# School bullying in contemporary Greece– An empirical examination of school bullying and its prevention in the Greek Press

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## Acknowledgement

I would like to thank first of all my supervisor Jonathan Josefsson from Linköpings University TEMA Institute- Department of Thematic studies. Without his valuable support, guidance and insightful comments, this master thesis might not have been complete.

I am also grateful towards ''the smile of the children'' the biggest NGO in Greece and the psychologist Popi Temekenidou, who were there for me when I needed them and provided me immediately with their multiannual experience in children.

## In loving memory of

Alex and Vangelis, and every other victim of bullying

## Abstract

School bullying and its prevention have emerged very recently as a crucial topic in the Greek research and media. This thesis uses three bullying cases reported in one of the largest morning newspapers in Greece to analyze the discussions around the definition of bullying and its consequences, causes and solutions. Furthermore, the discussions around the concepts of children and childhood are analyzed and reported. Even though the research in Greece the last five years has taken huge steps forward, it has been only based on a more traditional view on bullying, both in research and the media. This thesis suggests that the new paradigm of new social studies could be a vital analytical view on the studies of bullying and its prevention and could be a very useful alternative to be used by both research and the media.

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# INTRODUCTION

I would like to begin this study by narrating a story that shocked the Greek society in February 2015 known as ''Vangelis' case''. Vangelis Giakoumakis was a 19 years old student at the dairy school of Ioannina (now named ''Vangelis Giakoumakis'', after him) who disappeared on 02/09/2017. Many people were suspicious that the reason he disappeared was a continuous hostile behavior of 5 students against him. The latter abused physically and verbally many students of the university, based on the locals' testimonies. On the meanwhile, Vangelis' case attracted the interest of Greek society to a great extent. As a result, many people were anxious about where he was and what happened to him. One month later Vangelis was found dead 800m away from the institution shocking the Greek society. The Greek press made some indications that his death was an outcome of a bullying-related suicide or even a murder leading to numerous discussions on the topic of peer violence.

This case although it could be yet another homicide case, differs from most other cases, because it has to do with teenagers and that is something rare in Greece. In the last 20 years, only 15 homicides had offenders under 18 years old, according to the Greek Police. Furthermore, this case aroused a lot of anger and demanding of justice towards Vangelis making it a stimulating topic for media, and researchers. This massive investment was what made me also interested in the first place to research the problem of bullying in Greece.

The reason I called this attention ''massive'' is because it motivated many researchers in Greece to examine the problem of bullying. Even though this case had to do with a university institution, every educational institution was inspected intensively especially schools where bullying occurs more often. In addition to that, different sectors of the Greek society such as the Greek Media and the Governmental policy were coordinated to prevent bullying for the first time in Greece.

The ways they tried to achieve that was by introducing in 2015 the act 312 of the law no 4332/2015 (Spyropoulos 2016). The purpose of this was to penalize bullying for the first time in Greece. More specifically, the act 312 introduced a 6-months sentence to whoever ''acts as a bully''. ''Bullying'' was defined by the same act as ''a continuous harsh behavior which leads to a physical or psychological harm to a third person. It has to be noted that this was how the Greek policy defined bullying. More

about the history of the definition of bullying in the worldwide scientific research will be discussed in the literature review chapter.

According, to Spyropoulos (2016) the reason that led so hurriedly to setting bullying illegal at this particular time, was Vangelis' case. In addition to that, in the Greek media, there were now many articles informing people about bullying, so that people could become more sensitive to it. Furthermore, research in Greece showed a massive interest specifically after Vangelis death.

However, the vast majority of the research in the Greek context is characterized by quantitative research, individualistic accounts and the Olweus paradigm to bullying which focuses more on the ''the behavioral charactersitics of those involved'' considering bullying as an outcome of ''aggressiveness and the intention to cause harm'' (Horton 2011, p. 52 ; Olweus 1993, p. 9). Furthermore, children and childhood are conceptualized in a different more traditional way in Greece, viewing children as vulnerable and in constant need of protection.  This is despite the research perspective of the ''new child studies'' which view children as ''competent'' and able to protect themselves without the constant need of an adult (James & James 2012, p. 96-97) and also despite the recent turn in bullying research and childhood studies towards understanding bullying in context (Horton 2011, p. 53). Consequently, by adopting a qualitative method and regarding bullying as contextually situated this thesis makes an important contribution to the field.

## Aim and Research Questions

Taking into consideration the specialties of the Greek context mentioned above, (but without being prejudiced), this thesis aims to examine the problem of bullying and the description of its prevention in the Greek society and more particularly, in the Greek Press. Some central questions that I pose focus mainly on reviewing the discussions about issues such as which are the causes of bullying, which could be the possible solutions towards it and in what ways the Greek press portrays children and childhood as a whole.

In the former section, I gave details about the general idea of my Research Problem and why I find the context of it exciting and vital. Now, I would like to make this section more specific and give details on which questions mainly I decided to focus

on examining how the different materials define bullying and what meaning they give to it. The research questions of this thesis were:

A) How is bullying discussed and defined according to the Greek Press?

B) What are the causes of bullying according to the description of Greek Press?

C) What are the consequences of bullying to children and to the Greek school system according to the Greek Press?

D) What are the solutions towards bullying in schools suggested in the Greek press?

E) In what ways have children and childhood as a whole been portrayed and conceptualized via the prementioned source?

I chose this specific context of Greece because it introduced changes around the problem of bullying and its prevention very recently. Just two years have passed from the shocking case of Vangelis which motivated people to be more focused on bullying and gave my research the privileges to have a better scope of the critical field of harassment at its initial stages. ''The danger to reinvent the wheel'' was also reduced significantly (Silverman 2015, p. 48). Furthemore, Greece in general and the Greek press specifically (more on that in ''methods and material chapter) shows a massive interest into discussing and researching bullying the last five years and this puts the thesis into the centre of a topic of broad and current interest. Moreover, I had the opportunity to avoid lingual inefficiencies and understand the phenomenon deeply, because of the documents being in my native language.

However, although the results are much dependent on the Greek societal context where I collected the findings, this does not mean that they are not equally crucial for bullying research and anti-bullying work, conducted in other geographical and cultural backgrounds. The importance of my study might be, in line with what school bullying researcher Paul Horton notes, that by ''examining a setting where hitherto a few researchers have asked research questions on; I question some of the common assumptions about school bullying'' (Horton 2011, p. 12). Those assumptions were that school bullying is an outcome of individual differences and the intention towards aggressiveness (Horton 2011, p. 52).

It has to be mentioned at this point that bullying in Greek society happens not only in educational institutions but also in the field of work. Greece is according to Papalexandri , as cited in Kathimerini 2017, placed third in Europe at workplace

bullying. Bullying also appears in the form of cyberbullying. However since both of those types of bullying do not occur inside a school classroom and there is no specific legislation on them in Greece, I decided not to include them in my thesis. On the other hand, I narrowed down on school bullying inside the classroom, because it is the type of bullying which refers mostly to children.

As a child scientist, I have a specific interest in children, and that is why I chose the topic of school bullying and not something referring to adults. As an advantage, there is a new unique legislation covering school bullying in Greece, however not the other two prementioned types. Consequently, there are more data on school bullying because of this new legislation. But more on the societal context and the research background of Greece will be discussed in the following chapters, where I examine how the problem of bullying has been addressed in Greece over the last years.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

This review provides an overview of how bullying has been researched both internationally and in Greece in the past, as well as highlighting more contemporary approaches to this topic. It also explores the background in Greece with a particular focus on how the social phenomenon of bullying is described and what were the previous researches on the issue.

### The history of bullying research

The systematic research on bullying started in the early 70s in Norway and Sweden within the field of aggression psychology (Horton 2011, p. 49). The principal figure in the research topic of bullying is considered to be Dan Olweus. Olweus was the head of the first funded large-scale quantitative research into bullying which took place in Bergen, Norway. This research is considered to be the first significant effort by institutions at a national level to reduce bullying and the reason this place and time was chosen was that of three suicides, committed in Norway as an outcome of victimization in 1983 (Rigby, Smith and Peppler 2004, p. 1).

Olweus (1993, p.9) was the first to make a definition to bullying (mobbning) as: ''A student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative acts on the part of one or more other students'. Olweus' focus was mostly on the behavioral characteristics of those involved in bullying, emphasizing on the aggression of the individuals (Horton 2011, p. 50, 52). The theories, the definition and the research on bullying of the professor in Clinical psychology Dan Olweus are what I will name as ''paradigm one'' or ''Olweus paradigm'' to make it easier to spot it when I am referring to that later in this thesis.

The Scandinavian countries and the UK were the pioneers in the field (Horton 2011, 49-51). However, I have to mention that some critical studies throughout bullying's history took also place in Asia, as well. More specifically, in 1984, 17 pupils committed suicide in Japan, and that led Japan also to be interested in dealing with the problem of bullying to which they referred as ''ijime''. According to Horton (2011, p. 51-53), ''ijime's'' focus differs drastically from bullying. The major difference between the research in the east with the research in the west was that researchers in Asia were less interested in the ''aggressive intentionality'' and more interested in the context of the institutions where ''ijime'' occurs. In that sense, they were more keen on

cultural structures like for example ''differences in power relations'' which lead to bullying and less on the individual differences of those involved in bullying.

As Frank Wai-ming Tam and Mitsuru Taki (2017, p. 373) argue in Horton (2011, p. 15) ''existing knowledge about school bullying and its prevention is mainly derived from research conducted in western countries''. What has to be mentioned is that western countries followed Olweus' paradigm and focused mostly on the aggression of the individuals for many years. Consequently, they did not take so much into consideration the research conducted in the eastern countries which was focusing on the cultural structures. However, there is a new direction nowadays on bullying research which I would like to discuss below.

## Contemporary perspective on bullying research

Modern standpoint on bullying is in line with the studies which took place in Japan during the last three decades. Similar to where the systematic research on bullying in the western world began, the new direction of the theories in the context of bullying also started in Scandinavia (Koffoed and Söndergaard 2009; Horton 2011, p. 53) and are expressed mostly by Paul Horton. Other scandinavian researchers with a significant contribution in the modern standpoint on bullying research are Jette Kofoed, Dorte Marie Söndergaard and Sirkka Komulainen. This change of direction is what I will name as ''the new paradigm on bullying research'' or ''paradigm 2''.

