THE NORMALIZATION OF EVERYDAY VIOLENCE: RIGHTS, EDUCATION, 
AND VIOLENCE MANAGEMENT IN SALVADORAN CHILDREN’S LIVES

By

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>CONNA</td>
<td><em>Consejo Nacional de la Niñez y de la Adolescencia</em> (National Council on Childhood and Adolescence)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IACHR</td>
<td>Inter-American Commission on Human Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISNA</td>
<td><em>Instituto Salvadoreño para el Desarrollo Integral de la Niñez y la Adolescencia</em> (Salvadoran Institute for the Integral Development of Childhood and Adolescence)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEPINA</td>
<td><em>Ley de Protección Integral de Niñez y Adolescencia</em> (Law on the Integral Protection of Childhood and Adolescence)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PNPNA</td>
<td><em>Política Nacional de Protección Integral de la Niñez y de la Adolescencia de El Salvador</em> (National Policy for the Integral Protection of Childhood and Adolescence in El Salvador)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNCRC</td>
<td>United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child</td>
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This dissertation examines the influence of law, policy and education for children ages 8 to 11 who grow up in a context where violence is omnipresent. This research focuses on the daily context of violence, how children and caregivers live with violence, and the factors within the daily context that lead to variations in these experiences. I also explore how caregivers can prevent and mitigate violence. This study answers three research questions: (1) what are Salvadoran’s conceptions of violence and its consequences for children; (2) how do children learn about communal violence within their developmental niche; and (3) what effect does persistent communal violence have on children’s well-being. I used an exploratory, mixed-methods research design, utilizing four methodologies to understand the experience of children ages 8 to 11 and the factors that affect well-being in a context of pervasive violence: (1) participant observations with third- and fourth- graders and their teachers in two public schools in the greater San Salvador metropolitan area; (2) interviews with school educators and professionals who work with children in El Salvador; (3) a policy analysis of a Salvadoran law on the rights and responsibilities of children; and (4) an ethnographic content analysis of three Salvadoran newspapers. A main finding of this research is that the implementation of
global rights discourse in the local context affect definitions of children, violence and well-being, leading to varying understandings within Salvadoran society. Through an exploration of persistent violence in children’s everyday context, this study found that the normalization of violence is both a cause and consequence of violence. The government, institutions, and individuals employ prevention and mitigation tactics to manage violence and encourage children’s resilience and well-being. Although these tactics aim to counteract the normalization of violence, mediating factors contribute to the continuation of violence. The findings from this dissertation research contribute to theories in the anthropology of violence, children, childhoods, and Latin America on children’s socialization in a context of violence, the processes of violence and its management, and the role of culture change.
I arrive at the school in a car and am dropped off in front prior to the first bell of the day. The gate is open and children are arriving at the school by walking alone and with adults, being dropped off in cars, and getting off public transportation buses. The guard is standing at the gate and some teachers are close to the entrance of the gate. The students enter the school, going into the courtyard area at the center of the building.

7:15am The bell rings and the students line up by class in the courtyard. I stand behind the students next to the teachers. The teacher whose classroom I am observing today talks to the students, leads them in a prayer, and says that they need to work hard in class. The teacher tells them that at recess they should not use violence, should use the facilities and play without violence. The students then go to their classes. I see the students punching each other in the classroom. A mother comes to the classroom with a student and talks to the teacher. The teacher leaves the classroom.

7:38am A student comes into the classroom late.

7:41am Two boys are pushing each other.

7:42am The teacher comes back into the classroom and says that there was an incident of violence that they will have to investigate. The teacher says, “If you don’t want to be involved in problems, try to avoid them.” The teacher says that they will investigate what happened outside two days ago that they don’t want the students to be “bad people” and
“aggressive”. The teacher says that they need to avoid these bad “sentiments” towards their companions and that the teachers are trying to teach them “values”.

7:51am The teacher tells the students that the next activity is a type of game and that they should form pairs. (Edited Fieldnote)

Introduction

This dissertation examines the influence of law, policy and education for children ages 8 to 11 who grow up in a context where violence is omnipresent. By violence, I mean the “exercise of power to harm” (Henry 2000, 20). Everyday violence includes “the routine practices and expressions of interpersonal aggressions that serve to normalize violence at the micro-level” (Bourgois 2001). This dissertation discusses both actual and possible violence in the everyday. To incorporate the different types of violence that occur in the everyday, I utilize the concept of communal violence, which is “violence in communities where every child has witnessed or expects to witness violence and has been or expects to be violated” (Apfel and Simon 1996, 4–5). It is appropriate to use the everyday as a framework to explore how communal violence touches all spaces in the ordinary (Kelly 2008; Hermez 2012), since violence not only impacts those directly affected but also family, friends, and communities (Robben and Nordstrom 1995; Korbin 2003; Dickson-Gómez 2004; Levanon, Flamm-Oren, and Kahn-Hoffmann 2005).

In the research project, I will identify locally salient conceptualizations of violence by adults and children. I also look at local understandings of resilience and well-being, since resilience “depends both on the magnitude of the adversity – or risk – and the way one defines successful functioning” (Fraser and Richman 2001, 190) and the cultural understanding of the concept of well-being influences the experience of it
An aim of this project is to understand local ethnopsychological conceptions and goals of healthy development and well-being in this context.

One way that violence enters the everyday is through its anticipation, which also includes a level of uncertainty, since the future itself is never fully known (Adams, Murphy, and Clarke 2009a; Hermez 2012). This study looks at how caregivers in the school setting anticipate and manage violence since caregivers teach children “how to redefine the world” (Garbarino 2001, 372). Dickson-Gómez (2004) states that anthropology “has not been applied either to local or to national efforts to prevent violence” (157), but anthropology can provide data to these efforts by “documenting the everyday cruelties, rumors, fears, and methods of resolving conflicts” (157). Furthermore, there has been a call for research on the role of parents and schools on “the effects of violence exposure” (Feerick and Prinz 2003, 304). By using the developmental niche framework, this project addresses the effect of violence on children, on their caregivers, as well as on their daily settings particularly in the school. While there is a focus on the school day as the main setting of this research, I also wanted to get a broader understanding of violence in the lives of children. Therefore, I broadly document the daily context of violence, how children and caregivers live with violence, children’s and caregivers’ reactions to it, factors that lead to variations in these experiences, and the role of caregivers and cultural institutions for children’s socialization into a context of violence. Additionally, I identify factors that affect the locally salient definitions of violence and well-being. This study will contribute to both ethnographic and applied
theories (LeVine 2000) by identifying the factors and methods that can mitigate the effect of violence and contribute to resilience (Apfel and Simon 1996).

Research Setting

I conducted this research in El Salvador because of the historically high rates of violence affecting the country, which follows a trend of high rates of criminal and everyday violence replacing political violence in the region (Prevost and Vanden 2011; Moodie 2006; Zilberg 2007; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2011). For example, homicide rates in El Salvador were 72.2 per 100,000 in 2011, 42.7 per 100,000 in 2012 and 41.3 per 100,000 in 2013, followed by an increase with the homicide rate in 2014 being 64.2 per 100,000 (“UNODC Statistics” 2016; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2013). Due to the omnipresent violence, the greater metropolitan San Salvador area was a suitable site for research which explores the role of violence in children’s lives and the daily school context. With a pattern of multi-level violence, research in San Salvador contributes to understanding the effect of violence on children and how school-based caregivers and institutions can prevent and mitigate its effects when violence has been the norm for both caregivers as well as for children.

Both criminal and interpersonal violence surround the everyday context of the research. As a professional told me, “It is something that is constantly lived everyday.” During the research period, I saw gang tags on buildings and walls, including the walls of the school fieldsites. Criminal violence was also present in the news media on the television, radio, and in newspapers, with headlines continually including a violent event which occurred in the country. For example, on any given day, a newspaper could be opened and an average of three news stories would discuss cases of homicide. Further, I
also witnessed the consequences of violence. For example, I saw a homicide crime scene that included the exposed victim, while running weekly errands around San Salvador one afternoon. Security measures were also part of the everyday. Almost every building and home had barbed wire or protruding glass shards along the fences, walls, and roofs. Civilian security guards carrying shotguns stood outside of hospitals, schools, universities, government offices, and almost every business including coffee shops, grocery stores, restaurants, gas stations, corner stores, and other shops. Groups of police regularly patrolled areas or rode in the back of the police pick-up trucks wearing ski masks. These security measures were daily reminders of the insecurity and violence in the country. It is under this context that I set out to look into violence and the factors that affect it within the school setting.

**Research Setting**

This project uses a modified person-centered ethnography to understand individual perspectives and experiences, institutional roles, and the cultural context (Hollan 2001) in the process of violence. Consistent with this approach, I utilize a developmental niche framework (Super and Harkness 1997; Harkness et al. 2005) to examine the role of violence in the school setting through interactions within schools and the larger cultural context. I used an exploratory, mixed-methods research design, utilizing four methodologies to understand the role of policy and education for children ages 8 to 11 and the factors that affect well-being in a context of pervasive violence: (1) participant observations with third- and fourth-grade students and their teachers in two public schools in the greater San Salvador metropolitan area; (2) interviews with school educators and professionals who work with children in El Salvador; (3) a policy analysis
of a Salvadoran law on the rights and responsibilities of children; and (4) an ethnographic content analysis of three Salvadoran newspapers.

Research Questions

The aim of this dissertation was to understand the process and experience of communal violence for children in San Salvador, El Salvador, as well as the factors that affect these experiences. To achieve this aim, this study answers three research questions. In the first question (RQ1) I examined Salvadoran’s conceptions of violence and its consequences for children. In particular, I was interested in understanding the definitions of violence and its consequences for professionals who work with children, particularly in the school setting. In answering RQ1, this dissertation examines the locally salient definitions of violence, well-being, and resilience as well as the perceived effects of violence on children. I also identify the factors that affect these definitions to understand the intra-cultural variations. The local conceptions identified in this research question inform the answers to the second and third research questions.

In the second research question, how do children learn about communal violence within their developmental niche, I examined the effect of caregivers’ interactions with children in the school, the role of daily activities in the institutional setting, and the role of the cultural setting on children’s understandings of violence. While I was interested in exploring children’s daily activities within the school setting, I was also interested in understanding the broader range of factors and experiences that played a role in children’s understandings of violence. Therefore, I also explore the role of institutional policies and practices, as well as the larger Salvadoran cultural environment, on the developmental niche and on the child. Since children’s understanding of violence plays a
role in their experiences (Hill and Jones 1997; Dickson-Gómez 2002a), this project identifies the ways that children learn about violence and the factors that affect this process.

Through an exploration of the factors that affect the context and experiences of violence within children’s lives, the third research question asks what effect does persistent communal violence have on children’s well-being. In this dissertation I examine the spectrum of children’s reactions to violence and pay particular attention to the factors that affect and support children’s well-being within daily school settings and the broader Salvadoran cultural context.

Understanding the role of policy was an emergent question. While children’s rights were discussed in pilot research in relation to violence and children in El Salvador, policy emerged in the dissertation data as an important aspect for understandings of violence, its consequences, its role in children’s lives, and the behaviors and interactions of children’s caregivers particularly in the school setting to address violence. Due to this emphasis, investigating the historical context and role of policy in regards to children’s daily lives in schools in a context of violence emerged as an additional objective of the research and further informed the research questions.

Summary of Chapters

This dissertation answers the three research questions over the next six chapters. Chapter 2 describes the anthropological literature that provided the theoretical and conceptual framework. First, the chapter examines literature within the anthropology of violence. In particular, the chapter discusses anthropological research of everyday violence and the roles of risk, anticipation, and uncertainty on experiences of violence.
Next, I explore anthropological research on children in regards to theories of children as being and becoming, the role of rights, play and school in children’s lives, as well as theories of socialization. The chapter discusses the conceptual underpinnings of the research in psychological anthropology with a focus on the developmental niche framework. I discuss research on children and violence with an examination of the importance of context and children’s roles in the process of violence. Finally, the chapter provides an overview of prominent themes in anthropological research on Latin America. Culture change and inequality relate to these themes as well as the study of violence in Latin America. Overall, the literature review chapter demonstrates how violence crosses different fields of research in anthropology.

Chapter 3 describes the context and methodology of this dissertation research. The chapter explores the research setting through a historical overview of Latin America and El Salvador, including the history of violence. I describe a pilot and planning phase conducted prior to the dissertation as well as the two main field sites for the research. This contextualizes the setting in which the research took place. Finally, Chapter 3 details the data collection and analysis methodology including participant observations in the two field sites, interviews with educators and professionals who work with children, a policy analysis of a Salvadoran law which stipulates the rights and responsibilities of children, and an ethnographic content analysis of three Salvadoran newspapers.

Chapter 4 explores the Salvadoran law which stipulates children’s rights, Ley de Protección Integral de Niñez y Adolescencia (Law on the Integral Protection of Childhood and Adolescence; LEPINA). The chapter discusses the global convention on children’s rights and tracks its implementation in the local Salvadoran setting through this
law and its related policies. In this chapter, I argue that the implementation of this law affects local definitions of the child and violence. I also describe how the law impacts the daily experiences of children within their developmental niche, particularly in regards to how caregivers interpret the law within children’s everyday lives.

Chapter 5 continues to explore local understandings of violence. The chapter considers the types of violence that are present in the Salvadoran discourse on violence, particularly as understood through a media analysis of Salvadoran newspapers. In this chapter, I describe that while the types of violence described in the broader cultural discourse, particularly homicide and gang violence, were also discussed in relation to children within their daily lives in the school, there were different types of violence that were most often discussed by participants in interviews and present during participant observations in Salvadoran schools. These topics mainly included children’s aggressive behaviors in the classroom as well as during their play. After describing the different types of violence, the chapter explores the local explanations of the consequences of violence for Salvadoran children. I argue that the normalization of violence is both a cause and consequence of violence and affects all levels of a child’s developmental niche in this context.

Chapter 6 discusses the explicit and implicit tactics that Salvadorans utilize to manage violence, particularly in regards to the violence that children experience. I argue that there are two types of tactics: prevention tactics to prevent future violence and mitigation tactics to minimize the effects of violence on children. Mediating factors that limit the ability to manage violence are also discussed. These management tactics affect the way that Salvadoran children learn about and experience violence. The chapter also
examines how the tactics work to support children’s resilience and both current and future well-being.

Chapter 7 concludes the dissertation by summarizing the research findings from Chapters 4, 5, and 6 in relation to each of the three research questions. The chapter then explores the theoretical implications for anthropological research on violence, children, and Latin America. Policy and programmatic implications are also examined both in the local Salvadoran context as well as other settings also experiencing persistent everyday violence. Lastly, the chapter describes topics and questions for future research on communal violence and children stemming out of this dissertation research.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The anthropology of violence, anthropology of children and childhood and the anthropology of Latin America are central to this dissertation. This chapter explores the anthropology of violence as it relates to how violence enters the everyday and its effects. In the first section, I pay particular attention to the concepts of risk, uncertainty, and anticipation as they relate to violence. Next, the chapter reviews the anthropological research on children and childhood to provide a context for understanding violence and children. I detail the historical trajectory of theories on children and childhood as it relates to this dissertation, including the socialization of children as well as the role of globalization on the lives of children. The chapter also provides an overview of theories in psychological anthropology that guided the development of the current project, including the concept of person and the developmental niche framework. Finally, after discussing violence and children, this chapter broadly addresses themes from the anthropology of Latin America, ending with an overview of the anthropological research on violence in Latin America. Understanding how violence has been explored in different fields of research in anthropology was important for the development of the research described in this dissertation by contributing to the theoretical and conceptual framework guiding the three research questions: (1) what are Salvadoran’s conceptions of violence and its consequences for children; (2) how do children learn about communal violence
within their developmental niche; and (3) what effect does persistent communal violence have on children’s well-being?

**Anthropology of Violence**

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**Violence in the Everyday**

The anthropological study of violence has explored the production and consumption of violence. Anthropologists have looked at the involvement of individuals from different points of view – the perpetrator, victim, and witness – since each of these participants bring their own particular perspective to the violent events (Weiss and Six-Hohenbalken 2011). With these variations in mind, scholars examined violence in terms of its causes, understanding the process of violence in the local context, and the lived experience of violence (Penglase 2014; Schröder and Schmidt 2001). Although the anthropological study of violence has broadly identified and examined four types of violence – political, structural, symbolic, and everyday (Bourgois 2001), violence is a complex process, that includes multiple actors, types of violence, as well as spaces (Weiss and Six-Hohenbalken 2011; Penglase 2014; Kelly 2008). This complexity, though, leads to difficulty in the categorization of violence (Das 2007).

When violence, which is “the exercise of power to harm” (Henry 2000, 20), is omnipresent in a community, the experience of it enters the everyday. The definition of everyday violence is “the routine practices and expressions of interpersonal aggression that serve to normalize violence at the microlevel” (Bourgois 2001, 8–9). Anthropological research on violence in the everyday has shown that when violence is continuous, aspects of it may become part of the daily routine for individuals living in the context (Penglase 2014; Vigh 2008). Although it may be part of the normality in the
everyday, this does not mean that the individuals who live in a violent context think this is an acceptable normality. Instead, as Vigh (2008) notes, “it may become normal in the sense that is what there is most, but it does not become normal in the sense that this is how things should be” (11). The acknowledgement that the concept of normality has this variance in meaning is important for understanding how individuals in violent contexts respond to the violence.

Violence, Risk, Uncertainty, and Anticipation

Anthropologists have examined continual violence through the theoretical framework of risk, anticipation, and uncertainty. In this framework, the definition of risk is “calculated uncertainty” (Boholm 2003, 167). To understand risks, individuals look at their context and analyze what elements can affect their lives or what they value. Since these risks are only possibilities, risk, then, entails uncertainty (Boholm 2003). When violence is constant, uncertainty is then part of the everyday context (Golden 2005). Anticipation brings in temporality because it includes the calculation of risks based on understandings of the past and present as well as an individual’s socialization in their cultural context (Eddy and Hart 2012; Adams, Murphy, and Clarke 2009; Poli 2010), because “the future is embedded in the past; it is the projection of the past through the present” (Poli 2010, 8). In this way, “anticipation is not just a reaction, but a way of actively orienting oneself temporally” (Adams, Murphy, and Clarke 2009, 247) to respond to violence.

As an active positioning within the local context, individuals enact devices or tactics to address and manage violence (Samimian-Darash 2013; Goldstein 2013; Adams, Murphy, and Clarke 2009; Jeganathan 2000; Penglase 2014). Just as violence is complex
and occurs at multiple levels, tactics employed in response to violence are also multiple and occur on different levels (Goldstein 2013; Weiss and Six-Hohenbalken 2011). For those who can expect violence to occur in their future, “the ‘tactics of anticipation’ are part of their everyday lives” (Jeganathan 2000, 124). It is through these tactics, that violence in the everyday is both actual and possible, even when violence is not currently occurring (Das 2007; Jeganathan 2000). I utilize the concepts of anticipation, risk, and violence to explore what happens when everyday violence is omnipresent and how individuals, institutions, and governments anticipate, address, and manage violence.

**Anthropology of Children and Childhood**

Children as both Being and Becoming

The anthropology of children and childhood stems out of two historical trajectories in anthropology, one from research out of the United States and the other by researchers from Great Britain (LeVine and New 2008a; Montgomery 2009; LeVine 2010a; LeVine 2007). Anthropological research on childhood which is out of Great Britain aims to study the everyday lives of children within their cultural contexts (LeVine and New 2008a). A part of understanding children’s everyday lives is that they do not live in isolation. Children’s interactions with other children, as well as adults, are important for understanding their experiences (Montgomery 2009; Schwartzman 2001). In the United States, the anthropology of children focused on the topic of child development, both biologically and psychologically (Montgomery 2009; LeVine 2010a; LeVine 2007). Due to the nature of children’s lives, their “local manifestations, the ways in which societies adapt to their youngest members, the values they instill in them, and how they develop are all aspects of children’s lives that need to be studied and
understood if we are to learn how children grow up” (Montgomery 2009, 238). After an overview of the historical trends in the study of children and childhoods, this section describes globalization and rights as they concern the lives of children. Next, it discusses the socialization of children with a particular focus on research out of psychological anthropology. Finally, this section describes how anthropology has explored the issue of violence and children.

Anthropological research on children in the first half of the 20th century investigated the entire span of childhood cross-culturally (LeVine and New 2008b), which demonstrated the cross-cultural variation in the lives of children, including the topics of childrearing (Mead 2008; Malinowski 2008; Spiro 1958), socialization (Spiro 1958), expectations for child behavior at different stages of childhood (Mead 2008; Fortes 2008; Benedict 2008), and education (Fortes 2008). Through their research, anthropologists noted that cross-culturally there are different understandings of stages of childhood as well as the abilities and behaviors of children in these stages (Mead 2008; Fortes 2008; Benedict 2008). One example of this type of research is the Six Cultures Study, which used systematic natural observations of children ages three to 11 years old in their natural environments (Whiting and Whiting 1975; Whiting and Whiting 2008). In this research, they found that some behaviors, such as altruism among females, were elements of all six cultures. They also found that some behaviors occur in cultures with similar cultural and social organization (Whiting and Whiting 1975).

Current topics in anthropological research on children and childhood continue to look at the spread of activities that children engage in as well as the meaning of these activities (LeVine 2007) for their families, communities, and the child, as well as for the
child’s development. There has been particular focus on play (Bock 2002; Gaskins 2008; Ito 2008; Kremer-Sadlik, Izquierdo, and Fatigante 2010; Lancy 2007; Tucker and Young, 2005) and schooling (New 2008; Kusserow 2004; Tobin, Wu, and Davidson 1989; Holloway 2000; Cheney 2007; Benjamin 1997; Wortham 2005; Dyrness 2012).

Children spend much of their time in play (Bock 2002; Gaskins 2008; Ito 2008; Lancy 2007; Wenger 2008). Research has demonstrated gender differences for how much a child plays, where a child goes to play, as well as what type of play a child engages in (Gaskins 2008; Wenger 2008; Bock 2002). Anthropologists have looked at play in relation to preparation for adult roles (Gaskins 2008; Bock 2002). For example, in his work in Botswana, Bock (2002) found that girls would “play pound” (180), where they used a stick to simulate the pounding grain with a mortar and pestle, a skill-based female activity.

Globalization of mass schooling has been one of the biggest recent changes for children in many parts of the world (LeVine and New 2008a; Weisner and Lowe 2005). Research has investigated schooling throughout different stages of childhood, from preschools (New 2008; Kusserow 2004; Tobin, Wu, and Davidson 1989; Holloway 2000), elementary schools (Cheney 2007; Benjamin 1997), to high schools (Wortham 2005; Dyrness 2012). Anthropological research has found that schooling helps in the development of children’s identities through different structures, activities, and styles of teaching (Kusserow 2004; Dyrness 2012; Holloway 2000). For example, Dyrness (2012) studied the formation of civic identity in El Salvador by observing two high schools: a public school and a school with a U.S. curriculum. She found that through the different curricula and daily activities, the children learned two different types of identities, a pro-
North American identity and a pro-local civic identity. Research on schooling as well as other activities in which children spend much of their time, like play, demonstrated the role of these activities for children’s experiences and development.

Rights and Children

Globalization has affected the lives of children cross-culturally as seen above with the role of schooling. The movement of rights discourse into different cultural contexts as a product of globalization is another factor affecting the daily lives of children (Cowan, Dembour, and Wilson 2001; Montgomery 2001). Globalization is not only the movement of people, items, and concepts into a local context, but also “the local and regional adaptations to and resistances against these flows” (Lewellen 2002, 7–8). Global concepts, such as rights, then, can enter and affect local contexts in different ways (Lewellen 2002; Cowan, Dembour, and Wilson 2001; Montgomery 2001). Due to this, researchers argued that research should look at factors such as rights both within the local context, but also as part of a transnational process (Cowan, Dembour, and Wilson 2001; Montgomery 2001).

Anthropologists have considered the globalization of the rights of children, particularly after the introduction of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (Valentin and Meinert 2009; Reynolds, Nieuwenhuys, and Hanson 2006; Montgomery 2009; James 2007; Giordano 2010; Burr 2006; Theis 2001; Terrio 2008; Panter-Brick 2002). Children’s own priorities may not match the policies for an “ideal” childhood under this international rights framework, which may deny children’s own agency (Reynolds, Nieuwenhuys, and Hanson 2006; James 2007; Burr 2006; Terrio 2008). For example, Terrio (2008) looked at undocumented immigrant street youth in
France and policies set up to protect children’s rights. After an arrest, the juvenile justice system tried to protect and provide for these youth by pursuing criminal networks, finding the children’s families, and placing the children in emergency shelters. The children, though, had their own priorities and would provide false identification to avoid a return to their families, would leave group homes, as well as not appear in court for their trials to remain on the streets. This research demonstrated that local perspectives of childhood do not always match global definitions out of the UNCRC. The globalization of concepts and ideas including rights, as well as the local reaction to them, though, is an important aspect of children’s lives.

Socialization

Understanding socialization has been an important aspect of anthropological research in terms of understanding children’s roles in and learning the cultural norms of a group. Socialization is the process by which a novice becomes a member of the group by learning cultural models of how to think, feel, and behave in the expected ways of a group (Ochs 1986b; Bock 1994; Quinn 2005; Lebra 1994; Ochs 1990). The investigation of this process can provide information on how cultural symbols and models become meaningful for an individual and influence behavior (LeVine 1984).

Socialization is a complex process that can create intra-cultural variations as well as inter-cultural differences (Hallowell 1967; Spiro 1951), because the process of learning is not uniform within the culture. The context of socialization is an important aspect affecting children’s behavior. In examining the learning environment, research has shown that parents transmit their culture’s values to children through the assignment of tasks as well as punishing disobedience (Whiting and Whiting 1975; Barnouw 1985).
While there are universals in the behavior and socialization of children, variations occur in response to different learning environments (Whiting and Whiting 1975).

Socialization includes both continuities and discontinuities between the cultures of the older and younger generations (Lebra 1994) because socialization is a system of inputs interacting with one another (Super and Harkness 1997). There are also multiple types of socialization occurring throughout development (LeVine 1982; Lebra 1994). For example, Lebra (1994) found that two types of socialization were occurring in her research in Japan. The first is boundary socialization which creates an understanding of spaces including interior/exterior and private/public. The second type was positional socialization which teaches the child the rules of their current and future roles in life.

As this section’s discussion of socialization research demonstrates, the context in which the child grows up is important for how the process of socialization occurs (Whiting and Edwards 1988; Weisner 1996; Super and Harkness 1997). The child’s environment includes the activities and practices which transmit cultural messages to the child (Harkness 1992; Super and Harkness 1997; Harkness et al. 2005). Both the child, their families, and other caretakers engage in these activities, which Weisner (2005; 2002) stated makes up the child’s developmental pathways. It is in these activities where the child learns cultural values, norms, emotions, and scripts (Weisner 1997; Weisner 2002).

