neighborhood perception also depends on the public image of the place and the different symbolic values that one assigns to it.

The image of Güzelyaka has two major attributes. First, it involves a stress on the strength of community ties and second, it involves a fear of crime. Almost all interviewees in the neighborhood indicated that they are happy living here as they live close to their relatives and their families, despite the location's insufficient social services and recreational areas. Ayata (1996:78-79) emphasizes that the proximity to kin and *hemsehri* in the same neighborhood can provide security with neighborhood life (cited in Beşpınar-Ekici, 2001:25). Hence, the residents of Güzelyaka believe that life outside of their neighborhood is not as pleasant, and they are attached to the place with strong emotional ties. For instance, Özlem, a twenty- seven year old housewife, stated: "I cannot imagine living outside the neighborhood because everyone that I love is here. My family is here, my relatives are here." Yet, their perception of the neighborhood is not always positive, as they also mention their growing concern about some of the changes taking place in the neighborhood. Most respondents, regardless of social background, believe that the place has deteriorated over the years. The fear of crime is the major source of growing concern about life in here. Devrim, a twenty-year old student, says: "This is a bad place. The people here are ignorant. There's heroin is here, and alcoholics here, and fighting is here. I cannot have a future if I do not leave this place." Similarly, Şükrü, an unemployed nineteen year old, said: "I can't walk down the streets with my girlfriend," and Hatice, a twenty- eight year old housewife, added "It is bad. Before, I could easily go out with my children, but now I am almost afraid to go out into the street."

The image of the neighborhood changes in terms of the communities who have different geographical place of origin and length of stay in the neighborhood. As Elias and Scotson (1994) divide social groups as "established" and "outsiders in an English neighborhood (cited from Saravi, 2002:322) former groups is more likely to be early migrant families and later groups is more likely to newcomer families like Kurdish migrants. Hence, they are separated according to distinctions as 'we' and "they". In most interviews, some parts of the neighborhood are associated with crime

and some parts are not known at all. Resul, a seventeen year old high school student, says "we don't hang around the coffee house in the upper part of the neighborhood much. I do not know anybody over there. Our place, the Internet café, is better. Many fights have taken place over there. Being here is safer; such incidents don't take place here, because everybody knows everybody else.

Specifically, among the early migrants, the fragmentation of the neighborhood and the deteriorated image of the neighborhood are closely linked. Many young persons from early migrant families emphasize that the place has become worse because of the Kurdish and gypsy newcomers. Devrim, a twenty-year old student, for instance, said "In the past, only the local people lived here, but that was fifteen years ago. All of them left and now the gypsies have moved in. Göksel, a twenty-seven year old male technician, argues, "The place has become worse than before. People come here from the demolished squatter houses of *Altındağ*. In recent years, even gypsies have come here. No sane person would move here. The place has lost its appeal."

5.3.2. Interaction with the Neighborhood Based Peer Groups

According to Levine and Levine (1996: 135), the influence of peers becomes more significant as young people spend more time with their peers than with adults. During the transition from childhood to adulthood, they learn most of the things about the adult world from their peers (Levine and Levine, 1996:137). Peer values and habits become more influential on their behavior than parents', specifically in terms of smoking, cutting class and learning about sexuality. Since different young age groups experience transitions differently (Yumul, 1999), neighborhood based peer influence varies among the youth. During the field study, it was observed that young people who have not married, who have not done their military service and who worked in casual jobs have experienced this transition more intensively and quickly than university students. University students and graduates have weaker ties with neighborhood based peer groups. They spend most of their time outside the neighborhood, going to shopping districts such as *Demetevler* and *Kızılay* as well as to malls like *Ankamall*. Yet, for the young people who spend more time on the street, neighborhood based peer pressure is more damaging to their schooling. The interaction of young individuals with the neighborhood takes place at different levels

and in a gender specific way, as girls and boys are affected by peers in the neighborhood and family control mechanisms in a different ways.

Young Boys

Public places in a neighborhood's streets are 'gender segregated' (Marsh and McDonald, 2005), as young males are more visible in the neighborhood than females. As Nayak (2003) argues that young people spend their time in different zones in the place (Henderson, 2007:146-147) In the neighborhood of Güzelyaka, the front of the shops, the Internet cafes, the coffeehouses as well as street corners are such micro geographies, where young males wait, meet and hang out. The young play card games in the coffeehouses and drive around by car. Most of the time, they hang around the streets without doing anything. The daughter of a shop owner describes such youngsters in the following terms: "They are not interested in attending school. Boys in front of the coffeehouses as well as the in the street corner are here in order to stare at girls; they act like protectors of the neighborhood's honor, and they are also here because they have fun together".

Their behavior on street corners is perceived by some early migrants as a source of delinquency and they are generally called *başıboş* or *serseri* (meaning bums or punks, implying disobedient and trouble making behavior). Gülten, a thirty-two year old married young woman has stated that: "Boys in the neighborhood are aimless. They use drugs and drink alcohol in abandoned houses. We cannot even feel secure in street. The place is chaotic. It has deteriorated so much that I am afraid to put the garbage out in the evening." However, not all boys are delinquent. Some come together in coffeehouses at weekends after work, whereas others build a fire and use drugs in front of the school at night.

The street corner can be seen as a "shock absorber" for young people in poor neighborhoods (Levine and Levine, 1996:125). In Güzelyaka, places where the young people come together function as shock absorbers, and where they meet and have fun, and identify them as a member of a group. In this process, they state that they see each other as brothers, play card games in coffeehouses for long hours, and they spend time in a car, sitting, listening to music and smoking. Among the male youth, masculine values are often crucial for socialization. Some of them even have a

gun; they often call their friends by the names of characters in a popular TV series called *Kurtlar Vadisi*, or “Valley of Wolves”.¹⁵ As Yumul (1999) and Boratav (2005) argue, other young people take on a group identity based on the negotiation between the positive image of the *delikanlı* (meaning macho and loyal to the group) and the negative image of the *serseri* (meaning “punk”). In Güzelyaka, this negotiation leads to participation in a specific peer group in the street. Fatih, a twenty-seven year old man who works in a cleaning service at a university, explained why he participates in the peer group: “Everybody knows them, and everybody should know that I am one of them. In our neighborhood, these guys are influential and some people are really afraid of them. If you are in trouble, you can get help from these guys.”

More significantly, different types of neighborhood peer group based interactions increase the risk of educational failure because peer groups on the street are mainly identified by the following three negative characteristics. First, street corner youth have problems with school. Second, they have troubled relationships with their home and parents. Third, some of them are directly involved in crime and drug abuse.

First, members of peer groups tend to fail at school; as a matter of fact that they do not expect much from being in school. There is only one high school graduate among the six boys who frequently hang out in front of the coffeehouse. All of them had to repeat a year or more at school. As they state themselves: “We were the students who could pass the class only after *şok* (conditional committee decision) by which the school committee conditionally decides whether a student is able to pass. Saravi (2002:324) observed in poor neighborhoods in Argentina that youngsters who experience poverty and unemployment develop alternative status systems which contrast with those of the mainstream society. To the street corner youth in Güzelyaka, however, education is an important indicator of status in the society, similar to the *Kuştepe* case study in Istanbul¹⁶. On the other hand, during the school to work transition the school can only have secondary importance because they do not expect much from the school in terms of their future opportunities. For them, the school is at best a source of some nice memories. Besides, low expectations from

¹⁵*Kurtlar Vadisi* is a popular TV series depicting mafia relationships in Turkey.

¹⁶ In *Kuştepe* inner city in Istanbul, Kazgan et al (1999) found that most young people believed that education is necessary for better life standards.

school are not always the reason they get involved in street life as an alternative. Due to the unfavorable labor market conditions and their underprivileged position in the labor market, they need to get a job urgently instead of staying in school. Yusuf, a twenty-five year old man who works as a truck driver, suggests that staying in school instead of working brought him no prospects. He stated: "I had already realized that I could not achieve much in school. If I'd stayed in school, I couldn't have gotten a job".