Until now the published research on school bullying was explaining the phenomenon regarding individual personalities traits viewing bullies as abnormal, with a tendency towards violence and aggression. However, Horton (2011, p. 53) mentions that some researchers focus now on bullying as a social dynamic, conducted by ''ordinary children, during social processes of group inclusion and exclusion''. According to that opinion, bullying is a social construct. It is mostly constructed by the power relations within it occurs and less on the aggressive tendencies of those involved. That explains why it changes within different situations and different contexts when the relationships of power also change. This new view led to a further debate referred in Schott & Söndergaard (2014, p. 2), where is argued that research should move on from the predominance of Olweus theories (paradigm 1) and be updated with the new approaches on the topic (paradigm 2).

However, a change in the epistemology under which bullying is theorized leads also to a change in the methodology which is used to acquire knowledge. The ''Olweus paradigm'' used mostly quantitative methods ''to individualize data, often blind to other constituting forces and enacting forces''. On the other hand, to explore the complex processes and the effects of bullying the new social studies suggest that there is a need for use of qualitative researches or a mix with the quantitative-qualitative analysis.

## Bullying in Greece, a background

The EU membership allowed Greece to be an active partner also in European researches on bullying. One of them was the Europes Antibullying Campaign Project (2012, p. 43-85) in which Greece was asked to do a quantitative analysis of bullying providing the EU with measurable results. Some examples of what was asked in this project were ''what do students and teachers consider as bullying ?'' ( for example which is the percentage of people who think that teasing is bullying) and what prevention methods they statistically prefer (books, seminars, etc.). The aim was to compare Greek statistics of bullying with other European Countries.

Furthermore, Greece is part of the European Anti-bullying Network which led Greece to do its first 1st European anti-bullying Conference on "Bullying and Cyberbullying Across Europe" on 2014 in Athens. What I found interesting in that, is that according to the official conference proceedings (Salichos & Alevizos 2015), the honorary chair of the scientific committee was Dan Olweus. In the previous chapter, I mentioned that he is the dominant figure of paradigm one to which new social studies are skeptical.

This background of the Greek society highlights the tendency of the theoretical direction of Greek bullying research towards more traditional models within the bullying research (Paradigm 1 and quantitative research). At first, since the first anti-bullying conference in Greece was held in 2014, this emphasizes that not so much attention on bullying was given previously. Furthermore, since the two European networks of which the most prominent Greek NGO (the smile of the child) is a member, use quantitative methods and their scientific committee is Dan Olweus, this underlines that the whole research in Greece leans towards the direction of the first traditional paradigm.

After examining the research that has been produced in the greek context, (to which I will come back in below chapters), I would like to note that it was more individualistic oriented and used quantitative data. Furthermore, the interest towards the field of bullying research was only from Greek researchers belonging to developmental sciences (for example developmental psychology) which follow a more traditional developmental view on children and childhood as a whole. But more extensive discussion and examples about what characterizes Greek research will be given in the following chapters.

## Greek term for bullying

Mitsuru Taki (2001, cited in Horton 2011, p. 50-51) argued that the different meaning of the word ''ijime'' preferred in Asia to describe harassment, was also indicating a particular attitude towards bullying. After reading this idea, I decided to mention the Greek term and what it means when translated into English in a separate chapter. The translation could reveal some underlying attitude towards bullying precisely as the Japanese name did.

The term ''σχολικός εκφοβισμός'' (pronounced scholikos ekfovismos/school scaring) is the one preferred when referring to bullying in Greece. According to the online Greek dictionary, lexigram.gr:  ''εκφοβίζω'' (verb ekfovizw) means making somebody afraid of us, with threats, or by mentioning that something terrible is going to happen to them. The aim is to force them to accept our interests and act accordingly. It also means to cause panic attacks to a person.

## Research in  the Greek context

After problematizing around those hints that the Greek background gave me, I decided to look in a database to gain some understanding of how the research in Greece looks. I decided to use ''linköping university's database (f.e. PubMed, ERIC, PsycINFO, etc.) search option to study the Greek Research in bullying since it is the search option that I am most familiar with and also consists mostly of peer-reviewed articles, contributing to the validity of my results. It allows me also to filter different chronologies which is essential to examine how the research of bullying changed over the years.

I have to note that ''Linköpings library search'' gave me a satisfying amount of articles (351) when I used the term ''school bullying in Greece'',  however only (37)

when I used the Greek term/ keyword ''σχολικός εκφοβισμός'' (pronounced scholikos ekfovismos/school scaring).  So, I decided to do a second search using google scholar to investigate the Greek term/keyword ''εκφοβισμός''.
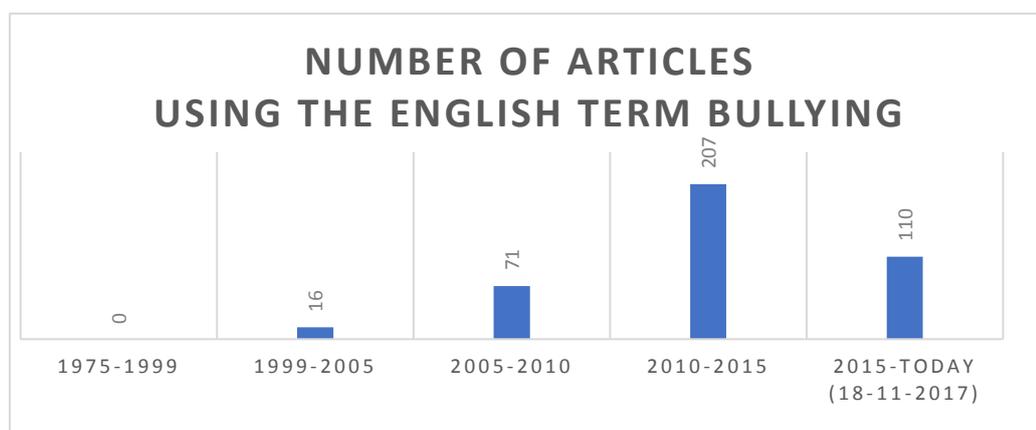
The number of results was impressive (870) compared to (37) of ERIC during the period of the last 20 years (1997-2017). Those 870 articles were written mostly by Greek researchers and not so many international since the Greek keyword/term ''ekfovismos'' is mainly used by Greeks. Consequently, I decided to present both ''Linköpings library databases'' results (because it had more valid results when using the English term) and google scholar's (because it had a bigger number of results when using the Greek term).

What was concluded after using those two databases and analyzing the Greek research were three themes: a) It is very recent, b) mostly quantitative, c) follows the first paradigm (Olweus-based). I will come back to each of those themes separately below highlighting the procedure I followed to conclude them.

## Relatively recent research on bullying in Greece

As a first stage, I used the keyword school bullying in Greece. I chose the word ''school'' since it is the institution where bullying among children happens more often and ''Greece'' because it is the societal context I want to focus. The English term ''bullying'' was preferred at this first stage, because many Greek articles are in English since Greek is not a commonly spoken language. Furthermore, some international studies which are not aware of the Greek term ''ekfovismos'' have taken place in Greece and it would be amiss not to include them in the search.

To make the discussion more interesting and easier to follow I will use some simple diagrammes:

**NUMBER OF ARTICLES USING THE ENGLISH TERM BULLYING**

| 1975-1999 | 1999-2005 | 2005-2010 | 2010-2015 | 2015-TODAY (18-11-2017) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 16 | 71 | 207 | 110 |

After filtering the 351 results,  in only the period from 1975 when bullying research started in the western world- 1999, I had zero results. The first article appeared in 2000 from the educational psychologist Eleni Andreou who together with Lena Pateraki are considered the pioneers in bullying research in Greece. By continuing the searching, the results from 2000-2005 were 16 only by Greek researchers (Andreou 2001; Pateraki 2001) in Journals like school psychology and educational psychology. At  2005-2010: 71  articles by mostly Greek researchers. Some research teams also appeared for the first time (Giovazolias, Kourkoutas, Mitsopoulou & Georgiadi 2010) in social and behavioral sciences journal. At 2010-2015: 207 in journals like educational psychology, school psychology. At 2015-today (18-11-2017): 110. In the last seven years, the situation did not change dramatically since the research was produced mostly by Greek Researchers (Kokkinos & Antoniadou 2013; Sideridis, Antoniou, Stamovlasis & Morgan, 2013) in the direction of the same journals mentioned earlier. Some international researches also took place (Maes et al. 2015; Stevens et al. 2015) in the journal of adolescent health), but not especially focused on the Greek society. The international researchers were still in the same direction of journals (Journal of adolescent health, aggression psychology, school psychology, etc.) and interested in Greece as part of statistics comparison in an international setting, or EU membership comparisons.