Activity routines are an interactional process. Children are also active in the socialization process and are able to affect the process itself and its outcome (Super and Harkness 1997; Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco 2001; Rogoff 1990; Rogoff et al. 2007; Ochs 1986a). The interaction between the child and actors in an environment,
including caregivers and other experienced members of the group, socializes and guides children into membership in a culture (Whiting and Edwards 1988; Ochs 1986b). For example, Rogoff et al. (2007) provided ways that cultures can organize the participation and learning of the novice, including children actively observing and listening to daily activities, giving information to the child, and skill modeling and imitation. The nature of these interactions can vary cross-culturally as well as intra-culturally (Seymour 2004; Richman, Miller, and LeVine 2010).

Language is an important way in which members of a culture pass on messages to novices (Peters and Boggs 1986; Schieffelin and Ochs 1986). Language socialization refers to children learning both how to use language as well as the use of language as a tool for socializing (Miller and Hoogstra 1992; Ochs 1986b; Schieffelin and Ochs 1986; Ochs 1990). Acquiring language and speaking like a member is a central feature of the development process (Harkness 1992; Ochs and Schieffelin 1984). Language is also a way that children acquire cultural meanings including ethnotheories of emotion and self (LeVine 2010a; Harkness 1992; Ochs 1986a; Ochs 1986b; P. Miller, Fung, and Mintz 2010; Schieffelin and Ochs 1986).

Socialization through language occurs both through explicit directives as well as implicitly (Miller and Hoogstra 1992; Ochs 1990). Explicit language socialization includes the repetition of rules and norms, elicited imitation, and prompting (Clancy 1986; Ochs 1990; Demuth 1986; Ochs 1986b). For example, Demuth (1986) found that the Bausotho used prompting to help children to learn to recognize situations and to provide practice for the children in how to respond in these situations. An important part of the implicit nature of language socialization is that language is a symbolic system.
where both the content and the order of the discourse indexes other contexts and meanings including both past and future events (Miller and Hoogstra 1992; Ochs 1990). Implicit language socialization occurs through the creation of routines of speech, role playing, and teasing (Schieffelin 1986; Eisenberg 1986; Anderson 1986; Watson-Gegeo and Gegeo 1986; Miller 1986). All of these different methods of language socialization lead to variation in how the child learns as well as to what the child learns.

The objective of the socialization process is for a novice to become a member of the group by learning cultural models, or how to think, feel, and behave in the expected ways of a group (Ochs 1986a; Bock 1994; Quinn 2005; Lebra 1994; Ochs 1990). Although the process can vary, the outcomes of this process in all cultures is an adult who has learned the values and morals (Whiting and Whiting 1975; Benedict 1946; Ek 2009; Miller, Fung, and Mintz 2010; Abu-Lughod 1999; Kusserow 2004; Shweder 1991; Fong 2010), emotions (Benedict 1946; Lutz 1988; Briggs 2010; Fung 1999), types of self (Benedict 1946; Hallowell 1967; P. Miller, Fung, and Mintz 2010; Lebra 2010), and identities (Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco 2001; Ek 2009; Wortham 2005) of their culture. The socialization process is how individuals learn and internalize cultural models and schemes.

Schemas are the underlying frameworks of symbols that allow individuals to interpret and understand experiences (D’Andrade 1992). Since schemas are abstract representations, they are adaptive to the ways that “culture and psychology mutually affect each other” (D’Andrade 1995, 182). Individuals internalize schemas and it is this process of internalization that results in intra-cultural variation (Lindholm 2007). Investigating schema is a way of understanding how the interactions between the
experience of events and concepts in a particular historical context and the interpretation of these in the individual’s mind and habitus, influences an individual’s perceptions and behavior (Strauss 1992; D’Andrade 1992; Bourdieu 1977).

**Person and Values**

One cultural model is the understanding of the person. Cultural understandings of what a person is shape the self and thus the understanding of other persons (Geertz 1984). A person is the outcome of both cultural and biological processes (Worthman 1992), as a person is the embodied understanding of the culture as well as the values, morals, and ethos of a society (Lovell 2007; James 2008; Levy and Hollan 1998). The understanding of what a person is varies across cultures.

With a culture’s concept of the person, a culture may categorize an individual who does not meet the criteria of embodying that culture’s values, morals, and ethos as different or not as a person at all (Biehl 2005; Ewing 2000). This can occur because power structures knowledge and classifications (Moore and Sanders 2006; Bourdieu 1994). Looking at the relationship between local understandings of the context and the person have been important for the development of and analysis of research undertaken for this dissertation.

**Developmental Niche Model**

The developmental niche framework is one way to understand and analyze the cultural environment of the child (Super and Harkness 1997; Harkness et al. 2005). In this model (see Figure 1 which is adapted from Super and Harkness 1997 and Harkness et al. 2005), the child is at the core and interacts with three subsystems which make up the developmental niche: the social setting (including the actors that the child interacts with),
the psychology of the child’s caretakers (including the caretakers’ cultural models and schemas), and the practices or customs that provide the child with cultural messages. Each part of the environment interacts with each other, with the actively learning child, as well as with the larger cultural environment. The focus of the model is to take the child’s perspective and go out to the subsystems since the child not only interacts with their niche but also contributes to it (Harkness 1992; Super and Harkness 1997; Harkness et al. 2005). The developmental niche model has been used to look at topics such as schooling, sleep, emotion, health, literacy, and language development (Harkness et al. 2005).
Culture influences thoughts, behaviors, and understandings of the environment, including understandings of the person and values. The developmental niche framework is one way to model the influence of the context as well as these culturally influenced understandings on the child. This dissertation utilized the developmental niche framework to understand the relationships between the different aspects of the local environment on a child’s socialization into a context of violence. This study used the developmental niche model because of its focus on the child and the framework it provides for understanding a child’s experience of violence through their interactions with and within their developmental niche. This model also informed how conceptualizations of person and the child affect the child and their developmental niche, particularly in regards to the experience of violence. The following section examines how anthropology has dealt with the topic of children’s experiences in a context of violence.

Anthropology of Children and Violence

Anthropological researchers have looked at the role of the following types of violence in the lives of children: structural violence, punishment and abuse, gender-based violence, community violence, youth violence, gang violence, and political violence. Additionally, research on violence and children looked at children encompassing different roles in the process, as victims, witness, and perpetrators of violence. The discussion of the research in this section will highlight the following themes as they relate to violence: a child’s context, schooling, children’s rights, children’s agency, and socialization. As demonstrated in the review of anthropological research described earlier in this chapter, these themes are part of the broader theoretical discussions from the
anthropology of children and childhood. Finally, this section will examine how anthropology has looked at the impact of violence on children’s lives.

**Structural Violence**


Anthropologists have also looked at the definition of violence in a context of poverty. There is a debate in anthropology on whether parents’ response to the illness and deaths of their children in situations of poverty is neglect (Schep-Hughes 1987a; Schep-Hughes 1987b; Schep-Hughes 1992a; Einarsdóttir 2004; Howard and Millard 1997; Nations and Rebhun 1988). Schep-Hughes’ (1987a; 1987b; 1992a) research on child mortality in Northeast Brazil led her to conclude that poor mothers in areas with few resources and high rates of infant mortality have a different way of thinking and maternal strategy than the mother-infant bonding strategy as described in the biomedical literature. This different maternal strategy, she concluded, allowed the mothers to neglect sick children and allow them to die. These women then believed that it was a deficiency
in the child which led to death, not something that they did or did not do (Scheper-Hughes 1987a). Because the women were not attached to the child, she argued that the death was met with pity over grief (Scheper-Hughes 1987a; Scheper-Hughes 1992a). Other anthropologists who have looked at the strategies of parents who have few resources and face high infant and child mortality disagreed with Scheper-Hughes neglect theory (Einarsdóttir 2004; Howard and Millard 1997; Nations and Rebhun 1988). They instead argued that parents have strategies to prevent death, are attached to their child, and mourn the child’s death (Einarsdóttir 2004; Howard and Millard 1997; Nations and Rebhun 1988).

**Punishment and Abuse**

Children’s punishment has been a topic of interest in anthropology. Early research in this area, such as Malinowski’s (2008), noted that adults sometimes used the threat of violence to get a child to do something. In his research, an adult sometimes struck children in rage, but the child also sometimes struck the adult. Even with this, Malinowski (2008) found that Trobriand Islanders felt the beating of children as “definite retribution, or of coercive punishment” (30) was “unnatural and immoral” (30).

Recent research discussed physical punishment with particular attention to understanding parenting strategies such as the reasons for the use of physical violence (Morton 1996; 1998; Sargent and Harris 1998). For example, in her study on Tonga socialization, Morton (1996) looked at the regular beatings children received. In her analysis, she found that parents used these beatings so that their children learned respect and obedience. Children’s own response to the beatings, when Morton asked them about
it, was feeling shame. In some research, though, the children expressed the wish that the physical punishment would end, and they rejoiced when it did.

This research brings to the forefront the question of whether physical punishment is maltreatment or abuse. Ennew (1998) looked at punishment in schools and children in this research were able to distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate physical punishment. In this argument, Ennew (1998) analyzed punishment within the framework of children’s dignity, which she characterized as “fragile” (30).

Anthropologists have also looked at the physical and emotional maltreatment of children within the family (Scheper-Hughes and Stein 1987; Handelman 1987; Graburn 1987; Weiss 1998; Sargent and Harris 1998; Korbin 1998). For example, in Weiss’s (1998) investigation of appearance-impaired children and their families in Israel, she found parents grappled to deal with their child’s physical differences. 80% of the parents physically secluded the child when Weiss went to their homes and some parents called the child names, such as “monster” characterizing the child “as a nonperson and as morally contaminated” (Weiss 1998, 150).

**Gender-Based Violence**

The role of gender in the violence perpetrated against children has been a topic in anthropological research (Korbin 2003; Anderson-Fye 2010a; Anderson-Fye 2003; Anderson-Fye 2010b; Sargent and Harris 1998; Korbin 1987; Montgomery 2001; Rubenson et al. 2005; Nordstrom 1999; La Fontaine 1998; Minturn 1984). The research in this area described the nature of the violence as well as mitigating and moderating factors. For example, Anderson-Fye’s (2010a; 2010b; 2003) work looked at the ethnopsychology of “Never Leave Yourself” in Belize. This supported female
adolescents’ self-protection from violence, including protection from forms of violence which adolescent girls had experienced in their past and wanted to avoid in their future.

There has also been research on the experience of sexual abuse, particularly for female children (Korbin 1987; Montgomery 2001; Anderson-Fye 2010a; Rubenson et al. 2005; Nordstrom 1999; La Fontaine 1998). This includes research analyzing female child prostitution in terms of children’s vulnerability as well as agency (Montgomery 2001; Rubenson et al. 2005). For example, Rubenson, Hanh, Hojer, and Johansson (2005) interviewed child female sex workers in Ho Chi Minh City. They found that a common feature in the fictive stories told by their participants was the need to help their families who were living in poverty. For these girls, prostitution was the best alternative (Rubenson et al. 2005).

While most of the research in this area has addressed violence against females (Anderson-Fye 2010a; Anderson-Fye 2003; Anderson-Fye 2010b; Korbin 1987; Montgomery 2001; Rubenson et al. 2005; Nordstrom 1999; La Fontaine 1998; Minturn 1984), anthropologists have studied gender-based violence against male children as well (Sargent and Harris 1998). Sargent and Harris (1998) studied the preferential treatment of girls in Kingston, Jamaica, where low-income females were the heads of household. They found that boys had higher morbidity and mortality rates in these households, as well as higher rates of abandonment of male children, which they analyzed as preferential treatment of female children. This example shows how the social structure, in this case a matriarchal system, is associated with gender-based violence.

**Community Violence**
Violence within a family’s community or neighborhood has implications for the child’s experiences. One way that research has examined community violence is from the view of the parents or families since families play a role in the activities and well-being of children (Kling, Liebman, and Katz 2005; Korbin and Coulton 1997). While mothers in Kling, Lievman, and Katz’s (2005) study in Boston did not feel that violence was directed at their family purposefully, they had a persistent fear that their children would be bystanders and subsequently injured. This fear led these families to alter their routines and restrict children’s activities in the attempt to maintain safety.

Research on violence from the perspective of the child has described the experiences of children in neighborhoods with high rates of violence (Jones 2010; Shields, Nadasen, and Pierce 2008) and the effects of these experiences (Anderson 1997; Reichert, Stoudt, and Kuriloff 2006; Spilsbury 2002). Children’s reactions to the high levels of violence that they experience or witness can lead to reactions of psychological trauma or resilience (Reichert, Stoudt, and Kuriloff 2006; Shields, Nadasen, and Pierce 2008). Mediating and moderating factors also affect children’s experiences (Reichert et al. 2006; Shields et al. 2008; Spilsbury and Korbin 2003; Spilsbury 2002). Shields, Nadasen, and Pierce (2008) looked at the effects of community violence in South Africa on children between the ages of eight and 13. They found that factors such as family conflict and not understanding the causes of violence may mediate the children’s reactions to the violence, leading to psychological distress. Shields, Nadasen, and Pierce (2008) also found that family and social support moderated the violence and thus the psychological distress of the children. As will be described in the subsection below on children’s awareness of violence and its impact, symptoms of psychological distress and
trauma are not the only reaction to violence. Children also can demonstrate resilience in reaction to violence.

Children’s agency in the strategies that they take to stay safe and be resilient amid community violence has also been studied (Reichert et al. 2006; Spilsbury and Korbin 2003; Spilsbury 2002). For example, by going on a neighborhood walk with children aged seven to 11, and presenting them with situations of risk, Spilsbury (2002) found that children concerned about violence utilized strategies which allowed them to stay safe and get help.

Political Violence

The last type of violence discussed in this chapter is political violence. Children involved in an environment where there is political violence must cope with their experience and the terror that those experiences bring (Assal and Farrell 1992). Anthropology has shown that children are affected by violence, although they have many different experiences of political violence (Cairns 1987). During times of political strife, children have sometimes been the direct targets and victims of violence (Reynolds 1995; Suarez-Orozco 1987; Berry 2004), including massacres of youth protesters (Reynolds 1995), exploitation by security forces (Suarez-Orozco 1987), and the rape and harassment of young girls by soldiers (Berry 2004). Not only are children the direct recipients of political violence, but living in war zones can make them vulnerable to other forms of violence, such as gender-based violence (Nordstrom 1999; Swaine and Feeny 2004). For example, Swaine and Feeny’s (2004) work with Kosovo refugees in Albania showed that their female informants were vulnerable to exploitation and abuse because of the disintegration of family and community networks.
Violence also affects children who are not direct victims of political violence (Cairns 1987; Igreja 2004; Suarez-Orozco 1987; Olujic 1998; Pettigrew 2000; Panter-Brick et al. 2011; Panter-Brick et al. 2009; Assal and Farrell 1992; Quesada 1998). Research in this area not only discussed the effects of the violence but also looked at the causes of these effects as well as mitigating and mediating factors. War also affects community and family dynamics, which has implications for children (Igreja 2004; Quesada 1998). For example, in looking at the civil war in Mozambique, Igreja (2004) found that there was an increase in domestic and community violence, and marital instability. Instability in the home and community can create changes in infant feeding and thus may lead to infant malnutrition. All of these factors created consequences for the well-being of infants.

Not only can war affect children’s physical health, but it can affect their mental health as well (Olujic 1998; Panter-Brick et al. 2011; Panter-Brick et al. 2009; Assal and Farrell 1992). For example, research in Afghanistan to assess the mental health of 11 to 16 year-olds found that children not only experienced war violence but other types of violence as well. Research also found an association between symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and children experiencing five or more traumatic events, which included war violence, family violence, and accidents. There was also an association between youth with symptoms of PTSD and caregivers reports of their own psychological distress (Panter-Brick et al. 2011; Panter-Brick et al. 2009), demonstrating the relation between caregivers experiences of violence and the effect of violence on children.
Anthropology has also documented that just because the war ends, its effects on children often do not (Olujic 1998; Quesada 1998; Dickson-Gómez 2002b; Miller 1996; Kaitz et al. 2009; Kidron 2009). Even after the political violence is over the effects of the violence may continue, particularly because of the long-lasting effects on the family and the community (Olujic 1998; Quesada 1998). For example, Olujic’s (1998) work in Croatia demonstrated that even after the war, children continued to experience uncertainty and anxiety because they still had to deal with poverty, poor sanitary conditions, weapons and mines left over from the war, as well as the whereabouts of disappeared family members.

The effects of war may even affect children who did not experience it themselves or were too young to remember it (Dickson-Gómez 2002b; Miller 1996). Miller (1996) studied Guatemalan children who were refugees in Mexico. He found that the violence of the war was salient for the children even though they did not remember the war themselves. The children learned about the war from their families and other adults, although many were not able to express why the violence occurred. Miller (1996) found that these children used the image of a soldier in their drawings and stories, reported fear that soldiers would enter the camp at night and kill them, and some even had nightmares about this occurring. Even though they did not experience the violence themselves, the war affected these children’s lives. Research on second generation Holocaust survivors also demonstrates this distress is transmitted in multiple ways (Kidron 2009). This transmission of distress on the next generation who may not have experienced the violence directly has been termed intergenerational transmission of trauma (Kaitz et al. 2009).
Research by anthropologists on children and political violence has also looked at children committing acts of political violence themselves as part of a social movement (Diouf 1996) and as child soldiers (Rosen 2005; Utas 2004; Dickson-Gómez 2002a; West 2000; Rosen 2007; Peters and Richards 1998). For example, while children are vulnerable to recruitment as a child soldier (Rosen 2005; Dickson-Gómez 2002a; Rosen 2007), some may sign up to fight willingly and may even enjoy their time as soldiers (West 2000; Peters and Richards 1998; Rosen 2007; Dickson-Gómez 2002a). Child soldiers as both victims and as aggressors are two views that are difficult to reconcile, particularly for victims of the violence (Rosen 2007). Anthropologists have also looked at the effects of child soldiers’ involvement in violence after a war. This research found some of these former child soldiers homeless, traumatized by the collapse of the ideals they once fought for, as well as continuing to live a violent life (West 2000; Utas 2004; Dickson-Gómez 2002a).

Children’s Awareness of Violence and its Impact

As demonstrated by the overview given above on children and violence, violence not only impacts those directly affected, but there is also an indirect effect on children. For example, children can learn about and experience violence indirectly through their families (Dickson-Gómez 2004). Furthermore, each person involved in the violence has a varying experience because they each bring their own perspective (Robben and Nordstrom 1995; Korbin 2003; Levanon, Flamm-Oren, and Kahn-Hoffmann 2005). Within the literature on violence and children, there is a discussion about children’s awareness and understanding of the violence and the meaning of this awareness for their experience. Dickson-Gómez’s (2002a) research showed that parents often believe their
children do not experience trauma because they are too young to understand what is happening around them. When parents underestimate their children’s awareness of and exposure to community violence, it can hinder their ability to guide children about the violence and may put the children at greater risk for negative effects of violence (Hill and Jones 1997).

Research on children in violent situations has shown variation in their levels of awareness (Assal and Farrell 1992; Miller 1996; Apfel and Simon 2000). Apfel and Simon (2000) found that the Israeli and Palestinian children they studied understood many aspects of the violence and danger. Awareness and salience of violence were greater, though, in children whose families more frequently discussed these issues.

Children who are aware of violence, both political and community violence, can express fear of the situation through symptoms of trauma, including anxiety disorders, PTSD, depression, nightmares, sleeping disorders, bedwetting, behavior issues, learning problems, pessimism, lack of trust, emotional detachment, insecurity, aggression, hyperactivity, stomach aches, headaches, tics, and asthma (Hill et al. 1996; Margolin and Gordis 2000; Assal and Farrell 1992; De Levita 2000; Farias 1991; Brinton Lykes 1994; McCloskey et al. 1995; Quesada 1998; Shields, Nadasen, and Pierce 2008).

Another reaction to violence besides fear and trauma is resilience (Robben and Nordstrom 1995; Apfel and Simon 1996; LeVine 2000; Fraser and Richman 2001). Resilience includes overcoming risk, adapting to risk, and recovering from trauma to be successful (Fraser and Richman 2001). Research has shown that mitigating factors, such as school, family, and social support, help children cope or transcend the trauma of violence (Apfel and Simon 2000; Quesada 1998; Summerfield 2000). For example, in
their study with urban male youth ages 12 to 17, Reichert et al. (2006) found that participants used their connections with people who loved them “to maintain their well-being, positive self-regard and optimistic sense of future” (205).

The literature defines well-being as “an optimal state for an individual” (Matthews and Izquierdo 2009b, 5). Well-being is influenced by the cultural understanding of the concept (Matthews and Izquierdo 2009b; Hollan 2009; Matthews and Izquierdo 2009a; Crivello, Camfield, and Woodhead 2009; Weisner 2013) and of the person (Weisner 2013). Cultural understandings of well-being and behavioral norms influence an individual’s well-being (Weisner 2013), and the experience of the factors that affect well-being (Matthews and Izquierdo 2009a; Hollan 2009; Crivello, Camfield, and Woodhead 2009; Weisner 2013). Using all of these elements, “well-being is the engaged participation in the activities that are deemed desirable and valued in a cultural community and the psychological experiences that are produced by such engagement” (Weisner 2013, 90). Since the everyday experience of an individual plays a role in the experience of well-being (Weisner 2013), anthropology has generally looked at well-being in relation to four elements: health, relationships, stress, and competence (Stevenson and Worthman 2013).

**Children as Aggressors of Violence**

Children’s agency has been part of research regarding their victimization of others (La Fontaine 1991; Leavitt 1998; Anderson 1997; Fleisher 1998; Vigil 1988; Vigil 2003; Vigil 1999; Mendoza Denton 2010; Rosen 2005; Utas 2004; Dickson-Gómez 2002a; West 2000; Rosen 2007; Peters and Richards 1998; Hecht 1998). One area of research in anthropology on children and violence is the process through which children become
violent (Anderson 1997; Bloch and Niederhoffer 1976; Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco 1995; Vigil and Yun 1998; Vigil 1988; Vigil 2003; Vigil 1999). Research has examined the role of the community environment on children’s violence (Anderson 1997; Bloch and Niederhoffer 1976; Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco 1995; Vigil and Yun 1998; Vigil 1988; Vigil 2003; Vigil 1999). Anderson (1997) found in their work that there is a street code which is about the presentation of the self to gain respect. This argument stated that all who grow up in an inner urban neighborhood must learn how to manage their selves within this environment. This may mean adopting the street code as their family’s main value system or maintaining middle-class values. Parents who had a street value system in Anderson’s (1997) research may socialize their children into the code of the street, although this is not necessarily always the case. Children whose families did not have this code as their main value system may also internalize the street code and take up those values (Anderson 1997). This example demonstrates that both neighborhood context and family value systems contribute to the type of value system that children adopt (Sánchez-Jankowski 1991; Anderson 1997).

Another factor in children’s involvement in violence is marginality (Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco 1995; Vigil and Yun 1998; Vigil 1988; Vigil 2003; Vigil 1999). Work in this area included the theory of multiple marginality to understand gang involvement (Vigil 1988; Vigil 2003; Vigil 1999; Vigil and Yun 1998). In this theory, ecological, economic, cultural, social, psychological, historical, and structural factors play a role in a child’s socialization into the street and then further into the gang (Vigil 2003). For example, a Chicano female gang member may have experienced both cultural conflict and poverty, which can lead to problems within strained family relationships.
The habits learned in the family, such as an irregular eating schedule, may not conform to the school schedule, leading to problems in the school. Gender expectations and exploitation by males can result in “pent-up rage” (Vigil 2003, 227). These females, then, may release this rage through violence and gang involvement (Vigil 2003).

Studies have shown that youth are often perceived as dangerous and violent (Riaño Alcalá 2006; Korbin and Coulton 1997; Uehling 2008; Scheper-Hughes and Hoffman 1998). This perception can lead to consequences including violence aimed at the youth themselves. For example, research by Scheper-Hughes and Hoffman (1998) showed that street youth in Brazil had a stereotype as dangerous criminals. Since these children sometimes had to defend themselves, the stereotype continued. Research implicated that this stereotype was a factor in massacres of street children by vigilantes in Brazil (Scheper-Hughes and Hoffman 1998).

One final area of research is the factors that protect and provide for youth so that they do not become perpetrators of violence. Vigil (1999) advocated for adults, particularly educators, to interact with at-risk youth one-on-one to decrease and prevent their uptake into gangs as well as promote their separation from gangs. He argued that a different person can emerge with separation from the group, and once schools acknowledged their potential in this role, they can then provide individualized help (Vigil 1988; Vigil 1999). This section on the anthropology of children and violence has demonstrated a commonality that context and factors within it affect children’s experiences of violence, the roles of children in violence, and the effects of violence on children.

**Anthropology of Latin America**
As seen in the previous section, the study of violence and children includes broader theories within the anthropology of children and childhood. This section will likewise demonstrate that research on violence in Latin America also incorporates broader theories from the anthropological research on Latin America.

Overview of Research

Anthropological research on Latin America focused on the diversity as well as specificity of sociocultural experiences. Latin America has been characterized by contrasts and inequalities which affect the meaning of an individual’s sociocultural experience (Skidmore, Smith, and Green 2010; Swetnam 1979; Scheper-Hughes 1984; Zorn 2004; Fernandez 2010; Cadena 1995). Within anthropology, research and theories of Latin America broadly addressed culture change and inequality as two underlying themes crossing all research whether addressed explicitly or implicitly. There are social, economic, and political consequences of the history of European colonization on the nation-states in Latin America and their societies (Sanabria 2016). Research examined the political violence in the region in the 20th century, as well as current globalization patterns, in terms of how inequality and culture change shape societies within the region. Inequality and culture change also underlie the themes in the anthropology of Latin America including ethnicity, gender, economy, and health and illness as described below. While violence as broadly defined in the sections above crosses these broad themes, this section will describe in more detail two types of violence included in anthropological research of Latin America: political violence and violence which occurs in times of peace.

Research on Demographic Groups in Latin America
Socio-economic status has been a focus of research since the 1950s, which looked at the role of these national and local factors on communities. One area of this research concerned the economic enterprises of groups particularly peasants and those in poverty (Wolf 1955; Johnson 1971; Loucky 1979; Lewis and La Farge 1959; Lewis 1961). Recent research also looked at the role of socio-economic factors on children and families in a context of poverty (Taylor and Hickey 2001; Hecht 1998; Leinaweaver 2008; Scheper-Hughes 1992a; Scheper-Hughes 1992b; Bernat 1999). For example, street children have been the focus of anthropological research, including the factors contributing to their daily contexts as well as children’s experiences within the context (Taylor and Hickey 2001; Hecht 1998; Bernat 1999). This research demonstrated that abandonment, economic opportunity to provide for themselves and their family, and poor family relationships are factors that contribute to children being on the streets (Taylor and Hickey 2001; Hecht 1998; Bernat 1999). These studies also showed that children in these contexts are not only victims of their circumstances but also agentive in their strategies for survival. For example, Hecht (1998) found that Brazilian street children developed relationships with community families and shopkeepers, stole, sold stolen goods, washed windshields, and begged.