The second characteristic of the street corner youth¹⁷ is their uneasy relationship with their families. Almost all the youngsters had problems at home. One had become estranged from his parents; one shares the house with twenty-seven relatives, while another has a father who works abroad. Yusuf, a twenty-five year old man who works as a truck driver, claims: "Our fathers are responsible for our lack of education". He then asked other youngsters in one discussion table: "What did your father do for you? Our fathers did not even know where the school is. My father was always in Russia. He used to come twice a year. I did not feel that he was my father. My uncle was like a father to me, and he always supported us. Children who want to attend school should have a relaxed mind". These boys' minds are not relaxed, though, as they are worried about their family and home.

Third, some of the street corner youth tend to get involved in a delinquent behavior and use heroin at night in front of the school; being put of such circles of the delinquent increases the risk of delinquent behavior. The street culture at night is defined by Anderson (1991) as a life career among the adolescent and the youth (cited in Saravi, 2002). These youngsters in Güzelyaka meet in front of the school and near the electric powerhouse at nights. They build a fire and some of them use drugs and heroin. Their graffiti writings on walls include slogans-like words such as *Alayımıza İsyân* (meaning: *to rebel against all of you*), *Gecekundu*, *Ölümüne* (meaning: *To the Death!*), to the revealing their rebellious spirit and desire to live completely independent.

¹⁷ For similar usage please see Marsh and McDonald (2005) and seminal work, Street Corner Society, of [William Foote Whyte](#) (1943)

Even though peer pressure increases the risk of educational failure, not all young boys in Güzelyaka neighborhood experience the peer pressure along these lines. The newcomer migrants and especially Kurdish migrants experience the negative effects of peer pressure more than the young from the early migrants. The Kurdish youth have similar families and suffer from the absence and neglect of fathers who have irregular jobs, and they live in houses more crowded with family members.

Families are generally authoritarian and overprotective in Turkey (Kağıtçıbaşı, 2002, Nauck, B. and Klaus, DC 2005). Especially during the transition into adulthood, the young are more resistant to parents' intervention in their lives (Hurn, 1985). Parents' control over and supervision of their children depends largely upon the father's working conditions and family structure. The newcomers generally work in casual jobs. They work until late hours during weekdays as well as on weekends. In such cases fathers spend less time with children and therefore have less control over their schooling. Furthermore, fathers' discipline is often involved. Yusuf, a twenty-five year old man who works as a truck driver, says, "My father beat me during dinner because I was choosy about food, not because I cut class. He did not know what I did at school". Adnan, a twenty-year old repairman, said, "He would beat me anytime during the day. He did not care about my schooling".

Family control mechanisms are weaker among Kurdish newcomers who live in extended family households with a large number of children. For instance, Erkan, a nineteen year old unemployed man, stays with twenty-seven family members in the same house and has nine brothers. He is called *piç* (literal meaning: "bastard", denotes: "punk") by his friends in the streets, a word that is used to describe a boy who is always on the street and who can get easily involved in trouble. He told us that he tried heroin before and participated in fights with his Kurdish relatives against other groups. Weak family control and negligent parents in the case of newcomers is strongly associated with low educational achievement. Mahmut, a twenty-three year old male respondent suggests that "When you visit other neighborhoods, you cannot see that many children in the streets after ten o'clock in the evening, whereas some families in the neighborhood simply want to get rid of their children". In the interviews, families who have less control over their children were typically described as relaxed and apathetic.

By contrast, some families among the early migrant group can exercise more control over their children, as they are mostly nuclear families and fathers have jobs that provide a steady income. They assign great value to family life and strictly apply various control mechanisms, looking after their children more regularly than the newcomers do. For instance, Ismail, a thirty year old man who works as the manager of a spice company, says that when he attempted to work as a shoe shining boy with his friends in a street, his mother strongly disapproved. The mother said, "Do you want to embarrass us?" Similarly, Göksel, a twenty- seven year old male technician, illustrates the difference between his family and the families of street corner boys on the street: "when we were teenagers, we could not go out at night and we were to return home before dinner time and before my father arrived".

The role of young mothers in the case of such early migrant families has been particularly important as they do their best to minimize the neighborhood based peer effect on their children. Being at home all day, mothers were vigilant observers of their children's behavior on the street, as Kiray (1999, 42) found that the mothers would inform the husband in the evening about what children did during the day. Among the second generation of the early migrants in particular, young mothers were more concerned about their children, as they were always watching what was happening with their children's education closely. Özlem, a twenty-five year old housewife, makes the following comments about the young age groups in the street: "They only hang out in the street and do nothing. And from them, my child learns abusing the Internet in the cafes. Hence, I bought him a computer, and now it is all under my control."

Young Girls

The most vulnerable group in the *gecekondu neighborhood* is the young females, who are usually kept under strict surveillance by their families and relatives (Erman, 2001); the only socializing place for them is the private spaces of home and the front yard of the *gecekondu* or the apartment. Hence, girls are more family oriented¹⁸ (Levine and Levine, 1996) than men and they have almost no ties with the street. Fatoş, a twenty-three year old housewife, comments on her social life: "Actually, I

¹⁸ In the work of Levine and Levine (1996), children are classified as peer oriented and family oriented.

do not usually go out of the house. The only place I visit is the house of my sister-in-law who lives closely ". Similarly, Hatice, a twenty-eight year old housewife, states: "For me, Güzelyaka is fine because I do not know any other place. When I married I came here and I have been living here since then. I do not want to leave this place. I like all the neighbors as well as my close relatives who live here. Even the married women are able to go outside into the neighborhood only when they are accompanied by another person who are either her family or close kin. For instance, they go to downtown *Demetevler* with their husbands or with the women from their husband's family.

As the streets are male dominated public places, they exclude females. Fadime, a thirty year old unemployed woman, compares streets in her childhood with the neighborhood's streets now: "When I was a child, we were all like brothers and sisters. There was no separation between girls and boys. I played with Muharrem, Bekir and Gökhan. They all supported us. We did not think that there were bad people in Güzelyaka. Even though my father was a conservative man, we would play outside until midnight. Now there is no safety. We cannot go out without locking the door". Fatoş, a twenty- three year old housewife, adds that "If I had a daughter, I would not let her play in these streets. She can meet her school friends outside of the neighborhood. She can meet them in a café in *Kızılay*, but not here".

For the girls, neighborhood based peer pressure comes from their relatives, *hemşehri* (people with the same geographical origin) and their neighbors' daughters. They socialize mainly at home and in their front yards. In such a context, the patriarchal values and role models are emphasized, and are reproduced. For instance, getting together at home, called *ev oturmaları* is an important means of socializing, when girls meet their relatives and neighbors. During such occasions, as Erman (2001) suggests, young females learn basic gender roles such as being a "good wife", which involves good family budgeting, preserving the family honor, and doing household chores. The meeting provides the opportunity for girls to showcase their readiness to be a wife, to make good meals, to "behave like a woman" and to demonstrate their knitting skills. The possibility of early marriage discourages girls from staying in school. The peer groups influence in during house visits and front yard gatherings encourage early marriage rather than staying in school. Gülten, a thirty year old

housewife, explains how she was influenced by her friend: "I did not continue mainly because of the people around me. I was affected by them but I do not know why. I had good relations with Nuran. I sometimes stayed at her house over night. I did my homework in their house. They helped me with my homework, too. They just liked being at home. She started to going to the Quran courses at the mosque and left school. I went to these courses with them and I did not attend school. The courses taught at the mosque were like those thought at school. They gave me a diploma afterwards." After she left school, she got married, as did her friend, Nuran.

These examples show that the neighborhood is a place which encourages the internalization of gender roles and reproduction of traditional values like patriarchy. On the other hand, as in the social control in the case of Fatoş, strength of religious belief as witnessed in the case of Gülten, illustrates how girls internalize their priorities as a homemaker; the peer pressure in the poor neighborhoods have similar effects on men. Young boys internalize the urgency of the breadwinner role instead of staying in school. When poverty coincides with practices that reproduce patriarchy, education seems to be taking a back seat.