The first search using the English term led to some conclusions: the research on bullying in Greece started later than the rest western countries (15 years later). However, the results were not so many (351 from 1975-today) and did not lead to a safe conclusion about how massive the research interest in Greece is, especially by Greek researchers, after the death of Vangelis Giakoumakis. So, I decided to do a second search using the Greek term (sxolikos ekfovismos) in google scholar. Here follows the diagram and a small discussion on that:

**NUMBER OF ARTICLES USING THE GREEK TERM (ΣΧΟΛΙΚΟΣ ΕΚΦΟΒΙΣΜΟΣ)**

| 1975-1999 | 1999-2005 | 2005-2010 | 2010-2017 | 2015-2017 (18-11-2017) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 16 | 123 | 778 | 611 |
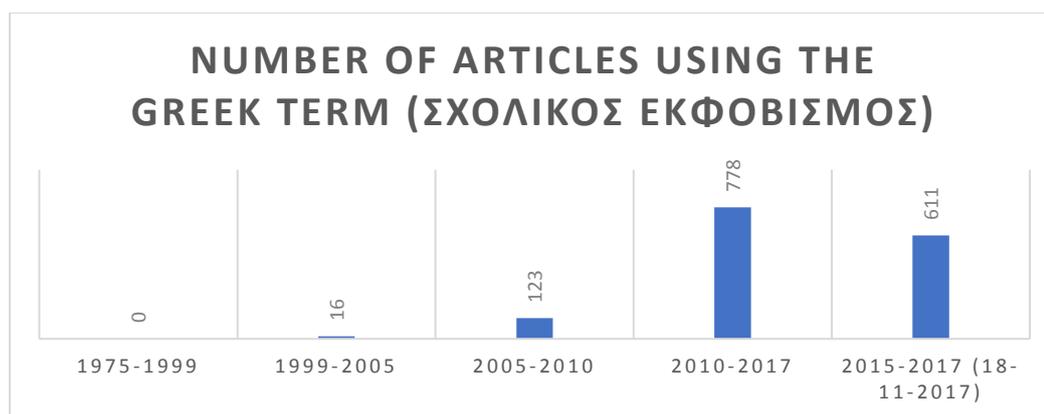
Following the same procedure but this time using the term ''sxolikos ekfovismos'' (tr. scholar scaring) from 2000-2005 there were 16 article, 2005-2010:123, 2010-2017: 778.  Of those 778 articles, the 611 were after 2015. It has to be reminded that 2015 was the year when Giakoumakis case shocked the Greek society and that highlights how much this instance influenced the interest of the Greek research on bullying. A signifacant note is that exactly like the former search, the researchers were mostly Greek following the direction of the same journals and belonging to the same departments/research groups mentioned above.

This 600% increase in the last two years,  apparently seen only when using the Greek term in google scholar, is fascinating. It supports many of the suggestions that I made about the bullying study in Greece.  At first, it is very recent, and second, there is a massive interest in this topic, especially now after the recent death of Vangelis Giakoumakis. Last but not least, it confirmed that I made the right choice to include the Greek key-word because it gave me the right to enter the Greek societal background, not accessed otherwise from somebody who does not know Greek.

### The dominance of quantitative research to bullying in Greece.

The first study on bullying in Greek schools was made by Andreou (2000, p. 49-50). In that research Andreou (2000) used two quantitative scales, Bullying Behaviour Scale and the Peer Victimisation Scale, to examine the self-esteem of bullies. What was suggested by the results was that bullies could be ''set as having low social acceptance, high levels of Machiavelism and negative self-esteem''.  By examining the researches in the years to come the methods used to study bullying in Greece did not change dramatically compared with this example.

Since google scholar did not give me the option to limit my results to the method (quantitative-qualitative), I decided to search for both the English term and the Greek

term for bullying in linköpings library database. The results when using ''scholikos ekfovismos'' (scholar scaring) were only three qualitative theses: 2 using the semi-structured interview as a technique to collect data (Giannakopoulou 2014; Kapari 2014) and 1 using a mix of ethnography with semi-structured interviews (Karamboutzi 2015). When using the term school bullying in Greece, limiting in qualitative researches, there were only 11 results. The vast majority of articles (340) applied quantitative analysis, indicating that the research in Greece has explicitly focused on the problem of bullying through the use of quantitative surveys.

## Focus towards individual behavior

The vast majority of the articles were published in journals referring to those sciences: Educational Psychology, School Psychology, and Developmental Psychology. Those prementioned sciences follow mostly a more traditional developmental view on children and childhood as a whole, where children's development is a universal stage-like process. After examining the articles I noticed that even those following a qualitative method, were not updated with the model of new social studies, as described by Prout & James ( 1997, as cited in Kehily 2013, p. 226-227), which views children through a sociocultural and interdisciplinary glance.

However, the focus of Greek research is not only invested in traditional theories on children and childhood but also follows the paradigm of Olweus. The Greek research mostly sees bullying as a universal problem and not as contextually situated within the institutional setting it occurs. In this way, this thesis is not only the first one to look at the discussions of  Greek Press around the problem of bullying and its prevention in the Greek society, but also the first to take into consideration the new child studies and the new paradigm on bullying in Greece.

# METHOD AND MATERIALS

In this section, a discussion on the choice of the data materials will be made, including a presentation of the selected data. Furthermore, I will present the method of data analysis and discuss the ethical aspects of this study.

## Greek Press

To begin with, the data for this study came from the Greek Press. This material is fascinating because the press together with news media are often mentioned as the fourth estate (or the fourth power) of a government. The media have an indirect but significant influence on a society because it influences the way people think and constructs consciences. So, in order to achieve a proper access to public discourses on bullying, media appears to be a good setting to investigate. Since the Greek media field is vast, I would like to narrow down my research only to the press. I think the Press has a more significant number of documents compared with other media and is easier to collect since most Greek newspapers are online nowadays.

## Kathimerini Newspaper

To study the Greek press, I focused my analysis exclusively on the online version of ''Kathimerini'' newspaper (tr. Daily news). There are many other online versions of other Greek newspapers, such as ''To Vima'' and ''Eleftherotupia'' just to name a few. However, I decided to use only Kathimerini, while being aware of the constraints that this choice could have, because I estimated that the advantages of using only this newspaper would be more than the disadvantages. It has to be noted that I will mention those restrictions in ''limitations'' chapter.

Regarding the advantages of using Kathimerini those were: Firstly, ''Kathimerini'' is the biggest national daily generalist newspaper, according to international media and newspapers ranking (http://www.4imn.com/reviews/692.htm ). It comes both as a print and online version and has the most significant circulation range of all the Greek publications (around 100.000). In that sense, there are higher possibilities that the articles of the biggest newspaper would be better written and would provide more fruitful discussions compared with those of a smaller one. This is because big newspapers have a bigger network of politicians and researchers who cooperate with them. Consequently, I decided that I sould not include mixed quality articles from

mixed quality newspapers in my thesis because this could only harm the reliability and validity of the analysis.

In addition to, many of the other newspapers in Greece are not free and do not offer so many articles as Kathimerini does. More specifically, Kathimerini was chosen because it is easily accessible, free and does not require registering using usernames and passwords. It offers also richer data about bullying and over a more extended period, compared with all the other newspapers. As an example, when I used the keyword ''bullying'' at Kathimerini's online search option I had 284 articles as a result (on 05.11.2017). On the other hand, when I searched for articles at the second most popular newspaper ''To Vima'' the results were significantly less presenting only 46 articles.

Before moving on the limitations of choosing cases from only one newspaper I would like to mention some further clues on this newspaper so that the readers could acquire a better idea of its background. ''Kathimerini'' has not a political or religious affiliation. However, it is traditionally perceived as conservative and pro-europeistic without that meaning that it is not considered as a high-quality broadsheet at the same time. In that case, it was of benefit to my research, because the newspaper was updated with the changes happening in the EU such as the anti-bullying projects described in the literature review.

## Limitations

In the previous chapter, I hightlighted the advantages of choosing to analyze articles from only one newspaper. However, I consider significant to mention that I was aware that choosing to analyze articles from only one newspaper could also lead to limitations. More specifically, choosing articles from only one newspaper instead of many could limit the number of cases available for analysis.

At this point, I have to admit that having more than three cases could offer more variety to my analysis. However, since all the Greek newspapers refer to the same country, Greece, the incidents which drew the attention of the news were more or less the same. To reassure about the limited variety of cases I made a brief search on google using the term ''bullying cases in newspapers / υποθέσεις bullying, εφημερίδες''. I can claim with certainty that Vangelis Giakoumakis' case was present in most discussions about bullying since there were 8 articles in the online newspaper prwtothema.gr and 4

on the second big newspaper in Greece, tovima.gr. However, no other significant stories that could fulfill my criteria were unveiled in the other newspapers. Those criteria will be described in ''selecting cases'' chapter.

I agree that having a bigger number of cases could benefit my thesis and even add some interesting themes in my analysis. However, this is not always possible. The reason is, as I explained in the introduction, that Greece is new into discussing bullying. This creates the limitation that not so many bullying cases are discussed in the Greek press. Furthermore, even though the interest was massive after Giakoumakis case, this does not mean that many bullying cases could attract the media's attention after that. Consequently, it was not possible for me to have a big variety of cases to choose from and I decided to continue my analysis using only Kathimerini. Below I will describe how I did a data selection on that.

## Data Selection

In order to search for school bullying cases to include in my analysis, I used the search choice of "Kathimerini''.  I will use a simple diagram to illustrate the articles and then I will make a small discussion on it:



number of articles
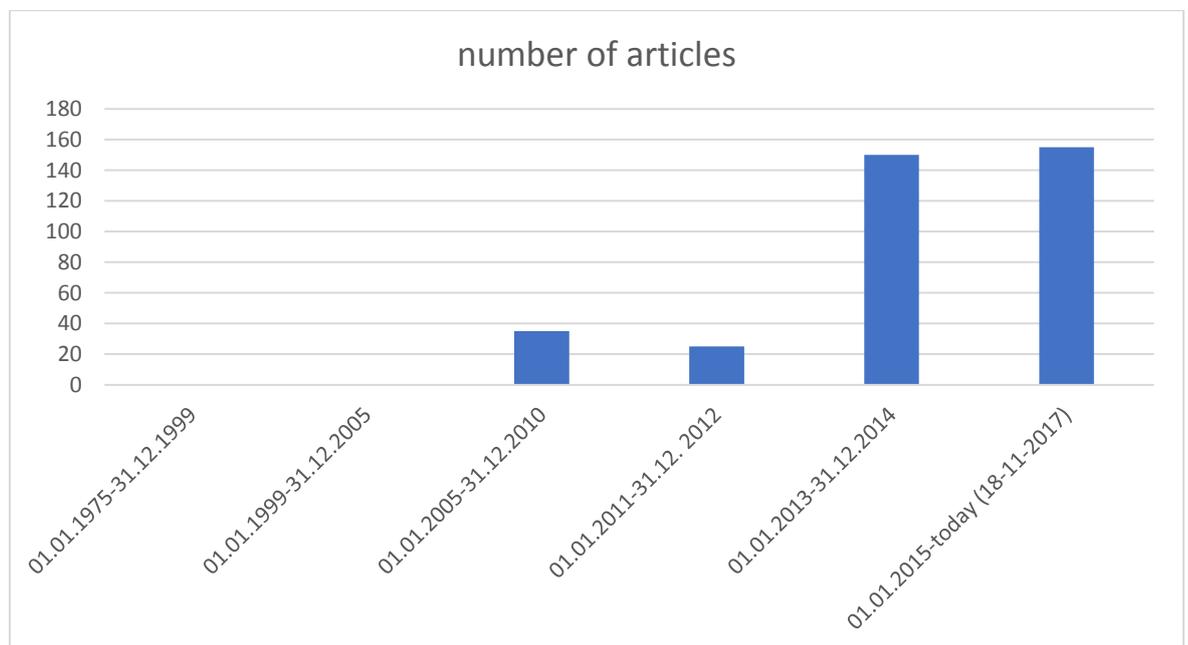
 I put the keyword bullying and searched from 1975 when the term ''bullying'' was first used in the western research until today (from 01.01.1975 to 18.11.2017). I had 365 results. I filtered further my search for the previous five years because I decided

that 365 results were quite a lot. As a surprise for me, the outcomes did not decrease significantly. Judging by that only, bullying must have been a new word in Greece, because 330 of the 365 articles (90%) were found just in the last five years. Consequently, I decided to include cases that occurred in Greece from 01.01.2012-today (18.01.2017), because since 90% cases happened then, I would not risk leaving something important out of my analysis. Furthermore, since bullying is a hot topic right now in Greece, I would like to put my analysis in the center of the incidents.