Research on gender has also been a focus for anthropological research in Latin America. This research has looked at constructions and expressions of gender identity, relations between the sexes, and sexual identity (Sanabria 2016). Gender has also been a factor in understanding violence in Latin America, particularly gender-based violence (Dickson-Gómez et al. 2006; Hautzinger 2007; Anderson-Fye 2010a; Klungel 2010). In some regions, societies consider violence against women as ‘normal’ (Anderson-Fye
The effects of this violence can include stigma, shame, hopelessness, and PTSD symptoms (Dickson-Gómez et al. 2006; Anderson-Fye 2010a). Anthropologists have also looked at the perpetuation of gender-based violence (Hautzinger 2007; Klungel 2010). In her work on rape in Guadelupe, Klungel (2010) found that rape stories were continually used as both a warning and as a form of reintegration since rape was a constant threat from both within and outside of the family. These stories spanned from the colonial times and the rape of slaves to the women telling their own story about rape. This rape occurred from male aggressors as well as through a “virginity test” conducted by their own mothers which some females identified as violations. Klungel (2010) theorized that the “virginity tests” were a way that “embodied memories are transmitted from mother to daughter in Guadeloupe” (55), and although the daughters disliked the tests and were afraid of their mothers because of it, the mothers saw it as their duty to check their daughters’ virginity and to control their bodies. In this way, they were trying to make sure the rapes that happened to them did not happen to their daughters, although this ultimately created a cycle of violence for females (Klungel 2010).

**Health and Illness**

Early research on health and illness in Latin America looked at folk illnesses and remedies, with folk meaning outside the understanding of Western medicine (Rubel 1964). These have included research on *susto* (Rubel 1964; Rubel, O’Nell, and Collado-Ardón 1984), folk medicine (Ingham 1970), hot/cold classification (Aho and Minott 1977), and *nervios* (Hill and Cottrell 1986). More recent research in anthropology has examined health and illness in relation to violence (Dickson-Gómez 2002b; Metz,
Mariano, and García 2010; Anderson-Fye 2010a; Meyers et al. 1989; Smith-Nonini 1997; Leatherman and Thomas 2009). During times of political violence, community members in war zones may not have access to health care (Leatherman and Thomas 2009; Smith-Nonini 1997; Meyers et al. 1989). There is also anthropological research on the mental health issues caused by violence (Dickson-Gómez 2002b; Metz, Mariano, and García 2010; Anderson-Fye 2010a; Leatherman and Thomas 2009). For example, Dickson-Gómez (2002b) found that individuals in a community after El Salvador’s civil war reported experiencing the illness, *nervios*, as a result of the violence. Because of their illness, these individuals expected their children to take care of them, reminiscent of the way they took care of their parents who suffered from *nervios* during the war. Dickson-Gómez (2002b) argued that through the process of *nervios*, parents transmit the trauma from the violence to their children. The effects of violence including its effect on individual’s health, can continue, then, even after the violence has ended.

Violence and Latin America

**Political Violence**

In Latin America, these wars left many parents dealing with the issues of having their families and children disappeared or killed (Stephen 1995; Robben 2000). These situations of loss had lasting effects on survivors, as documented in research (Robben and Suarez-Orozco 2000; Green 1999; Quesada 1998; Dickson-Gómez 2004; Green 1994; Leatherman and Thomas 2009; Nelson 2009; Bourgois 2001; Bourgois 2002; Binford 2002). For example, Green (1999) looked at the effects of the Guatemalan war on Mayan widows. She found that the legacies of fear and violence continued to affect the population. Even after the violence, there was a silence about the war, which led to ambiguity regarding the context of what happened. Green (1999) also looked at the ways that Maya widows struggled to survive after the war, particularly due to gender roles regarding agricultural labor.

In Latin America, movements rose up in response to the lasting effects of political violence (Stephen 1995). For example, in El Salvador, the mothers of the disappeared began a movement to get the government to explain the whereabouts of their children. After the movement became successful, its focus turned to women’s rights and the resources women need (Stephen 1995). As demonstrated by the research on this particular movement, even after the war, inequalities and issues exist within a society. The next subsection describes research on violence outside of the context of political violence.

**Violence during times of Peace**

Research in the anthropology of Latin America and violence that occurs outside the context of political violence and war includes criminal violence, vigilante violence, and police violence (Pansters and Castillo Berthier 2007; Caldeira 1996; Caldeira and
Holston 1999; Goldstein 2003; Wolseth 2008; Moodie 2006; Zilberg 2007; Zaluar 1995; Metz, Mariano, and García 2010; Goldstein 2004; Riaño Alcalá 2006; Moodie 2010; Martin-Barbero 2002; Caldeira 2000). For example, in post-conflict zones, the conflict itself sometimes creates a place where violence continues but in the form of criminal violence, sometimes with increased rates of violence and communities considering the violence as worse than during the war (Dickson-Gómez 2002b; Zilberg 2007; Zaluar 1995; Metz, Mariano, and García 2010; Caldeira 2000; Riaño Alcalá 2006; Moodie 2010; Moodie 2006). In cities where criminal violence has become an issue, many citizens create changes to protect themselves, including building gated communities, fortifying their houses, hiring private security, and not going out into the public spaces of the city other than those considered safe (Pansters and Castillo Berthier 2007; Caldeira 1996; Caldeira and Holston 1999; Zaluar 1995; Caldeira 2000). The criminal violence creates a new image of the criminal, a young male from a poor marginal community, which results in further marginalization of these individuals from society (Hautzinger 2007; Dickson-Gómez et al. 2006; Goldstein 2004; Caldeira and Holston 1999). For example, as a response to crime in Brazil, Caldeira and Holston (1999) discussed how citizens supported the stripping of rights of criminals, mainly through the use of police force and a growing support for the adoption of the death penalty. Research on violence in Latin America has demonstrated that the historical context of the inequalities is related to both political violence and the types of violence that characterize violence in times of peace. For this dissertation research, I paid attention to issues of inequality and culture in the examination of the process of violence in children’s lives as well as the ways that violence can be prevented and mitigated.
Summary

This chapter described an overview of the anthropology of violence in relation to theories of violence in the everyday, the uncertainty it causes, and its anticipation by individuals living in a violent context. After discussing a brief historical trajectory of research in the anthropology of children and childhood, particularly as it relates to research on children as being and becoming, as well as research on the role of globalization of rights on children’s daily lives, the chapter also described theories from the perspective of psychological anthropology on the socialization of children. This research demonstrates the importance of the child’s daily environment and interactions in the process of how a child learns how to become a member of their cultural group. Given the importance of the child’s context on children’s socialization, children’s experience of violence in their daily lives has been a focus of anthropological research on children and childhood.

The conceptual framework of the research developed out of psychological anthropology, including the concepts of cultural schemas and how they internally structure the environment and affect thoughts and behavior. One area that has received significant research and demonstrated the importance of cultural meanings and structures is the concept of the person. Examining how a culture conceptualizes the person can aid in understanding cultural values. One way to look at the interaction of cultural understandings of a context in relation to the development of the child is the developmental niche model. I used this model in the development of data collection as well as data analysis.
Finally, I reviewed research in Latin America since much of this dissertation documents the process and residuals of inequality and culture change in the region. These factors, as well as the historical and cultural context of Latin America, play a role in the experiences of violence. Several themes cross these three different fields of anthropological research. Global and local factors, both current and historical, interactions between actors in the local context, as well as individual factors including socio-demographic factors and individual beliefs are important for understanding the role of violence. This overview demonstrated how the study of violence in anthropology is interwoven into the broader themes of other fields of research.

These three bodies of research in anthropology informed the development and understanding of the research presented in this dissertation. I utilize the theories of risk, anticipation, and uncertainty out of the anthropology of violence to examine how the anticipation of violence affects children’s daily contexts and interactions in the school setting, particularly in regards to the tactics that Salvadorans employ to address everyday violence.

The anthropology of Latin America described the role of the historical context of inequality and culture change on individuals’ experiences of multiple domains, including violence. This dissertation looks at these aspects of inequality and culture change to understand the context of violence, the strategies for protection from violence, as well as the negative consequences of violence.

The globalization of children’s rights is an important factor in children’s lives cross-culturally. This dissertation documents the current period of culture change in El Salvador as a result of the rights discourse to understand its role on local understandings
of violence as well as children’s daily contexts and experiences in schools.

Anthropological research on children and childhood also examines children in their current status as well as in a state of developing. This dissertation looks at children as both being and becoming to understand their daily activities, interactions, routines, and experiences, as well as the effects of these on their development in a context of violence. Views of children as being and becoming are important for understanding children’s personhood in the local context in regards to local understandings of violence as well as the role of violence in children’s lives. There is also a focus on work, play, and school in anthropological research on children and childhood. This dissertation focuses on the role of play and education in the school setting for children’s socialization in the school within a context of violence. This is further examined to understand the effects of schooling on children’s well-being in this context.

The developmental niche framework was used to connect these three fields and examine the effect of violence on children through the three research questions: (1) what are Salvadoran’s conceptions of violence and its consequences for children; (2) how do children learn about communal violence within their developmental niche; and (3) what effect does persistent communal violence have on children’s well-being. Specifically, this dissertation focuses on the interactions of the different elements in the child’s developmental niche, institutional setting, and cultural environment with each other as well as with the child to understand how violence enters and affects the developmental niche and how the developmental niche in this context affects children’s daily lives in the school setting and their future development.
CHAPTER 3
METHODS

Introduction

This dissertation contributes to the anthropology of violence, the anthropology of children, and the anthropology of Latin America by investigating violence in the daily worlds of children in El Salvador, particularly the school setting and the larger environment through printed news media. This study used a framework based in psychological anthropology to answer three research questions: (1) what are Salvadoran’s conceptions of violence and its consequences for children; (2) how do children learn about communal violence within their developmental niche; and (3) what effect does persistent communal violence have on children’s well-being? First, the chapter will describe the research setting through a historical overview of Latin America and El Salvador, including a description of violence in El Salvador at the time of the research. The examination of the themes related to the topic of violence and children in El Salvador began with pilot research conducted prior to the dissertation research. Findings from pilot research contributed to the research design and methodological development of the dissertation research. Finally, the chapter describes the specific methodology utilized in this study, as well as the ways that challenges in the field led to adaptations.

Research Context
As the context of violence is a focus of the study, this section provides a brief overview of this context including the broader historical framework of Latin America before describing the specific research sites and methodology.

The history of Latin America is important for understanding the experiences of the diverse groups within the region. This brief summary is organized using the eight time periods as described by Skidmore and Smith (2005). The first four periods represent the colonial history as well as the early period of independence for many of the modern-day countries in the region. The first period is the conquest and colonization of the region by European powers from 1492 to 1600 (Skidmore and Smith 2005). As the Spanish and Portuguese explored the region, they found different indigenous groups with complex cultures. The Spanish who settled in the region then began to recreate their society in the Americas. The foundation of the economy in the Americas was the indigenous population, although many indigenous groups did attempt to resist European conquest. When the indigenous population began to decrease, Europe began to import slaves from Africa into the region. In this time period, other European powers, such as Britain, France, and Holland also created colonies in the region (Skidmore and Smith 2005; Williams 1970; Sanabria 2016; Carmack, Gasco, and Gossen 1996; González 1988; Mintz 2010). Independence movements from colonists seeking freedom as well as slave revolts characterized the second time period, from 1600 to 1750 (Skidmore and Smith 2005; Mintz 2010; Williams 1970; Sanabria 2016). The period immediately following independence is from 1830 to 1850, when the wars for independence left the region’s economies in trouble. The base of the economic systems of this time was agriculture and mining as well as a system of liberalism and free trade. The political systems of the new
countries included *caudillos* who often took power by force. The final period, from 1850 to the 1880s, brought the integration of the region’s economies into the world market. European immigration, the development of infrastructure (e.g., railroads) and the importation of industrial goods from Europe characterized this time period (Skidmore and Smith 2005).

The movement of the region into its modern state occurred between the 1880s to the present. Skidmore and Smith (2005) separated this into five phases. The first phase, from 1880 to 1900, involved a system of economic liberalism with the exportation of raw goods out of the region and importation of manufactured goods into the region. Two trends of political and economic systems during this time period included control by elites and the emergence of dictators (Skidmore and Smith 2005). In El Salvador, the economy became controlled by a few elite families (Prevost and Vanden 2011).

The second phase in the region from 1900 to 1930 saw the growth of the middle class, the immigration of working class labor from abroad, the growth of cities, as well as the inclusion of the middle class in the political system (Skidmore and Smith 2005). The third phase, from 1930 to 1960, began with the Great Depression. As the previous economic system began to falter and politicians were discredited, industrialization characterized the economic system, which increased jobs for those in the working class. Along with these economic changes, authoritarian populist regimes took over political power (Skidmore and Smith 2005; Blouet 2007; Fernandez 2010; Williams 1970). During this time period in El Salvador, in response to economic inequalities, the public elected a liberal president in 1931, who allowed the Communist Party to participate in the
elections. The military, however, seized power and ruled the country for the next 50 years (Prevost and Vanden 2011).

The fourth regional phase, from the 1960s into the 1980s, included growing unemployment in the region. In response to the pressure from the faltering economy, several countries came under the power of repressive regimes (Skidmore and Smith 2005). During the final period, the 1980s to the present, revolutions and civic movements occurred in response to the authoritarian regimes and the debt crisis in the region.

Likewise, El Salvador’s civil war began with the uniting of revolutionary forces for political, economic, and social reform in the late 1970s and the early 1980s. A civil war ensued against the U.S. backed Salvadoran army from 1980 to 1992 (Coutin 2003; Prevost and Vanden 2011). The civil war displaced 27% of the Salvadoran population, with the majority immigrating to the U.S. (Coutin 2003). This diaspora of Salvadorans, particularly Salvadoran youth in Los Angeles, formed the *maras* (gangs) in response to the gangs they encountered within the U.S. Organized crime and gangs have since become a major issue for El Salvador with the deportation of gang members from the U.S. back to El Salvador (Zilberg 2007). Continued economic and social inequality has aggravated criminal violence in El Salvador, including gang violence (Prevost and Vanden 2011; Moodie 2006; Zilberg 2007). Reports have implicated gangs in continuing violent crimes in El Salvador (Zilberg 2007), as reflected in the high homicide rate, 66.0 per 100,000 population (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2011).

This trend of high homicide rates is also found throughout the region. According to the 2011 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime report on homicide, four out of the ten countries with the highest homicide rates were in Central America: Honduras
(82.1 per 100,000 population), El Salvador (66.0 per 100,000 population), Belize (41.7 per 100,000 population) and Guatemala (41.4 per 100,000 population). The report found that “in the last five years, homicide rates have increased in five out of eight countries in Central America” (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2011, 11) showing that this is a growing problem in the region. In comparison, the U.S. had a homicide rate of 4.6 per 100,000 population (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2011). 1,098,000 of the 6,141,350 Salvadoran population live in the capital city, San Salvador (“The World Factbook” 2016), which had a 2009 homicide rate of 94.6 per 100,000 (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2011). Homicide rates in El Salvador have followed a trajectory of decreasing with rates of 72.2 per 100,000 in 2011, 42.7 per 100,000 in 2012 and 41.3 per 100,000 in 2013, followed by an increase with the homicide rate in 2014 being 64.2 per 100,000 (“UNODC Statistics” 2016; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2013). The high rates of violence in El Salvador has created a context where violence is normal (Dickson-Gómez 2002b) and children “have never experienced a world of safety” (Dickson-Gómez 2004, 147). There has also been rapid culture change instigated by violence with communal violence becoming the norm for children in San Salvador, replacing the violence of the Civil War in the 1980s (Dickson-Gómez 2002b). It is important to conduct research with an understanding of these historical processes because the change in violence types is a pattern seen in other countries, such as Brazil, Guatemala, Bolivia, and Colombia (Zaluar 1995; Metz, Mariano, and García 2010; Caldeira 2000; Riaño Alcalá 2006; Goldstein 2003; Goldstein 2004). Due to the omnipresent violence, the greater metropolitan San Salvador area was a suitable site for a research project that addressed violence, security, well-being, and resilience.
Research Piloting and Planning Period

In preparation for the dissertation research on violence and children, I conducted research piloting and planning in El Salvador in June 2011, December 2011, and December 2012 through June 2013. This section describes this period prior to the dissertation research data collection.

Pilot Research

In the pilot research, I conducted semi-structured, open-ended interviews about the effect of violence on children with nine professionals in El Salvador who work with children. In this research, several themes emerged, which influenced the research questions and methods of the dissertation research. Participants discussed multiple types of violence present in the lives of children including gang violence, violence within families, violence in schools among children, and threats to schools from violent elements in the communities. Participants reported that children consider violence as normal, and that it is part of their daily lives. There are also ways that schools counter violence, including providing support to victims of violence and teaching children skills for their future. Participants also discussed the rights of children as related to violence, including the law, Ley de Protección Integral de Niñez y Adolescencia (Law on the Integral Protection of Childhood and Adolescence; LEPINA). The law also has created a system of protection through institutions to restore the rights of children. Participants also discussed how the law is misunderstood by parents and teachers because they believe they cannot correct children’s poor behaviors because of the law. A major weakness of the law, as discussed by participants, is that there was no system in place to enforce the
law. These themes influenced the development of the research question and a priori themes for analysis as reflected in the codebooks (see Appendix A and Appendix B).

Preparation for Research

A planning period was also conducted in El Salvador prior to the dissertation research. During this time, I secured a letter of cooperation with an organization who works with public schools in El Salvador. Working with this organization allowed me to access two public schools which served as the field sites for this dissertation research. To minimize the risks of doing research in a context of violence, I selected field sites in coordination with the cooperating organization. The main field sites for this research were two public schools because schools “serve as crucial arenas in which children are socialized” (Golden 2005, 80). The cooperating organization selected four possible sites between December 2012 and February 2013 based on their perception of school openness to this research as well as the ability to conduct research safely, including the safety of potential research participants. I selected two schools in February 2013 because combined they would provide a breadth of experiences within the greater urban San Salvador metropolitan area, including the ability to observe school sessions in the morning as well as in the afternoon. Approvals for the research and letters of cooperation from the National Ministry of Education, the Departmental Office of Education as well as the directors of each school for the research were sought and received between February and April 2013.

The Institutional Review Boards at the Universidad Centroamericana José Simeón Cañas in El Salvador and Case Western Reserve University approved the research in June 2013. During the analysis, I combined data from the two field sites to protect the privacy
of schools and participants as well as provide a general view of the lives of children. As seen in the results chapters, school and participant information, including class hours, genders, and organization names are not described to maintain the confidentiality and privacy of all involved in the research.

**Dissertation Research Design and Methods**

This ethnographic dissertation to understand the experience of violence within a child’s developmental niche focused on the school setting in El Salvador used an exploratory mixed-methods research design. As described in the previous chapters, anthropological research on violence as well as this dissertation used the concept of risk, which includes understandings of uncertainty and anticipation. This dissertation project used a mixed-methods research design because “social relationships, power relations and hierarchies, cultural beliefs, trust in institutions and science, knowledge, experience, discourses, practices and collective memories all shape notions about risk or safety” (Boholm 2003, 175).

*Table 1: Data Collection Timeline*

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This was a cross-sectional study with data collected between June and November 2013 (see Table 1). The research utilized multiple methodologies to understand children’s everyday context and experiences in schools and the role of the multiple levels of the developmental niche. These methodologies included a modified person-centered
approach through interviews and participant observations, an ethnographic media analysis and a policy analysis. I triangulated the analyses from these different methodologies to answer the three research questions. This following section describes these methods and analyses in more detail.

Modified Person-Centered Approach

An effective way of understanding the concepts of person and self is through person-centered ethnography (Levy and Hollan 1998). Because of the interest in understanding individual perspectives, experiences, as well as the institutional and cultural context, I employed a modified person-centered ethnography (Hollan 2001) to understand how children experience their world in a context of communal violence. Person-centered ethnography is a multi-level ethnographic approach that focuses on individuals and their experience within an institutional and cultural context (Hollan 2001). In this study, and consistent with a person-centered approach, a focus was on the influence of context on the developmental niche of children. This study utilized a modified person-centered ethnography because of concerns of privacy and the safety of participants.

Participant Observations in Schools

Since direct questioning may not work with children, particularly with younger children (Clark 2004), as well as in consideration for limitations in being able to interview children in this setting, including privacy and safety concerns, I used observational methods to understand children’s worlds (Gaskins 2008). Gaskins (2008) argued that observations should be analyzed using local meanings. In the observations, I observed particular individuals within their local context as well as participated and
engaged with individual child and adult participants, utilizing discussions to understand
their experience with the immediate context.

Data in this study included 143 hours of participant observations at two public
schools in the greater San Salvador metropolitan region. The two public schools in the
greater metropolitan San Salvador area are set up similarly. A story-high wall surrounds
the school and barbed-wire tops the wall. There is one entrance into the school, a solid
door which has a slat that can be opened to see inside or out. At the beginning and end of
the school-day the door is open for students to freely enter, but after, individuals have to
knock on the door to have a guard open it. Classrooms, offices, bathrooms, a small store
for snacks (*cafetín*), and a kitchen are along the perimeter of the school and surround a
courtyard. All classrooms have windows into the courtyard area and only a few
classrooms have barred windows looking out of the school. The courtyard is used for
beginning of the school day announcements, recess, and physical education. Children in
preschool through ninth grade attend the schools for half of the day, about five hours,
either in the morning or in the afternoon.

I conducted participant observations with six teachers (three female and three
male teachers) and 18 students (nine female and nine male students) purposively sampled
from five third- and fourth-grade classrooms, as well as during other school activities
such as recess, lunch, and workshops, to understand children’s behavior and interactions
in the institutional setting. There were difficulties in participant recruitment, including
safety concerns regarding the context of violence as well as scheduling issues. Educators
consented and student participants had to both receive permission from their parents as
well as had to assent to participation. During the participant observations, when possible,
I utilized a structured observation methodology and noted the activities of participants every five minutes (Whiting 1966). If an event activity related to violence occurred in between this five-minute time frame, it was also noted. Because this methodology also included participation in activities and interaction with participants, there were periods where noting behaviors every five minutes was not possible. In these instances, after the participation or interaction was complete, I noted what occurred during that time period.

Working with the cooperating organization as well as the two schools, I selected these grades so that students would be between the ages of 8 and 11. I chose this age range for several reasons. In El Salvador, children are legally considered adolescents at the age of 12 (Diario Oficial 2009). Secondly, the age range was chosen to minimize the likelihood of youth gang membership, since pilot research findings showed that youth enter gangs around the age of 12. The 8 to 11 year-old age range was also chosen because it is an important developmental time period for children. During this age range, children participate in more complex activities and have more responsibilities placed upon them. Research shows that socialization occurs through children’s participation in these activities such as school, work, and play (LeVine 2007; Rogoff et al. 2008; Montgomery 2009; Weisner and Gallimore 2008; Gaskins 2008; Wenger 2008). Through participation in these activities, children between the ages of 8 to 11 develop morally and emotionally, learning social awareness, social responsibility, self-reliance, and self-esteem (Guest 2007; Ochs and Izquierdo 2009).

**Interviews**

I conducted interviews with eight purposively sampled professional participants who work with children in the greater San Salvador metropolitan area between July 2013
and November 2013. These participants included professionals who work for governmental institutions, non-governmental organizations, advocacy centers, and professionals who work in Salvadoran schools. The interviews addressed the local context of violence, their professional opinions about the effect of violence on children, and their understandings of the terms of violence, well-being, and resilience.

Interviews were also conducted with five of the six educators who participated in the classroom observations in October and November 2013. Three of the participants completed two interviews and two of the participants completed one interview. Scheduling issues limited the number of completed educator interviews. These interviews addressed children’s daily activities, the context of violence, the role of secondary caregivers in how children learn about communal violence, children’s participation in school activities, the effect of communal violence on children, participants’ understandings of the terms of violence, well-being, and resilience, as well as the circumstances around violent events that occurred in the lives of the children they teach.

I conducted all interviews in Spanish. My language training included completing course requirements for a minor in Spanish, studying Spanish in Guatemala in June 2005, and working as a research assistant on projects conducted in Spanish in Central America. Interviews were audio recorded. The audio recording failed during one interview with a professional participant and I took extensive notes during the interview to capture interview themes. Analysis of Spanish data were conducted without translation. I translated Spanish interviews and notes into English for use in this dissertation.

Thematic Analysis
Interview transcripts, fieldnotes, and observation fieldnotes were thematically coded (Bernard 2006; LeCompte and Schensul 1999) using NVivo (Richards 2002). The codebook began with a list of a priori codes developed from literature as well as the pilot research (see Appendix A). I noted emergent themes and added these themes to the codebook. In the analysis, I paid special attention to the themes that related to children’s developmental niche and children’s interactions with it, particularly in regards to understandings of and reactions to violence. Discrepant data including variations between observed behavior and interview narratives were included in the analysis, which allowed for a broader understanding of the variability in the conceptualizations of, experiences of, and responses to violence as well as the factors that contribute to these variations.

Policy Analysis

I closely read and analyzed the law LEPINA as well as associated policies because pilot research, and dissertation interviews and participant observations identified the law, the rights it describes, and associated policies as related to violence. Anthropology is well suited to look at how policies are “experienced and interpreted by people at the local level” (Wedel et al. 2005, 34). As such, I examined LEPINA and its subsequent policies including their origins, implementation and interpretation at the local level. I also included discrepant data in the analysis, mainly regarding the implementation and perceptions of LEPINA in different settings.

Ethnographic Content Analysis of Media Data

Anthropologists have analyzed mass media as a means to reflect issues in a society, including violence (Estill 2000; Martin-Barbero 2002; Moodie 2006). When violence is high in a community, the media counts the injured or killed (Martin-Barbero
2002; Moodie 2006). For example, in Colombia, Martin-Barbero (2002) discussed how the media reinforced fear and distrust of the city. Furthermore, the media has the ability to inform and influence how the audience feels and thinks about violent events and their context. In El Salvador, Moodie (2006) argued that the media portrayed the injuries and deaths as “individual acts of imprudence: irresponsibility, ignorance, or perhaps indifference” (71). The media is a way that both reflects and influences experiences, including that of violence.

An ethnographic content analysis of media data allowed me to understand media constructions of violence (Spitulnik 1993) and combine this analysis with the other data to understand the ecocultural context (Super and Harkness 1997; Harkness et al. 2005). Content analysis of media is a technique to analyze the meanings of texts and images for those who produce and are consumers of these media within a particular context (Krippendorff 2013). In this research, I employed an ethnographic content analysis (Altheide and Schneider 2013) to look at three newspapers in El Salvador. I analyzed the documents “as representations of social meanings and institutional relations” (Altheide and Schneider 2013, 5). With this understanding, I generated a priori categories but allowed others to emerge from the data (Altheide 1987; see Appendix B). For this research, I reviewed three different newspapers with daily editions (although one only published one edition for the weekend instead of two) for three months (June 27, 2013-September 26, 2013). Newspapers were utilized as the news medium for the analysis because of their presence within the school setting and commonality in Salvadoran homes. Salvadoran newspapers are set up in the form of a magazine or book, with a cover page, and then articles inside. In the analysis, I included any article, editorial, news brief
or political cartoon related to violence or children for the analysis. This resulted in 1,203 relevant news stories. I analyzed these news stories based on categorical themes and relationships between themes as well as associated photos to understand the imagery related to these topics. The media data identified violent events noted by the media in a context of omnipresent violence and the representation of these events since ethnographic content analysis aims to understand documents within their context (Altheide 1987). The analysis also accounted for discrepant data within the themes to account for the range of discourse and perceptions on the topics of violence and children.