5.4. Conclusion

Close ties and disadvantaged conditions in the neighborhood confines social relations to the neighborhood. The high density of peer group interaction negatively influences the level of young people's education. Even though there is no one type of peer group in the neighborhood, interaction with peer groups in the disadvantaged conditions reproduces traditional roles like patriarchy, and the importance of marriage. Those roles with poverty in the neighborhood legitimize education as a long run investment. Instead, almost all kinds of peer group interaction in the same neighborhood prioritize the urgency of regular income. On the other hand, the peer group effect varies depending on the level of family control. Young people living with only their nuclear family with relatively better living standards are more likely to have conflicted relationships with peer groups, whereas, the ones who come from the families where there father's control is absent are vulnerable to the negative effects of peer pressure.

CHAPTER VI
FAMILY BACKGROUND, CONDITIONS AT HOME AND
PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOLING

6.1. Introduction

The Güzelyaka neighborhood is heterogeneous in the sense that people come from different family backgrounds and different socio-economic statuses, ethnic origins and have migration stories similar to other typical squatter neighborhoods in Turkey. In these neighborhoods, not all families experience income poverty, but all of them experience the risks associated with squatter settlements. Household poverty in the neighborhood can be defined as capability deprivation, which emphasizes the internal differences among the families facing particular deprivations. Taking into consideration the heterogeneous nature of the neighborhood, I discuss the role of families in explaining differences in education levels among the young people in the Güzelyaka neighborhood.

The chapter is divided into three sections. In the first section, I discuss how factors involved in the family background, such as parents' level of education; household income and sibling size affect the success of the young in school. In the second part of the chapter, I describe the living conditions at home, namely physical, social and economic conditions, and their impact on the educational achievement of the young. Lastly, I discuss whether the parents' involvement in schooling makes a difference for young people from dissimilar family backgrounds.

6.2. Family Background

As studies indicate, an important factor in the educational achievement of students is the socioeconomic status (SES) of the family. In her study on Household Income and Consumption Data of Turkey, Tansel (2002:456) maintains, "the most consistent factors affecting the school attainment are parents' education and permanent household income". Mete (2004) associates the educational levels of adults with the educational outcomes of their children and observes that children's primary school attendance is closely related to their parents' levels of education. For instance, according to Table 11 below, the children of illiterate fathers are more likely to drop out of school; the percentage difference between children who attended and those who did not is 13 percent. On the other hand, the difference in the case of the children of illiterate mothers is 30 percent. Therefore, those who do not attend primary school appear to have parents with a lower level of education. It is also striking that the differences in school attendance between children according to their mother's level of education is even more marked.

Household income is the second significant factor that influences the school achievement of students. Fuller and Pitchett (1999) explain the effect of household income on the educational performance of the pupils by comparing the cases in thirty five developing countries. They state that:

substantial cross-country variation in the differences between median years of school attainment of the students who are at the top 20% compared to others who are at the bottom 40% of the wealth distribution. All countries (except Kazakhstan) displayed a crucial difference in children's school attainment ratios between rich and poor families, and the largest wealth gap is emerged in the countries of South Africa (cited In Buchman and Hannum (2001:83)).

Similarly, according to the CEPAL (2002) report, "the probability that children of families in the lowest income groups will leave school early is 2, 64 times higher than it is for the children of the highest income groups"(cited in Bonal (2004:657)).

Table 11: Characteristics of Children Aged 6 to 14 by Primary Attendance Status (reported numbers of percentages)

	Attending and Already Completed (compulsory) primary schooling	Not Attending and Never Completed (compulsory) primary schooling
Mother's Schooling		
Illiterate	26,37	55,75
Literate without Diploma	6,01	7,45
Primary	54,06	28,23
Junior secondary	4,55	6,54
Secondary	6,82	0,38
More than secondary	2,19	1,64
Father's schooling		
Illiterate	5,27	18,83
Literate without Diploma	5,95	15,33
Primary	56,91	52,67
Junior secondary	11,41	3,69
Secondary	14,31	8,47
More than secondary	6,19	1,01

Source: METE (2004)

The findings of the case study in the Güzelyaka neighborhood are parallel to the results of these large-scale national surveys. Looking at the education levels of the parents, we see that among the respondents there are only three parents, mother or fathers, who have completed secondary school, whereas there are nine mothers who did not have any schooling.

In general, there is a low level of education among the working class families in Güzelyaka and little variation in the parents' educational levels. It could be argued that economic differences are more detrimental to educational outcomes than the parents' level of education. Moreover, young people's level of education is likely to increase along with the length of stay in the neighborhood and with changes in family income. Early migrant families have higher living standards; they live in their own houses, and some of them have cars, which many newcomer families do not have. As Table 12 illustrates below, all educated youth in Güzelyaka come from families who are homeowners. On the other hand, the families of almost half of the young people who did not continue school after primary school are tenants.

Table 12: Some Demographic Indicators for Families in Güzelyaka

	Average number of years staying in the neighborhood	Average score of home ownership ¹⁹	Average number of persons living in the house
Primary	12,88	0,52	6,21
Secondary	22,85	0,56	3,41
Higher School	25,67	1	4,2

Sibling size in the family is the third aspect of the family background relevant for an understanding of educational achievement. An increase in sibling size in the families results in less suitable conditions for the children's schooling and an increased dependency between siblings for educational achievement. Mustafa, a thirty year old head workman, explains how he experienced such dependency: "We are three siblings. We went to the same school. I was in third, my brother was in fifth, and my sister was in the first grade. My mother waited in front of the school for the three of us. When I left the school, she gave my bag to my sister. We, three children, used the same notebook for our coursework." Dependency is even more detrimental for girls due to their subordinate position in the family. Fatoş, a twenty three year old housewife, mentioned her sister's failure in school as a significant excuse for not letting her attend the school. In this study, there were only three families in which both boys and girls had high levels of education. At the same time, there were only three cases in which the educational achievement of the boys and girls were not similar. For instance, Aşkın is a university student, while his brother is a high school dropout. When Aşkın started university, his mother started to work in a cleaning agency and his brother was working abroad to send them cash in order to pay for his *dershane* (private tutoring course) expenses; yet Aşkın's brother did not have this opportunity when he was in school. Therefore, even in the same family, poverty may cause different educational outcomes among siblings. Those children who grew up during hard times may be less successful in school than their sisters or brothers who grew up in better living standards. Hence, the older brothers or sisters often tend to think that that their younger siblings were luckier than they were themselves.

¹⁹ I selected home ownership and car ownership as an income indicator because the response rate is very low for the total income of parents.

Last but not least, the status of families in the neighborhood in terms of their migration background plays an important role in the educational attainment of the young people. Young new migrants claim that the change of school when they moved from rural areas to urban areas was a significant factor in their failure at school, since they had to go through various adaptation problems in both the school and the new environment. Sedat, a twenty-five year old male technician, one of the interviewees, hints that the most important reason for his failure in school was that he had to change schools more than once, unlike others who continued in the same school. On the other hand, migrant women such as Hatice and Özlem point out that their world changed dramatically when they moved to the new neighborhood. Özlem, a twenty seven year old housewife, states, “I was raising a child when I was a child myself. My eyes opened in this place and I understood what real life was”. Similarly, Hatice, a twenty eight year old housewife, mentioned that when she was living in the village, her father did not let her go to school; she was told that her place was at home and she was responsible for the housekeeping and five brothers. She emphasized that urban life gives girls more opportunities to continue their education. However, it should be underlined that although the Güzelyaka neighborhood can be described as an urban area compared to rural living areas, the gender gap continues to maintain educational inequality.

The working class background of families is one of the causes of school failure amongst young people, because as families try to survive against poverty, they are not able to provide as suitable an environment for their children as upper class families might. On the other hand, in Turkey among rural-to-urban migrants, children, especially older ones, join the labor market at an early age and help their families climb the social ladder. The case of the Güzelyaka neighborhood reveals that both the social class of parents and poverty cause young people to sacrifice their education.

6.3. Living Conditions at Home

People in the Güzelyaka neighborhood live mostly in squatter houses. There are only four respondents who live in flats. As mentioned in the previous chapter, they have strong ties with their relatives and neighbors. Besides the family background, social

ties and living conditions have significant consequences for the educational achievement of young people. In this section, I discuss the physical conditions of squatters, substantive economical problems as well as social life in the squatter houses, and the implications of these conditions for the educational achievement of young people.