## Selection of Cases

To begin with a case means a set of articles written about a certain person in a newspaper. One can see that articles and cases are interrelated with each other, as the definition of the term ''case'' indicates. In that sense, the criteria that I will describe below applied both to cases and articles at the same time. In that sense every time I was filtering articles I was filtering cases at the same time and vice versa.

This means that after using the keyword bullying on Kathimerini I had 330 articles. After setting all of these criteria that I will describe below and filtering the articles I had only 11 articles suitable for analysis. Those 11 articles were referring to three cases: Vangelis who was the person I described in the introduction and who triggered the massive interest on bullying, Helen who is an 11-year old British girl and student in a Greek school and Artemis an also 11-year-old girl and student. More about the background of the cases and the stories of those three people will be discussed in the introduction of the data analysis.

To begin with, there were more bullying cases referred in the Greek press however only three fulfilled my criteria, which were: a) having articles written on them who are relevant to the topic of school bullying b) referring to children, c) being rich in data. Furthermore, I chose a case based on the d) gender. It has to be noted that I considered the criteria for choosing a case very significant for the validity and reliability of my analysis. In that sense, I was not so interested in the quantity of my cases and on the number of the articles written on them but instead more on the quality of those articles. But why I chose those criteria and why I think that those articles written on those three cases fulfilled those criteria (and others did not) is something that I would like to discuss below.

My interest was in the description of bullying cases occurring among children in school. So, it is quite apparent that I excluded 165 of (330) articles which concerned other irrelevant topics such as ''bullying in the workplace'' or bullying used to describe violence between countries or politicians. From the rest 165 articles which had school bullying as a topic, only 8 cases could be identified, the rest articles were about films about school bullying, advertisements of big telephonic companies and neurobiological studies of school bullying. I explained in the introduction that I was interested only in analyzing cases of bullying so now I had to choose only between 8 cases of bullying to see if they satisfy my other criteria (being about children, rich in data and at least one case considering gender),

From those eight cases, three cases were about: 1) a 19 years old teenager and 2) a 22 years old woman who shot students that were studying in their high school because they felt victimized. The third case was 3) 19 years old Vangelis Giakoumakis. Those three cases were referring to school bullying. However they were far from being children, so I decided not to include them because they did not fulfill my second criteria which was to have cases referring to children.  Now I had to choose between 5 to see if they fulfilled my other criteria which was to have articles rich in data and at least on case which takes gender into consideration. Vangelis Giakoumakis was though an exception, and I included him, but in order not to spoil the narration I will explain below why.

Three of the five cases were not rich in data. They were very small texts and they were just mentioning the date and place of the incident of bullying, without discussing further issues. The reason I believe that rich-in-data articles are so significant for my analysis is that they contribute to collecting more details and descriptions around my research questions.To decide which cases were rich in data, I chose only cases which had at least one big (at least 300 words) article written on them. The only three cases that fulfilled those criteria were the three cases of Vangelis, Helen, and Artemis. So, I decided to include Vangelis Giakoumakis instead even though he was 18 years old (and technically not a child) because it is the most referred case of bullying occurring in an educational institution in Greece. Consequently, I think it would be amiss in my analysis not to include this case, which is considered a hallmark of the bullying field in Greece.

It has to be noted that the case of Helen was not only included because of being one of the 5 cases relevant to the topic and one of the three rich in data cases but also

because of being specifically about bullying among girls. I thought that by examining how the press refers to bullying occurring among girls and make a comparison with how it refers to the other two cases which were bullying among boys (Vangelis) and mixed (Artemis) I could reveal gender-related themes.

To sum up, after using these criteria I had 11 articles written on the three cases of Vangelis, Artemis and Helen. I decided to study and analyze all of them since I did not want to miss an important aspect by excluding articles and also the number was not difficult to handle. It has to be noted that 9 of those 11 articles (81%) were about Giakoumakis case. The journalist who wrote the most articles on Giakoumakis' case was Georgiopoulou (2015a; 2015b; 2015c) who wrote 3 articles on this case. However, neither Georgiopoulou nor any of the other journalists on Giakoumakis case wrote any articles about the other two cases of Artemis and Helen. Furthermore, Giannarou (2015) who described Artemis case and Fotiadi (2015) who addressed Helen, did not write any articles about Giakoumakis case. A further aspect that has to be noted about all the articles, was that all of them were written from 2015 and forward since all of the three cases happened in 2015.

The 11 articles that I analyzed will be presented below. I translated the titles so as to make it easier for the readers to understand them since Greek is not a common language. However, whoever is interested could find the original titles in Greek in the ''sources'' chapter.

**Giakoumakis case:**

1.Choulakis P 2015. A new turn on Giakoumakis case.

2. Georgiopoulou T 2015a. They were humiliating constantly Vangelis Giakoumakis.

3. Georgiopoulou T 2015b. It is difficult to name guilties for Giakoumakis death.

4.Georgiopoulou T 2015c. ''Some people become more mature and speak'' about Giakoumakis.

5.Karakasidis S (2016). The trial of those who were responsible for the institute, where Giakoumakis case took place.

6.Kasimatis S (2015). The silence is the victory of his murderers.

7.Kassimi A (2015). The crucial comeback of one of V. Giakoumakis' peers.

8.Kathimerini 2016. Giakoumakis case: The former director of the diary school was found guilty.

9.Mpistika E 2015. Agios Alexios and the children of the god... «Σταυρόν ηδ' άρω»...

**Helen's case**

10.Fotiadi I 2015. British student became a victim of bullying in Lesvos island.

**Artemis' case**

11.Giannarou L 2015. 'I would like to die, there is no reason for me to live anymore''.

One aspect that one can notice after looking at this appendix is that there are a lot more articles analyzed about Vangelis compared with the other two cases. This was because as I referred in the ''introduction'' and ''limitations'' chapter, it was his case which triggered the massive interest in bullying. Consequently, this interest can be reflected also on the articles available on his case compared with every other case of bullying in Greece.

A further note which needs to be made is that different journalists covered the three different cases. More specifically there were 9 journalists in the three cases: 7 different journalists in Giakoumakis case (Georgiopoulou covered three articles), 1 in Artemis case (Giannarou 2015) and 1 in Helen's case (Fotiadi 2015). This means that there was not just one journalist who made the same argument through all the cases, but 9 different journalists. I consider it important since having only one argument could create bias and harm the analytical process and the results that I will discuss in the next chapters.

## Analytical Process

After selecting the documents, I departed from my research questions and formulated "analytical questions" that I posed to the material (Silverman 2015, p. 110). After that, I decided to ''thematize some meaning'' by searching and identifying patterns within the data that occurred from my scientific questions. Later I reported them and organized them into themes and subthemes, under what is referred to as thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke 2006, p. 78, p. 79). I decided to use thematic analysis because it provided me with greater flexibility, as it was not dependent and ''tied'' as much on a specific theory and epistemology. Furthermore, it was easily accessible and

did not require ''detailed theoretical and technological knowledge'', which is more common in ''NA'' and ''GT'' methods (Braun & Clarke 2006, p. 81).

## Analytical questions posed to the material

The analysis of the data is closely connected to my research questions. In order to formulate themes, I decided to verbalize sub-questions departed from my main research questions described above. The analytical questions that I had in mind while analyzing my material were:  A) How is bullying discussed and defined according to the different cases? Which violent behaviors are bullying according to the different sources? Could one behavior, like direct physical and verbal violence, for example, be considered closer to the idea of bullying than other behaviors? B) What are the causes of bullying according to the description of the prementioned sources? Could it be the behavioral characteristics of the victim and/or the offender? Could it be some societal structures like the legislation in school that are responsible for the rise of bullying in schools?  C) What are the consequences of bullying to children and the Greek educational system? Could it be physical, psychological or even death? D) What are the solutions towards the prevention of bullying in schools, suggested in the prementioned sources?  How are those suggestions described and why could they (or not) be useful, according to the different material? E) In what ways have children and childhood as a whole been portrayed and conceptualized, via the Press? Who are the responsible people to deal with bullying? Are they the teachers, the state, the children themselves?

It has to be noted that all of those major questions and all of the sub-questions were able to be answered in ''the data analyisis'' chapter.

## Semantic approach

I followed a semantic approach in my thematic analysis. I was more interested in the explicit meanings of the writings in the documents. The reason is that my thesis purpose is to describe what is going on in the Greek society about bullying and its prevention and not examine the underlying ideologies and ideas about the appearance of bullying in Greece.  Consequently, I was not interested in the hidden meanings behind bullying like for example how the patriarchy or capitalism constructs bullying and hinders the solution to this problem. It might have been interesting, but the limited time allowed me to make a thematic analysis on only one level.