Data Triangulation

I triangulated data from each of the different collection methods (i.e., participant observations, interviews, policy analysis, and ethnographic content analysis) and analyses to provide a broad examination of the local environment and context as well as to see if there were congruencies and differences between the different levels of the developmental niche of the child (LeCompte and Schensul 1999; Schensul, Schensul, and LeCompte 1999). The media and policy analysis provided a broader contextual overview of the larger cultural environment and institutional levels of the developmental niche. I analyzed interview data to understand activities which occurred during participant observations as well as provided an in-depth interpretation of the broader themes from the media and policy analysis. I used participant observations to corroborate participants’ statements about daily routines, interactions, and activities. Including discrepant data allowed for an understanding of the differences in perceptions and behaviors as well as the factors that affect these variations. Data triangulation allowed me to build theoretical models regarding the relations between themes related to violence and children.
Unanticipated Challenges and Affordances

The data collection timeline was a challenge for the research due to several factors, including time constraints. Each stage of the planning process took longer than originally expected, including the selection of the schools, securing meetings with key stakeholders to discuss the project and receive a signed letter of cooperation from each level of the Ministry of Education, as well as the review period for the Salvadoran IRB due to the addition of new IRB members.

Once all approvals were secured, access to students was difficult. Although 20-35 students in each classroom were approached for participation in the study, 18 students in total returned written permission to participate in the study as well as assented to participation. While parents and guardians were given my local contact information, I did not receive any contact from parents or guardians regarding the study. Parents and guardians expressed concerns to school staff regarding students’ privacy and their families’ privacy during the research. At both schools, parents and guardians let teachers and school directors know their worries that I was investigating particular children who have relations to gangs, or that I would be observing children in areas other than the classroom and at recess, including in the restrooms. Teachers and directors answered parents’ concerns as I noted in a process note:

Many of the parents had asked about the study. Many were worried that I was looking for violence in the homes. The school staff member told the parents that I was looking for how violence in the surroundings affect the children, their behavior in the school, and what can help children who face these issues.

My work with the collaborating organization also helped parents and guardians feel more comfortable with the research. To allow parents and guardians another avenue to meet me and ask questions, I attended all-school parent meetings, which parents thanked me for as
it helped to ease their concerns. Another issue which may have lowered the enrollment was that several students told me that they kept forgetting their permission forms. I am also unsure how many parents or guardians received the written permission letter that students brought home.

While gang violence affects children in El Salvador, the goal of this research project was to look at children not involved in these groups. This was one of the reasons why third- and fourth-grades were chosen, since most gang inductees were older. Anthropological research in El Salvador has looked at the influence of gangs on children in regards to access to resources, language, and connections to transnational processes (Dyrness and Sepúlveda 2015; Zilberg 2004). I wanted to take a broader view of the issue of violence in El Salvador, rather than focus on the gangs. This broader view was informed by pilot research which identified that there are multiple types of violence which children experience within their daily lives in El Salvador. Although my study was not focused on gangs, but on the effect of communal violence in general, there was concern that the research could be perceived by others as investigating gangs. To limit this perception, I used a script, which was approved by the IRB to explain the focus of the research (see Appendix C).

Concern for students’ privacy limited my contact with children outside of the school including their routes to and from school or within their homes. I had originally planned on conducting interviews with students within the school. While I was able to privately enroll students in the participant observations by going through the assent process with all students in a classroom, the school setting did not allow for a space or methodology to interview a sample of students without others knowing which individuals
were participating in the study. The school offices and classrooms were all open to a
center courtyard, so any interaction outside of the normal school day, would be detectable
by others in the school. To protect students’ privacy, I decided not to conduct these
interviews because both recruitment of students during the school day and going into one
of the private areas with a student for an interview would be visible to the other students
in the school.

The challenges in the research limited the sample size as well as the ability to
fully conduct a person-centered methodology with the experiences of the children
themselves. My experience with these limitations provided some of the first information
regarding the pervasiveness of the fear of violence as well as the daily processes in the
Salvadoran public school system. Also, due to these limitations, the focus of the research
was adapted to further explore the school setting and its role in the process of communal
violence. The focus on observations within the school day was also done as there is a
precedent for the use observational data to explore the lives of children (Whiting and
Whiting 1975; Whiting and Whiting 2008). Although policy was mentioned during the
pilot research, I was not expecting it to be an important part of the language and
processes of violence, but throughout the research, the topic was embedded within
interviews and daily school contexts involving the topic of violence. The change in the
focus of the research also allowed me to include an analysis of the policy itself and its
antecedent to better understand the policy and its role on the broader environment and
individual’s daily lives in the schools in regards to issues of violence.

Limitations
This research project was a cross-sectional study and does not provide longitudinal data which would allow for a deeper understanding of the processes involved in the experience of violence in El Salvador. Field sites were purposively selected from coordination with the participating organization. I selected these schools based on the ability to conduct the research in the setting. Furthermore, all participants were purposively sampled and sample sizes were small. As noted in the sections above, there were difficulties in accessing the schools and recruiting participants, which included safety concerns and scheduling issues. In the two schools, I only noted the activities involving enrolled participants. Due to the sampling method and the small sample sizes, field sites and participants may not be representative of the broader Salvadoran population.

Summary

This chapter described the research context within the history of Latin America and El Salvador, specifically couched in the context of violence. Within this context, I conducted piloting and planning for the research to identify important concepts for the dissertation research as well as develop relationships with organizations to facilitate the research. These relationships aided in the following methodologies utilized in this study: participant observations in two public schools, interviews with professionals who work with children as well as educators, a policy analysis, and an ethnographic content media analysis. The next three chapters describe the results of the data collected and analyzed through these methodologies to answer the study’s three research questions.
CHAPTER 4
LEPINA: CHILDREN’S RIGHTS AND PERSONHOOD

Introduction

This chapter looks at the role of policy on violence within children’s daily contexts and experiences in schools. In particular, this chapter focuses on a Salvadoran law, *Ley de Protección Integral de Niñez y Adolescencia* (Law on the Integral Protection of Childhood and Adolescence), *la ley LEPINA* (the LEPINA law), or LEPINA\(^1\) as called in Salvadoran publications as well as by participants in this study. The legislative body of El Salvador passed LEPINA in 2009, and it became effective in 2011. The law discusses the rights and responsibilities of children in El Salvador (Diario Oficial 2009). This chapter will discuss the role of LEPINA in the school and children’s daily lives and how the local discourse regarding the law demonstrates changing definitions of personhood, childhood, and violence in El Salvador.

As discussed in Chapter 1, this dissertation set out to answer three research questions. This chapter contributes to answering research questions 1 and 2. The first question asks what are the conceptions of violence and its consequences by adults who interact with children by looking at local understandings of violence and security. This chapter examines how LEPINA contributes to these conceptualizations. The second research question aims to understand how children learn about communal violence within

\(^1\) The law will be referred to as LEPINA in this chapter.
their developmental niche, specifically in terms of the role of caregivers’ interactions with children, daily activities in the school setting, and the cultural setting with a focus on interactions that reference the topics of violence and security. By looking at LEPINA and its role for children, this chapter shows how all of the systems of the developmental niche model interact and affect the experiences of children. As a law that speaks to the rights of children, including freedoms and protections from different types of violence, this dissertation discusses LEPINA because it has an impact on the larger cultural environment in the definitions of childhood and violence, on institutions (in this case the school, government institutions, and non-governmental institutions), on daily routines and settings (including the school, the home, and the community) and children’s interactions within these settings.

LEPINA first emerged as an important theme for understanding children and their experiences in El Salvador through pilot research, which I discussed in Chapter 3. With pilot research data in mind, I included LEPINA in questions in the professional and teacher interviews, as well as noted when it was present in participant observations. Media data also pointed to the role of LEPINA as part of the cultural conversation regarding children and violence in El Salvador. Although LEPINA was present in both pilot and dissertation research, there is little academic work on this law. This chapter aims to contribute to the scant literature on the topics of LEPINA and children’s rights in El Salvador.


\(^2\) For the remainder of the dissertation, this document will be called UNCRC.
Nations General Assembly 1989). After discussing the UNCRC, I provide an overview of the anthropological discussion about the convention and its tenets. Then, I turn to how the UNCRC, a global idea and document, is implemented locally in El Salvador in the form of LEPINA. Finally, I discuss the role of LEPINA in Salvadoran children’s everyday lives.

**Basis for LEPINA: United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child**

The basis for LEPINA is the UNCRC, which El Salvador signed on April 27, 1990 (Diario Oficial 2009). While there has been little academic writing on LEPINA itself, there is a wide range of academic work, including anthropological publications, on the UNCRC. Since LEPINA has its basis in this document, it is important to understand the basic tenets of the UNCRC, as well as the academic discussion surrounding this law. Therefore, I begin this section by describing the UNCRC and then summarize the anthropological literature regarding the document before moving on to a description of LEPINA itself in the following section.

**Description of the UNCRC**

The United Nations General Assembly adopted the UNCRC in 1989 and 196 state parties have ratified it to date3 (“Status of Ratification Interactive Dashboard” 2016). As gleaned from the title and as stated by the Society for Medical Anthropology’s Council on Infant and Child Health and Welfare Policy Statement Task Forces, the UNCRC had the “goal of protecting children’s rights” (Society for Medical Anthropology 2007, 235).

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3 The United States of America is the only state party that has signed but not ratified the UNCRC (“Status of Ratification Interactive Dashboard” 2016).
The document has four sections, a preamble and then three parts. The preamble lays out the tenets considered while constructing the document. It recognizes that children need “special care and assistance” (United Nations General Assembly 1989, 1), the family environment is the suitable one for the development of the child, and that many children live in difficult conditions4.

The rest of the UNCRC contains the three parts. The first part has 41 articles and describes children’s rights as well as the responsibilities of the state to the child. In this section, the definition of a child is “every human being” (United Nations General Assembly 1989, 2) 18 years or younger. Children’s best interests are to be the “primary consideration” (United Nations General Assembly 1989, 2), for all dealings with children. The articles also discuss how the state should ensure all rights of children consistent with their “evolving capacities” (United Nations General Assembly 1989, 2) but that the family has the responsibility for children’s rights. The state, for its part, should respect the families’ and communities’ rights in raising children and should support them in their responsibility. The state can carry this out through implementing the right of children to stay with their families as long as it is in their best interest (United Nations General Assembly 1989).

Children’s rights include their right to an identity, to hold and express their opinions and beliefs, to associate and to information. The UNCRC also states that children have the right to health and a high standard of living. Additionally, children have

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4 These principles are also discussed in previously adopted international declarations and documents including the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child of 1924, the United Nation’s Declaration of the Rights of the Child of 1959, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Declaration on Social and Legal Principals (United Nations General Assembly 1989).
the right to leisure, play, religion, culture, and arts. Handicapped children should also have the means to a dignified life (United Nations General Assembly 1989).

Children also have the right to “physical, mental, spiritual, moral, and social development” (United Nations General Assembly 1989, 2). Along the lines of development, children have the right to education, which according to the UNCRC should include the development of a child’s personality, abilities, as well as respect for human rights, parents, culture, national values, and the environment (United Nations General Assembly 1989). Furthermore, education should prepare children for a “responsible life” (United Nations General Assembly 1989, 9).

Part I also describes the protections and freedoms that children should have. These include protection from economic exploitation, narcotics, illegal substances, violence, abuse, and neglect. According to the UNCRC, children’s lives should be free from sexual exploitation, torture, and capital punishment. The UNCRC also discusses how the state should prevent child trafficking. The state should refrain from recruiting children into armed forces until they reach the age of 15 and should protect them from political conflict as well (United Nations General Assembly 1989).

The UNCRC also recognizes the different circumstances in which children live and allows for variations in the implementation of the child’s rights. Several statements acknowledge that children’s best interest should guide state policy. Included in this is that the state should allow for adoption if it is in the best interest of the child. States should also only use deprivation of liberty as a last resort with children, and if this case is necessary, children have the right to legal assistance (United Nations General Assembly 1989).
Parts II and III discuss the administration of the UNCRC. In its four articles, Part II lays out the process for a committee who will oversee the progress of states. States should also report their progress after the first two years and then every subsequent five years. The nine articles in Part III elaborate the process for ratification of the UNCRC by states. States are also able to propose amendments, make reservations, and denounce the UNCRC in writing (United Nations General Assembly 1989).

Anthropology and the UNCRC

There has been academic discussion regarding the UNCRC, the rights it proposes, as well as its implementation by states. Although the UNCRC received “wide international support” (Society for Medical Anthropology 2007, 235), anthropologists have criticized it as promoting a Western notion of the child and “what childhood should be” (Burman 1996, 47). Anthropologists have criticized the UNCRC’s understanding of children’s age, their need for care, and the idea that the proper place for children is at home or school (Forces 2007; Montgomery 2009; Burman 1996; Cowan, Dembour, and Wilson 2001; Montgomery 2001; Ennew 2002) as taking “little account of cultural relativity” (Montgomery 2009, 7). Work in anthropology has shown that the realities of children’s lives are different from the constructed ideals of the UNCRC. As Schepers-Hughes and Sargent (1998) discussed in the introduction to their volume on children and cultural politics, the use of rights “ignores the cultural constructedness of categories such as child, woman, mother, and adult. These categories always risk being naturalized and essentialized so that the local context is obscured and important differences are flattened” (10).
Although, as these authors have pointed out, the UNCRC laid out goals and guidelines for children and childhood, I argue that there is room for cultural variations in the language found in the document. For example, in article 1 regarding the definition of a child being younger than 18, it also says “unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier” (United Nations General Assembly 1989, 2). There is also acknowledgement of different family structures as described in Part I, article 5, which says that the state should respect the family, community, or extended family to care for children (United Nations General Assembly 1989). When describing education in Part I, article 29, the UNCRC opens education up to include local values as well as “civilizations different from his or her own” (United Nations General Assembly 1989, 9), recognizing the differences between cultures and states in both type and values. This type of language allows for adaptations to the UNCRC through locally salient changes to the definitions or ideas included in the articles during its implementation in the local context, as exemplified in the adoption of LEPINA in El Salvador.

The discussion of the UNCRC and rights is a global one (Burman 1996). In discussing rights and culture, Burman argued for the use of globalization as an analytic tool, stating that “whatever the western origins or assumptions guiding local (educational or welfare) practices, these ideas have now entered into previously non-western contexts to accord them new sets of local meanings” (Burman 1996, 48). It is within this context that I now turn to a discussion of El Salvador’s adaptation of the UNCRC through LEPINA, as well as the Política Nacional de Protección Integral de la Niñez y de la Adolescencia de El Salvador (PNPNA; National Policy for the Integral Protection of Childhood and Adolescence in El Salvador; Consejo Nacional de la Niñez y de la
Adolescencia, 2013b), which outlines the implementation of LEPINA. After discussing what the law includes, I will discuss the role of LEPINA in the local context.

**LEPINA**

LEPINA has a similar format as the UNCRC in that it begins with a discussion of the basis for the law, and then contains three parts, which LEPINA titles *Libros* (Books). The foundation of the law includes the UNCRC and Articles 34 and 35 of El Salvador’s 1983 Constitution, which recognizes children’s right to live in conditions which “allow for their integral development” (Diario Oficial 2009, 4), as well as makes the State responsible for children and adolescents’ right to physical, mental, and moral health, as well as education (Constitución Política de La República de El Salvador 1983).

LEPINA directly cites the UNCRC as a consideration for the law. It also states that children are dependent, vulnerable, but also “persons with rights” (Diario Oficial 2009, 4) and that “it is the obligation of the State to provide the security and legal certainty that all girls, boys and adolescents need for their full development” (Diario Oficial 2009, 4). After stating the principals that were in mind when developing the law, LEPINA moves into Book 1, which describes the bulk of the rights and responsibilities of children and adolescents.

Book 1 has four sections or *Títulos* (Titles), of which “General Dispositions” is the first. In this section, there are definitions for concepts such as community, program, integral health, society, childhood and adolescence. In contrast to the UNCRC, LEPINA designates underage as two time periods, childhood, which is from conception until 12-years of age and adolescence which is from 12-years to 18-years-old. Parents, those responsible for the child or adolescent, officials, public institutions, private organizations,
and society writ large are all responsible for complying with the law (Diario Oficial 2009). In this way, LEPINA expands the parties responsible for ensuring children’s rights from the UNCRC. The State is also responsible for creating measures so that all parties responsible for children can comply with the law, including creating programs and activities to teach these rights and responsibilities to those deemed as responsible for children and adolescents as well as to the children and adolescents themselves (Diario Oficial 2009). Finally, this section discusses several principles held by LEPINA, including the fundamental role of the family, the need for equality and equity, and taking into account the child and adolescent’s best interest, meaning that “every situation that fosters their physical, spiritual, psychological, moral and social development in order to achieve the full and harmonious development of their personality” (Diario Oficial 2009, 7).

The rest of this book discusses the rights and responsibilities of children. The 20 articles in Title I discuss the rights to survival and integral growth, including the right to life, health, healthcare, and a healthy environment (Diario Oficial 2009). The 34 articles in Title II discuss the rights of protection. While this includes the right to personal integrity, “which is understood as physical, psychological, cultural, moral, emotional, and sexual integrity” (Diario Oficial 2009, 13), the majority of these articles discuss things that children and adolescents should be protected or free from. This includes protection from maltreatment, which is “every action or omission that provokes or can provoke pain, suffering, or harm” (Diario Oficial 2009, 14) and also includes “neglect in carrying out obligations related to the provision of a nutritious and balanced diet, medical attention, education, daily care, and the use of girls, boys and adolescents in begging”
(Diario Oficial 2009, 14), protection from torture, imprisonment, trafficking, and the use of children’s images, economic exploitation, and special protections in the case of disasters and wars (Diario Oficial 2009).

Title III contains 14 articles and is about children’s right to development, including the development of their personality. Children also have the right to an identity and to be raised in their family. Children have the right to both education and culture as well. LEPINA discusses education as both integral and “directed towards the full development of personality, aptitudes, mental and physical capacities” (Diario Oficial 2009, 23). Education should be free and the State is responsible for providing the resources for education, including the maintenance of schools, and the provision of teaching materials. LEPINA then goes into the responsibilities of parents or those responsible for children in terms of education, including school enrollment, ensuring school attendance, and reporting rights violations. Public and private schools, termed centros educativos (educational centers) in El Salvador, also have the responsibility to report school desertion, as well as threats to or violations of students’ rights. According to LEPINA, educational centers are to teach discipline and respect to both students and educators. Under the law, discipline, including school discipline, should still respect children’s rights, which means the prohibition of “abuse, physical and psychological maltreatment, and any form of cruel, inhuman, or degrading punishment” (Diario Oficial 2009, 25).

Title IV discusses children and adolescents’ right to participation in eight articles. This includes the freedom of expression, the right to petition, opinion, to access information, and meet for legal activities (Diario Oficial 2009). PNPNA takes the right to
participation as its foundation. To inform the development of PNPNA, children and adolescents participated in a study undertaken by *Consejo Nacional de la Niñez y de la Adolescencia* (CONNA; National Council of Childhood and Adolescence), to understand children’s and adolescents’ lives in relation to the rights laid out in LEPINA (*Consejo Nacional de la Niñez y de la Adolescencia* 2013b). Finally, Title V lists the responsibilities of children and adolescents, which includes knowing their rights, respecting others, knowing the national history, protecting the environment, and fulfilling family and school obligations (*Diario Oficial* 2009).

Book 2 discusses the National System of Integral Protection of Childhood and Adolescence. This sets up a system of protection which includes CONNA, which oversees programs regarding children and their rights, local committees which both promote children’s and adolescents’ rights as well as reports of rights violations, and departmental boards of protection which receive and investigate reports of rights violations. CONNA is also the institution that developed the PNPNA, which is the policy guiding the implementation of LEPINA in El Salvador (*Consejo Nacional de la Niñez y de la Adolescencia* 2013b). The national system also includes *Instituto Salvadoreño para El Desarrollo Integral de la Niñez y la Adolescencia* (ISNA; Salvadoran Institute for the Integral Development of Childhood and Adolescence), which creates programs to promote rights, defend rights, and conduct research regarding childhood and adolescence. The final book, Book 3, “Administration of Justice”, details the process that occurs during an investigation of rights’ violations, as well as the process that occurs to restore children’s rights after they have been violated (*Diario Oficial* 2009).
Now that I have described the contents of the law and its antecedents, particularly the UNCRC, the next section discusses the implementation of LEPINA in the local context, particularly in terms of the school setting. The following section uses a “rights as culture” analytic process (Cowan, Dembour, and Wilson 2001, 4), whereby I look at the rights processes and its “connections to other aspects of social life” (Cowan, Dembour, and Wilson 2001, 4).

LEPINA in the Lives of Children

The legislative body of El Salvador approved LEPINA four years prior to data collection (Diario Oficial 2009). As Scheper-Hughes and Sargent (1998) argued regarding rights discourse, anthropologists have the skills to understand the translation of rights discourse into local communities. This section discusses the application of LEPINA in the local context of Salvadoran schools. At the time of data collection, governmental and non-governmental institutions were disseminating LEPINA to Salvadorans and many participants had an opinion about it. This section will first discuss participants’ general opinions about the law. Then I analyze the implementation of the tenets of LEPINA in terms of the right to education using data from interviews, participant observations, and the ethnographic content media analysis. Finally, I discuss the ways that LEPINA affects educators’ jobs through the system of denuncia.

General Thoughts about LEPINA

Participants discussed the principles laid out by LEPINA. These laws give guidelines for how individuals and institutions should work with children. In particular, participants identified that the law discusses rights and that programs through the system of institutions set up through the law, such as CONNA and ISNA, have the goal to
guarantee and “restore the rights” (Professional Participant) of children and adolescents through formal programs and workshops. When there is a report of a rights violation, participants identified that there would be an investigation regarding the context of this violation. Professional participants also discussed how the case may pass to a judge who then determines the types of procedures that need to occur for the restoration of rights. This aspect of restoring rights was important because as one professional stated in an interview, without this focus, “we will not move forward” as a country.

While there have not been many academic publications on LEPINA, essays and Salvadoran newspaper articles address children’s rights, the law, and PNPNA. In the media analysis, 21 articles discussed children and their rights. These news stories included descriptions of the policy and law, discussions of the role of the system of protection outlined in LEPINA, as well as the specific rights of children. In particular, there is a focus on children’s right to protection from violence. Educating the public about the law is also an important aspect with the news stories. Although in the media analysis there were 21 articles about children and rights, only 13 of them specifically mentioned LEPINA or the system set up to implement and enforce the law.

A local Salvadoran collection of essays presented at a conference by those who work in Salvadoran schools also discussed LEPINA. This publication defines the term, derecho (right), as “an attribute that I have since the moment I was conceived and that I have for the simple reason that I am a person, a human” (Andrade Rivera 2012, 7). This definition relates to the language in LEPINA defining childhood as beginning at conception and giving children rights because they are persons as described in the consideration section of the law (Diario Oficial 2009). A professional participant also
equated rights to necessities in their interview. When discussing rights, this participant said “a child needs food. A child needs health. A child needs a dignified life”. LEPINA then defines the rights or needs that children should have or be guaranteed.

Another right that many of the participants identified was the freedom from maltreatment and particularly from physical punishment. In this, multiple participants identified that this is a difficult right to enforce because of the way that adults view children. Participants called this view “adultocentric” (adult-centric), which meant that there is a view of children as inferior, helpless, and the “property” of adults, as two professional participants discussed it. When the term adult-centric was used, participants described adults educating children with “golpes” (hits, strikes) “because adults continue to think of boys and girls as being under our power” (Professional Participant). In this view of children, some types of violence against children are considered acceptable, as a professional said: “these fathers or mothers were raised, like before, no one paid attention to maltreatment, right. Then they repeat this, repeat this in their children”. Furthermore, the reasons that children are under the power of adults was described by a professional participant:

the size of the strength, the authority that we have as adults. Fathers and mothers are the authority. Teachers are the authority. Also, in the school there is a lot of this situation. And the other element that weakens children is the love that they have. The child, because of love, they are hit, they always consider them their mom. It is normal and natural…The child fails to identify the situation as violence.

In the adult-centric view, not only do some adults see these behaviors as acceptable, but children do not see the behaviors enacted against them as violence as well.

Programs set up through the enactment of LEPINA were working towards changing this adult-centric view of children by integrating the discourse of rights into
society. Participants identified that all of society, including the parents and the state, share the responsibility of guaranteeing children’s rights. The need to educate the public about children’s rights and the law came up in both educator and professional interviews.

As an educator told me in an interview:

> For me these things [LEPINA] are necessary, they are necessary, but maybe here…they have to educate the people involved in the process of youth. Already…the national Ministry, parents, educate them, so that they know and that the children also know and understand that they have rights because it is necessary to teach us how to treat a child as a person with rights, as a person that deserves our respect, right.

As this educator described, both children themselves and adults involved in the lives of children need to know about their rights. As described by participants, this type of education allows children to be seen as persons. Education about the law was also the theme that was discussed most often in the media analysis news stories about LEPINA. Seven of the news stories discussed campaigns and workshops enacted to educate the public on the law, children and youth themselves, parents, and those who work with children about the law.

The discussion of LEPINA also included weaknesses of the law and issues with its implementation. Five of the news stories discussed the weaknesses of the law including the lack of resources to implement the law fully. News stories also identified that there are problems with what the law states, including ambiguities in understanding what a rights violation is. This allows for different interpretation of rights violations, which will be discussed later. One of the professional participants who works within the process set up by LEPINA said that the challenge for them is to work as a system.
Another weakness perceived by participants is that when the government changes, the law may change as well so there was uncertainty regarding the law.

Right to Education

This subsection discusses the ways that the right to education as stipulated in articles 81 through 91 of LEPINA are being completed. In these articles, the law states that all children and adolescents are guaranteed the right to education without discrimination (Diario Oficial 2009). In a report by CONNA, they state that:

> education as a right should be understood not only as access to schooling, but in a broader sense as the social formation for life, for the exercise of their rights and the compliance of their rights and obligations. Education has been deemed in Salvadoran legislation as one of the most important priorities (Consejo Nacional de la Niñez y de la Adolescencia 2013a, 127).

The state, parents, educators, and children themselves have the responsibility to guarantee this right (Diario Oficial 2009; Andrade Rivera 2012). This can only be accomplished when schools have adequate materials, educators, and “optimal conditions for learning” (Pérez 2012, 77). In the rest of this subsection, I discuss whether these conditions were met in terms of access to schools, education being free, learning in the broader sense of the term, and then the issue of violence in the schools.