First, the physical conditions at home are not always suitable for studying. In most houses, there is no private space for children. They do their homework either in front of the traditional coal-burning stove, or on the dinner table in front of the television. Even though second generation young parents coming from early migrants try to arrange a private space for studying, most families lack this opportunity. In overcrowded houses in particular, the allocation of space for kids is not sufficient and in some cases children “use the home as a dormitory,” as the Turkish expression goes. This means that they go home to sleep. Furthermore, the absence of a private space for study results in cognitive and behavioral difficulties at school. Ismail, a thirty three year old man who works as the director of a spice company mentions a conversation between his teacher and his mother. The teacher tells her: “When I ask him something in the classroom, he shuts down. He is a successful student, but he is very shy. Why?” His mother emphasized that the negative conditions at home such as lack of financial resources and frequent quarrels between the parents affected him negatively. In addition to the frequent quarrels in crowded families, it is very difficult to sustain standards for the pupils in such housing conditions. Children who come from overcrowded families have serious adaptation problems, as well. A primary school teacher stated that students from overcrowded families sleep close to their parents’ bed, and they make “improper” remarks to their friends about sexual issues and these families have weak control over their children. Even though students can be talented in the classroom, such cases indicate that the home environment affects their relations with their teachers and friends in negatively.

Secondly, the community life in squatter neighborhoods involves dense kinship and relative ties. People are visited by their relatives and neighbors very frequently. Fatoş, a twenty three year old housewife, expresses this situation in the following. “Every evening there are three families in our house. How am I supposed to do my

homework when I am to prepare tea for them?" During these visits, children gather in one room and play. While these social occasions bring extra responsibilities for girls in particular, children of both sexes cannot have time alone to complete their homework or study. Close community ties can be beneficial to poor families in terms of emotional, informational and economical support, yet the daily visits and meetings of the kin and neighbors disrupt children's study.

The last point about the living conditions at home involves economic problems and their consequences for young people's education. Regarding poverty in Güzelyaka, family budgets have become more strained according to the last poverty report of TUSIAD (Executives of Turkish Industrialists' & Businessman's Association). The report stated that even though family and kin support continue their buffer role, the family budgets have become tighter because of decreasing savings and rising debts. In Güzelyaka, more than half of the families have credit debts and one out of four²⁰ families has received social benefits from municipalities and other institutions. They take on new debts in order to pay their regular monthly debts and this has become a surviving mechanism for them. In addition to the increasing fragility of the family budget and the low-income levels, young people in Güzelyaka inevitably enter the job market at an early age instead of continuing education because they have to contribute to the household income. In Güzelyaka, one-third of young people enter working life early in order to support their family. Furthermore, half of the respondents enter working life without completing secondary school. The school to work transition is related to three main factors. First, the opportunity cost of sending children to school instead of having them join in paid-work is very high for the poor families. Thus, the poor families do not protest when their children start to work. They think that if their children are not successful in school, it makes sense to let them join the labor market. Given the fact that many adolescents who attend school regularly are deprived of decent living standards, they can meet at least monthly expenditures by entering the labor force. According to the statistics of *Eğitim Sen* and *Eğitim Bir Sen* (the two well-known trade unions for teachers) monthly school expenditures for poor families are almost three times higher than the minimum subsistence wage in Turkey. The educational expenditures for poor families are an

²⁰ The response rate is very low. This rate is about half of the respondents.

additional burden on the family budget. Secondly, it is observed that most children work in short-term jobs during summer breaks. If a student is not doing well in school, poor families may tend to encourage them to work in summer jobs such as car repair, and it can be claimed that having such short-term work experience discourages children's school attendance. Students receive weekly salaries and this gives them the opportunity to spend their money on items they have never had access to before. For instance, Fatih, a twenty seven year old man who works for a cleaning service at a university, states, "When I started to work, I understood that money is good and spending money is fun. Once I understood this, school became a more distant place for me. One of the benefits of working is that you do not have to ask for any money from your father. You earn your own money." Similarly, Yusuf, a twenty five year old man who works as a truck driver relates: "When working, I earned 120 YTL every week and gave half of it to my mother and spent the remaining half with my friends. We had lunch in restaurants and had *pide*, *kebab* (Turkish traditional foods) whatever we wanted to eat. We went down to Demet, and we still had money left. If you earn money and work, it is difficult for you to go to school ". The subordinate position of women in the family is also related to the high opportunity cost of schooling for girls (Oxall, 1997: 1). The girls have to deal with heavy household chores to help substitute for their own mothers. Fatoş, a twenty three year old housewife states: "When I think of Zeynep, my brother's daughter, I see that she is very lucky. When I was her age, I had to take care of my family's financial situation; I paid their monthly water and electricity expenditure. That's why I had to work for my family and for the bills." Similarly, Hatice, a twenty eight year old housewife reflects: "Since I was the only daughter in our family, I had to complete all the household chores. I made the meals, washed dishes and helped my mother. There were five men at home and I was responsible for their clothes". As they indicate, these young people take up responsibility at an early age and become acquainted with the adult world earlier. Due to economic conditions, school becomes of secondary importance for them and earning money to support the family budget comes first.

The stability of the father's job is another economic issue that affects study conditions at home. Some young men who joined working life at an early age work

with or for their fathers. They mention that they had more difficulty in schooling than their class mates. Their fathers worked in small enterprises such as the coffeehouses or in industry, since such enterprises need cheap labor; in order to contribute to the family income, the children participated in their father's work. Mustafa, a thirty-year old foreman says: "I had no idea about those kinds of places whereas my friends played coffee house games like *foosball and billiards* at the coffeehouse. They had fun; but I would not. When I came back home, sometimes I forgot to eat something. I went straight to bed because I was so tired. I had no interest in school". Similarly, Fatih states: "I did not join our friends because of economic reasons. I had to go with my father to the construction sites to work". In some cases when my father's business took a downturn, my grades worsened." This illustrates that some families who try to improve by setting up their own business face additional problems during economic slowdowns. Bora, a twenty five year old owner of an Internet café says, "When my father's business took a turn for the worse, I stopped preparing for the university entrance exam. Before that, my scores were good. I was better than others who attended the *dershane* (private tutoring course)." Şükrü, an eighteen year old unemployed man, stated the following: "If my father had not lost money in a game and lost his job, we would be living in Çankaya today, and I would have graduated from university and become a doctor."

These examples show that the everyday life in an impoverished home passing through the early stages of migration increases children's tendency to drop out of school. There is no personal space for them, they cannot depend on their father's emotional support, and conflicts between parents have a negative impact on them. These living conditions in the poor homes cause children to be less successful in school.

6.4. Social Capital and Parental Involvement in Children's Education

Social capital is frequently introduced as a concept to examine the multidimensionality of parental involvement, family-school relations, family-family relations, and family-children relations (McNeal, 1999). Since families in Güzelyaka have working class characteristics, social capital in the working class is a particularly contested topic worth delving into at this point.

At the beginning, Lareau (2001) argues below that there is no consensus on the distribution of social capital among individuals who have different class positions:

Bourdieu sees social capital as a tool of reproduction for the dominant class; whereas Coleman sees social capital as (positive) social control, where trust, information channels, and norms are characteristics of community. Thus, Coleman's work supports the idea that it is the family's responsibility to adopt certain norms to advance children's life chances, whereas Bourdieu's work emphasizes structural constraints and unequal access to institutional resources based on class, gender and race (cited in Dika and Singh, 2002: 34).

Coleman states that social capital plays an instrumental role in the accumulation of human capital (Coleman, 1988). He argues that social capital is distributed more democratically than other kinds of capital, for instance, human capital and cultural capital (Croll, 2004:401). Wong (1998) identifies this relationship in the following terms: "parents with less abundant economic and human capital may still be able to use social capital efficiently and effectively to have a positive effect on their educational outcomes and social behaviors" (Wong, 1998:5). Bourdieu, however, claims that social capital attracts other kinds of capital (Mcneal, 1999:122), namely human and cultural capital. He argues that middle class families dominate the field of interactions with their high quality cultural capital such as a more intellectual home environment and dense social networks (Dika and Singht, 2004). Thus, the two approaches differ in the way they view social capital and its relation to family background among working class families.