In addition to, Braun & Clarke (2006, p. 85) claim that an analysis typically focuses exclusively on one level. However, I attempted ''to theorize the significance of the patterns and their broader meanings and implications about previous literature giving in that way ''a progression to my analysis'' (Braun & Clarke 2006, p. 84). Consequently, I did not just try just to describe those patterns but also made some brief interpretations at the end of every theme-chapter, based on previous literature on bullying research. In that sense, even though I was not interested into unveiling the hidden meanings behind bullying, I described at some parts the latent power relationships, because I thought that they were interesting and could offer a progression to my analysis.

## Thematic analysis (analytic phases)

To do my thematic analysis, I used the six step-to-step analytic phases described in Braun & Clarke (2006, p. 87-93). More specifically, I started by familiarizing myself with the data. I read and re-read the data, took notes and marked some initial ideas that might be proven useful for future coding (Braun & Clarke 2006, p. 87). Since the data used for this thesis were already in written form, and as such '' already transcribed for me'' I took advantage of the time, to familiarize myself more with the data. However, I needed to translate some parts of the documents to report them because they were in Greek. In order to do this, I put effort and time to translate the precise words and meanings responsibly from Greek to English.

Later, I continued my analytical procedure by generating initial codes, by organizing my data into meaningful groups that I found interesting. It has to be noted that this initial coding was theory-driven and not data-driven since I had already some specific research questions which I described above that I wanted to code around (Braun & Clarke 2006, p. 88-89). In that sense, the themes within my data were identified in ''a theoretical/deductive or top-down way'' (Boyatzis 1998, as cited in Braun & Clarke 2006, p. 83). However, this does not mean that I had already formed an early hypothesis and that I looked to build codes that fitted my ideas. On the opposite, I gave full and equal attention to each data item even to those that did not fit my ideas (Braun & Clarke 2006, p.89). During phase three my analysis moved to the broader level of themes. What I decided to do was to sort those initial codes into potential themes and gather relevant information to the identified themes.

Phase 4 was done by reviewing the themes and deciding which of the candidate themes are satisfying for my analysis. The criteria that made a theme satisfactory for me were according to Braun and Clarke (p. 91) that they had enough data to support them and that there was a clear and identifiable distinction between themes. The next phase (phase 5), was important because it was then when I finally defined which were my themes for my analysis and gave names to them. It has to be noted that I tried to give names to my themes that were ''concise, punchy and could give the reader a sense of what the theme is about'' (Braun & Clarke, p.93). The last phase (phase 6) consisted of writing my report, with a purpose of narrating the story that my data told and also gave some answers to my research questions. At this phase, I also used extracts and quotes from my data, not to support my arguments, but demonstrate with their help how I came to some conclusions to the research questions.

## Ethical Considerations

Many ethical aspects were avoided in my case, allowing me to continue with the topic of ''How is bullying and its prevention described in the Greek Press''. The reason is that '' I was fortunate choosing documents and texts that were already in the public sphere'' (Silverman 2015, p. 140), as a method of collecting data. This helped me avoid the ethical issue described in Farrell (2005 p. 68) about informed consent and protecting the identities of the participants that could happen if I had chosen interviews or ethnography.

Public statements like articles in newspapers about bullying and the official governmental legal plan towards those behaviors in schools were ''by definition there for all to observe'' (Silverman 2015, p. 152). To ask for and collect those data required some slightly standardized procedures, but definitely, it was not unethical to acquire them. Thus, not having to ask for informed consent eliminated the possibility of the ethical pitfall of ''deception'' as highlighted in Silverman (2015, p. 141), as I did not have to hide my intentions to anyone.

A further ethical pitfall that I overcame by choosing to devote my whole focus on documents was to avoid causing emotional and physical harm to the participants and myself. If for example I had decided to use an interview method and asked the participants questions related to peer abuse, some traumatic experiences could arise from their past. This could start a series of emotions, for example, anger, revenge, and

sadness, harming them potentially and leading to excessive stress or even suicidal thoughts. Furthermore, by choosing to analyze documents as a method, I deprivied myself of the possibility to create a bond with children and teachers, and this offered me the opportunity to examine the bullying cases with more objectivity.

It has to be noted that even if documents require less emotional involvement than other methods it is still quite stressfull to read about bullying cases. Examining cases of peer abuse could harm a researcher because it is easy to feel empathy about the children described and experience emotions of stress and despair. In my case, my previous studies and work as a psychologist helped me surpass the psychological harm of reading about stressful cases. However, I would still have to take the responsibility of warning the readers about the sensitive material of this thesis.

Last but not least, as referred in Silverman (2015, p. 140), the motives of a research and the values and the attitude towards a topic would be the one to determine to a great extent how ethically reflective a study would be. Consequently, at this point, I have to explain the honest motives behind my research which was to help prevent bullying. I believe that the prevention could be possible if we understand the problem first and this study could be a small step to understand it. So, if you had to ask me about my values and my attitude behind this particular research; I could assure you that those were the general idea of common good and the protection of people.

# DATA ANALYSIS

## Introduction

After selecting the data mentioned in the previous sections, I was able to move on with my thematic analysis. In the previous chapter, I explained the step by step procedure (explained in the previous section) that I followed to answer my research questions and form my themes. Now, I would like to highlight and discuss the themes that occurred after my analysis. Every theme is connected with my research questions (described above) since they departed from them however they are not just answers to those questions, but a product of systematic analysis and search for patterns through the data materials. Every broader theme is a chapter of my analysis and has a small introduction explaining which subthemes occurred (and why I decided to include or not to include them) and how many of my 3 cases discussed in Kathimerini newspaper (Vangelis, Artemis, and Helen) responded to them.

Since I discussed Vangelis Giakoumakis case in the introduction of this thesis, whose bullying related death was a hallmark of discussions on bullying in Greece, I think it is important to speak briefly about the other two cases before moving to their analysis. Helen Cembson is an 11-year old British girl and student in a Greek school. In her case, both the offenders and the victim were girls since a group of girls was hostile against her inside the classroom. This case had many references (3 articles written in her case). Her story was remarkable because it was her mother that mostly spoke to the media and I find interesting to examine how parents describe bullying.

The third case was also about an 11-year old girl named Artemis. However this time the offenders were both boys and girls. The discussion in the newspaper on the problem of bullying came after an essay of the girl named Artemis. The paper was a part of homework with the topic ''Have you ever been a victim of school bullying during your school years?''. Furthermore, this case took place inside the school, and all of the offenders were children.

In order to choose examples and quotes from my data material, I consulted the work of Joseffson (2016, p. 5) who also studied media material in his study on ''asylum-seeking children' cases. Josefsson (2016, p.5) suggests that it is important to select examples that illustrate and exemplify broader patterns of opinion and discussions in the context of immigration. Since sometimes the several discussions expressed in the articles could be mutually dependent, interconnected and intertwined, ''the majority of

the quotes and examples discussed in the newspaper will not be quoted or highlighted in the analysis''. However, that I did not include everything in my analysis should not worry the readers since ''the selection of fewer cases enables a more focused analysis while at the same time, it is important to note, it represents broader patterns'' (Josefsson 2016, p. 5).

At this point, I would like to make a small summary of the analysis of the themes, in order to make the analysis more vivid and give an idea to the readers of what is following. After examining the cases, it was highlighted that in Greece there was more emphasis on direct and less on indirect forms when defining bullying. Furthermore, the consequences of bullying were discussed to be negative both psychologically and physically for the victim but also unfavorable for the good operation of the Greek school system. The articles in Kathimerini also focused on the abnormality of the victim and in one case in the cultural context as the cause of bullying and proposed that talking to an adult about the bullying experiences could be a proper solution. Considering the concepts in Kathimerini, one case was conceptualizing children as innocent and two cases as evil. Furthermore, in all cases, children were discussed as in constant need of adult protection.

Consequently, the five major themes and their subthemes that will follow are: 1) Definitions of bullying: a) Direct physical violence, b) Direct verbal violence. 2) The causes of bullying: abnormality of the victim. 3) Consequences of bullying: a) physical consequences, b) psychological consequences. 4) Solutions to bullying: breaking the silence. 5) Concepts of children and childhood: a) childrens' voices b) children as innately good/evil.

## Definitions of Bullying

The analytical question which led me to this theme was ''Which violent behaviors are considered bullying according to the different cases?''. What was highlighted by the discussion in the texts was that all three cases in Kathimerini defined bullying according to ''Olweus paradigm''. As discussed in the literature review Olweus defined bullying as: ''A student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative acts on the part of one or more other students'' (Horton 2011, p. 50; Olweus 1993, p. 9). In that sense, all three gave examples of what they considered bullying, which was direct forms of either physical or verbal violence. However, none of them discussed indirect bullying and that is why it was not included in the analysis. In that case, the themes that occurred where: Direct physical violence and direct verbal violence.

### Direct Physical Violence

A direct physical abuse mentioned in two of the three cases discussed in Kathimerini newspaper was locking someone in a place. Helen's mother, as mentioned in Fotiadi's (2015) text in Kathimerini, is written to have said that ''girls often locked Helen inside the classroom''. In Vangelis case as suggested in Kathimerini's article with the title ''They were constantly humiliating Vangelis Giakoumakis'' *(Georgiopoulou 2015a)* is mentioned that: *''They locked him into a wardrobe and threw coins in it to make him sing as the jukebox does'' (Georgiopoulou 2015a).*

Another direct violent behavior mentioned in both cases was ''threat with a weapon''. In Fotiadi's (2015) text is written that Helen's mother revealed that: *''A father of one of the girls who bullied my daughter ended up catching Helen, holding a knife in his hand and threatening to kill her''* (Fotiadi 2015). A further direct violent behavior is also described in Georgiopoulou's (2015a) article about Vangeli's case. More specifically it is mentioned that *''one of the Cretans pulled out a gun and threatened to hang another student from a window'' (Georgiopoulou 2015).*

Furthermore, a violent experience named in Helen's and Vangeli's cases was ''vandalizing personal items''. An example that Helen's mother gave, as described in Fotiadi's (2015) article in Kathimerini was that ''they were stealing Helen's personal items''. In Georgiopoulou (2015a) it is mentioned that Vangelis told his mother: ''they beat me and removed two boards out of my bed.'' In Artemis' case, no examples of

vandalising personal items were given however Artemis, as introduced in Giannarou's (2015) text in Kathimerini,  was highlighted to have said that: *''I was a victim of both physical and mental violence throughout my school years which brought me to my psychological limits''* (Giannarou's 2015).