Article 83 of LEPINA stipulates that the government should guarantee access to school for all children and adolescents (Diario Oficial 2009). Access includes having close schools in proximity to children’s homes that are in good condition in terms of facilities and infrastructures, as well as a safe route to school without risks to students’ lives (Andrade Rivera 2012). One of the issues that makes it difficult for students to

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5 The campaign for the Presidential election scheduled in the year following the research was ongoing during data collection.
access schools is transportation, which the report by CONNA (2013a), and teachers during observations identified as a reason for students missing school. For example, during observations, an educator told me that a student had to leave home by two hours before school and sometimes would not arrive at school until three hours after the school day began due to issues with the public transportation system.

Decisions around the students’ safety on their trip to and from school were also made during the school day, sometimes decreasing the amount of time students spent in the classroom. For example, if there were predictions of a heavy rain arriving around the time when the students leave for the day, the schools would let the students out early. This occurred on five of the observations done during the study. The first time this occurred I spoke to the teacher about it:

It starts to lightning and thunder outside. The bell rings and the students leave. Over the microphone I hear the director say that students need to leave the school in 5 minutes. I ask the teacher why the students are leaving early and the teacher says that when it is going to storm, the students leave early for safety reasons. (Fieldnote)

Schools let students leave early so that they arrive home safely before any strong winds and lightning.

Safety en route to the school not only included natural issues, but also human-made issues, particularly violence that can occur during this transportation to and from school. As described by a professional participant, the problems students encounter can depend on where individuals live, “The route to school, depending on where they live, right, if you live in [name of community], sure you will come out to a lot of gangs”. The presence or threat of violence on children’s route to schools is an issue for some students living in certain communities. This can also be a threat to teachers as well. For example,
one teacher discussed living within walking distance to the school and being safe in spite of the violence in the country. While describing this, the teacher’s companions said that, it wouldn’t be good, it wouldn’t be good for a teacher to live close to where they work. And I said, but look, I haven’t had any problems. If I respect my students, if I respect the parents, if I am an example in the community, if I don’t smoke, if I don’t drink, and I dedicate myself to my family, to my work, what could be the problem.

In this teacher’s view, there are ways to avoid these issues which included avoiding public transportation as well as living in a way to avoid violence.

Issues with access to school also include the reasons described for why students miss school. Students miss class when an educator is not at the school that day. During the observations when a teacher was not in the school due to illness or meetings, the students were often told not to come to the school or left early as often there were no other educators to take care of the class. On the few occasions when the students did remain in the school when the educators were not there, they did not complete their regular classes and had an increased amount of recess. Another reason that students miss school is “the lack of economic resources” (Consejo Nacional de la Niñez y de la Adolescencia 2013a, 89). Although LEPINA states that those who are underage can only work if it doesn’t interfere with their schooling and that the minimum age for work is 14 years old, working is one of the reasons that students miss class (Consejo Nacional de la Niñez y de la Adolescencia 2013a). Educators in this study mentioned students younger than the minimum working age who worked in the market or sold goods with their family. Not only does a lack of economic resources create the need to work, but also students miss school because they have to take care of their siblings or they don’t have money for transportation.
Access to schools, as discussed in the Andrade Rivera (2012) quote above, also means having adequate facilities, materials, and conditions for students. To guarantee free education for children, these resources are also needed. While the schools received food from the government, there were elements that were missing and schools had to supply them. The educators also described the food and school packets that include a uniform and shoes as things that the government provides for students. In participant observations, I observed students being measured for and receiving their uniforms and shoes as well as students receiving food each day. Although certain elements are provided to schools, throughout observations, school staff asked students to ask their parents to help with food or resources, but as one professional participant who works with schools described,

For example, free education. Yes, as a school you can’t charge anything. They give food, true, and the government gives the students food and they don’t have to pay anything, but … in these announcements, in this propaganda, they don’t say that the only food that they give are the basics: grains, rice, beans, sugar, what else, milk, and a fortified drink. This is all that they give. In the propaganda, they forget to tell the parents that they have to buy salt, pepper, and other seasoning to put on the vegetables.

There are other supplies for the students that the educators noted in both interviews and observations that would help with their job. In all classrooms, there was not a sufficient number of books for all students. Teachers commented to the students in class during the observations about the lack of books and other materials. When I asked an educator about the lack of materials, which was mentioned to students during the previous class, they told me that the office is supposed to buy these supplies. It is of note that several observation days after this conversation, the school director handed out these supplies to the educators in the school.
Educators noted other materials or resources that the government should provide, such as a library, a therapy classroom, a place to store supplies, social activities, and games. As one educator discussed in an interview, the school and the Ministry of Education will not provide some of these resources because they think the students will destroy them or will take them out of the school. Even when materials are provided, there is the risk of damage or materials being stolen. For example, in one of the classrooms, the white board had a large hole in it, which the educator had to work around each day.

Interviews and participant observations revealed other issues in terms of infrastructure and facilities. Participants discussed the lack of sufficient resources for recreation. As a teacher told me in an interview when talking about what schools need to support students, “But they have to more to provide the institution, and the facilities, and the teachers to involve them [students] in social activities. For example, this, that they have recreational games in the educational centers.” At one of the schools, an outdoor faucet and basin where students get access to fresh water to drink and wash their hands and dishes was not working for two observation days at one of the schools with no other alternative available. The restrooms were not working at one of the schools for a period of time. These infrastructure aspects are important for the academic achievement of students, as shown in a study by Duarte, Gargiulo, and Moreno (2011). They found that libraries, science laboratories, computer classrooms, electricity, telephone services, potable water, bathrooms, nursing services, and a gymnasium or auditorium were associated with better academic results in urban schools. Many of these facilities mentioned in this study by Duarte, Gargiulo, and Moreno (2011) were not available at the schools and educators noted the need for them. One of the educators told me during a
participant observation while discussing the lack of resources that while there are many social problems in the country, the lack of resources can be improved. In a later interview, this educator said that further investment in children from both private institutions as well as the government would help decrease the poor behavior of students. Of note, I did observe students at the schools receiving materials and services from private institutions, such as books, curriculum instruction, and shoes.

While the earlier part of this subsection has focused heavily on how LEPINA is not completed in schools in terms of the right to education, there were ways that the schools were achieving the broader sense of education as discussed in the 2013 CONNA report in which education includes more than just the formal classes, like reading and writing (Andrade Rivera 2012). There were discussions of other types of education in interviews as well as observed during the school day. In classes, such as sociales (social studies), lessons included politics, rights, values, and violence. One teacher described this process in class: “I give them the real picture and within this context I tell them, you have rights. But you also have responsibilities.” Other events occurred during the school day, such as a poetry contest and a workshop organized by the Protección Civil (Civil Protection), a part of the Ministry of Governance, about risks in the school including natural threats such as landslides and earthquakes as well as threats caused by humans, such as robbery. Also, students learned about their rights as outlined in LEPINA. For example, in preparation for the celebration of the Day of the Child on October 1st, one of the schools put up a bulletin board that listed all of children’s rights. It is through these alternative manners that schools incorporated a broader notion of education.

*Denuncias* and Educators
In this final subsection, I discuss the *denuncia* (report) of a rights violation that is part of the process discussed by LEPINA and how it affects educators. In interviews with professionals, there was recognition that educators are able to make reports of rights violations of their own, as they are able to “detect violence” as one participant put it. Along with learning about their rights, students are also able to make reports against violations of their rights. This was seen as a positive way that students can get help if their rights are violated. As a teacher described the benefit of this system: “So because there are many levels in which the rights of children are violated. We as a school, what can we do. Teach them rights and teach them the culture of *denuncia*.”

Professionals and teachers also noted that this system of reporting can cause issues and misunderstandings. Educators expressed fear of others reporting them for violating the rights of a student, which professionals who work in this area have heard from teachers as well. While LEPINA and the system of reporting rights offered teachers a system to be agentive in protecting students whose rights have been violated, it has also created a system where some teachers feel that they have lost some of their agency within the school.

Since the language and principals of children’s rights and the system of reporting rights violations has been spread and internalized in the language and behaviors of teachers, students, and parents, there is a worry by teachers that they will be identified as perpetrators of rights violations and thus violence. For example, educators mentioned that they cannot correct a lot of behavior, they cannot tell a student to get a haircut, they always have to let a student use the bathroom when they ask permission, or it is “violence” as one educator put it and parents will then make a *denuncia* on them. This
can make teachers’ jobs difficult, as noted by both educators and professionals. When asked about LEPINA, one teacher described this process in an interview. This teacher discussed how a father told them that he was going to make a report against them because the educator kept bothering him with reports when his son was behaving poorly. This educator said:

He told me that he was going to report me for this, right, because, I am at fault for him hitting his son. Well, this was a very, very, very hard situation for me…this is one of the, of the cons that I see because there are many parents that know about the law and accept the law LEPINA.

Education, though, about the law was seen as a way that could help to alleviate this issue. Professional participants, discussed the need for educating teachers and parents regarding LEPINA, because as one professional said, “they see a right as a threat.”

Another professional discussed the difficulty that the spread of rights language has on teachers but offered education for teachers and children as a solution:

We have to use words differently, right, to guide the students so that they can be conscious of what they are doing also when they use these words, right. If there is something, for example, sometimes children come to say that “[name], look, he hit me”, for example, at recess. And he comes and I ask him, “why did you hit them?” “No [name], I was running and ran into her. I didn’t hit you.” Well, already the girl was putting intention in something that was an accident.

One teacher, though, thought that it isn’t a problem of LEPINA being a threat, but an issue with teacher’s interpretation: “The problem is that here, well, that we don’t, the teachers, we don’t like that we, that we are told that you made a mistake, you made a mistake.”

Even though this process of denuncia made some educators’ jobs more difficult causing them to change some of their behavior towards students, educators did recognize the need for the denuncia, because as one educator said “on the other hand, there are
educators that abuse children and hit them.” The internalization of meaning systems, in this case understandings of rights, guides behaviors and thoughts and leads to variation in a culture (D’Andrade 1992; Quinn and Holland 1987; Holland 1992; D’Andrade 1995; Lindholm 2007). In this case, teachers’ interpretation of LEPINA affects what is considered a violation of rights. This interpretation of LEPINA then affects children’s daily experiences in the school. While LEPINA protects children from rights violations that include maltreatment, abuse, and neglect, other behaviors could be interpreted as a violation, leading to teachers’ monitoring and limiting their own behaviors in ways that professionals say the law was not intended.

**Discussion**

**LEPINA and Childhood**

PNPNA identifies that LEPINA is creating a cultural change where the family, society, and the state are responsible for guaranteeing children’s rights (Consejo Nacional de la Niñez y de la Adolescencia 2013b). In line with the UNCRC, LEPINA is moving beyond the previous view of children as “incomplete persons” (Consejo Nacional de la Niñez y de la Adolescencia 2013b, 10), where children are considered as minors. For example, although the Salvadoran Constitution recognizes personhood to begin at conception, it also only considers citizenship to begin at the age of 18 (Constitución Política de La República de El Salvador 1983). Under LEPINA, the conceptualization of children should be as persons, deserving of rights, and not as minors under the control of adults. The introduction of the law itself and participants described this as a change in the view of childhood.
Many of the goals regarding children and education, as discussed by participants and LEPINA, involve the development of children, including the development of their personality, in this sense meaning their personhood. Although the law describes children as persons from conception and deserving of rights, they are also seen as a developing person. Education is heavily emphasized in both the UNCRC and LEPINA and this is important for both the development of the child and the state because giving rights is a way to improve the country. One way to achieve this goal is to educate students to live a “responsible life” (United Nations General Assembly 1989, 9) as described in the UNCRC. Looking toward the future and preparing children for it is an important component of not only giving rights to children but also part of the tools that participants used to prevent violence and promote children’s well-being which will be discussed in Chapter 6.

Although PNPNA and participants discussed the changing view of childhood, from one of minors, under the power and control of the state and adults, there is still an emphasis in LEPINA on protections for children. PNPNA also outlines how protections need to be in place at the institutional, family, and social or community level (Consejo Nacional de la Niñez y de la Adolescencia 2013b). At the institutional level is the national system of protection and the national strategy to prevent and reduce violence. At the family level is their role in guaranteeing rights. Finally, at the society or community level is the change in the culture.

LEPINA and Violence

The changing definition of childhood and the rights of children plays a role in the violence within children’s daily contexts and experiences in schools in El Salvador.
Professional participants identified that the power that adults feel over children allows for violence to continue and demonstrates how children are not viewed as persons. As one professional participant said when discussing this view of children, “you are incapable, you are less than me. And this allows you to think ‘I can hit, I can raise a hand to a child. I don’t see a child as a person like myself.’” The different views of the person and children that varying segments of Salvadoran society have internalized affects the acceptability of certain behaviors in regards to children as well as whether these behaviors are considered violence.

The right to personal integrity also has implications for understanding violence in the local setting. In PNPNA, the definition of violence is the violation of this right (Consejo Nacional de la Niñez y de la Adolescencia 2013b). In LEPINA, violence against children includes “abuse, exploitation, maltreatment, torture, abuse or neglect that affects their right to personal integrity” (Diario Oficial 2009, 14). Maltreatment, as described in LEPINA, is anything that can but does not necessarily cause “pain, suffering, or harm” (Diario Oficial 2009, 14). This indicates that there only needs to be the risk of these consequences for something to be classified as maltreatment. Maltreatment as described by LEPINA also includes neglect of education. Violence, therefore, incorporates a broader range of actions when viewed under the purview of this definition of maltreatment.

LEPINA and the Developmental Niche

This chapter discussed the development of LEPINA and its role in the local context. The developmental niche is utilized to understand LEPINA and the lives of children in Salvadoran schools (see Figure 2). PNPNA outlines how LEPINA needs to be
implemented at multiple levels, including parts of the developmental niche, the community/society level, and the institutional level. I also argue that the law is part of all aspects of a child’s developmental niche and therefore affects the interactions between each level.

Figure 2: LEPINA in the Developmental Niche

Although anthropology has criticized the use of rights as ignoring local context and understandings, this chapter has demonstrated how rights are adapted and reinterpreted in the local context. As depicted in Figure 2, global concepts are brought
into the country, in this situation the conceptualization of the rights of children from the UNCRC, and are adapted to the local context through LEPINA and PNPNA. As described in this chapter, LEPINA and PNPNA are striving to create a change in the local cultural conceptualizations of childhood and violence through the rights framework. At the next level are the institutions in El Salvador that are tasked with ensuring the rights of children, including the educational system as well as the system of protection described in the law. The law also enters into the immediate developmental niche of the child in the perceptions of educators and caregivers regarding the law, the daily routines that the law stipulates, such as access to educational institutions, as well as daily activities, such as the expression of rights through class teaching and signage in the school.

**Summary**

This chapter set out to contribute to Research Questions 1 and 2. LEPINA’s broad definition of violence which includes violations of the right to education, a form of structural violence, and violations of the right to personal integrity is a way that violence enters the everyday lives of children. LEPINA, therefore, is used as an analytic tool to look at when violence occurs in the lives of children, which this chapter and the next try to do. The way that the state, institutions, and adults implement LEPINA allows for topics of violence and security to enter the school day, including children learning about their rights, the allowable types of discipline in the school, as well as the changing behaviors of educators when they interpret LEPINA as putting them at risk of receiving a *denuncia*.

Research Question 1 looks at the conceptualizations of violence and childhood by adults who work with children. LEPINA and its implementation have been working to
change the understandings of violence and childhood so that children are conceived as persons and violence against them as defined by LEPINA will be considered violence by the broader Salvadoran population. Chapter 6 will show how LEPINA also affects the concept of well-being for children as well as its role in the goal of providing children with a better future.
CHAPTER 5
VIOLENCE IN SALVADORAN CHILDREN’S LIVES

Introduction

Chapter 4 described children’s rights and its discourse in El Salvador. It also noted that in the process of implementing LEPINA, the concept of violence and childhood are changing. The focus of this research study was to understand the ways that violence enters the everyday lives of children, particularly in schools. This chapter further analyzes the concept of violence in El Salvador to understand not only what is considered violence in the local context but also the role of pervasive violence in children’s lives. The data presented in this chapter addresses all three research questions: (1) what are adults’ conceptions of violence and its consequences for children; (2) how do children learn about communal violence in their developmental niche; and (3) what effect does persistent communal violence have on children’s well-being.

This chapter uses data from the media analysis, interviews, and participant observations to understand violence at the different levels of the context in which children live, from the larger cultural environment to the daily school setting. The consequences of violence for children are also explored. First, the chapter describes the larger cultural discourse of violence with a focus on the types of violence that are addressed in news media as well as how violence is discussed. Then the chapter discusses the types of violence that children encounter in their lives as described by participants, including the types of violence that occur within the school setting. Finally, the chapter
assesses the causes and consequences of violence in children’s lives as discussed by professionals and teacher participants.

**Discourse of Violence**

This section explores how violence is discussed in Salvadoran news media. The analysis used Salvadoran newspapers to understand the broader cultural context and conceptualization of violence, particularly the types of violence that are reported, how violence is discussed, as well as how children fit into the types of violence discussed in the news media. The analysis of Salvadoran newspapers contributed to understanding the discourse around violence, with a focus on the meanings and themes derived from it (Altheide 2002).

**Table 2: Violence Themes from News Stories**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Violence Themes</th>
<th>N (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social/Criminal Violence</td>
<td>580 (51.23%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justice</td>
<td>322 (28.45%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>71 (6.27%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Violence</td>
<td>68 (6.01%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevention</td>
<td>58 (5.12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence in Schools</td>
<td>33 (2.92%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,132 (100%)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Violence was a common theme in the three newspapers analyzed over the three months of media analysis. 1,132 news stories included the topic of violence. The main themes that were present in the media analysis were descriptions of acts of social and criminal violence as well as descriptions of justice for violent crimes, which included the arrests, trials, and sentencing of those accused of committing violent acts (see Table 2). These two categories made up 51.3% and 28.4%, respectively, of the news stories that included the topic of violence. Other themes that were present in these news stories were
discussions of security measures in response to violence, descriptions of acts of violence other than social and criminal violence (e.g., domestic violence and political violence), news stories that described the prevention of violence, and violence that occurs in or around schools. In the rest of this section, I will go into more detail about the news stories that describe social and criminal violence as well as justice for violent crimes. Later in the chapter, I will discuss violence in schools from both the media analysis as well as participant observations and interviews. Security and prevention are analyzed deeper in Chapter 6’s discussion of the management of violence.

Social and Criminal Violence

Descriptions of social and criminal violence made up more than half (51.3%) of the news stories that included the topic of violence. Of the 580 news stories, two subthemes predominated, homicides and gang violence. Four hundred eighty-nine of the 580 news stories about social and criminal violence discussed homicides (84.3%) and 289 of the 580 social and criminal violence news stories (49.8%) involved the topic of gang violence. Table 3 illustrates the five most prominent themes in the news stories about gangs and homicides. There was often overlap in the stories that described homicides and gang violence. For example, 39% of the news stories that described homicides also discussed the role of gangs on this type of violence. The other prominent themes from the 439 news stories about homicides were descriptions of the increasing rates of homicides (15.7%), the relationship between extortion and homicides (2.5%), descriptions of the decreasing rates of homicides (2.3%), and the relationship between homicides and alcohol, drugs, and mental health (1.6%). There is also overlap in the stories that discuss these five themes. For example, 20 of the 69 news stories (29.0%) that
described the increasing rates of homicides attributed this change to the gangs. This was often discussed in the news stories in relation to a gang truce, which had been in effect for about a year when data collection occurred (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2013). Many news stories noted that the gang truce gave gangs control over violence rates and the gangs used the increase or decrease of violence as a negotiation tactic. The gang truce was also used as a benchmark in these news stories for measuring homicide rates. News stories compared current homicide rates in El Salvador overall and rates in different municipalities, particularly in those declared violence-free, to homicide rates both before and immediately after the truce became effective in 2012.

Table 3: Themes about Social and Criminal Violence from News Stories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social and Criminal Violence Themes</th>
<th>N (% within each theme)</th>
<th>% of 1,132 Total Violence News Stories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Homicide (5 most prevalent themes)</strong></td>
<td>N=439</td>
<td>38.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gangs</td>
<td>171 (38.95%)</td>
<td>15.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing Rates</td>
<td>69 (15.72%)</td>
<td>6.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extortion</td>
<td>11 (2.51%)</td>
<td>0.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreasing Rates</td>
<td>10 (2.28%)</td>
<td>0.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol, Drugs &amp; Mental Health</td>
<td>7 (1.59%)</td>
<td>0.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gang Violence (5 most prevalent themes)</strong></td>
<td>N=289</td>
<td>25.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homicide</td>
<td>171 (59.17%)</td>
<td>15.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truce</td>
<td>67 (23.18%)</td>
<td>5.92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extortion</td>
<td>13 (4.50%)</td>
<td>1.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confrontation with Police</td>
<td>11 (3.81%)</td>
<td>0.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assault/Attack</td>
<td>8 (2.77%)</td>
<td>0.71%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the news stories that described violence that is attributed to the gangs, homicide was the violent act described in 59.2% of the stories. The next most prevalent theme was the gang truce. News stories discussed the truce in terms of peace or the pacification process in El Salvador. The etic goal of this process according to the news stories, was to decrease the overall violence rates. As mentioned earlier, the gang truce was also
associated in the news stories with gang control over levels of violence. This control is mostly conveyed in a negative connotation, but sometimes news stories described this control as contributing to a decrease or discontinuation of violence. More often, though, news stories related gang control to continued violence in violence-free municipalities or an expansion of violence into other municipalities that the news stories said did not have gang violence before the truce. The other types of violence that news stories discussed as related to gang violence, although in much smaller numbers, were descriptions of gangs using extortion as well as attacks on individuals. The news stories demonstrate that in the discourse of violence, there is a relationship between homicides, violence, and gang violence.

Justice for Violence

Three hundred twenty-two of the 1,132 news stories described the arrest, trial, or sentencing of the perpetrator of a violent act. Due to the number of news stories (28.4% of all news stories about violence), and the difference in focus of the articles, I separated out these 322 news stories that focused on justice for violent acts from the news stories that described violent acts for this analysis. 14 types of violence were described in these 322 news stories about justice for violence (Table 4). As seen in the discussion about the news stories that described violence, homicide was the type of violence that was most often discussed in the news articles about justice for violent acts (57.1% of the news stories). The other most prevalent violent crimes mentioned in these stories included sexual violence (e.g., rape and sexual assault), extortion, attempted homicide, and human trafficking. The stories about justice for violent acts described not only the violent crime, but also the characteristics of the perpetrators including their age, gender, and
“occupation”, particularly if they were police, military, educators, or gang members.

News stories implicated gang members as the perpetrator in 99 of the 322 news stories about justice for violence (30.7%), which included homicide (76.8% of the 99 cases), extortion (15.2% of the 99 cases), armed assault (4.0% of the 99 cases), attempted homicide (3.0% of the 99 cases), and sexual violence (1.0% of the 99 cases).

Table 4: Types of Violence from News Stories about Justice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Violent behavior in Justice News Stories</th>
<th>N (% of 322 Justice News Stories)</th>
<th>% of 1,132 Total Violence News Stories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homicide¹</td>
<td>185 (57.45%)</td>
<td>16.34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Violence</td>
<td>58 (18.01%)</td>
<td>5.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extortion</td>
<td>50 (15.52%)</td>
<td>4.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted Homicide</td>
<td>13 (4.04%)</td>
<td>1.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Trafficking</td>
<td>7 (2.17%)</td>
<td>0.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assault/Attacks</td>
<td>6 (1.86%)</td>
<td>0.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Maltreatment</td>
<td>4 (1.24%)</td>
<td>0.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Violence</td>
<td>3 (0.93%)</td>
<td>0.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Causing an Abortion</td>
<td>1 (0.31%)</td>
<td>0.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fighting</td>
<td>1 (0.31%)</td>
<td>0.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted Sexual Violence</td>
<td>1 (0.31%)</td>
<td>0.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threats</td>
<td>1 (0.31%)</td>
<td>0.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corruption of a Minor</td>
<td>1 (0.31%)</td>
<td>0.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kidnapping</td>
<td>1 (0.31%)</td>
<td>0.09%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Including two news stories regarding a case of abortion being considered homicide.

In the news stories about social and criminal violence as well as justice for violent acts, the analysis demonstrates that gangs were often associated with violence in many of the cases: gangs were discussed as involved in 49.8% of social and criminal violence news stories and 30.7% of news stories about justice for violent acts. This involvement includes gang members as both perpetrators of violence as well as victims of violence, although the latter occurred less often. Also, contrary to some of the discussion around gang violence being immune to the justice system in the new stories about the control of gangs as a result of the truce, 30.7% of the news stories about the arrest, trial and
sentencing of gang members for violent crimes indicated that gang members were also subject to consequences through the justice system.

Children and Violence

As described in Chapter 2, there is a debate about whether children are aware of violence that is occurring around them. The media analysis revealed that children in El Salvador are aware of violence and come in contact with it. For the analysis, I also examined the photos associated with a news story, including those on the front pages of the newspapers that guide the reader to the news stories contained in that day’s edition. In the three months of newspapers analyzed, a homicide victim was visible in photos 36 times, 7 of which were on the front page or the table of contents page of the newspaper. Children were also shown to be witnesses of violence as seen in 16 photos from the media analysis in which children are in the frame and looking at a homicide crime scene. Two of these photos were on the front page of the newspapers. From the media analysis data, children become witnesses of violence both in person and if they see the cover of newspapers in their environment. Participants also discussed the influence of media on children’s awareness of violence. One professional participant said, “they realize, right, because they see, because they hear the news, right. Yes, they know violence exists.” The frequent presence of violence in the news coverage is one method in which children learn about violence in El Salvador.

The media analysis also showed how children are further involved in violence besides being a witness to the violence. Children are both described in the media analysis as victims of violence as well as the perpetrators of violence in all themes associated with violence in the news stories. Table 5 shows the types of violence involving minors in the
roles of victims and perpetrators. Minors were described as the victims of violence in 153 news stories (13.5% of all news stories about violence). The three most common types of violence discussed in these news stories are homicide, sexual violence (e.g., rape and sexual assault), and disappearance (i.e., reports of missing children). Minors were also discussed as the perpetrators of violence in 33 news stories (2.9% of all news stories about violence). The three most common types of violence described in these news stories are homicide, violent confrontations with police, and extortion. Often, the minors were implicated as being members of gangs as well as the perpetrators of the violence (69.7% of the 33 cases where minors are described as perpetrators).