Regarding the two contested viewpoints, I would like to discuss the role of parental involvement as social capital for the educational achievement of young people from working class backgrounds. How parental involvement influences children's schooling is also a contested subject (McNeal, 1999). For instance, underachieving children from high SES families are more involved in school than those from other families (Horvat et al, 2006). The other point of view reveals that the students' achievement in mathematics and reading has a negative correlation with their

parents' assistance with homework (see McNeal, 1999). There are three important issues to be clarified considering the role of parental involvement in schooling. First, as McNeal (1999:119) argues we need to define "which involvement practices help contribute to attainment and achievement, and how these effects are distributed in the student population". Second, parental involvement should be considered in relation to social class. Middle class families have more organized relations with the school and are more capable of dealing with problems in their children's education (Horvat et al, 2006). When they face difficulties in their children's education, they benefit from their professional class network (Horvat et al, 2006:455). However, the poor are individually involved in schooling, and they cannot challenge the teacher's approach to their children's education (Horvat et al, 2006:460). On the other hand, whereas middle class families are in a superior position compared to working class families in terms of social capital, the activation of social capital among middle class families varies according to skill levels (Horvat and Lareau, 2001:260).

Regarding the contested views about the social capital of working class families, we can raise three major important questions. To what extent are working class families involved in schooling in Güzelyaka? Do all families from the same class position employ the same practices about parental involvement in school? If not, what factors affect variations among the families in the same poor neighborhood? Within this context, I will define parental involvement as social capital and discuss it in two dimensions, exterior and interior dimensions, namely parents' interest in schooling and the social network outside the families.

6.4.1. Parents' Interest in Their Children's Schooling

Most young people in Güzelyaka state that their parents did not show any interest in their education. Vildan, a twenty three year old housewife, whose opinion about her parents' interest in her education is quite representative, emphasizes the lack of parental involvement. She said: "My father could not evaluate my school performance. My parents did not ask anything about our exam results. We informed them about the results. Their only comments were "good" or "nice". They did not do anything special." Some respondents tend to hold the parents responsible for their inadequate education and for their poverty. Sedat, a twenty five year old man who is

a technician, says, "My mother did not support us. They did not ask whether I completed my homework or whether I had any problems in school." Following these comments, the extent to which the parents are interested in the child's school can be examined in four dimensions.

First, it is crucial to understand what value parents assign to education to understand the extent of their interest in their own children's school performance. Göksel, a twenty seven year old male technician, states that "my father thought it was enough to send us to school with clean clothes, books and pencils as he himself had to go to school without good shoes or good clothes". In addition, their parents sent the children to school in order for them to get better jobs than they themselves were able to secure. Ismail, a thirty-three year old man who works as the director of a spice company, comments: "They did not say that school was bad or schooling was not good. They always wanted us to get a desk-job or a 'clean' job. That was the extent of their interest in education. This was their vision". The interviews revealed that the degree of parents' interest depends primarily on the levels of deprivation experienced by the parents themselves; that is, parents want their children to avoid experiencing the same working conditions they do. That is why they press them to continue school, though their perception of school is related to the conditions of poverty instead of the conditions of competition and selectivity in the education system.

Secondly, mothers pay more attention to the requirements of school for their kids than fathers do. According to the household division of labor in most families, mothers are responsible for the schooling of their children. Almost all respondents state that their mothers participate in school meetings to evaluate their semester performance. In these meetings, some mothers develop close relations with teachers, especially with the female ones. Fatoş, a twenty-three year old housewife, says "my mother has good relations with my teacher, and she is like a neighbor to us; she often comes to our house". Similarly, Ahmet's mother, a twenty- six year old technician says, "I used to make knit in booties for babies and made gifts of such items to teachers". In the Güzelyaka neighborhood, mothers who have no time for leisure activities due to the heavy load of household chores, school visits are a major burden. Some develop mutual relations of trust with female teachers with the school being

close to their house. Others believe that via this close relationship, teachers will show more interest in their children's education compared to other students'.

These families perceive teachers virtually as kin, as a member of the same community. Among the early migrant families, the second generation mothers' involvement in the child's schooling is significantly different than those of the first generation mothers. This is because their level of education is higher, their expectations have increased (Erman et al, 2003), and they understand the competition in education and in schools. They are more aware of the exams which sort and place students in the schools. Second generation mothers from early migrant families also establish close relations with female teachers, though their perception of the school and their interest in their children's school is different in some significant ways. First, some approach this particular issue emotionally, as they had to leave school or secondary education and marry at an early age. Second, young mothers try to provide private study space at home. Children often have their own rooms; some of them have their own computers. Yet in the winter, they all share the room with heater, and children have to study in the warm living room and in front of TV, as it used to be in the past. Third, their children have separate "play time" and "study time".

Parent's interest in the education of their children depends on the deprivation and poverty they experienced in their own childhood. When families migrate to the city or live in rural areas, they lack adequate school supplies, i.e clean clothes, notebooks and books. Their interest in their child's education is more dependent upon what they had themselves rather than their children in school. On the other hand, among the young parents from early migrant, the value of education and interest in education perceived differently. In the struggle against poverty, they had to drop out of school in order to supplement their family budget. They had a poor study environment at home, no personal space in which to study or emotional support from their father, and limited playing time because of the need to become a breadwinner at an early age. For these reasons, the priorities of young parents from early migrant are different because they experienced poverty in different conditions from their parents; hence, they assign more value to education, and therefore encourage their children to stay in school to a greater extent. This view is much higher among mothers, as they

try to provide more time for their children to play, enjoy their childhood and provide a suitable study table and their own study space. Mothers in particular play a more active role in education, because they have better an education compared to their own mothers; their own deprivation in schooling results from having been forced to drop out school due to their sex, as well as poverty in their home.

6.4.2. Social Network outside the Families

As regards the more educated youth - either university graduates or university students - families have benefited from their social networks, particularly in terms of searching for a better school for their children. Those families who live in *gecekondu* neighborhoods attempting to be economic "climbers" are more intensively involved in the schooling of their children (Erder, 1997). Even though their perception about school and education is not significantly different from other families', their social networks positively influence the educational achievement of their children. Among the thirty families that I interviewed, there are four families that make use of social networks, benefiting from these networks in diverse ways.

The first family²¹ has established close relations with the school in order to improve their children's schooling performance. The mother of a university student talks about how she took active responsibility in her daughter's education. When the daughter encountered a serious problem in school, repeating a year as a result of the negative effects of the peer group, the mother found relatives who had friends in better schools and paid money to register her daughter in one of these schools. Officially, each school has restrictions on the registration of students who reside in different neighborhoods. Thus, the families in the Güzelyaka neighborhood cannot register their children at schools in *Yenimahalle*, a close-by, middle class neighborhood. In this case, the mother benefited from her social network. In the new school, her daughter's performance improved significantly. Similarly, another woman changed her daughter's school when the students of the neighborhood school

²¹ These families are homeowner early migrants. Even though the head of the household has an alcohol abuse problem, the grandfather, who lives in Sweden, assists them by sending them cash. There are four children in the family.

were suffering from an epidemic. She contacted a person who worked in the Ministry of Education to help to register her daughter at another school.

The third case is getting help from relatives who work in the public sector. Aşkın, a twenty-three year old university student, stated that after having disciplinary problems in high school, he changed his mind and decided to improve his school performance. According to him, his family and his social networks assisted this transformation in two ways. First, he stated that his community of Alewi families has a more positive attitude towards education²², especially towards girls' education than Sunni families do. He began reading books regularly thanks to his young adult relatives who prompted him to do so. He stated that his cousins, who live in *Ümitköy*, a middle class gated community in Ankara, encouraged him to continue his education. His mother also found a job and started to work as a homemaker after receiving help from her relatives working at the Ministry of Finance. Since the total income of the household increased, he was able to change schools, thereby improving his performance in school.