Direct verbal violence

A motive met in two of the three cases (Artemis, and Helen)  was namecalling. In Artemis case (Giannarou 2015) it is referred that a boy called  Artemis a *''stupid fat girl''*. Namecalling also occurred in Helen's case where some girls in her classroom told her *''Go back to your country you English girl''* (Fotiadi 2015). It has to be reminded here that Helen was born and raised in Greece by English parents. However, it seems in this quote from Fotiadi's (2015) text that she was still seen as a foreigner under bullies' eyes. In Vangelis case, it was not clear if examples of verbal violence were mentioned. The only comments were in Georgiopoulou's (2015a) article in Kathimerini suggesting that *''bullies humiliated and made fun of Vangelis''*.

Two notes that need to be made about this theme is that there were more physical examples in Giakoumakis and less in the other two. On the other side, there were more examples of direct verbal violence in the girls' cases than Vangelis. An explanation was given by the journalist Giannarou (2015) in  her article in Kathimerini claiming that: *'' One in four boys (23.9%) reported physical violence during 2014, compared with 8.3% of girls (more often involved in verbal violence) (Giannarou 2015).''*

The other note is that no indirect bullying was mentioned in any of the cases. According to Horton (2011, 50), this possibly happened because bullying in the west is more focused on direct forms of bullying emphasizing on the aggression of those involved. On the other hand, Horton claims that equal focus should be on the indirect forms of bullying and the relations of power that are negotiated in an institution ( Horton 2015, 54)

## The causes of Bullying

In all of the three school bullying cases (Vangelis, Artemis, Helen) written in Kathimerini newspaper the ''abnormality of the victim'' (Fotiadi 2015; Giannarou 2015; Georgiopoulou 2015a; Kasimatis 2015),  was mentioned to be the cause of bullying. What was considered as abnormality was a) being better or worse than the norm: grades, appearance (height and weight) and  b) obedience to gender and cultural roles (being girly in Helen's case and being tough in Vangelis case) (Fotiadi 2015; Giannarou 2015; Georgiopoulou 2015a; Kasimatis 2015). Abnormality of the offender was not discussed, so that is why I did not include it.

A further theme met only in Vangelis but not in the other cases was the economic crisis that Greece suffers the last ten years. In that sense poverty is the cause of bullying. I decided to just mention it briefly in the introduction and not in the text because there was not enough data to support it. On the other hand, a theme discussed only in Vangelis case as presented in Georgiopoulou's (2015b) article, which I decided to include because it had enough data to support it, was the ''cultural background'' (Georgiopoulou 2015b) of the offenders and the victims as the second cause of bullying. No other themes or categories were met during my analysis. So, the themes that occurred were: the abnormality of the victim and the cultural background.

### Abnormality of the victim

In all three cases discussed in Kathimerini, the abnormality of the victim is mentioned as the cause of bullying. As mentioned in Helen's case:

*''Her tall stature and her blond hair, her talent in music, her aversion to some "girlish" habits, and her origin (of the UK and not Greece) take her out of the "norm" making her vulnerable to all sorts of attacks''* (Fotiadi 2015).

Helen's victimization is considered an outcome of ''her better than average grades'' and ''her high skills in singing'' (Fotiadi 2015). In that case, somebody, who is better than the norm in aspects like grades or talent could be a victim of normal children as suggested by the case. However, as the case of Helen indicated somebody would not need to be just better or worse than the norm, but by just being different than the norm could also have problems with those who ''guard'' the normality (Kofoed

2008, p. 415). Helen claims that because she did not like the pink color, which is considered a girlish color, as the rock song composed by her indicates (''pink is not a color it's an attitude'') was an example of what *''an aversion to the girlish habits''* means. Furthermore, her origin of the UK and not Greece like the other girls in her classroom contributed also to her being abnormal and an *''easy target''* for bullying.

Artemis and her parents also agree with the abnormality of the victim as the main cause of bullying. More specifically as Artemis father as introduced in Giannarou's (2015) article in Kathimerin, was written to have said in Giannarou's (2015) text that: *''Artemis was an easy target because she was chubby and due to her dyslexia a not so good student and you know that children are cruel''.*

In that case, the bad grades are the reason why Artemis is different than the norm as opposed to the good grades of Helen. Furthermore, Artemis' parents, as described in Giannarou's (2015) article in Kathimerini, were highlighted to have blamed Artemis' abnormality (dyslexia and chubbiness) as the main cause of her being bullied. Artemis father also conceptualizes children as ''cruel'' (Giannarou 2015), but this will be analyzed in ''Concepts of children and childhood'' chapter.

Furthermore, Artemis was presented in Giannarou's (2015) article to have said that : *''Yes, I have been a victim of bullying because I was different and weird.''*

This part of Giannarou's (2015) text is not that clear since it can be read in two ways. Firstly, it seems that Artemis, as presented in Giannarou's (2015) text, thinks that other children bullied her because she was ''different and weird'' and thus abnormal. However, one could claim that she perceived and described herself as different and weird, because bullying lowered her self esteem. Since it is not clear in the original text, both interpretations could be accepted. However, the significant here is that the theme ''abnormality of the victim'' is discussed extensively in all of those quotes.

## The cultural background of the offender(s) and the victim

As Kasimatis (2015) suggested in his article in Kathimerini:
*''We know that Giakoumakis was the constant object of the intimidation and violence of a group of his peers, because of some unspecified diversity, which was not considered*

*tolerable by the culture of Crete where he and the group come from. To put it into simple words: Giakoumakis wanted to be different and the self-conscious representatives of a "wild, proud tradition," prevented him''*.

To explain what he means by the culture of Crete Kasimatis (2015) adds that in Crete island (in southern Greece) there is *''an oppressive perception of manhood, inherent in a localist feeling of pride as part of their culture''*. The offenders were according to that norm which wants Cretan boys tough. On the other hand, Vangelis was perceived by them as abnormal, ''intolerable'' and ''different'' (Kasimatis 2015). Georgiopoulou (2015a; Georgiopoulou 2015 b) also adds a brief description of Vangelis personality presenting him in her texts as ''low-profile'', ''serious'' and ˝someone who would never hurt anyone''.

Georgiopoulou (2015b) also views the cultural background of the offenders and the victim as important for the appearance of bullying and claims in her article in Kathimerini :

*''We have to understand that the national dairy research institute of Ioannina is a school where people from rural families study. It is a societal context where people often have harsh behaviors''*.

Consequently, Vangelis was presented in Georgiopoulou's (2015b) text to be not only far from the norm of the culture of his island's culture but also far from the culture of the institutional context to which he was a student. The causes of the victimization of Vangelis as discussed in the two quotes above taken from Kasimati's (2015) and Georgiopoulou's (2015) articles in Kathimerini were thus: a) ''the cultural background'' of the offenders who either as Cretans or people from rural families have tough and harsh behaviors. B) The abnormality of Vangelis towards the norm of his geographical area (Crete) and institutional norm (Dairy school of Ioannina).

What could be highlighted in that theme is that the opinions of the parents of the victims (Helen's mother), the journalists in Vangelis case and the victim itself (Artemis) express some opinions about the causes of bullying which agree with the Olweus paradigm. That is because they emphasize the behavioral characteristics of those involved in bullying.

It has to be noted that even if the journalists in Vangelis case (Georgiopoulou 2015a; Kasimatis 2015) were the only to clearly recognize the significance of the context where bullying occurs (diary institute of Ioannina were people have harsh

behaviors) they still did that according to the Olweus paradigm. This is because they presented the cultural background as an argument to support the abnormal behavior of Giakoumakis towards the norms of his island and his school. They were not thus presenting bullying as ''a phenomenon involving ordinary children in particular situations and group contexts and not based so much on individual behavioral differences'' as the Horton's paradigm suggests (Horton 2011, p. 53). Furthermore, anywhere in Kathimerini's articles was highlighted that: ''what is considered normal and appropriate is continuously negotiated and changes among groups and different settings'' as Kofoed (2008, p. 414) suggests.

## Consequences of bullying

In all three cases discussed in Kathimerini, bullying was perceived as having negative consequences both psychological and physical for the victim but sometimes also for the family of the victim in Helen's case. Many were also the examples in the 3 cases where the consequences of bullying were destructive for the victim's life. The themes identified were psychological consequences, physical consequences and educational consequences. The two first themes, psychological and physical consequences, were met in all three cases and were rich in data. Furtermore educational consequences were met in Helen's case. However, it was not clear if the other two cases discussed these consequence as well. So, I will discuss only Helen's case under this theme. A further aspect that has to be noted is that the physical consequences of bullying were discussed more in Vangelis case, without that meaning that they were absent also in the other two cases.

### Psychological consequences

The major psychological consequences that Helen suffered were insomnia and depression. According to the girl's mother as disussed in Fotiadi's article in Kathimerini (Fotiadi 2015) *''after a threat to the 11 years old girl's life, Helen could not sleep properly for several months''*. Furthermore, Helen's mother adds as described in Fotiadi's (2015) text that *''Helen was depressed for one scholar year and did not want to play piano although a musician. She only smiled and played piano again when she changed school''*.

Furthermore, the psychological consequences were negative not only for Helen but also for her Parents. According to their story as described in Fotiadi's (2015) article in Kathimerini: *"We fell in love 19 years ago in Lesvos, married in the village of Eftalou and a few months after the birth of our daughter, we decided to move to Greece. We believed it was the right place to raise our child," ''We could not imagine the nightmare our daughter, and we were going to experience some years later, recalls Mrs. Cembson today with bitterness''.* Helen's mother also adds that *''both I and my husband have lost our courage because of the whole situation"* (Fotiadi 2015).

Artemis also mentions feelings of depression. More specifically as mentioned in Giannarou's (2015) article in Kathimerini, Artemis claims *''I said I want to die, there is no reason to live or even to exist.''* In that sense, we see that bullying could

have a long period of depression [Artemis, Helen (possibly Vangelis too) ] as a consequence and even leads to suicidal thoughts (Vangelis and Artemis). Although not mentioned clearly, Giakoumakis also showed some symptoms of depression: ''*lost in his thoughts'' ''closed'' ''not open'' ''always serious'' ''with a melancholic smile''*. The possibilities that he committed suicide also raise the possibilities that he had depression because of bullying (Georgiopoulou 2015a; Georgiopoulou 2015b; Mpistika 2015).