Table 5: Types of Violence involving Children from News Stories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children and Violence</th>
<th>N (% within each theme)</th>
<th>% of 1,132 Total Violence News Stories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Children as Perpetrators</strong></td>
<td>N=33</td>
<td>2.92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homicide</td>
<td>25 (75.75%)</td>
<td>2.21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violent Confrontation with Police</td>
<td>3 (9.09%)</td>
<td>0.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extortion</td>
<td>3 (9.09%)</td>
<td>0.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assault</td>
<td>2 (6.06%)</td>
<td>0.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Children as Victims</strong></td>
<td>N=153</td>
<td>13.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homicide</td>
<td>42 (27.45%)</td>
<td>3.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Violence</td>
<td>38 (24.83%)</td>
<td>3.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>22 (14.38%)</td>
<td>1.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assault</td>
<td>13 (8.50%)</td>
<td>1.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Trafficking</td>
<td>5 (3.27%)</td>
<td>0.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Maltreatment</td>
<td>5 (3.27%)</td>
<td>0.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted Homicide</td>
<td>2 (1.31%)</td>
<td>0.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threats</td>
<td>2 (1.31%)</td>
<td>0.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abandonment</td>
<td>1 (0.65%)</td>
<td>0.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negligence</td>
<td>1 (0.65%)</td>
<td>0.09%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in this section, the types of violence covered most in the news media were those of homicide and gang violence. While there were reports of the arrest and sentencing of those who commit violent crimes, this only made up 28% of the news
stories, while descriptions of criminal and social violence accounted for 51% of news coverage on violence. This demonstrates a perception that many violent behaviors occur without legal consequences for the perpetrator. The news media analysis also revealed that children are involved in the violence as witnesses, victims, and perpetrators. The crimes involving children from the news stories follow the same categories as the broader themes associated with violence: homicide, sexual violence, and gang violence. The exception is the disappearance of minors, a theme which was less common when children were not involved in the incident described in the news story. While participants also mentioned children encountering these types of violence in El Salvador, as I describe in the next section, the types of violence that participants often described as a concern to them, as well as the types of violence observed in the schools, were not usually part of the discourse of violence in the news media.

As Altheide (2002) described with his analysis of fear, a term “becomes a matter of discourse when it expands from being used with a specific referent to use as a pervasive problem and more general orientation” (76). As seen in this media analysis, violence encompasses a broad range of behaviors in Salvadoran newspapers. Salvadoran newspapers used the term violence in titles of articles to represent these multiple behaviors. Participants and educators used the term violence for many behaviors, including as a broad, all-encompassing category. This was exemplified by an educator who told me during an observation that El Salvador would be nicer if it weren’t for the “violence”. Violence in this instance was used broadly and the insinuation was the broader social violence. Violence, though, was also used to describe students’ aggressive behaviors which will be described in more detail later in this chapter. This broad
understanding of violence was also seen in imagery in the schools. A sign in one of the schools read, “There is violence. Violence has to be prevented.” This sign was visible to all students in the school and used the term violence without specifying a type of violence. This section demonstrated how in the Salvadoran context, the discourse of violence can have multiple meanings and cover multiple levels, from social violence to interpersonal violence between children. The next section describes the types of violence in the local context, particularly the violence that occurs in schools.

**Types of Violence in the Local Context**

A focus of this dissertation research was to understand the types of violence that children experience from the perspective of adults who interact professionally with children as well as from participant observations in schools, with the guidance of participants to understand what should be considered violence. Overall, participants described several types of violence that were part of children’s daily lives in El Salvador. Chapter 4 discussed local conceptions of violence based on the law, LEPINA, or the local understanding of the law. These included maltreatment, sexual violence, and lack of access to education. In addition to the types of violence mentioned that were specifically discussed in relation to LEPINA, participants also described physical violence, psychological violence, economic violence, institutional violence (e.g., repressive policies from the state), social violence (e.g., gang violence), intra-familiar violence, workplace violence including the violation of rights in minor’s workplaces, and gender-based violence. Each of these types of violence, also included other types of violence. For example, a poster in a school listed out types of violence as violence against women.
along with definitions for each type, including Feminicide, physical, economic, psychological, patriarchal, sexual, and symbolic.

Participants described violence as occurring in all aspects of children’s lives, including in their homes, in their communities, but also in the school setting. Violence is part of all of these realms, as a professional participant who worked with children in programs that occur outside of schools described when drawing a diagram of the context of violence in children’s lives on a piece of paper during an interview:

When the boys and girls leave here, they go to a family, right, they go to a school, they go to a community. Well, here [the program], we talk about rights, ok, and the boys and girls, we teach them that no one can yell at them. That no one can hit them. That they have the right to organize. That they have the right to talk and to have opinions, right. But when they leave here, they arrive at a school where the teacher tells them, “Be quiet, you don’t know.” Right. They leave here, they go to a family where the mom yells at them or the father yells at them or the father hits them.

As this quote demonstrates, violence crosses through many areas of a child’s life in El Salvador. Additionally, it demonstrates the impact of the rights discourse in everyday language. While it is important to note the wide array of violence that children encounter, much of the focus of this research was on the school setting. The school is an important site where children learn about and are socialized into a culture (Golden 2005). Violence that occurs in the school setting will be discussed in the remainder of this section.

Violence in Schools

Professional and teacher participants discussed how violence can occur in some schools where students are yelled at and sometimes even hit by teachers. The media analysis also discussed one case of sexual violence against students by an educator. In their report, CONNA found with surveys of children under the age of 12:
Maltreatment and violence inside of the school, fights between girls and boys of the same age and with older students happens constantly. Furthermore, this includes the maltreatment that they receive on the part of teachers and they express that they yell and punish them (Consejo Nacional de la Niñez y de la Adolescencia 2013a, 89–90).

The school can be a site where children are the victims of multiple types of both etic and emic violence, with each person having a different perspective on what is considered violence, from adult caretakers, community violence that enters the school, as well as from other children.

Presence of Gangs in Schools

The media analysis contributed to the understanding of the types of violence that occur within schools in El Salvador (Table 6), although this only occupied 2.9% of all news stories about violence. About a third of the news stories that mentioned violence in the school (32.8%), discussed the influence of gangs. The types of violence in schools related to gangs included threats or extortion of educators as well as students. Almost 20% of the news stories about violence in schools also discussed threats to educators that are not related to gangs. The results of threats, both gang-related and not, to the lives of educators and students included students and teachers leaving the school and sometimes moving to other schools. This was also related to the discussion of security and insecurity within the school, including the increase of police presence in schools. The news stories also discussed or implied fear of the students and educators in the schools that are being threatened or facing extortion. These news stories described how students and educators desert the schools where they are facing these threats to their lives, as well as schools changing class schedules and canceling classes altogether because of threats. While five news stories described students and educators as victims of homicide, one news story
made the connection between school desertion from threats and a homicide of a minor near the school.

Table 6: Themes Related to Violence in Schools from News Stories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Violence in Schools (Most Prominent Themes)</th>
<th>N (% of 61 News Stories of Violence in Schools)</th>
<th>% of 1,132 Total Violence News Stories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gangs</td>
<td>20 (32.78%)</td>
<td>1.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threats/Extortion</td>
<td>19 (31.15%)</td>
<td>1.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Desertion – Students &amp; Teachers</td>
<td>5 (8.20%)</td>
<td>0.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class schedule changed/Classes cancelled</td>
<td>4 (6.56%)</td>
<td>0.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security/Insecurity</td>
<td>11 (18.03%)</td>
<td>0.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Presence</td>
<td>2 (3.28%)</td>
<td>0.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threats (Not gang-related)</td>
<td>12 (19.67%)</td>
<td>1.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Schedule Changed/Classes Cancelled</td>
<td>5 (8.20%)</td>
<td>0.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Desertion</td>
<td>1 (1.64%)</td>
<td>0.88%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the participant observations, the topic of gangs was present, although gangs were not directly involved in the research. The topic of gangs and delinquency entered students’ discussions twice during the observations, although the students never discussed the topic long. On one occasion, students were playing a game at a table during recess and they mentioned gangs as being present in El Salvador. The students, though, quickly returned to their game without much discussion.

Gang insignias in and around the schools were also seen during observations. On six observations, at least one desk had a gang insignia etched into it. Educators acknowledged the presence of the gang insignias, but teachers placed blame for these gang insignias on other students and grades, not their own (e.g., the morning session teachers blamed the insignias on the afternoon session students). One educator said that their students were not involved in creating these gang insignias because, “They know it’s bad, because ‘Look at this’ they tell me. And they say, ‘It wasn’t me, it wasn’t me.’”
Gang violence also was present in Salvadoran schools because of the connections between students and the gangs. Both educators and professional participants discussed children having family who are members of gangs as an issue in some schools. One educator mentioned that they do not interact with students outside of the school because of these possible family relationships with gangs. Teachers also had to be careful with the way they behave in the school due to this relationship. One teacher said when talking about discussions of violence in the classroom,

there are relatives who are gang members…Then, you have to, you have to focus on the pedagogical perspective and know how to do it because imagine that you, you show a different focus and a child goes talking in their house… because of this, a teacher has to be careful.

Also, some participants expressed that educators’ fear correcting the behavior of students who have family members who are part of the gangs. As will be discussed in Chapter 6, violence in the school also takes time away from classroom education as the teachers have to dedicate time to teaching students not to use violence and to correct or discipline violent behavior.

As this data demonstrates, children are aware of gang violence in El Salvador because it enters into their daily contexts in the school. The awareness of social violence, though, does not cover all of children’s interactions with violence as demonstrated by the media analysis. In the discourse of violence, children play the role of victims and perpetrators of violence. As was the case with the themes related to violence and children in the media analysis, children occupied three roles when it came to violence in schools: witness, victim, and perpetrator. The types of violence seen during observations and most often mentioned by participants, were different than those discussed in the media analysis, though, as will be described in the next section.
Violent and Aggressive Behaviors

Although gang violence and threats of violence were the predominant topics of discussion in the media coverage of violence in schools, most of the violence that educators described within the school occurred at the individual-level among students. The term “violence” was mostly used to describe aggressive behaviors by both teachers and students. For example, when entering an observation period one day, an educator told me that I can observe their “*agresividad*” (aggressiveness). These behaviors occurred regularly and were present both during structured (e.g., classroom) and unstructured (e.g., recess) time during the school day. As one educator said during an observation, “This happens every day, hits, insults, saying bad words.” Participants described these aggressive behaviors as occurring on a daily basis and these behaviors were also observed during data collection.

During participant observations, I noted violent or aggressive behavior that involved enrolled students and educators. While academic instruction occupied the majority of the day, I observed 102 instances of students engaging in this type of violence both in the classroom and during recess over the 143 hours of participant observations. These events which occurred during both structured and unstructured time periods included fighting over school supplies, physical fights, verbal arguments, name calling, destruction of property, students hitting each other with objects, and students pushing, hitting, and kicking other students as they walked down the rows of desks or tables. For example, I wrote in the participant observation fieldnote: “Student 1 hits the head of another student who says something as Student 1 walks by”.
Educators also reported violence that occurred during play. This violent behavior ranged from students kicking, hitting, pulling, and pushing each other during a game, for example when playing soccer or tag, and students pretending to fight, stab each other, or shoot each other with a gun. Often these acts were characterized by students smiling or laughing. For example, during one participant observation at recess, I noted:

The student gets up and plays a game that is girls vs. boys. It is a type of tag…I see Student 1 pulling the shirts of other students to put them in the “jail” and I see the student hit another student in the back of the head. Student 2 pushes other students to the jail area. (Fieldnote)

Two educators described this as “jugando” (playing) with violence. While research by Richman Beresin (2004) in the U.S. documented that violence rarely occurred during play but instead occurred in the period between recess and returning to the classroom, my observational data, as well as descriptions from participants, indicate that in San Salvador play incorporated and sometimes changed to aggressive and violent behavior.

Research in the United States and Canada exploring violence or aggressive acts by students during the school day has shown that these behaviors are more common during unstructured periods such as during recess and in the hallways (Craig, Pepler, and Atlas 2000; Behre, Astor, and Meyer 2001; Warren and Andersonbutcher 2005). Craig, Pepler, and Atlas’s (2000) observations of school children found that about twice as many violent acts occurred on the playground per hour than in the classroom. My data revealed that 1.3 times as many violent acts occurred per hour during unstructured periods than in the classroom, with 33 violent events recorded during 37 hours of observed unstructured time and 66 violent events recorded during 106 hours of observed structured time. All types of violent behaviors (physical violence, fighting, verbal aggressive behaviors, as well as violence during play and play fighting) occurred in both
unstructured spaces as well as within the structured time periods of both schools. A teacher confirmed this finding, when they told me about children’s behavior, “It is no different in the classroom and at recess.”

Gender also played a role in these aggressive behaviors that children displayed. Although nine boys and nine girls enrolled in the research, male students were more often involved in the violent behaviors as both the aggressors as well as the victim of the aggression. Males were involved in an event as the aggressor 65.8% of the time and as the victims 74.3% of the time. Teachers were conflicted in the difference in behavior of children in regards to their involvement as the aggressors of violence. While one teacher told me, “Boys are more impulsive than the girls. The boys are more reactive because the boys hit more,” another teacher told me “They are the same. Girls fight, boys fight.”

Participants used the term violence to describe a variety of aggressive behaviors. For example, during an observation, one of the educators told the students that there would be an investigation into the incident that occurred the previous day. The educator then told me that there had been an incident of violence after school the prior day. One of the students threw a rock into the window of a public transportation “microbus” which was carrying students and parents. While no one was physically injured from this incident, this educator used the term, “violence”, for the behavior.

Students also used the term, violence, for these behaviors. During one observation, a student was pushing another student. A student who was witnessing the pushing chanted violencia (violence). Aggressive behaviors were also sometimes discussed as “bullying” by professionals, educators, and students. When asked to list types of violence, bullying was also mentioned by both professionals and teachers. The
English word, “bullying”, has been adopted and used in the local Salvadoran context. For example, during another observation at recess, two students were pushing each other, and one pushed the other student into a car. The student who was pushed into the car pointed at the other student and said, “bullying”. Another term that I only heard used by a student once for aggressive behaviors in the school was *abuso* (abuse). This occurred when two students were hitting each other and one of the students said “*abuso*”.

**Ethnopsychology of Children’s Violent and Aggressive Behaviors**

Violence was considered a normal part of everyday life. Many different types of behaviors were considered violence including students’ “intolerance” (Two Teacher Interviews), and violence during play. Although many different types of behaviors were termed violence, there were variations in the perceived levels of violence, with some behaviors being considered more serious than others. While aggressive behaviors were described as violent, a teacher said when discussing children’s behaviors in the school, “I always say there are different types of violence. Then, I feel that this a very soft violence now that can be corrected.” Another teacher qualified the level of violence when talking about children’s behavior, saying, “Aggressions, but not so violent.”

Other behaviors, though, were seen as more serious. For example, some behaviors were described as “grave” (serious). As a teacher described, “physical aggression against their companions. That they have a bloody nose or mouth, break an arm, this is another serious behavior. It is a very, very elevated level of violence in this child.” When other children were physically hurt or crying, teachers most often responded to the students as seen in the participant observations.
While violence was described as being at different levels of seriousness, many of these behaviors were considered the norm for children. For example, one teacher said “It’s normal that they play with violence that they hit each other”. Another teacher described the causes of violence in terms of its normality, “This for me has its origins in the context of violence that they live. Some, right. And others naturally have very aggressive behavior.” Although there were many “levels of violence” (Teacher Interview), and violence was perceived as a norm for children, it is within the historical and current context of violence that has influenced adult’s perceptions of the behaviors as a concern. A teacher described this context while discussing children’s violent and aggressive behaviors, saying,

Remember that we are with young students that are the products and consequences, that were born when the war was ending. And then we got the phenomenon of the gangs...Then, all of these things should make you reflect on how as an institution we have to take various strategies.

As will be described in the next chapter, it is within this context that violence at all levels is addressed at the school level through both direct and indirect tactics.

**Causes and Consequences of Violence**

Children’s aggressive and violent behavior can impact children’s ability and desire to attend schools. In one instance, a student did not come to school for several days. An educator told me that other students made fun of this student on a daily basis to make this student leave the school. The teacher said that the students succeeded, and this child did not return to class. Not only does violence in the school have the potential to keep children from attending school, but violence in the home can as well. One educator told me in an interview that “sometimes it is because when I send a complaint to the mom or dad, I know that they hit the child. They miss two, three days.”
Participants also identified the reasons for violence in which children engage. One of the reasons given was family disintegration. Another reason cited was a lack of resources in the school. For example, during one observation, two students were fighting over a book. The educator pointed this out to me explaining that this is why it would be best if each student had their own books. Professional and educator participants both mentioned children being alone at home as a cause of their engaging in violent behaviors. When parents are not around their child “this affects the child in a way that presents as a behavior here and sometimes as aggressiveness towards their companions. Sometimes they lack verbal respect and in others, games in which manifests their level of violence, right” (Teacher Interview). Being alone at home meant that the children did not have parents to be examples for them, and they said that children cannot entertain themselves alone. This, then, leads to children’s engagement in aggressive and violent behaviors. One professional participant also described children’s violent behavior as the way that children play but also analyzed it further noting the cause of their violence: “They very much like to practice these games that they see on television, fighting, but they don’t know their strength and they can end up getting hit.”

Another reason mentioned for children’s violent and aggressive behaviors was as a reaction to insecurity in their communities, as a teacher said, “I consider that it is part of the generalized violence in the country.” It was also related to their direct experience of violence according to participants. Participants described bullying, using bad words, insulting others, hitting others, yelling and entering gangs as related to children’s role as the victims of or witnesses to violence. A professional described it, saying, “many grew up in homes where the father abused the mother and they think it is normal. Then they
come abusing their companions.” Both professional and educator participants described this relationship as a circle of violence, cycle of violence, naturalization of violence, or most often, normalization of violence. One professional said, “when boys and girls live in a circle of violence, most likely they will be victimizers.” Not only is this described as being part of the present, but participants related this normalization of violence to how Salvadoran’s historically raised children. For example, a professional participant said, “This reflects the historical context of the relationship between parents and children and the majority of adults grew up with hitting. Hitting marks your life…It is very serious because our boys and girls are learning it is natural to hit one another.”

Both professionals and educators described violence in El Salvador as constant and normal. One educator said that children are regularly “violating the rights of their companions. They hit them, push them, maltreat them. These are the daily examples in which we live in the institution.” The discourse of violence in Salvadoran media also demonstrated the perception that violence is common. While other research has related the ubiquity of violence to fear, such as Altheide’s (2002) analysis of U.S. newspapers, this word was not regularly present in the violence new stories from the Salvadoran newspapers or in the discussions of violence by participants. One participant described this lack of fear, saying, “There isn’t fear of anything.” While fear does occur and is implicit in the reason why extortion and threats happen and have consequences for those experiencing it, the normalization of violence contributes to fear not being an explicit part of the everyday discourse of violence.

The multiple types of violence that schools and children experience have contributed to what participants described as children considering violence as “normal”.

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This included all levels of violence, including death, as exemplified by one educator who told me during an observation that children have lost their sensibilidad (sensitization) to death. Another teacher described this same perception, “'I am going to kill you, I am going to kill.' this word for them, is a natural word.” Not only does the violence from the community outside of the school enter into the school day as discussed above, but violent behavior in the school was also considered part of the daily experience by students and staff. Because of student’s experience of violence in their everyday lives, it is an expected and often enacted experience in their lives.

As discussed in Chapter 4, LEPINA is working to change the definition of violence. Professionals discussed violence in this context as a cycle of violence where there is a repetition of violence across generations because Salvadorans do not consider it violence or a violation of the rights of the victims. As one professional participant said when discussing child maltreatment, “It’s that we feel that fathers and mothers were raised, like before, no one paid attention to maltreatment, right. Then they repeat this, repeat this in their children.” In this instance, the cause of violence is the lack of recognition of the behavior as violence, and continued violence is the consequence. With the normalization, there is a sense that these issues are not going to change. For example, during a workshop about risks and threats, both natural risks and social risks, that Salvadorans face, the students were told that they need to learn how to “convivir” (live with) threats like robbery.

**Discussion**

Figure 3 depicts the normalization of violence within a child’s developmental niche. As this chapter described, the discourse about violence from news media to adults
who interact professionally with children, is that it is prevalent in all realms of a child’s daily life. The media analysis demonstrated the ubiquity of topics such as homicide and gang violence in the broader discourse of violence. Not only is violence a topic of consistent discussion in the media, but it is a topic that pervades all levels of the child’s world. Participants described many types of violence, including institutional and structural types of violence, such as access to education. Within the child’s daily surroundings, participants described violence in children’s communities, in their homes, among their neighbors, and in the school.

From the participant observations and interviews that were conducted as part of this study, violence enters the school in multiple ways. For example, violence is mentioned on signs in the school. Gangs are present in the school through student discussions and insignias in the school. There are also aggressive behaviors that children display which the educators and professionals described as violence. Educators’ perceptions and use of the term “violence” for aggressive behaviors that occur at play as well as within the classroom allow for students to perceive their world as violent as exhibited by children using terms associated with violence when they witnessed these behaviors. All of the types of violence that are part of each level of a child’s environment (larger cultural environment, institutional level, and immediate developmental niche) contribute to the normalization of violence for the child. The daily presence and normalization of violence have implications and consequences for children in El Salvador as described by participants including participation in violence as perpetrators themselves.
Figure 3: Normalization of Violence in the Developmental Niche

While for some children certain types of violence permeate all levels of their developmental niche and although adults talked about the normalization of all types of violence, including death, this is not necessarily the case for all children. On one occasion, students were talking about delinquents. The students said that before the delinquents came to El Salvador, it was “normal”, suggesting that it currently is not normal. Professionals also described how certain consequences of violence, including
children’s engagement in violence, does not happen for every child when they experience violence.

**Summary**

As this chapter demonstrated, children learn about violence through the news media and through violence they see in their families, communities, as well as in their schools. The violence that children experience as witnesses, victims, as well as perpetrators, range from gang violence, political violence, sexual violence, homicides, as well as aggressive behaviors in schools among children such as hitting and “playing with violence.” The multiple types of violence that children encounter as well as its pervasiveness has led to a normalization of violence, where for many Salvadoran youth, violence has become the everyday normalcy for their lives. This normalization of violence is not only a consequence of the violence in El Salvador but also a cause of further violence. The normalization of violence creates a cycle of violence, where children engage in violent and aggressive behaviors because they see it as the normal mode of behaving. The next chapter will focus on the management of violence in the local setting which has the goal of counteracting the normalcy of violence. It will explore the process of addressing violence at multiple levels of the child’s local context as well as variations in the ways that violence is addressed.
CHAPTER 6
MANAGEMENT OF VIOLENCE

Introduction

The previous two chapters examined the types of violence that occur at different levels of a child’s life in El Salvador. The ubiquity and daily occurrence of violence lead to its normalization, and it is anticipated that violence will regularly occur. Although violence is an expected occurrence, anticipation requires uncertainty, though, since the future itself cannot be known (Adams, Murphy, and Clarke 2009; Hermez 2012). Since the future “is necessarily coming and so therefore always demanding response” (Adams, Murphy, and Clarke 2009, 249), anticipation is a way that individuals try to know or predict the future (Hermez 2012). In the process of anticipation, “tactics” (Jeganathan 2000, 124) are undertaken in an attempt to manage, reduce, and avoid identified and evaluated risks (Boholm 2003; Samimian-Darash 2013). It is through these tactics that violence becomes part of and structures everyday lives (Jeganathan 2000; Schröder and Schmidt 2001; Hermez 2012). In the case of El Salvador, the different types of violence are the anticipated risks. Using this anticipatory framework, this chapter examines the implementation of tactics to manage violence.

There are two categories of tactics implemented for the management of violence in El Salvador: (1) prevention tactics and (2) mitigation tactics. The aim of prevention tactics is to prevent violence from occurring. These tactics include LEPINA, security, teaching Salvadorans about children’s rights, teaching children about values, and getting
students to think about their futures. The goal of employing mitigating tactics is to minimize the effects of the violence, including the continuation of the cycle of violence. These tactics included the system of protection set up under LEPINA, discipline of students who behave aggressively or violently, and the discussion of this discipline in front of the other students. This chapter describes the use of these two types of tactics in response to the multiple types of violence in El Salvador by first describing prevention tactics and then mitigation tactics. The chapter will also examine issues that play a role in the ability of Salvadorans to employ these tactics. By examining the processes of the implementation of these tactics, this chapter contributes to answering research question 2: how do children learn about violence in their developmental niche. Finally, the chapter discusses the process of utilizing these tactics in relation to participant’s understandings of children’s well-being in response to research question 3: what effect does persistent communal violence have on children’s well-being.

**Prevention Tactics**

As described in Chapter 5, violence is present at multiple levels in a child’s life, from the descriptions of gang and homicide violence in Salvadoran newspapers to children’s aggressive behaviors in schools. There is acknowledgement by adults who work with children that violence is pervasive and continuously occurring. Although it is anticipated that violence will occur, it is not just accepted and allowed to happen without a response. Measures are undertaken in El Salvador to prevent this anticipated violence and decrease the amount of violence that is occurring in the country and therefore in children’s daily environment. This section will describe the types of prevention tactics
employed in El Salvador from tactics described in the media analysis as well as the
tactics that are undertaken by adults in children’s daily lives.

LEPINA and Prevention

As described in Chapter 4, one of the goals of LEPINA and its implementation
through the PNPNA is to change the conceptualization of violence and childhood. By
changing the understandings of these definitions, those who are implementing the law
hope that the Salvadoran population will see children as persons deserving of rights and
consider the violation of children’s rights as violence. As one professional described this
process, “To diminish violence, we have to change the raising, the form of educating. We
have to change the vision of childhood.” Prevention in this tactic begins with a change in
the broader conceptualization of children. When this conceptualization changes, the
perception of those supporting the work of the law think that the form of violence against
children (e.g., hitting and yelling), which has been in their view historically part of the
Salvadoran culture of raising children, will no longer be the norm for dealing with
children. When violence is no longer the norm in regards to an acceptable response to
children, this violence will then be prevented.

Security as Prevention

Security both within and outside of the school is one of the methods employed to
prevent violence. 71 of the news stories about violence in the media analysis (6.3%)
described issues or modes of security. Over half of these news stories involved security
operations, including those undertaken by police and the military to prevent homicides,
estortion, and gang violence. Although security is one of the main themes regarding
violence in Salvadoran newspapers, the feeling of insecurity by Salvadorans is a major
theme in over a fourth of the news stories about security. This insecurity is related to the perception that there is a lack of security and a lack of resources for security. As discussed in the news stories, insecurity is addressed through prevention and security measures undertaken in the country in community operations, school security, as well as laws and policy discussions addressing security.

Table 7: Themes Related to Security from News Stories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Security</th>
<th>N (% of 71 News Stories about Security)</th>
<th>% of 1,132 Total Violence News Stories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Operations</td>
<td>40 (56.34%)</td>
<td>3.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-extortion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-gang</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-homicide</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insecurity</td>
<td>19 (26.76%)</td>
<td>1.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Security</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Resources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law/Policy</td>
<td>12 (16.90%)</td>
<td>1.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Promises</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security Plans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Security</td>
<td>11 (15.49%)</td>
<td>0.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Presence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As described in Chapter 5, security within the school was also a topic often discussed in the news stories related to violence. Children’s daily settings in the school included both structural and operational security components to prevent violence. From the media analysis, security included police presence in the school, which news articles credited with allowing classes to resume after incidents or threats of violence. Police presence in schools was also part of three of the participant observations, where police were in and walking around schools.

From interviews and observations, security within the schools also included the structure of the school. Schools tried to manage outside violence and keep it from entering the school through structural tactics. For example, a wall topped with barbed
wire surrounded both schools. Each school also had a single locked entrance, with a
guard who controlled who entered and exited the school.

