

Children Rights in Social Studies Curricula in Elementary Education: A Comparative Study*

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Abstract

Social studies classes educate students as citizens who are expected to adopt democratic values and apply their information and richness to their life. Social studies classes are the ones that include human rights education in the first place. The purpose of this study is to make a comparison of inclusion levels of children's rights issues in Turkish and USA social studies curricula. The study adopts the survey model. Data source of the study is all the gains in social studies curricula of Turkey and the USA. We used the content analysis, which is a qualitative research method, in this study. Turkish social studies curriculum was found to include children's rights more than USA curriculum does. Gains with right to participation takes the most place in Turkish social studies curriculum whereas gains with the right to development take the most allocated place in USA social studies curriculum. In addition, neither country's curriculum included gains with the children's right to protection in social studies curricula.

Key Words

Children's Rights, UN Convention on the Rights of Child, Curricula, Social Studies Education, Turkey, U.S.A.

The idea of children's rights is an important part of human rights. Thus, the emergence, realization, development, and acquisition/application of children's rights have been studied along with the development process of human rights more generally (Doğan, 2000). The concept of children's rights means the provision of benefits and protection by

legal rules in order to allow children to develop mentally, physically, emotionally, socially, morally, economically, independently, decently, healthily and normally (Akyüz, 1999). In other words, children's rights are considered as part of a universal concept including all physically, psychologically, sociologically, and politically described rights granted to all children on earth, in relation to legal and social norms, given at birth (Wald, 1986).

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The idea of protecting children and children's rights emerged from the idea that all people are responsible for children regardless of religion, language, race, color, nationality, or ideology (İnan, 1995). The history of this idea started with the Geneva Declaration of Children's Rights in 1924; later in 1959, the Declaration of Children's Rights was added to the discussion. In 1979, when the United Nations celebrated the "Children's Year", Prof. Lopatka from Poland proposed a bill for children's rights. The idea of a bill was accepted with majority votes in the United Nations general assembly in 1979. The first draft was accepted and was then developed into its latest form over ten years' time. The text, first voted in the United Nations' General As-

sembly, was accepted on the 30th anniversary of the Declaration of Children's Rights on November 20, 1989 and was signed by 61 nations on January 26, 1990. The Convention of Children's rights (CCR) was approved by 191 nations, except the USA and Somalia, and was put into effect on the September 2, 1990. Like other human rights documents, this bill has general validity on the international platform and includes children's political, economic, social, cultural, and citizenship rights. According to Doğan (2005), the CCR is the most important document so far prepared about children's rights, since children were provided with the legal support expected and described in 1989. The physical, mental, emotional, social, and moral protection of children is detailed in the bill. The CCR rights require the signing nations to provide the stated rights in full (Akyüz, 1999).

Introducing children's fundamental rights and freedoms to children became a requirement at this time. Based on the best benefit for children, various needs and desires are put forward in the Convention of Children's Rights. The bill's principles and provisions cover all units (family, society, state, and etc.) related to children. It is doubtless that providing the permanency and development of children's rights will be a sound investment in contemporary democratic culture, as childhood defines adulthood. Individuals transfer behaviors and social learning acquired as children to the rest of their lives. The means and opportunities presented to children should support their intellectual, moral, mental and social development. The CCR is a legal document which helps meet such expectations and needs at the minimum level (Uçuş, 2009). The UN's CCR requires that fundamental human rights and basic justice principles be introduced to children and youth. It promotes the meaning of human rights for individuals and societies, the meaning of rights only when balanced with responsibilities, and the exchange of opinions on how youth should study their rights in daily life.

Today, the Convention of Children's Rights is one of the most important agreements accepted all around the world and targeting the greatest benefits to children. This is the most tangible indicator of both children's significance and the promotion of this significance all around the world (Polat, 2007).