## Physical consequences

The most easily detectable physical consequences of bullying are highlighted in Vangelis Giakoumakis case. As Choulakis (2015) mentions in his article in Kathimerini:

''*The Prosecutor of the Court of First Instance of Ioannina persecuted intentional homicide, dangerous personal injuries and unlawful violence against Vangelis Giakoumakis by unknown people''. ''This gives another dimension to the case, as the version of suicide seems to be losing ground''.*

What is concluded from the case mentioned above is that bullying could lead to a destructive for the life of the victim physical damage, death. Death could come either as an outcome of a bullying-related murder, or a bullying-related suicide. More specifically it was mentioned in Fotiadi (2015) that a father of the girls who bullied Helen, threatened to kill Helen with a knife. Furthermore, the journalist Choulakis (2015) said that the Greek court ''persecuted unknown people for intentional homicide against Vangelis. Furthermore, bullying-related suicide was mentioned in Giannarou's (2015) article in Kathimerini about Artemis. More specifically it was written in the text that Artemis claimed that ''I want to die there is no reason for me to be alive'', indicating that she had suicidal toughts.

## Educational consequences

In Fotiadi's (2015) article in Kathimerini, Helen's mother is mentioned to have said that :

''*If the problem of bullying continues my daughter will be forced to quit school''.*

It has to be reminded that in the same text of Fotiadi's (2015) article, Helen was highlighted to be a very good and efficient student, as:

''She had won an international competition after composing the music and lyrics for thesong Pink is not a color, it's an attitude. This distinction has strengthened the prestige of the Musical High School of Mytilene, contributing to the continuation of its operation'' (Fotiadi 2015)

What one could see after reading those quotes from Fotiadi's (2015) article is that bullying could harm not only individuals but also sometimes the educational system. Even some of the brightest students ''who contributed to the continuation of the operation of a school'' (Fotiadi 2015) could face the dilemma of quiting school because of being victimized by their peers. Losing students is of course of no benefit to any school.

## Solutions to bullying

In all three cases discussed in Kathimerini, the solution that was suggested to all three victims (Vangelis, Artemis, and Helen) was to break their silence and speak about their bullying experiences and problems to an adult (Kasimatis 2015; Fotiadi 2015, Giannarou 2015). However, in all three cases, this solution was discussed by the victims themselves to be problematic for many reasons that I will explain below. The theme that occurred as a solution to bullying was: Breaking the silence. No other solution was discussed in any of the articles around the three cases and that is why there is only one theme in this chapter.

## Breaking the silence

What all the three cases of Vangelis, Artemis and Helen highlighted was the responsibility of those involved in bullying (victims and bystanders) to talk. In Kasimati's (2015) article about Vangelis Giakoumakis case with the title, *''Our Silence is the victory of his murderers'' (Kasimatis 2015)*, is suggested that everyone who knew Vangelis Giakoumakis should break the silence and speak. More specifically Kasimatis (2015) claims in his article in Kathimerini:

*''The silence surrounding Vangelis Giakoumakis' case is the ideal condition for the hypocrisy to flourish around the case''.* Kasimasits (2015) *also adds ''Those who have been angry with the injustice against Giakoumakis and all of us that allowed the society to break the life of Vangelis Yakoumakis with our silence - let's put an end to that and finally speak.''*

In Artemis' case, Giannarou (2015) also considers the ''breaking of silence'' as a good solution and characterizes in her article the decision of Artemis' parents to speak to the parents of the offenders as *''wise''*. Helen also adds *''I did what was right for two other girls-also victims -and me and spoke to a teacher about our problems with bullying.''*

To support how vital is the solution of breaking the silence in common sense I will mention some comments made by simple Greek citizens mentioned In Georgiopoulou's article (2015c) about Vangelis. More specifically, many locals were presented in the text to have wandered: *''Why didn't he say anything to the teachers or his parents?'' (Georgipoulou 2015c).* Furthermore, some others even expressed some extremist opinion claiming that *''there was no bullying''* because *''he would have*

*talked otherwise''*. However, the private investigator as introduced in Georgioupoulou's (2015c) article in Kathimerini answered ''*From my personal experience I know that the victims of bullying rarely speak about their sad experiences. Not even to their parents.''*

On the other hand, all three victims in the cases mentioned in Kathimerini (Vangelis, Artemis, and Helen) found the solution of ''breaking the silence'' problematic. More specifically, Artemis claimed:

''*When my parents were talking to the parents of the children who bullied me, the latter were immediately becoming defensive and refused that their child did that''* (Giannarou 2015).

Helen also is described in Fotiadi's (2015) text to have said:

''*When I decided to take the situation into my hands; I responded to a teacher to ask for help. However, the method he used made the situation even worse. He was shouting for one-hour towards the classroom, ending up turning everyone into my enemy.''* She continues saying that ''*the next days I was trying to speak with this teachers again, but he was turning his back on me.''* (Fotiadi 2015).

The situation was not different to Vangelis. As mentioned in Georgiopoulou (2015a), the former director of the dairy school of Ioannina tried to make Vangelis Giakoumakis open up and share his experiences. However, the answers that he got were *"Everything is fine''* and ''*Mr professor it is also my fault, I do not want them to get punished''.* From Vangelis answer, it is highlighted that the victims sometimes develop a strong emotional bond with the offenders and keep their silence as a way to protect their abusers. Consequently, according to all three cases breaking the silence might not always be a good solution to bullying.

The phenomenon to which all of the above were referring (Greek locals, private investigator, and the three victims) is that of ''silencing'' which is the difficulty in speaking about the experiences of bullying. However, according to Horton (2011, p. 173) victims and bystanders, find it challenging to speak not as an outcome of bullying, or because of their behavioral characteristics, but because of the institutional context of the school and the specific relations of power and hierarchies occurring there. Consequently, those power relations which hide behind ''the keeping and breaking of the silence'' could make the breaking of silence not a suitable solution sometimes (Horton 2011, p. 173)

All  the discussions of the victims in all 3 cases mentioned above were closer to the opinion of Horton (2011, p. 173) and further from the opinions of the Greek locals, the private investigator and the journalists (Georgiopoulou 2015a; Giannarou 2013), who suggested the breaking of the silence is a satisfying solution to bullying.

## Concepts of children and childhood

The themes for this chapter departed from the analytical question: ''In what ways have children and childhood been conceptualized according to Kathimerini?''. I was also interested to examine the subquestion ''Who are the responsible people to deal with bullying?''. After analyzing the articles in Kathimerini, it occurred that children were not muted and were still given voice in all three cases in Kathimerini. Furthermore, the articles recognized that children had both the agency to start a bullying incident, as well as to try to fight against it, as highlighted in Helen's case. However, in all three cases, the adults were perceived as more competent to deal with bullying, on behalf of the children. A further note that was made is that children were viewed as innately good (Mpistika 2015) and in some other articles, children were presented in the discussions as innately evil (Fotiadi 2015; Giannarou 2015). To sum up, the themes that occurred were: Children as innately good vs children as innately evil and children's voices. It has to be noted that under children's voices, the competence of adults is also discussed. Since the competence of adults departs from the discussion on children's voice and adds some comments on it, I did not want to put it in a separate chapter.

## Children's voices

Giannarou (2015) in her article in  Kathimerini highlights the thoughts of the teacher on what could be a solution to Artemis's victimization.  More specifically:
*''The teacher gathered the essays of the children and shuffled them. She had promised them complete anonymity and wanted to reassure even those who left their paper at the top, that even this would not betray their name. However, she immediately recognized Artemis's essay by her graphic character, as well as some minor mistakes in grammar due to her dyslexia. Violating the agreement she had made with her students, the teacher felt it right to inform the child's parents: she knew them, felt that they would want to know and that they were capable of handling it in the best way'' (Giannarou 2015).*

What is highlighted in the words of the journalist above (Giannarou 2015) is that the teacher considered the voice of the children important. That is why she gave the children the option to speak about their bullying experiences, by writing them down at a paper. In that way, we could see that children were not muted but could still express their beliefs on this topic.

However, one could also see that the teacher considers also the parents as more competent to deal with the problem of bullying. More specifically, the teacher in Giannarou's (2015) text is presented to have thought that the parents are so capable of dealing with the victimization of their daughter, that she needed to break the promise towards her students and Artemis. It is not mentioned anywhere in the text if the teacher even spoke to Artemis first before violating Artemis' privacy rights.

According to Vangelis Giakomaki's case who was now an adult (18 years old), it was still the older than him adults who were responsible for handling with his victimization inside the educational institution. As mentioned in Georgiopoulou's (2015a) article in Kathimerini:

*''Mr. Mantzaris himself admits that he had phoned a helpline to ask for advice on how he could help Vangelis to be more open. A teacher of the school contacted his parents in Crete (although Vangelis was an adult), who replied that they spoke with Vangelis, advised him and said there was no problem'' (Georgiopoulou 2015a)*

What is highlighted here is that Vangelis was given the opportunity to speak about which were those reasons and past experiences, that made him to be so closed and thoughtfull as a person. In that way, exactly like Artemis, Vangelis was not muted. He had the opportunity to speak about his bullying experiences with his parents if he wanted to. However, one can also see that neither the director Mr. Mantzaris, nor the teacher of the school spoke immediately to Vangelis Giakoumakis. On the other hand, they preferred to speak to his parents even though he was an adult. Even if it is not stated clear in the text, I think the reason that the director and the teacher spoke directly to the parents, was because they considered them responsible for their child's well being and because they believe that parents ought to protect their children.