Staff and teachers also employed other restrictions to create a secure environment. In the middle of the observation data collection period at one of the schools, the teachers and the director changed the school routine by not allowing parents to enter the school with their children before or after classes. This served to further limit access of non-students and others who are not school staff to the school. Some educators also added another element of security by locking shut classroom doors in between classes. One teacher told me that they did this because there are a lot of people in the school, and there have been cases of stolen belongings. This behavior limits where students and non-school staff can go in the school. The daily presence of these security measures controlled the flow of individuals into and within the school. Security and structural measures tried to keep the violence in the community outside of the school and classrooms.

Education as Prevention

The concept of education taken from LEPINA includes not only education in the classroom setting but also a broader definition of education as discussed in Chapter 4. Access to education both in and outside of the school was one of the ways that at the institutional level Salvadorans try to prevent violence as identified in the media analysis. News stories discussed violence prevention programs in schools as well as investment in education as prevention programs. In interviews as well as in discussions with students in the classroom, participants also identified this broader conceptualization of education. They mentioned that the goal of education is to train children to be professionals, learn
cultural norms, think alone, prepare them for the future, teach them values, as well as provide them with knowledge (conocimiento).

The goals of education contribute to the prevention of violence. For example, a goal of education was to help students prepare for the future. As will be described in this chapter, preparing students for a future without violence is a tactic to prevent violence. Education itself was described as a way to prevent violence by offering children a space away from violence in their communities or homes as well as providing students with future opportunities so that they have futures other than one of violence. One teacher described encouraging students to achieve the futures they want by saying, “If you want to be a doctor, you will do it. Everything is step by step.” To help students focus on their education, teachers encouraged students in the classroom by praising their work, praising their abilities, encouraging students to continue to work in the classroom, as well as telling the students about the purpose of education. In these discussions, teachers mentioned students focusing on their education so that they don’t have to stay later in the school year, don’t have to repeat the grade, to advance the country, to not have to immigrate to the U.S., so that others will see how well behaved and educated they are, and to prepare them for their own future. Turning students toward their future was a way that participants oriented them to the possibilities they have, both positive and negative.

Access to education was an important element for the prevention of violence. Participants described education itself as a way to prevent future violence of children. Access to education includes all of the ways described in Chapter 4, including safe routes to school, safety within the school, as well as resources to improve their ability to learn within the classroom. This demonstrates the importance of security outside of the school
to facilitate access to education as well as security within the school so that children feel safe and able to participate in their education as well as prevention programs.

Prevention Programs

Table 8: Themes Related to Prevention of Violence from News Stories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prevention of Violence</th>
<th>N (% of 58 News Stories about Violence Prevention)</th>
<th>% of 1,132 Total Violence News Stories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schools/Education</td>
<td>13 (22.41%)</td>
<td>1.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gangs</td>
<td>11 (18.97%)</td>
<td>0.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities for Youth Outside of School</td>
<td>10 (17.24%)</td>
<td>0.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marches</td>
<td>5 (8.62%)</td>
<td>0.44%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prevention programs implemented through institutions were part of the national discourse regarding violence. In the news media, prevention was a topic in 58 of the news stories about violence (see Table 8). These stories included prevention programs implemented both in the school as well as outside of the school. Prevention programs discussed in the news stories were mainly supported by non-governmental as well as international organizations. The types of programs for youth which news stories described were art projects, educational workshops and classes held outside of the classroom, soccer activities and tournaments, dance and music groups, as well as capacity building. Another activity that youth participated in as discussed in the news stories regarding the prevention of violence was community marches against gang violence, against bullying and for peace. Other prevention tactics to specifically decrease gang violence included weapon turn-in programs, as well as sports, education, and employment programs. In the news stories regarding violence prevention, the methods were also described as not only violence prevention but also creating peace, which was
often in terms of the creation of a “culture of peace”, meaning an environment and
culture free from violence. This is in contrast to the description in the news media of El
Salvador as violent.

In interviews with professionals and teachers, participants identified the need for
children and youth to have programs to occupy their time outside of the school day, both
within the school as well as with outside organizations, to prevent violence. As discussed
in Chapter 5, participants identified being alone in the home as a cause of violence.
Participating in clubs and extra-curricular activities was a way to keep children from
becoming involved in violence. These programs function in this capacity by teaching
children skills, and preventing them from coming into contact with violence in the
community, such as gangs. One teacher described the need for these types of
opportunities “so that they [the students] don’t think about negative things.” Keeping
children focused on the positive elements which can occupy their time and thoughts is
one way to keep them from thinking about and participating in violent activities and
groups. Participants described these programmatic opportunities as limited, though,
particularly for the majority of students in the country who do not have money or access
to these opportunities.

Verbal Prevention Tactics of Caregivers in the School

Caregivers employed verbal tactics to prevent violence, although the tactics that
each teacher used were a teacher’s own attempt at managing and addressing situations of
aggression and violence. These tactics ranged from teaching students about values,
talking to students about behaviors they should and should not engage in, and relating
past and present behavior to students’ possible futures to encourage students to behave
better. This section will examine how teachers tried to instruct students during the school day using these tactics as a method of violence prevention.

Teachers specifically told students about what types of behaviors they should and should not engage in. When teachers told students about what behaviors they should engage in, it was often described in conjunction with telling students not to use violence in general. For example, one day during the school announcements, a teacher told the students that they should work hard in class and at recess they should play without violence. Teachers used this type of discussion to encourage positive behavior, such as how students should participate in classes, play and think about their actions. The tactic also functioned to discourage negative behaviors. For example, a teacher said about talking to students about not using violence, “More than anything the violent games. And this is what we are trying to make the children aware of everyday, so that they don’t play like that.”

Another related tactic is that teachers discussed and encouraged students to have the following values: courtesy, respect, gratefulness, responsibility, and valuing one’s own abilities. The most frequently mentioned value was respect, which participants described in terms of respect for others’ rights, others’ belongings, the school’s schedules and norms, adults, teachers, and their classmates. The second most common value discussed was responsibility in regards to the norms of the school and responsibility meaning thinking about one’s own actions and the consequences of these actions. During observations, teachers encouraged students to exhibit these values during the day instead of “using violence” in their behaviors. In this way, if their actions followed these values, violence would not be part of their behaviors.
Teachers not only taught students about what values they should have, but they also discussed the concept of values as well as their importance. On separate occasions, multiple teachers told students about the use of appropriate values for different situations. They told students that the reason for this is that there are certain habits and customs appropriate in each setting. One way that teachers taught about what values are and how they should be used was exemplified in a class where the teacher read out statements regarding values and the students were to copy these statements into their notebooks. One of the statements was that, “Every family event is an opportunity to demonstrate values.” By discussing values, teachers encouraged students in this broader sense to think about and use appropriate values in different settings. Values, therefore, were not just limited to the school day. Since teachers described values as something that students should exhibit instead of violence, this broader discussion of values aimed to deter not only violent behavior in the classroom but also in other aspects of students’ lives.

Not only were these verbal tactics observed often during the data collection but teachers also discussed them as a daily occurrence. Teachers included teaching values into students’ daily routines. On most days, students stood in the school courtyards for the daily announcements. A teacher described this daily occurrence as an important part of the day for teaching students not to use violence when they said, “Including the greetings [announcements]. Everyone says to avoid violence.” During classes, where values were explicitly taught, teachers encouraged students to behave in a way that helps to decrease violent and aggressive behaviors. One teacher described scheduling the class where they incorporate teaching values before physical education class so that the students “remember in this moment how they should play, but if I don’t touch on the
topic, violence exists between them”. In anticipation that violence will occur at specific times of the school day, the daily schedule of these discussions about behavior was an important aspect of preventing expected violence.

Educators also taught students how not to engage in negative and aggressive behaviors by teaching them how to deal with conflict when it arises without the use of violence. They taught students to use discussion and kinder-phrased suggestions instead of insults. For example, during an observation, a student was crying because another student told the student that their hair was messy. The teacher said that instead of insults, they should give suggestions because although the student’s statement was true, this was not the appropriate way to tell the other student.

**Mitigation Tactics**

While Salvadorans employed tactics to prevent violence, violence still occurred within the child’s environment. Because of this, Salvadorans employ other types of tactics with the goal of mitigating the negative effects and consequences of the violence. This section will describe these tactics from the larger cultural environment level to the tactics employed within the daily school setting.

**System of Protection**

As described in Chapter 4, LEPINA not only describes the protection of rights, but it also discusses what should happen with the violation of a child’s rights. For this tactic to work, changing the normalization of violence against children will allow for the recognition and reporting of rights violations as such by children as well as adults. In the law, a system of protection is set up between governmental and non-governmental organizations who work with children to guarantee their rights. When a violation of
children’s rights occurs, the child should then enter this system of protection. As professional participants described, the system of protection set up by the law works to protect victims of violence and support them for their future.

Professional participants described the system of protection and its goal to “restore the rights” of the children whose rights were violated. These institutions set up programs for these children who have had their rights violated and work to investigate the incident of violence, provide workshops and training for the families of the violated child, offer psychological help for the children and then reinforce the link between children and their families. By going through this process, these institutions and programs work to address the violence these children experienced, whether as victim or perpetrator and re-incorporate the child into their place in society as a child and ideally with their family.

Mitigation through Institutional Programs

Programs were also implemented by institutions in El Salvador to help children who are at risk and ultimately expected to encounter violence so that they can develop the capacity to face violence and rise above it. Other participants described resilience (resiliencia; supervivencia) as “a child feeling that they belong in a place” and “the child knows that they have a purpose in life”. Participants described resilience as being something that can develop in children. One participant acknowledged that some children do not develop this resilience. While one participant said “children survive violence,” the goal of these programs is for children to overcome this violence. The tactics employed to prevent and address violence through these programs can help with the development of resilience by helping children see violence as abnormal through the communication
between adults and children about the violence. One common theme discussed in relation to these programs, as described by professional participants, is the development of self-esteem (*auto estima*), which help children to face and overcome violence. With self-esteem, the goals of the programs can be achieved, such as encouraging and helping youth to continue their educational studies because as one professional participant said, education “allows the child to develop better capacities to face the effects of violence.”

These programs also work in this realm of anticipating future violence in the presence of current violence at different levels. By acknowledging that violence will occur, institutional programs work to not only help children who are currently experiencing violence but also those who are at risk to minimize the effects of this future violence. Ultimately, these programs work to help those who will experience violence to “leave this cycle” (Professional Participant) of violence and not perpetuate the violence themselves.

**Justice and Discipline**

Chapter 5 described the arrests, trials, and sentencings for certain types of violence. These news stories demonstrated that there are consequences for perpetrators for some of the violence discussed in the news stories. Violence, in this process, is addressed through the investigation of violent crimes and then the imposition of justice. Although the violence that is most often present in the school is different than violent crimes discussed in the news media as examined in Chapter 5, there was a process of consequences described and observed for child perpetrators of aggressive and violent behaviors in the schools. While sometimes there was discipline immediately following a violent behavior, participants used the language of “investigating” for a process of getting
facts prior to discipline. For example, during an observation, an educator told the students that they were “investigating” an incident of a rock being thrown from the previous day. Later in the observation, the educator told me that they were investigating this violent behavior before imposing sanctions even though parents wanted the perpetrators disciplined immediately.

During interviews and observations, participants who work in or with schools described consequences for students when they are misbehaving or acting aggressively. The language used for the consequences of violence in schools included discipline, sanctions, or punishment by participants. The differences in terminology described the different types of consequences appropriate for these cases. For example, a participant described school staff’s response to students drawing gang insignias on desks. The participant said that they “are working on this so that the same [students] erase them.” This participant then said that in cases like this, “It is more than talking about punishment. They are given sanctions so that they are aware of their actions and promise certain things in writing.” This discipline of having students write something down or students receiving a written letter was a common type of discipline seen and discussed by participants for students engaging in violent behavior. One teacher said that this happens for serious cases “and in the presence of the mom, the student, the teacher signs there and gives them a condition.” In these instances, multiple parties are present for and participate in the discipline. For example, in one observed discipline of this type, the school director, teacher, and student signed a letter which was then sent home to the student’s parent.
Other types of discipline were also enacted during the observations. The types of discipline that were witnessed during the observations included both the actual discipline as well as the threat of discipline. These observed discipline measures included doing squats, telling students to be quiet or settle down in both words or as sounds, asking a student what they said when they said a bad word or insulted another student, having a student leave the class, not letting the class go to physical education class or recess, sending a student to the principal’s office, having the students clean the classroom, pointing out to a student their poor behavior, having a student remain in the classroom alone during the recess period, asking a student to explain why they were engaging in poor behavior, telling students who are misbehaving that they are bad-mannered and having students apologize to each other. An example of these other types of discipline was given to two students who were brought to the teacher because they were fighting during recess. The discipline given by the teacher was for them to hug. The teacher told me when the students left that having them hug is the most difficult punishment.

Other Verbal Methods to Address Violence

Participants also identified other ways that they dealt with violence when it occurred besides discipline. This included speaking with the parents and recommending psycho-social help. Participants said that this type of help is for those behaving violently as well as those who experience violence outside of the school. One participant said, though, that parents do not always take this recommendation because “parents believe that a psychologist is because their children are crazy, right, and that isn’t it. They don’t understand that the function of a psychologist works to overcome problems in a better way.”
Another method that participants described as a way to deal with violence in the school was to talk with the students about their behavior. The benefit of talking to a student, as a teacher described, is that “it makes them aware that they have to respect”. Speaking with a student about their behavior allows the teacher to enforce teaching values, as well as the norms of the classroom. One educator described this when they said in an interview that they talk with students when they are playing with violence so that the student knows “that there is a rule, that there is a sanction.” They do not immediately move to the discipline or a sanction in all instances but instead try to make the student aware of their behaviors and its consequences.

In the classroom, mitigation tactics can also be a tactic for preventing future violence in the students who engaged in the violence themselves but also the other students who were not involved in the incident at hand. One of these mitigation tactics that teachers employed which also served as a prevention tactic for other students was discussing specific acts of violence, the consequences of these behaviors, as well as the ways that students should behave in front of other students. While participants did not explicitly discuss this as a tactic for addressing violence, it was witnessed during the participant observations. As an example of this type of discussion employed by teachers, there was a physical fight between students where one student hit another on the head with an object at recess, causing an injury. The teacher told the whole class about this incident when everyone returned from recess and discussed how the students needed to have their parents come into the school the next day to address the issue. If the students’ parents did not come to the school, the students would not receive their paper which allowed them to move on to the next grade. Teachers discussed these incidents in front of
the class as an example of how students should not behave in the school and as a tool through which students can learn that there are consequences for this type of behavior.

Teachers also encouraged students not to have poor behavior by discussing the students’ behaviors and their possible futures in front of the full class. In these discussions, teachers told the students that they are preparing them for the future and then related the students’ current behavior with the type of future they can or cannot expect. In one observation, this was also tied to the cases of former students. In this case, the teacher told the students that they have former students who are in gangs, which is a shame, and other students who have done better. The educator then asked the students what they want to be in the future. The teacher responded to a student who said they want to be a doctor by saying this student cannot be a doctor by yelling at the patient about being sick. In this example, the teacher related past experiences with former students to children’s current behavior and the future they can and cannot have in relation to their current behavior.

**Mediating Factors**

At all levels, violence was only one of the many concerns and risks that are being managed in El Salvador in regards to children. There were also other factors that limit the ability of individuals to address violence. One of these reasons, as described by participants, was the lack of resources in the country. These resources include recreational materials and space for recreation in the schools, interactive classes, libraries, materials, and therapy classrooms. Also, although participants and news stories included extra-curricular activities as a way to prevent violence, they also described these opportunities as not available for most individuals in El Salvador, due to socio-economic
factors. Lack of resources was also related to the participation of other sectors in the education of children, including private organizations and parents. Participants noted the need for help and resources to come from outside of the educational system to support the capacity of schools. One teacher said that it is the role of all of society to work together to prevent violence: “What do we have to do? Government, civil society, mass media, and all the components of society, try to reduce, try to create space where they can motivate them, develop physically and emotionally.” One professional participant, though, said that parents are not aware that there is a need for their involvement in the education of their children. Teachers also identified the other needs of parents (e.g., economic responsibilities) as a reason that keeps them from increased participation in their child’s education. Although socio-economic status was discussed as related to the factors that prevent violence, one teacher discussed how children’s violent behavior occurs at both public schools as well as those where the parents pay for the child to attend: “I include the private schools [colegios], where one pays money, there is violence. You see that it manifests like bullying.”

Youth may also not be receptive to institutional programs, discipline, or prevention methods. For example, while describing programs for children involved in violence in some capacity, one professional participant said that these children, “don’t accept [the program]. Right, they don’t want to, they don’t want to. More than anything, the girls and boys that are in gangs. They want to return to the gang.” Sometimes these programs don’t work because the children do not see there are alternatives for themselves in their lives even though these programs aim to prepare children for the possibility of a positive future free from the cycle of violence. A professional participant described an
example of where children do not envision this type of future as possible. In this example, a child whose siblings ended their studies after 9th grade didn’t want to follow this same route and wanted to go to a university, but they didn’t think of this is as a reality.

Discipline and prevention methods were also discussed as something that sometimes does not work in this context. One reason given was a child having violence occur in their lives outside of the school. For example, a participant described a student who misbehaved and fought with other students. The participant said that the student was hit by their mother and “the consequence was that if they were scolded, and if she was told ‘I am going to talk to your mother’, it didn’t matter to the girl.” Ultimately, the participant said that they had to “change the way they treated this girl to improve her behavior.” When one method of addressing violence would not work, another tactic was utilized to avoid an issue going unaddressed. Another teacher also described how preventing violence may not work due to the violence that is permitted in their homes:

In, I include when these papers and I [say] ‘Draw me your family’… ‘And why did you draw your brother hitting your sister?’ ‘That’s how they are.’ ‘This?’ ‘My mom doesn’t say anything.’ Ah, how am I going to tell them don’t do this if the mom is seeing a fight and doesn’t correct it Then, they see this in their house, they bring it here, and like all the other children experience the same, violence begins.

Another reason that violence still occurred or was not addressed was that those who could address violence may not know about the violence. Participants described teachers as holding a role that can address violence or as one professional said, “parents and teachers, the immediate environment can offer elements for the development of other basic capacities to face these situations of violence.” Caregivers, though, may not know that violence is occurring due to their perception that this behavior is normal. Also, the
majority of violent events observed within the school occurred without the teachers directly acknowledging it, stopping it, or disciplining those involved in the incident. While this finding supports evidence from research in the U.S. and Canada which indicates that teachers rarely intervened in violent events (Craig, Pepler, and Atlas 2000; Behre, Astor, and Meyer 2001), I cannot be sure how many of the specific instances of violence that I observed were actually witnessed by the teachers, because of the multiple responsibilities and issues that they are dealing with during the school day.

There are also multiple issues and risks that teachers are managing within the classroom which sometimes means that some types of violence or behavior are not witnessed or are allowed to occur in the school. For example, educators were managing the school day as well as trying to teach students. They were also working to manage students’ poor behavior in the classroom that did not include aggression and violence. These behaviors, as pointed out by teachers and observed in the schools, included students talking, sleeping, taking each other’s property, standing on desks, walking around the room instead of sitting at their desks, repeating what someone is saying, using poor language, chewing gum and eating, and using their phones in the classroom. These behaviors were often corrected during the school day to keep the classroom focused on the lessons being taught. One teacher told me during an observation that students throwing garbage on the floor in the classroom create conditions that are not good for students to concentrate. This teacher disciplined students who were behaving this way by having them stay after the school day to clean up. These behaviors also contributed to what teachers called “losing time” (*perder tiempo*) in both interviews and while speaking with students.
Behaviors other than violence that teachers were addressing with discipline during the school day also followed a similar pattern as the violent behaviors that were witnessed as far as gender. 37.2% of corrections were addressed to the full class for group behavior such as talking and not paying attention. When gender of the individual students who were disciplined for behavior was noted, males were disciplined in 43.3% of the cases and females were disciplined in 19.4% of the cases.

Correcting violence itself can also take up a substantial amount of time during the school day which then takes time away from teaching. One educator said, “We have to allocate time to solve problems” when discussing disciplining the aggressive behaviors of students. This loss of time takes away from the time that could be spent on lessons and related activities in the classroom.

Educators were also managing other risks which could create conditions in which they do not address violence. One professional participant who works with schools said that students “are resentful” when they are punished or receive sanctions. As discussed in Chapter 4, there is fear by teachers that if they correct a student, the parents will report (denunciar) them as violating a child’s rights. There is also fear about correcting students’ violent behavior if the families of the child are members of the gangs.

Management of Violence and Children’s Well-being

The objectives and goals of the prevention and mitigation tactics relate to participants’ descriptions of students’ current and future well-being (bienestar). Guaranteeing the rights as stipulated in LEPINA was related to participants’ descriptions of the characteristics of well-being. For example, children living in their family environment, was often described as being an indicator of well-being. This relates to the
conceptualization of the family being the rightful place for children as espoused by LEPINA. Participants described children feeling loved and belonging as well-being and as resilience. Resilience, in this ethnopsychological conception is well-being. As one participant said, well-being is when children “feel accepted, loved, they belong in their school group.” Values, such as respect and courtesy, which teachers were trying to instill in their students, can help to not only prevent violence, such as bullying, within the school but can also create the environment that would allow children to feel supported. Education, as well as parents’ involvement in student’s education, was also described as being characteristics of well-being as well as one of the factors that could help children face violence. Access to education, as well as the necessary resources needed to create that access, play a role in the capacity of Salvadorans to address violence. Furthermore, having children participate in education in the school setting, as well as in extra-curricular education settings, is not only important for students’ educational formation but also gives them access to programs implemented to prevent and mitigate the effects of violence. Professional training was also discussed as a characteristic of well-being. Tactics implemented to address violence also work to prepare children for their futures including their future careers. For example, educators used students’ possible future jobs as a way to encourage students to not only study but also to have them think about their current behavior in relation to their future prospects.

The data I collected in Salvadoran schools demonstrate that uncertainty about the future is often a mix of “fear and hope” (Adams, Murphy, and Clarke 2009, 249). Teachers expressed both fear and hope for the futures they envision for their students. Because “anticipation demands action” (Adams, Murphy, and Clarke 2009, 255), schools
strive to manage both possible and actual (Das 2007) events of violence. By “tacking back and forth between past experiences, the present, and the future” (Adams, Murphy, and Clarke 2009, 255), Salvadoran schools utilize multiple tactics in an attempt to not only minimize the risks of violence from both inside and outside of the school, but also to increase the possibility of what they consider to be a positive future for their students.

**Discussion**

Figure 4 depicts the process of the utilization of violence management tactics in El Salvador. Within a context where violence occurs and has been occurring in the country, there is an effect on children and their future as described in Chapter 5. The consequences of violence have an effect on children’s future abilities through their access to education, access to opportunities, as well as the normalization of violence. A participant expressed this cycle of violence and expectations for the future when they said, “Well, we have a violent past, a violent present. What future can we expect? A future of violence and we can’t speak about peace.” The possibility of a future of peace, although discussed in the news media, was a future that this participant did not expect because of the cycle of violence.

Salvadorans employed tactics to address violence (see Table 9). Prevention tactics at multiple levels in the country counteracted the normalization and cycle of violence. At the larger cultural environment level, LEPINA, as discussed in Chapter 4, is working to change the cultural discourse and understanding of children as well as violence in an effort to make violence against children abnormal. At the institutional level, governmental and non-governmental organizations implemented operations, policies, and programs to prevent violence through security, activities for youth, and facilitating access
to education. Within the daily context that students experience within the school, caregivers employed methods to prevent violence including the presence of security measures in the daily school setting and verbal tactics such as telling students about values, talking to students about behaviors they should and should not have to prevent poor behavior, and relating past and present behavior to students’ possible futures to encourage students to behave better. As this chapter discussed, teachers applied different methods to prevent violence. As one professional who works with schools said, “It is necessary that the teacher uses many methods with children to avoid violence and move on to another type of activity.”

Table 9: Tactics for Managing Violence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prevention Tactics</th>
<th>Mitigation Tactics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LEPINA</td>
<td>Change Conceptualization of Children and Violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change Conceptualization of Children and Violence</td>
<td>System of Protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>Institutional Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operations</td>
<td>Justice and Discipline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Security</td>
<td>Verbal Tactics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Speaking with Families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals of Education</td>
<td>Speaking with Students about Behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Education</td>
<td>Discussing Behaviors and Consequences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevention Programs</td>
<td>Relating Current Behavior and Possible Future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal Prevention</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Values</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Behaviors that Students Should and Should Not Engage In</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 4: Management of Violence

Although tactics are undertaken to prevent violence, it did still occur. When violence occurred, there were mediating factors that played a role in the response to the violence. Mediating factors such as resources available to respond to the violence, risks that need to be balanced, other behaviors of children in the classroom that are being managed, as well as the effectiveness of these tactics affect the methods for addressing violence. With these mediating factors, some violence was not addressed, which occurred in the participant observations. Violence that was not addressed contributes to the normalization of violence and the cycle of violence as described in Chapter 5. When some behaviors are corrected and other are not, children are socialized into cultural norms of what is acceptable.

Salvadorans, though, also employ mitigating tactics to both minimize the effects of violence as well as prevent future violence. These mitigating tactics include the system of protection as discussed in LEPINA as well as employed by organizations within the
systems, institutional programs to build children’s capabilities to deal with violence, discipline of those who are violent, educators discussing violent behaviors with students and their families, and educators discussing the violent behavior as well as its consequences in front of other students. These tactics also worked towards supporting the possible futures of children, which one of the mitigating tactics included educators speaking explicitly with students about how their current behavior will affect their futures.

**Summary**

The prevention tactics described in this chapter address violence that occurs in the community outside of the school as well as the violence that occurs within the school. Since the expectation of violence is a salient aspect of the everyday in this context, Salvadorans employ tactics to both decrease the negative consequences of violence as well as prevent future violence. As Hermez (2012) argued, individuals can experience violence through its anticipation. The tactics utilized to manage violence are another way that children can be introduced to and learn about violence particularly with the tactics that shape the routines, interactions and settings of a child’s daily context. The goals of these tactics were to contribute to factors supporting children’s current and future well-being in the context of violence through supporting children’s rights, encouraging a context where children are respected and cared for, as well as aiding children to have a future without the experience or use of violence.
CHAPTER 7
CONCLUSION

Introduction

This dissertation examined the influence of law, policy, and education for children in El Salvador who grow up in a context of omnipresent violence. The goal of the project was to understand how violence enters the everyday school context, the anticipation of violence, and the management of violence in El Salvador in general and in Salvadoran public schools in particular. This project also aimed to investigate the factors that affect the well-being of children in a context of persistent violence.

To understand the process and experience of violence in El Salvador, this study answered three research questions: (1) what are Salvadoran’s conceptions of violence and its consequences for children, including local understandings of violence, security, well-being, and resilience as well as local understandings of the effects of violence on children; (2) how do children learn about communal violence within their developmental niche including examining the roles of caregivers’ interactions with children, children’s daily activities, and the cultural setting on children’s understandings of violence; and (3) what effect does persistent communal violence have on children’s well-being.