The case of the fourth family is related with the schooling experience of the university student whose father works in the public sector. During the interview, Şebnem, a nineteen year old female university student, emphasized that her father used to compare her with his workmates' children, who attend university. The father wanted a good future for his daughter since he himself was the person who had the least education in the whole office. They were engineers, civil servants and specialists, with better their working conditions, salaries and employment status his due to their educational credentials. Thus, the father pushed her to continue her education and succeed in school, so she would be able to reach a position like a manager in an office. The daughter, however, sometimes complains about her father's ceaseless persistence that she succeed in school. When families break out of the circle of poverty, they compare themselves with others and try to improve their children's schooling.

²² Further large-scale surveys are needed to test the hypothesis that students from Alewi families are more successful than other students are because they are more committed to the value of education.

In view of all these cases, we can conclude that in the neighborhood some families are able to improve their children's educational performance through assistance from various social networks. Many are early migrants living under better economic conditions than the newcomers. All families are house owners, while one receives cash monthly from the grandfather who lives in Sweden, and one owns land in his hometown. These cases show that even though working class families do not have as many resources as middle class families do, they can activate their social capital as they improve their economic conditions. These families can draw benefits from their social networks, which generally consist of their relatives or their kin, although they lack cultural capital and high education level.

6.5. Conclusion

In general, poverty during the early migration period leads to unfavorable conditions for the children's education because of limited space for them in the house, dense social relations and the urgency of supporting the family budget. On the other hand, when families become upwardly mobilized economically, the years of remaining in school increase compared with children in newcomer families. The transient character of poverty in *gecekondu* neighborhoods explains the variation of educational achievement among the children.

Regarding the debate about the role of social capital of working class families, it can be argued that when migrants stay longer in the neighborhood and become more stable economically, they can benefit from their social capital for the schooling of their children. Families in the Güzelyaka neighborhood are able to activate their social capital when they are faced with the problems in the school life of their children, despite their inferior social capital compared with middle class families. On the other hand, social capital has not always played an instrumental, positive role in the schooling of children. Dense ties among the kin and families lead to less time for studying in the home, as there is decreased personal space for children; still, these ties have positive effects when families face the problems of educating their children.

Among early migrants, second generation young parents' involvement in the schooling of their children includes providing them with appropriate space to study,

distinction between studies and play time, and regular school visits. This can be explained with family development toward the more nuclear family life, as well as greater income and better education than newcomer families and their parents. They have a strong extended family and social network, but compared with their own parents, their approach to their children is more focused on individual development and emotional support.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

The aim of this master thesis has been to understand educational attainments of young people who live in the Güzelyaka neighborhood, one of the *gecekondu* settlements in Ankara. In this study I aimed to focus on three sub-research questions: (1) How the interactions within a disadvantaged neighborhood influence the educational attainments of its young people; (2) whether or not the educational attainment of young people differ due to the heterogeneity among working class families and their experiences in surviving against poverty in a *gecekondu* neighborhood; and (3) whether or not school made a difference for the educational attainment of the young people. In doing so, I conducted thirty two in-depth interviews with young people living in the Güzelyaka neighborhood.

The *gecekondu* neighborhood is a working class neighborhood that is rife with poverty and the residents are mostly deprived of basic services such as quality educational materials in the school and recreational areas. In addition to neighborhood disadvantage, working class families vary in terms of length of stay, experiences with poverty and family structure in the Güzelyaka neighborhood. The heterogeneity among the working class families is beneficial for the research problem in two ways. First, since almost all families have experienced poverty at least once and most of them are still struggling, I was able to find out how poverty experiences influence the educational performance of the young people. On the other hand, the socio-economic differences between early migrant families and newcomer families gave me some insights into how young people from different family backgrounds experience similar neighborhood disadvantages and how family background influences the educational attainments of the young people.

To conclude, the educational attainment of young people in the same *gecekondü* neighborhoods do not vary much. The underlying reasons for this are that peer groups in the neighborhood are anti-school and there are no successful role models among the residents. Young people's educational attainments are also directly influenced by poverty. Even among the early migrants who have since improved their income and living standards, early experiences of poverty caused young people to drop out of school and join the labor market. On the other hand, these families benefit from their social network when they face crises in their children's schooling. Young parents from early migrant families are more involved in their children's schooling than their own parents were and take a greater interest in their children's school performance than newcomer families do. Lastly, school can not change the student's disadvantaged position; urban poverty and neighborhood deprivation have resulted in an inferior school climate in the Güzelyaka neighborhood. As the young interviewees have indicated, schools around the neighborhood do not offer a good education; they state that there is no competition in the classroom and that their expectations from the education are low.

In addition, there are three important contributions here to studies on the debates of the culture and education in *gecekondü* neighborhoods, family-neighborhood interactions and the role of social capital among the working class families in the field of the sociology of education.

Culture and Education in the *Gecekondü* Neighborhood

Gecekondü neighborhoods enjoy a unique culture characterized by strong community ties based on extended family networks and kinship-*hemşehri* (people with the geographic origin) solidarities, patriarchy, poverty and neighborhood disadvantage. This culture prioritizes family life and the traditional sexual division of labor. Education, on the other hand, is not considered nearly as important. First of all, even though youth are deprived of a high quality education, they still think of school as a meritocratic institution. Secondly, interaction with peer groups in the neighborhood reproduces traditional values such as patriarchy, which influences the school attendance of young girls, and economic reasons such as the pressure to become a breadwinner influence the decisions of young boys as regards schooling. Thirdly,

concentrated poverty in the *gecekond* neighborhood worsens the quality of education and lowers expectations of the students. Therefore, the role of education in breaking the cycle of poverty is not solely based upon competition among individuals as the human capital approach argues. Rather, larger social settings as in the case of this *gecekond* neighborhood and its culture limit the capability of individuals and families in terms of better educational attainments.

However, the influence of factors related to the neighborhood as a place, namely *gecekond*, culture and peer effect vary according to family background. Those newcomer families who are trying to survive against poverty are more susceptible to being influenced by the *gecekond* neighborhoods' culture. On the other hand, when families stay longer in the urban areas, they are socially upwardly mobile and also opt more for the nuclear family life, their interaction with the peer effect and their involvement in school life changes.

Peer Pressure versus Family Development in the *Gecekond* Neighborhood

When families are upwardly mobile in terms of their finances and opting for nuclear family life, children have personal space in the house, feel they are emotionally supported by their fathers, and, their parents are more likely to be interested in the child's development. Under these conditions, families often conflict with peer pressure in the neighborhood. On the other hand, newcomer families, especially ethnic migrants battling poverty, feel a strong commitment towards and dependency on the community. Fathers are almost always absent during the time that their children are socializing outside of the home because of difficult working conditions such as irregular working hours and extra jobs. Under these conditions, children are more vulnerable to the negative peer effects in schooling; in some cases they even become involved in delinquent behavior in the neighborhood. In this case, peer pressure is greater since the family is not very involved in the children's lives. The interaction between the peer effect and family control influences the educational attainment of the children. Young parents from early migrant families who now have nuclear families with relatively better living standards are more likely to encourage their children to attend school, whereas, the ones who come from the families where

there father's control is absent are more vulnerable to peer pressure. In the former type of family, the group's control overshadows the neighborhood disadvantage.

The Changing Role of Social Capital on Educational Attainment among Working Class Families

The role of social capital in educational attainment among the working class has been investigated through two important theoretical traditions: Bourdieu's cultural reproduction theory and Coleman's functionalist theory. Working class families lack the competent social capital that middle class families have, and Bourdieu argued that working class people have no competent human capital or cultural capital. Cultural reproduction theories in general argue that schooling reproduces existing inequalities, and working class families can not challenge the middle class domination in education. Therefore, their school involvement is no conflicted relationship with the school and less organized. On the other hand, in the Güzelyaka neighborhood, family practices regarding the children's schooling vary according to the length of stay in the neighborhood and the household income. The attitudes of young parents coming from early migrant families towards education and their valuation is dramatically influenced by educational deprivation, hence their type of school involvement is quite different than their parents' was. In particular, the increasing level of education of the mothers influences the kind of family involvement in children's schooling. Young mothers from early migrants have differing expectations and consumption styles from their parents, too, and they are more open to popular culture and media influences. They seem to share the mainstream values about education and that it is a competitive, selective, exam-based system. In addition, long-inhabiting residents and economically better off families in the neighborhood are also able to benefit from social networks outside the neighborhood when there is a crisis in their children's schooling. However, the role of social capital is not similar to the instrumental role of social capital in education as Coleman defined it. In most cases, the strength of the extended family network positively influences the educational practices of young people. However, daily evening visits in the squatter houses disrupt the student's study environment. Therefore, the strength of the extended family network does not always reflect positively on school experiences.