Furthermore, a further article in Kathimerini (Kathimerini 2016) gives a very significant clue of how important the Greek society thinks is the role of adults in dealing with bullying. More specifically, many people were involved in Giakoumakis case, like for example the Cretan gang who caused physical and psychological damage to Vangelis and were suspicious of leading to his death. However, the Greek court

decided to punish only the former director of the dairy school of Ioannina, who lost his job because of the incident as Kathimerini (2016) informs in the article. Furthermore, the readers are informed in the same article (Kathierini 2016) that: ''a two-year imprisonment with a three-year suspension was imposed on the former director of the Dairy School about the case of unfortunate Vangelis Giaakoumakis because he was found guilty of a continuous duty infringement''. This decision indicates among others that the director was the one who had the biggest responsibility of dealing with the prevention of school bullying in Giakoumakis case.

In Helen's case and more specifically in Fotiadi's (2015) article in Kathimerini, it is described in the text that Helen had the opportunity to not only speak about her bullying experiences but also to do something about them:

''When I decided to take the situation into my hands; I responded to a teacher to ask for help. However, the method he used made the situation even worse. He was shouting for one-hour towards the classroom, ending up turning everyone into my enemy.'' She continues saying that ''the next days I was trying to speak with this teachers again, but he was turning his back on me.'' (Fotiadi 2015).

One can see here that Helen was not an innocent muted child. On the contrary, she had enough agency to realize the bad situation she was in and do something to help herself and the other students that were suffering from bullying. Furthermore, one can see that her voice was heard the first time by one of the teachers. However, even in that case, the adults were perceived as more competent than the children to deal with bullying. The reason I claim this is because Helen did not speak to the offenders or to other children about bullying, but preferred to speak to a teacher and ask him to solve the problem of bullying.


## Children as innately good/evil

The document that was the departure to form this theme was Mpistika's (2015) article in Kathimerini. Mpistika's (2015) writing was quite significant because it had the ''tilefos signature'' of Kathimerini newspaper. The Tilefos signature means that the newspaper agrees with the writings, which gives the article a further prestige as well as a greater responsibility for the writers since it does not reflect only the personal views but also the opinion of the newspaper. What was written about Vangelis Giakoumaki's case was:

*''Bullying is a disease of cowardice and malignancy, with offenders, who are at a tender and carefree age period, exactly like the innocent victims. All children are special under God's eyes. However, some of them were a victim of bad luck''* (Mpistika 2015).

With this quote, the journalist Mpistika (2015) sees bullying ''as a disease'' and takes the responsibility away from the offenders and the victims of bullying. According to Mpistika (2015), all children are ''special under god's eyes'', they are ''innocent'' and ''at a tender and carefree period of their lives''. What Mpistika (2015) defines as bad luck which turns the innocent children, both victims and offenders, into behaving in a way that is not appropriate to *''their tender and carefree age''* is the ''disease of bullying which turns children into cowards and malignants''. It is not clear if Mpistika (2015) thinks literally that bullying is an actual biological disease with those symptoms, but maybe she speaks metaphorically about a societal disease.

One of the reason's I mentioned this quote is because Kathimerini considers it to be an important article, by putting the tilefos signature on it. However, the major reason I highlighted it is because it indicated Mpistika's (2015) views on childhood. According to the quote children are innately good (Mpistika 2015). This opinion of the journalist Mpistika (2015) agrees with the philosophy of Jacques Rousseau. If we accept that Mpistika (2015) viewed bullying as a societal disease which turns the innocent children into corrupted, then we could conclude that Mpistika (2015) conceptualized childhood according to Rousseu's theories. It has to be reminded that Rousseau viewed children as innocent by nature and was opposed to the puritan opinion/ Christian thought that children are innately evil and wild. According to him, children needed to be protected by a society which corrupts them (Kehily 2013, p.80).

However, the other two cases viewed children as innately evil. A comment which supports a view that children are evil comes from Artemis' father as introduced in the text of Giannarou's (2015) article in Kathimerini who claims: *''Artemis was an easy target because she was chubby and due to her dyslexia a not so good student and you know that children are cruel''.* What Artemis' father refers to is a phrase well known and often used in Greece *''that children are cruel'' (Giannarou 2015).* This phrase is often used when referring to an action made by a child which weakens once again the concept that children are innocent. The verb *''you know''* emphasizes that most Greeks have heard before the phrase ''that children are cruel'' and some of them think thus that children are not innocent and are innately cruel. According to Artemis'

father as presented in Giannarou's (2015) text: ''children are in a constant search for *an easy target''.*

Fotiadi' s (2015) article on Helen's case also agrees with that idea and claims that: *''the cruel students are in a constant search for an easy target''.* Helen as mentioned in Fotiadi (2015) when asked in an interview why students search for an easy target she responded *''Because they need to feel better for themselves, by humiliating and diminishing others''* and moved on to no further explanations.

# DISCUSSION

In this thesis, I have examined how the causes, the consequences, and the solutions of bullying are discussed in three bullying cases presented in Kathimerini. A further examination was on how bullying is defined and how childhood and children are conceptualized in the three prementioned cases. It has to be noted that all of those questions and subquestions were answered after the completion of the analysis of this thesis. Before, moving to the summary and discussion of the analysis I would like also to make some general comments on this thesis. What was suggested by my analysis was that there was a truly massive interest in Greece both by the Greek researchers and the Greek Press about bullying and its prevention especially after Vangelis Giakoumakis death in the year 2015. Furthermore, after the literature review and the search Kathimerini's articles, it was highlighted that the interest on bullying was very recent compared with the rest western countries and EU members.

At first, this thesis set out to examine which were the causes of school bullying according to the Greek Press. The opinions on that issue emphasized the behavioral characteristics of those involved considering that bullying is something that occurs in abnormal children. As abnormal were seen the children that had better or worse grades and height/weight than the norm or a different origin. Furthermore, one could be seen as abnormal if they were not obedient to a certain gender and cultural roles like being girly for example in Helen's case or being tough in Vangelis case. It has to be noted that this cultural background in Vangelis case was used mostly to emphasize the abnormality of Vangelis towards his tough and harsh cultural background, and not so much the appearance of bullying or the behaviors of the offenders. In all three cases, bullies were not discussed as abnormal but as guardians of the normality.

Furthermore, the consequences of bullying were discussed in all three cases to be destructive for the victim and sometimes even its family. Bullying caused severe psychological damages like insomnia, depression and suicidal thoughts to the victims. It also led to long periods of stress for the family. Severe was also the physical damages caused by bullying, as it was the reason for Vangelis death and a threat to Artemis' life.

In addition to, a question that I examined was what could be a solution to bullying according to the Greek press. In all three bullying cases, it was discussed that talking to an adult about the victimization (breaking the silence) and asking for help could be a good answer to bullying. However, the children considered this suggestion

of ''breaking the silence'' as problematic. The reason they believed that, was because there were power relations inside the institution that could not be surpassed. However, none of the journalists and the researchers in the press considered those power related obstacles, before offering this problematic solution to bullying.

A further question that this analysis departed from was how children and childhood were conceptualized through the Greek press. As expressed in Mpistika's (2015) article in Kathimerini, childhood was viewed as a period of innocence. Mpistika (2015) claimed the idea that children are ''tender'' by nature and are destroyed by the corruption of the society. However, the parents of the children expressed the ideas that children are not innocent as many people think. On the opposite, they said that ''children are evil'' and are in a constant search for victims to prove and satisfy their dominance among others.

If I had to make some further elaboration on Greek childhood I would say that children in Greece seemed to have been aware of the problem of bullying. One could see that in two of the three cases the children knew that their experiences was not something that they should be ashamed of and asked for help. The only person that kept his bullying experiences as a secret and suffered by them was Vangelis Giakoumakis. Unfortunately, he might have not even been aware of what bullying is since he did not mention anything about the term bullying in any of the articles in Kathimerini. The stance he kept towards bullying contributed in a negative way and led indirectly to his death. This indicates how important it is to provide seminars and make most people know more about bullying. According now to the Greek Press, it is encouraging that they show all of this interest on this topic and that they give voice to children and families who suffered from this problem. This makes me think that the Greek media appreciates childhood and knows that children have equal important problems as adults that need to be focused on by the Greek society.

Furthermore, I examined which behaviors were defined as bullying according to the texts of the three cases. What was highlighted was that the focus was only on one aspect of bullying leaving a very big part of it outside of the definition. In that sense, the articles in Kathimerini focused only on the direct forms of physical and verbal violence like ''name-calling''  and did not give attention to indirect forms like ''spreading of rumors.''

Now that I have described the empirical data of this thesis' analysis, I would like to depart from this last paragraph and make some comments.  The recent and

massive interest in bullying in Greece was in the opposite direction of the new social studies and followed mostly the Olweus' paradigm 1. More specifically, the discussions in Kathimerini treated victims as abnormal, gave more emphasis on the direct aggression of the individuals and left the indirect forms of bullying on the outside.

I agree that direct forms of either physical or verbal violence are important, however less visible indirect forms of bullying like '' spreading of rumors, exclusion, isolation and note passing'' (Horton 2011, p. 50) are equally important. The aim which is to deeply and truly understand bullying and be able to spot it and deal with it could be achieved easier if all the parts of it were included in the research without leaving significant parts of it (such as the indirect forms) on the outside. Consequently, I consider this topic of indirect bullying to be a good topic for further research specifically in the Greek context and a topic that needs to be taken more seriously into consideration in the future in every country in general.

A further suggestion that I would like to propose as future research, is to examine not only the press but also further data material. There are some interesting documents that the Greek society offers, such as the government's policy and the NGO brochures. I would be interested in searching for them if the time and space, available in a future thesis, allow it.

A further aspect that I would not want to leave undiscussed before closing this thesis is that the research conducted so far in Greece on bullying was only quantitative and according to the first paradigm (Olweus). This preference towards focusing on the behavioral and individual characteristics of the offenders (being aggressive) and the victims (being shy), led to the problematic solution of ''breaking the silence'' to which all of the children in the three cases were opposed. I claim that this problem could be avoided if the focus was instead on the institution surrounding those involved in bullying because the hidden power negotiations which led children to be silent might had been revealed.

As a conclusion, by broadening the kind of research that is conducted on this problem (not only quantitative and according to the first paradigm) along the new paradigm, could deepen and improve the understanding of this phenomena and form a knowledge base for the research and press to use in their articles in the future. Maybe in that way, the solution to bullying, which so many researchers were looking to all that years and never came, could finally come.

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