At the time of the research, the Salvadoran context was one of high rates of multiple types of violence, although a truce was occurring between the main gangs of El Salvador. As discussed in this dissertation, during data collection there were lower rates of homicide violence (“UNODC Statistics” 2016), although the levels of violence were
increasing again as discussed in the news media analyzed as part of the research. The two main field sites for this dissertation were two public schools in the greater metropolitan San Salvador area. At the two main field sites, I utilized a modified person-centered methodology to understand the developmental niche of children within the school setting. I conducted participant observations with third- and fourth-grade students and teachers. Also, I conducted interviews with teachers as well as professionals who work with children in the region. To further understand the context in which children live, I conducted an ethnographic content analysis of three Salvadoran newspapers and a policy analysis of a law that stipulates the rights and responsibilities of children.

Understanding violence within children’s daily contexts and experiences in schools is an important topic to look at because it is a common experience in many places in the world, including Latin America. Furthermore, there has been a call for research to understand the factors that contribute to children’s resilience and mitigate the effect of violence, particularly in the school setting (Feerick and Prinz 2003). This study answers this research call by examining how violence affects children, how it enters the everyday worlds of children, and how Salvadorans manage violence in the local setting.

This conclusion chapter reviews the findings from the research that answered the three research questions. Then, the chapter describes the implications of this research in regards to the anthropological research on violence, children, as well as Latin America. This research also has programmatic and policy implications in regards to children growing-up in a context of violence. Finally, I discuss recommendations for future research to further expand on the findings from this study.

Research Findings
This research answered three questions pertaining to violence within children’s everyday and experiences within their developmental niche in schools. This section will document the research findings that related to each research question and their specific objectives.

Research Question 1: What are Salvadoran’s conceptions of violence and its consequences for children?

The first research question asked what are Salvadoran’s conceptions of violence and its consequences for children. The objectives under this question were to look at the local understandings of violence, security, well-being, and resilience as well as the local understandings of the effects of violence on children. Findings from the discourse around LEPINA, violence as discussed in the news media, children’s behaviors as described by participants and as observed in schools, as well as the tactics to manage violence addressed this research question.

This research found that understandings of children and violence may not be the same among different sectors of Salvadoran society. The implementation of the UNCRC within the local context through LEPINA has affected local understandings of violence and well-being. According to LEPINA, children are persons, and therefore have rights. Under the rights stipulated by LEPINA, the denial of the right to education is also considered violence. This right to education also includes access to education, including transportation, safety en route to school, teachers’ presence in the school, the cancellation of classes, student attendance, and the availability of resources for education.

The definition of maltreatment is also laid out in LEPINA. The reports of the violations of children’s rights may be misunderstood, which then affects the
conceptualizations of violence and children. For example, teachers may fear that implementing some discipline will lead to a report of a violation of that child’s rights. LEPINA and its system of protection that it sets up are necessary because children are also in need of protection because although children are persons, they are also still in a state of developing. Salvadorans are not necessarily accepting and taking up this conceptualization of violence as discussed by participants who said that a culture change to see children as persons with rights is still in the process. Also, LEPINA has implications for local understandings of well-being as the guarantee of rights.

Understandings of violence in the local context were also determined through the media analysis as well as data from the participant observations and interviews. Violence in the media analysis was often discussed in terms of social and criminal violence, particularly homicides and gang violence, as well as justice for criminal violence. The violence that participants discussed during interviews, as well as violence that I observed during the participant observations in schools, included different kinds of violence presented in Salvadoran newspapers. While participants did discuss social and criminal violence, more often, they described violence in relation to schools in terms of students’ aggressive behaviors in the classrooms as well as during their play. Teachers and students discussed these aggressive behaviors using the terminology associated with violence.

The consequences of violence were also explored in this dissertation. While limited access to education is considered a type of violence under LEPINA, participants also identified this as a consequence of violence. Another consequence of violence is children engaging in violence. This occurs from children being both the victims of and
the witnesses of violence. These experiences create what participants described as a cycle or normalization of violence, which then causes more violence.

Resilience and well-being were also discussed in the research by participants and are part of the possible reactions to and outcomes of experiencing violence. When discussing the tactics that are utilized to manage violence, resilience was described as a sense of belonging, having purpose, and something that can be developed to overcome violence. Well-being was described as guaranteeing of rights, feeling accepted and loved, and having parental involvement in children’s education.

Research Question 2: How do children learn about communal violence within their developmental niche?

The second research question asked how children learn about communal violence within their developmental niche. The objectives for this question were to examine the role of caregivers’ interactions with children, daily activities, and the cultural setting on children’s understandings of violence. Findings in the research that demonstrated how children learn about violence included the rights discourse, the implementation of LEPINA, and the tactics to manage violence.

Children learn about violence through their understanding of rights, the violation of rights, as well as the presence of the rights discourse within their developmental niche. Children also learn about violence through the various roles that they play in the process of violence, as witness, victim, and perpetrator, which was, which was expressed in the news media and by participants. Children also learn about violence from news media as discussed by participants. Newspaper coverage of violence, including associated photos of violence, enters children’s awareness because of its presence in their daily setting.
Violence is part of many aspects of a child’s world and its ubiquity has led to its normalization.

Children also learn about violence through tactics employed to manage violence. Prevention tactics, including changing the conceptualizations of children and violence so that children are seen as persons and violating their rights is seen as violence, are one way that children become aware of violence. Proponents of LEPINA believe that if this view changes, violence against children will decrease.

Security elements are also present in the lives of children in an attempt to prevent violence. These elements include police and military operations, school security including police presence in schools, structural tactics including the locking of class doors, limiting the access of individuals to schools, and security in the communities which allows children to access schools. Children’s exposure to these security measures is a way that they become aware of violence.

Both the news media and participants considered education as a way to prevent violence. By increasing access to education, violence is prevented through programs implemented in the schools, training children for better futures other than ones that include violence, having schools provide a space away from violence that occurs in the communities and homes of children, and encouraging students in their education. Also, verbal tactics including telling students about what behaviors they should and should not engage in, as well as relating past behaviors to possible futures, are ways that children can learn about and therefore experience violence.

Programs implemented outside of the school day also have the public goal of preventing violence. These programs include art projects, educational workshops, soccer
activities and tournaments, dance and music groups, capacity building, marches for peace and against violence, weapon turn-in programs, and after school activities. Children hear about these programs through the news media and within school and community institutions.

Violence is also managed through mitigation tactics, which are aimed at minimizing the consequences of violence. These tactics include institutional programs for at-risk children to help them face future violence, justice for criminal violence, and discipline in schools for violent or aggressive behaviors. Verbal methods utilized in the school setting include speaking with parents of students in the school, recommending help and resources for students, talking to students about their behavior, discussing specific acts of violence and their consequences with students, and discussing poor behavior in relation to students’ possible futures. Children witnessing and experiencing these tactics also affects their knowledge of the different types of violence that occurs in El Salvador as well as the possible consequences.

Research Question 3: What effect does persistent communal violence have on children’s well-being?

Finally, the third research question asked what effect persistent communal violence has on children’s well-being with the objectives of investigating the context and experiences of violence within the school setting. The findings from this research that addressed this question included understanding how violence management tactics and the normalization of violence affects the violence within children’s daily contexts and experiences in schools.
The normalization of violence touches all aspects of a child’s developmental niche in this context and participants considered it both a cause and consequence of violence. In this context, violence is part of children’s daily worlds, including everyday discourse and routines, which a professional described, saying, “Violence against boys and girls I, is a, is a, like permanent, a constant, right.” This continuous presence leads to the perception that violence is normal. Participants described how there is a cycle of violence in which children perpetuate violence because they perceive it to be a normal mode of behavior. As a professional participant explained, “Many grow-up in homes where the father maltreats the mother and they think this is normal. Then they come [to the school] and maltreat their companions.”

In response to violence, the tactics implemented to manage it affect violence within children’s everyday context and experiences in the school, the consequences of the violence, and the well-being of children. The goals of the tactics used to manage violence are to guarantee children’s rights, help children feel accepted and loved, as well as encourage parental involvement in children’s education. These goals correspond with the definitions of well-being as described in answer to research question 1. LEPINA sets up a system of protection to help children overcome the violence they experience and restore their rights. Institutional programs encourage the development of resilience in reaction to violence, through supporting children so they feel that they belong, feel that they have purpose, learn that violence is abnormal so that the cycle of violence is not perpetuated, develop self-esteem, and continue education as methods that give students the capacity to face violence. The future orientation of these tactics affects children’s well-being by aiming to help children in the present for what is considered a good future life.
Mediating factors affect the ability of Salvadorans to manage violence and therefore, children continue to experience violence. Thus, children’s well-being may also be affected. These mediating factors include the lack of resources and opportunities to support the programs that prevent violence and help students face violence, as well as youth not always being receptive to these programs. Other mediating factors include that the types of discipline utilized by caregivers may not work in some situations and contexts, caregivers may not be aware of violence, and the balance of other risks that Salvadorans are managing at the same time as the risk of violence including the fear to correct behaviors due to possible responses from the children and their families. These mediating factors may make it more difficult for Salvadorans to address violence.

Implications

This dissertation research, which looked at violence within children’s daily contexts and experiences in schools, as well as the factors that affect children’s everyday in El Salvador, has theoretical, policy, and programmatic implications. The theoretical implications relate to the contribution of this research to anthropological literature. Additionally, there are implications for policies and programs that relate to violence in El Salvador as well as other cities, countries, and regions where multiple types of violence are consistently present in the lives of children.

Theoretical Implications

This research contributes to the anthropological research on violence, children and childhoods, as well as Latin America. Research in the anthropology of violence describes the three different roles that individuals, including children, can play in the process of violence: as a perpetrator, as a victim, and as a witness. Anthropological
research investigates children as both perpetrators and victims at the same time, particularly in the case of child soldiers. This dissertation research showed how children can play all three roles at the same time. For example, since violence is part of different sectors of a child’s life, a child may be experiencing violence as a witness to community violence including through their exposure to news media, as a victim of violence, such as in their homes or by the violation of their rights, and as a perpetrator by their engagement in aggressive behaviors in schools that participants considered as violence.

Research in the anthropology of violence also looks at the causes of violence. In this research, some of the causes of violence included the local conceptualization of the child as discussed by individuals who are proponents of the law LEPINA. Another cause of violence as described in this study is the normalization of violence, such violence included in play. Violence not only occurs within areas of a child’s life, but the child can play different roles and experience violence from varying perspectives in each of these spaces.

The role of anticipation and uncertainty on the experience of violence has shown that when communities, institutions and individuals anticipate violence, they make attempts to manage the expected violence. Findings from this study demonstrated that the management of violence includes both preventing violence as well as mitigating the effects of violence. Due to mediating factors, though, communities, institutions, and individuals may have difficulty implementing these tactics in this context.

The anthropology of children and childhood investigates children within their current worlds or in relation to their development. Both of these understandings of the child were important in this research context because caregivers and those who work and
interact with children view children as both in their current condition as well as with awareness of their development, as demonstrated by the future-orientation of the tactics that teachers employ to manage violence.

Socialization, including the role of the context in which children are socialized, is an important topic of research in the anthropology of children. Anthropological research demonstrates how socialization plays a role in children’s experience and awareness of violence. This dissertation argued that the socialization of children in a context of omnipresent violence occurs through the normalization of violence which is part of and perpetuated by all segments of children’s everyday worlds. The socialization of children is part of the tactics that are utilized to manage violence. For example, teachers socialize children in the schools to incorporate values, to engage in particular types of play that do not include violence, and to work towards futures that do not include violence. In these tactics, there are both explicit and implicit language socialization (Miller and Hoogstra 1992; Ochs 1990).

The developmental niche includes the child in the center, the subsystems of the developmental niche (i.e., daily social settings, customs, and caretakers), and the larger cultural environment (Super and Harkness 1997; Harkness et al. 2005). The child is at the center of the model and interacts with the subsystems of the developmental niche, which interact with each other and the larger cultural environment (Super and Harkness 1997; Harkness et al. 2005). This research demonstrated that other aspects are important in the study of the developmental niche. I added an institutional level to the model for this research because of the interest in institutional settings and processes, particularly the institution of schooling as well as the interaction between policy and the everyday
context within the school. Global processes and ideas play an important role in the local daily worlds of a child, although this a one-sided influence. The local context, though, implements global ideas in varying ways. This was demonstrated by the influence of the UNCRC and global discourse of rights on the laws and policies of El Salvador (LEPINA and PNPNA), conceptualizations of the child and violence in El Salvador, as well as the experiences and settings in which a child grows up (see Figure 2).

This research also discussed how violence enters the developmental niche through the normalization of violence. The normalization of violence encompasses and also enters all levels of the developmental niche. In this way, the normalization of violence affects these levels as well as the child. Activities, routines, and interactions at these levels also feedback into the normalization of violence (see Figure 3). For example, despite management tactics, violence continues to occur or is not addressed in a local context.

Children’s awareness of violence is a discussion in the anthropological research on children and violence. In this context in El Salvador, caregivers try to protect children from violence, but there is also recognition that violence will occur and that children are both aware of and experience it.

Well-being is also an important part of research on violence and children. Weisner (2013) argued that research on well-being should include three processes: (1) norms; (2) understandings of the person, well-being, and values; and (3) experiences of well-being and the factors that affect it. This research included these three processes. I research also demonstrated that parallel processes are important to investigate to understand violence including norms, the local understandings of the person, violence
and values, experiences of violence, and the factors that affect the individual’s experience of violence.

This research also has implications for research in the Anthropology of Latin America, particularly when examining the issues of violence in the region. There are methodological implications for work in similar contexts. While broad level ethnographic research may not be possible while maintaining the safety or privacy of participants, there are other advantages to concentrated research within an institutional setting, including a focus on a realm in which children spend much of their time and which plays a large role in their socialization. This focus also allowed for an extensive examination of the role of policy on the daily context of caregivers and children within the school setting as well as in the broader cultural context. As will be discussed in the next section, this type of methodological research has broader implications for local and regional policies aimed at improving the lives of children.

Culture change and inequality were pertinent to understanding the process of violence in Salvadoran children’s lives. These topics have historically been of interest in anthropological areas studies of Latin America. This dissertation research demonstrated how culture change may improve the context of and mitigate the effects of violence. In this research, some participants viewed the change in the conceptualization of children and violence with the implementation of LEPINA as helping to decrease the amount of violence in the country that children face including maltreatment and issues with access to education. Inequality is also important in terms of the access to education, resources, and programs that can both prevent and mitigate violence.

Policy and Programmatic Implications
The current study provides data regarding how individuals perceive local policy and the local context of violence as well as its impact on daily experiences in the school setting. Understanding the processes around the law LEPINA and the strategies that Salvadorans use to manage violence can inform future policies and programs at both the school and national level regarding children, rights, and violence.

The discussion of LEPINA serves to contribute to the scant academic conversation on this law in El Salvador and its role in the lives of Salvadorans. The inclusion of LEPINA in this dissertation on violence demonstrates how Salvadorans in different sectors of the society are interpreting the law, their perception of its implementation, and the role of the law on children’s experience of violence. This can contribute to those working with the law to understand how the process of implementation is proceeding. Furthermore, understanding the policy and discourse of rights is important in understanding the impact on well-being in the everyday context. The rights discourse is impacting the definition of a person, which also relates to experiences of well-being, particularly when defined as the guarantee of rights.

This research also identified strategies that Salvadorans implemented to manage violence. These are areas where systematic violence management strategies can be further developed. For example, capacity building training can include and enhance the strategies teachers are already using in their daily routines, including teaching values and using examples of the consequences of different types of violence. Finding ways to incorporate these tactics into the daily routines may help to decrease the burden of violence management that teachers identified. This research identified factors that
mediate the ability to implement these tactics. A focus on addressing these mediating factors may help in the prevention and mitigation of violence.

In particular, there are implications of this dissertation for the goals of the Organization of American States of which El Salvador is a member, particularly the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), which aims to promote human rights (“Rapporteurship on the Rights of the Child” 2011). In a 2015 report about children, violence, and crime, the relationship between rights violations and violence in the lives of children in the region was noted (Inter-American Commission on Human Rights 2015). Particularly, while it noted the prevalence and impact of organized crime and gangs on children, the report discussed the multiple types of violence that children face in their daily lives within a cycle of violence and rights violations (Inter-American Commission on Human Rights 2015). The effect of violence on schools and education was also of interest and the school was noted in the recommendations as an area where rights can be guaranteed and as a space for investment in children, both improving children’s future and protecting against the effects of violence (Inter-American Commission on Human Rights 2015). The current project supports the findings from this report that multiple types of violations and violence are occurring within the context of children’s daily live in schools, which has an effect on their education. It also furthers our understandings of the relationship between the interpretations of the violations of children’s rights, daily interactions and routines in the school setting, as well as the adults’ perception of students’ future well-being.

Another recommendation from the report was the adoption of comprehensive and holistic policies to address and prevent violence, using the input of the local population
(Inter-American Commission on Human Rights 2015). The research findings from this study can be used as a starting point for El Salvador in understanding the role of policies in schools in regards to violence, children, and rights, as well as a place to begin to understand the types of programs and policies that can support children in a context of violence. For example, policies regarding the *denuncia* system in El Salvador are interpreted by teachers in different ways, which affects the way that teachers interact with students and communicate with parents or guardians.

**Future Research Recommendations**

While this dissertation research began to answer some of the questions regarding the role of continual violence on children’s developmental niche as well as how actors in the developmental niche respond to the presence of and possibility of violence, additional research would help to expand on the themes discussed in this research. First, it would be beneficial to examine whether similar tactics employed to manage violence are having a positive influence on individuals and ultimately decrease the amount of violence through longitudinal research. While this dissertation described some of the explicit and implicit tactics that Salvadorans employed to address violence, it did not examine the effectiveness of these types of tactics to promote children’s resilience and well-being. A longitudinal assessment of these tactics would help to understand the procedures and outcomes of violence management tactics.

Secondly, this research took place with a small sample in two field sites in one greater metropolitan region in Central America. Future research should include larger samples and children of different ages. Also, it would be valuable to conduct similar research to understand the role of persistent violence on children and the tactics that are
used to manage violence in other areas in Latin America as well as regions with a different socio-historical context.

This research took place during a unique circumstance, where violence had decreased for a period. Since the data collection ended, violence has increased in El Salvador. For example, the homicide rates in El Salvador have had the following trajectory since 2010: 72.2 per 100,000 in 2011; 42.7 per 100,000 in 2012; 41.3 per 100,000 in 2013; and 64.2 per 100,000 in 2014 (“UNODC Statistics” 2016). News stories analyzed for this dissertation noted this trend in the rates of violence. Future research in El Salvador should examine whether the themes captured in this research are the same and whether violence is managed in similar ways in the current context of violence.

The previous section mentioned that this research contributed to understanding the role of global processes in the local through the implementation of the UNCRC in the local Salvadoran context with LEPINA. 196 states have ratified the UNCRC (“Status of Ratification Interactive Dashboard” 2016). Future research examining the implementation of the UNCRC in other local contexts, particularly contexts of violence, would contribute to the discussion of how global rights discourse enters and affects the local developmental niche of children. Due to privacy and safety concerns, this research was limited and interviews with children were not possible within the setting. Future research within school settings in contexts of omnipresent violence should consider these limitations to access and understand children’s experiences.

Summary

This research answered three questions to understand how violence in El Salvador enters children’s everyday experiences and the factors that affect their experiences of
violence and well-being. In response to research question 1, I found that there are different local definitions of children and violence. Local understandings of children’s personhood and rights affect the definitions of violence and well-being. Many different processes and behaviors described by the media, participants, and observed in schools were considered violence, from homicides to children’s aggressive behaviors. Also, participants considered the normalization of violence to be both a cause and consequence of violence.

Regarding research question 2, this research found that children learn about violence through the discourse of rights and the experience of violence. Since violence enters all aspects of a child’s daily context, it becomes a normal part of their lives. Children also learn about violence through the implementation of tactics to manage violence.

Finally, in answering research question 3, the findings showed that the normalization of violence affects children’s experience because violence becomes part of their everyday worlds. The tactics to manage violence affect experiences of violence and its consequences including affecting children’s resilience and current and future well-being. Mediating factors that hinder the implementation of violence management tactics can lead to a continuation of violence.

With these findings, this research contributes to the anthropological study of violence, children, and Latin America. This study adds to the literature on the causes of violence, the management of violence, and processes that should be included in the study of violence. Other findings contributed to research on socialization by showing how the normalization of violence is part of socialization, children’s socialization in particular
ways is part of the tactics to manage violence, and that there are additional factors related
to the developmental niche of children, particularly in a context of violence, that
need to be considered in research. Additionally, this research discussed the possible
positive outcomes of culture change. This research also has policy and programmatic
implications pointing to the need to understand local implementation of the UNCRC and
rights discourse. By identifying tactics to manage violence as well as mediating factors,
this research has implications for policies and programs to find ways to incorporate the
already utilized management tactics as well address these mediating factors. Future
research should continue to examine the effectiveness of the tactics utilized to manage
violence as well as look at other contexts of violence to further understand management
tactics, the effects of violence, as well as the role of rights discourse.
## APPENDIX A

### PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION AND INTERVIEW CODEBOOK

#### A priori Codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>LEPINA</td>
<td>Thoughts about LEPINA</td>
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<td>Rights</td>
<td>Thoughts about children’s rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>Routine</td>
<td>Children’s daily routine in the school day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trauma</td>
<td>Participant’s descriptions of what trauma entails</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence - consequences</td>
<td>Participant’s descriptions of the consequences of violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence - learning</td>
<td>Participant’s descriptions of how children learn about violence</td>
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<td>Violence - perceptions</td>
<td>Participant’s descriptions of children’s perceptions of violence</td>
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<td>Violence - types</td>
<td>Participant’s descriptions of what violence entails</td>
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<td>Well-being</td>
<td>Participant’s descriptions of what wellbeing entails</td>
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#### Emergent Codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult-centric</td>
<td>Descriptions of El Salvador as adult-centric and its relationship to the view of children in El Salvador</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad Behavior</td>
<td>Discussion about when students behave poorly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullying</td>
<td>Discussions of bullying – what it is, where it occurs, consequences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Labor</td>
<td>Thoughts and Descriptions of Child Labor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Childhood</td>
<td>Discussion about children/childhood</td>
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<td>Context of violence</td>
<td>Descriptions of the context of violence as it relates to children in El Salvador</td>
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<tr>
<td>Curriculum Thoughts</td>
<td>Participant's thoughts about school curriculum</td>
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<td>Dealing with violence</td>
<td>Description of how to deal with violence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Differences in the view of violence</td>
<td>Differences in how individuals view/consider violence in El Salvador</td>
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<td>Discipline - Family</td>
<td>Discipline enacted by families</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discipline-School</td>
<td>Discipline enacted at the school</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussions of violence</td>
<td>Discussions adults have with children about violence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Educating the public</td>
<td>Descriptions of education for the public by the institutions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elements of Prevention</td>
<td>Elements set up to prevent violence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elements of Protection</td>
<td>Elements set up to protect children</td>
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<td>Encouragement</td>
<td>Encouragement of Students to study/do schoolwork</td>
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<td>Fighting</td>
<td>Fighting between students in the school</td>
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<td>Topic</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<td>Fixing country’s problems</td>
<td>Discussions about how to fix the country’s problems</td>
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<tr>
<td>Future</td>
<td>Thoughts/Ideas about children’s futures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gangs</td>
<td>Discussions/Evidence of gangs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender &amp; Violence</td>
<td>Descriptions of how gender relates to violence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Good Life-Bad Life</td>
<td>Descriptions of what a good life and bad life is for children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of discipline</td>
<td>When teacher notices poor behavior and doesn't discipline the student</td>
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<tr>
<td>Normalization of violence</td>
<td>Discussion around violence being normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace</td>
<td>How peace relates to violence and children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power</td>
<td>How relations of power relate to violence and children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason for violence</td>
<td>Thoughts on why there is violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rights Violations</td>
<td>Reports of rights violations and what it means for participants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Risks</td>
<td>Discussion about the risks children face</td>
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<tr>
<td>Role of Teacher</td>
<td>Role of the teacher in regards to violence</td>
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<tr>
<td>School conditions</td>
<td>Conditions within the school and how they affect children/teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Security</td>
<td>Security features in the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher-Student issue</td>
<td>Issues and problems between teachers and students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching values</td>
<td>Teaching values not part of normal curricula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>View of Children</td>
<td>Descriptions of how adults view children/how this view is changing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence – Structured Time</td>
<td>Violence which occurs during structured/classroom time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence – Unstructured Time</td>
<td>Violent acts that occur during times of play/unstructured time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence in the Family</td>
<td>Descriptions of violence in families</td>
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## APPENDIX B

### ETHNOGRAPHIC CONTENT ANALYSIS OF MEDIA DATA CODEBOOK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children/Youth</td>
<td>Descriptions on childhood and adolescence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Descriptions of the educational system in El Salvador</td>
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<tr>
<td>Future</td>
<td>Thoughts/Ideas about children’s futures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gangs</td>
<td>Descriptions of violence related to gangs in El Salvador</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insecurity</td>
<td>Descriptions of insecurity related to violence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Justice</td>
<td>Descriptions of the justice for violent crimes (i.e., arrest, trial, or sentencing of perpetrators of violence)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEPINA</td>
<td>Descriptions of the law, LEPINA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rights</td>
<td>Descriptions of children’s rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Violence</td>
<td>Descriptions of violence that involves schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>Descriptions of security related to violence (e.g., operations, policies)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social/Criminal</td>
<td>Descriptions of social/criminal violence in El Salvador</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence – Causes</td>
<td>Descriptions of the cause of violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence – Children/Youth</td>
<td>Descriptions of violence that involves children or youth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Violence - Prevention</td>
<td>Ways that violence can be prevented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence - Rates</td>
<td>Descriptions of the rates of violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence - Types</td>
<td>Descriptions of what violence entails</td>
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</table>
The focus of this research is on the effects of communal violence which is defined as any type of violence in communities where each child has seen or experienced violence or can expect to see or experience violence. In this study, we are interested in the effects of communal violence on children and not the specifics of gangs, such as names or locations. The purpose of this research is to understand what factors lead to different responses to communal violence, how children learn about communal violence, and how children experience communal violence. The goal of this research is to inform professionals who work with children who experience violence here in El Salvador and in other countries.

El enfoque de esta investigación es los efectos de la violencia comunal cual se define como cualquier tipo de violencia en comunidades donde cada niño ha visto o experimentado violencia o podría esperar ver o experimentar violencia. En esta investigación, estamos interesados en los efectos de la violencia comunal en los niños y no en los detalles específicos de las pandillas, como nombres o lugares específicos. El propósito de esta investigación es comprender los factores que conducen a las diferentes reacciones a la violencia comunal, cómo los niños aprenden sobre la violencia comunal y
cómo los niños experimentan la violencia comunal. El objetivo de esta investigación es informar a los profesionales quienes trabajan con los niños que experimentan la violencia aquí en El Salvador y en otros países.
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