Since this study is one of the first among those focusing on the educational attainments of young people in poor neighborhoods in Turkey, I believe there are large sets of possible research issues for future studies. The research findings should be tested in a larger sample survey in *gecekondu* neighborhoods. Quantitative studies especially will contribute more to the neighborhood level studies on educational attainment with neighborhood indicators such as respondent's SES, quality of social services and interaction level with urban areas. Those indices would be useful in analyzing bivariate and multivariate relationships between the educational attainment and neighborhood disadvantage index. On the other hand, qualitative studies, especially participant observation studies would also be conducive to focusing on the educational attainments of people who have moved out of disadvantaged neighborhoods, or that of a different segment of respondents who are ethnic migrants and come from, for instance, *Alewi* families.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I

Interview Questions

1.1 Interview Questions

1. Demographic Questions

1.1: Basic socio-demographic questions

- Age?
- Occupation?
- What is the average amount of money that you earn monthly?
- What do the people in your household do?
- What are their occupations?
- Are you married?
- If yes, Do you have children? Does your partner work?

1.2: Questions on migrational background

- Where are you from?
- Where do you live currently?
- How many years have you stayed in your current residence?
- How many years have you been living in Ankara?

2. Questions on Education

2.1: School years: Educational socialization:

- How was your attitude towards to the classes?
- Did you like the school?
- How were your relationships with your teachers?
- Was there anything that you felt you were missing during your school years?
- If yes, what was it?
- Did your ever work during your childhood? (Selling Simit, cleaning shoes, apprenticeship, etc.?)
- Have you ever get disciplinary punishments?
- Have you ever failed a class?
- Did you get pocket money regularly during your school years?

2.2: Questions on dropping out of or leaving school

- What is the most important reason you left school?
- Do you think the school had a role in your leaving the school?
- Do you think your family has a role in your leaving the school?
- Was there any influence from your friends on your decision to leave the school?
- How do you feel now about having left school?

2.3: How do people value to education?

- What comes to your mind when you think about education? Could you please tell me the first three words?
- What comes to your mind when you think about education? Could you please tell me the first three words?
- What are the differences between educated and uneducated people? Can you give examples from your daily life?
- Has being educated become more important or not compared to how it was in the past? Why? Can you give examples from your daily life?
- How do you evaluate the educational system?
- What do you think about the quality of education that you received?
- How satisfied are you with the local government?
- How do they contribute to education?
- How satisfied are you with the government?
- What do you think about the educational policies of the government?

2.4: Future plans and the influence of education

- What do you think about your future?
- What do you plan to do in ten years?
- Do you have a fear of being unemployed?
- Do you feel successful when you look at the past? Why?
- What is the most important thing that you feel has been missing from your life?
- What is your expectation from the future?
- Imagine that you get a big amount of money; how would you spend it?

3. Questions on Family

3.1: Household subsistence and survival strategies against poverty

- How is your household finance?
- Do you have any difficulty in making ends meet?
- What do you do in order to get rid of this situation?
- Do you get any social aid? Do you work in extra jobs?
- Do you have any debts that you are required pay regularly? (Credit cards, credits....)
- Do you play the lottery? (iddia, sayısal loto..)?
- Does anyone in your household have chronic health problems?
- Does anyone in your household have to take medicine regularly?

3.2: Influence of family on education

- What is your parents' level of education?
- (sub questions: Did your parents education influence your education? If yes, how? What are your parents' attitudes towards education?)

- Did your parents support you enough for your education?
- How were your parents' relationships with the school management and your teachers?
- Did your parents help you with your lessons during your school years?
- Did your parents read the newspaper regularly during your childhood years?
- Did you have a separate room for yourself when you were a child?
- What was your parents' reaction when you left the school?

3.3: Questions on social mobility

- When you compare your situation with your parents' do you see yourself in a better or worse situation?
- What will be your children's situation? Better? or Worse than you? Why?

4. Questions on Neighborhood

4.1: Squatter neighborhood and education

- How is life in the Güzelyaka neighborhood?
- What do you think about the schools around this neighborhood?
- What do you know about them?
- How is education perceived in Güzelyaka? Could you please give examples? (Second question: Do you think the neighborhood influences school performance?)
- Are there successful young people in the school in your neighborhood?
- What do you think about them?

4.2: Social relationships in the squatter neighborhood

- What can you say about your relationships with your neighbors?
- What can you say about your relationships with your friends?
- What can you say about your relationships with your relatives?
- What can you say about your relationships with your fellow townsman?
- Is there a place that you regularly visit such as club, cafe shop, billiard place, etc?

4.3: How is the relationship with city, urban life? The distance/closeness to modern and traditional spheres of life

- What do you think about the Internet?
- Do you use it regularly?
- What do you think about living in the city?
- How would you feel about this?
- Is there any newspaper that you read regularly?
- Is there any social activity that you attend regularly? (civil society association, trade union, etc.)
- Where do you go for shopping? (Local bazaar, Ulus, Kızılay, Big shopping malls) Have you ever been to the big shopping malls like Ankamall or Armada?
- Which television shows do you watch regularly?

1.2 Mülakat Soruları (Turkish Version)

1. Demografik Bilgiler

1.1. Temel demografik sorular?

- Yaşınız?
- Mesleğiniz?
- Aylık ortalama ne kadar kazanıyorsunuz?
- Hanehalkı neler yapıyor, ne iş ile uğraşıyorlar?
- Evli misiniz? Çocuğunuz var mı? Eşiniz çalışıyor mu?

1.2. Göç ile ilgili sorular?

- Nerelisiniz?
- Nerede oturuyorsunuz?
- Kaç yıldır burada kalıyorsunuz?
- Kaç yıldır Ankara'da yaşıyorsunuz?

2. Eğitim ilgili sorular?

2.1: Okul yılları

- Derslerle aranınız nasıldı?
- Okulu seviyor muydunuz?
- Hocalarla aranınız nasıldı?
- Okulda yıllarında eksikliğini hissettiğiniz bir şey oldu mu? Oldu ise en çok neyin eksikliğini hissettiniz?
- Çocukluk yıllarında hiç çalıştınız mı? Simit satmak, ayakkabı boyamak, çıraklık yapmak gibi?
- Hiç disiplin cezası aldınız mı? Sınıfta kaldınız mı hiç?
- Okula giderken düzenli harçlık alıyor muydunuz?

2.2. Okulu bırakma ya da okuldan ayrılma üstüne

- Okulu bırakmanızın ya da ayrılmanızın en önemli sebebi nedir?
- Okulu bırakmanızda ya da ayrılmanızda okulun rolü var mı?
- Okulu bırakmanızda ailenizin rolü var mı?
- Arkadaş çevrenizin okulu bırakmanızda etkisi oldu mu?
- Okulu bıraktığınız için şu an ne hissediyorsunuz?

2.3: Eğitime nasıl bir değer veriliyor?

- Eğitim deyince aklınıza neler geliyor? Üç kelime ile ifade edebilir misiniz?
- Üniversite deyince aklınıza neler geliyor? Üç kelime ile ifade edebilir misiniz?
- Eğitimli insan ile eğitimi daha düşük olan insanlar arasındaki farklılıklar nelerdir? Günlük hayattan örnekler verebilir misiniz?
- Eğitimli olmak eskisine göre daha mı önemli oldu yoksa daha mı önemsiz? Neden? Günlük hayattan örnekler verebilir misiniz?
- Eğitim sistemimizi nasıl değerlendiriyorsunuz?
- Aldığınız eğitimin kalitesi hakkında ne düşünüyorsunuz?
- Yerel yönetimlerden ne kadar memnunsunuz?
- Eğitim hakkında ne gibi katkıları oluyor?
- Hükümetten ne kadar memnunsunuz? Hükümetin eğitim politikalarını nasıl değerlendiriyorsunuz?

2.4: Gelecek planları ve eğitimin etkisi

- Gelecekte hakkında ne düşünüyorsunuz?
- Önümüzdeki on yıl içinde ne yapmayı planlıyorsunuz?
- İşsizliğe düşme korkusu yaşıyor musunuz?
- Geçmişe dönüp baktığınızda kendini başarılı hissediyor musunuz?
- Başarılı ya da başarısız olduğunuzu düşünüyorsanız neden?
- Hayatta en çok neyin eksikliğini hissediyorsunuz?
- Gelecekte beklentiniz nedir?
- Elinize herhangi bir yerden büyük miktarda bir para geldiğini düşündüğümüzde bu parayı nasıl harcardınız?

3. Aile ile ilgili sorular

3.1: Aile'nin eğitim üzerindeki etkisi?

- Anne babanızın eğitim düzeyleri nasıl?
- Annenizin babanızın eğitimi sizi etkiledi mi, etkiledi ise nasıl etkiledi?
- Anne babanızın okumaya, eğitime bakışları nasıldı?
- Anne babanız okumanız için size gerekli desteği verdiler mi?)
- Anne babanızın okul yönetimi ile hocalarla ilişkileri görüşmeleri oluyor muydu? Anneni ya da babanız hiç okul sırasında derslere yardımcı olur muydu?
- Siz çocukken anne babanız düzenli gazete okurlar mıydı?
- Siz çocukken ayrı bir odanız var mıydı?
- Okulu bıraktığınız zaman ailenizin tepkisi ne oldu?

3.2: Aile'nin geçimi ve yoksulluğa karşı girilen geçim stratejileri

- Ailenizin geçim durumu nasıl? Maddi bakımdan zorlanıyor musunuz?
- Bu durumdan kurtulmak için neler yapıyorsunuz?
- (Cevap yoksa bu soru:):Yardım alıyor musunuz?ek iş yapıyor musunuz?)
- Sürekli ödeme yaptığınız borçlarınız var mı? (kredi kartı, kredi....)
- Şans oyunu (iddia, sayısal loto..) oynuyor musunuz ?
- Evde sürekli sağlık problemi bulunuyor mu? Evinizde sürekli ilaç kullanımı var mı?

3.3 Sosyal hareketlilik soruları

- Anne babanız ile kendi durumunuzu karşılaştırdığınızda kendinizi daha iyi mi yoksa daha kötü durumda mı görüyorsunuz?
- Sizin çocuklarınızın durumu sizden daha iyi mi yoksa olur yoksa daha kötü olur? Neden?

3.4: Çocuklar ilgili Sorular? {Bu sorular çocuğu olan aileler için geçerli}

- Çocuğunuz okula gidiyor mu?
- Derslerle arası nasıl, Öğretmenlerle, arkadaşlarla?
- Siz neler gözlemliyorsunuz?
- Çocuğunuzun çalışıp meslek sahibi olmasını mı istersiniz ya da üniversite bitirmesini mi?

4. Mahalle ile İlgili Sorular

4.1: Gecekondu (squater) ve Eğitim

- Güzelyaka'da yaşamak nasıl bir şey?
- Bu civardaki okullar hakkında ne düşünüyorsunuz? Neler duyuyorsunuz?

- Güzelyaka'da eğitime, okula, nasıl bakılıyor?
- Sizce Mahalle okul başarısını nasıl etkiliyor?)
- Yakın çevrede mahallede okumuş, okulda başarılı gençler var mı? Onlar hakkında ne düşünüyorsunuz?

4.2: Gecekonudaki sosyal ilişkiler?

- Komşularla ilişkileriniz nasıl değerlendiriyorsunuz?
- Arkadaşlarla ilişkiler nasıl değerlendiriyorsunuz?
- Akrabalar ile ilişkiler nasıl değerlendiriyorsunuz?
- Hemşerilerle nasıl değerlendiriyorsunuz?
- Sürekli gittiğiniz bir yer var mı (dernek, kahve, bilardo salonu gibi)

4.3: Şehir, Kentle ilişki nasıl? Modern ve geleneksel kesimlere yakınlık uzaklık?

- İnternet hakkında ne düşünüyorsunuz? Düzenli kullanabiliyor musunuz?
- Şehirde yaşamak ne düşünüyorsunuz? Ne hissediyorsunuz?
- Düzenli takip ettiğiniz bir gazete var mı?
- Düzenli katıldığınız bir sosyal aktivite var mı? (dernek, vakıf ya da sendika.)
- Alışverişi nereden yapıyorsunuz? (Semt pazarı, Ulus, Kızılay, Büyük alışveriş Merkezleri) Ankamall, armada gibi alışveriş merkezlerini hiç gezip gördünüz mü? Televizyonda genelde hangi programları takip ediyorsunuz?
- İnternet hakkında ne düşünüyorsunuz?
- Düzenli kullanabiliyor musunuz?

Appendix II Sample Profile

	Name	Sex	Age	Education Level	Marital Status	Social Security
1	Fatih	Male	27	Primary	Married	Yes
2	Sedat	Male	25	Secondary	Married	Yes
3	Mustafa	Male	30	Primary	Married	Yes
4	Yusuf	Male	25	Primary	Single	Yes
5	Mahmut	Male	23	Secondary	Single	Yes
6	Erkan	Male	19	Secondary	Single	No
7	Şükrü	Male	19	Secondary	Single	No
8	Resul	Male	18	Student	Single	Yes
9	Ramazan	Male	23	Primary	Married	Yes
10	Bora	Male	25	Secondary	Married	Yes
11	Devrim	Male	27	Student	Single	Yes
12	Ahmet	Male	26	Secondary	Single	Yes
13	Ahmet	Male	23	Secondary	Single	Yes
14	Aşkın	Male	22	University	Single	Yes
15	Fahri	Male	28	University-two year	Married	Yes
16	İsmail	Male	33	University	Married	Yes
17	Göksel	Male	27	Secondary	Single	Yes
18	Filiz	Female	27	Primary	Married	No
19	Gülten	Female	30	Secondary	Married	No
20	Fatoş	Female	23	Primary	Married	No
21	Özlem	Female	28	Primary	Married	No
22	Aysel	Female	23	Primary	Married	No
23	Fadime	Female	30	University	Single	No
24	Seda	Female	28	Student	Single	No
25	Özlem	Female	21	Secondary	Single	Yes
26	Aysel	Female	22	Primary	Married	No
27	Şebnem	Female	19	Student	Single	Yes
28	Hatice	Female	28	Primary	Married	No
29	Şerife	Female	30	Primary	Married	No
30	Nagihan	Female	25	Primary	Married	No
31	Vildan	Female	23	Primary	Married	Yes
32	Aysel	Female	30	Primary	Married	No

	Name	Place of Origin	Employment Status
1	Fatih	Kırşehir	Working
2	Sedat	Kayseri	Working
3	Mustafa	Yozgat	Working
4	Yusuf	Konya	Working
5	Mahmut	Çankırı	Working
6	Erkan	Kars	Unemployed
7	Şükrü	Kayseri	Unemployed
8	Resul	Kayseri	Student
9	Ramazan	Yozgat	Working
10	Bora	Çanakkale	Working
11	Devrim	Yozgat	Student
12	Ahmet	Yozgat	Working
13	Ahmet	Kayseri	Working
14	Aşkın	Yozgat	Student
15	Fahri	Ankara	Working
16	İsmail	Kırşehir	Working
17	Göksel	Kırşehir	Working
18	Filiz	Kars	Housewife
19	Gülten	Yozgat	Housewife
20	Fatoş	Ankara	Housewife
21	Özlem	Konya	Housewife
22	Aysel	Çankırı	Housewife
23	Fadime	Çankırı	Working
24	Seda	Kırşehir	Student
25	Özlem	Yozgat	Working
26	Aysel	Ankara	Housewife
27	Şebnem	Ankara	Student
28	Hatice	Yozgat	Housewife
29	Şerife	Kırşehir	Housewife
30	Nagihan	Bolu	Housewife
31	Vildan	Ankara	Housewife
32	Aysel	Ankara	Housewife