The Convention of Children's Rights is comprised of 54 articles and includes rules that govern children's rights in four major groups, such as civic, economic, social, and cultural spheres, similar to

the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (İnan, 1968). As can be understood from the articles of the CCR, the "concept of Children's Rights", in the largest meaning, is a concept that includes social, philosophical, moral, and legal dimensions. Seen from philosophical and social perspectives, children's rights are considered under four main titles such as welfare rights, protection rights, adult rights, and rights towards parents (Akyüz, 2001; Franklin, 1986). Although children's rights are stated under different titles, it is possible to gather and study them under four primary groups as survival rights, rights to development, rights to protection, and rights to participation (Akyüz, 2000; Karaman & Kepenekçi, 2010; Karaman, Kepenekçi, & Aslan, 2011). The right to survive includes the rights that provide the most fundamental needs such as to life itself and the existence of sufficient standards of living, the avoidance of discrimination by social institutions (be they family, school, society, etc.), and the possession of a name, medical care, nutrition, and accommodation. The right to development refers to the rights such as education, play, rest, information, religion, and freedom of conscience and thought. The right to protection includes rights to be protected against any kind of abuse and exploitation. These are the rights that protect children in the judicial system and from use as soldiers, child labor, physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, drug addiction, and special care for refugee children. The right to participation refers to the rights that provide children with an active role in family and society. These are the rights to express their opinions and participate in the decisions that affect them, to establish associations, and to have peaceful meetings.

The Place of Social Studies Curricula in Children's Rights Education

One of the most emphasized and a talked-of concept in the 21st century is education. 21st century education focuses on flexibility, self-learning, being able to look at phenomena from a large perspective, being able to ask insightful questions, and creative problem solving (Karaman-Kepenekçi, 2000). The priority in education is the support of an individual's harmony with society and the acceptance and adoption of universal values. However, this education needs to be carried out within a plan. For society's future and for individuals constituting the society to reach their targets, educational efforts need to be put forward systematically. Prepared curricula allow education to be organized and controlled in order to reach its targets.

Today's curricula aim at educating individuals equipped with contemporary democratic values for 21st century. These individuals are expected to be respectful towards human rights; sensitive towards the environment in which they live; critical thinking; creative; making right decisions; having developed social participation skills; adopting social scientists' scientific methods of creating knowledge; active and productive in social life; and with a knowledge of their own rights and responsibilities (Ministry of National Education [MONE], 2005). Social studies curriculum is the leading one among those with such targets as mentioned above.

Social studies is a citizenship education program that simplifies and integrates the findings of Social Sciences at students' developmental levels and, using these, aims to bring students information, ability, attitude, and values they need in order to both harmonize with social life and to problem-solve socially (Öztürk & Otluoğlu, 2002). Social studies classes educate students as citizens who are expected to adopt democratic values and apply their information and richness to their life. These classes always represent the most significant possibilities for human rights education. Students learn about democratic governments and functions of these governments, as well as beliefs and values shared within the rich cultural mosaic of all countries. Thus, students start developing the consciousness of responsibility they need to feel towards their own and others' countries. In this meaning, social studies classes provide benefits for individuals to fulfill their responsibilities as a member of world and country in order to get human rights while also developing and spreading democracy (Tezgel, 2008). It is possible for children to problem-solve, understand the contemporary and past world, and plan their future only when they know their rights and responsibilities as democratic citizens in a democratic society.

The Convention of Children's Rights is an agreement that considers the common good and the highest benefit for children and lays out some goals for children's rights education. According to the bill, it is required for children to know the parts of the bill that directly relate to them. This is explained in the 42nd article of the UN's CCR: "States Parties undertake to make the principles and provisions of the Bill widely known, by appropriate and active means, to adults and children alike." According to this article, it is a responsibility for children as well as adults to know the provisions and principles of the bill. Therefore, while this article

mostly advises on children's rights, it also implies that children need to receive human rights education. Children informed about the rights they have will be individuals who are aware of their rights as adults, capable of using their rights, protecting them, and respecting others' rights (Karaman-Kepenekçi, 2000). Thus, it may be stated that the 42nd article of the bill is closely related to children's rights, and these related issues need to be taught at social institutions (family, school, etc.).

In the USA, social studies topics can be grouped as follows: us (who "we" are), family, and school at the pre-school level; family and school at elementary level; neighborhood and society at the second grade level; topics related to Virginia and US history at the fifth grade level; and World Issues at the sixth grade level (Ellis, 2002; Parker, 2009; Zarrillo, 2004). On the other hand, in Turkey, the elementary social studies learning areas include: "individual and society", "culture and heritage", "people, places, and environments", "production, distribution, and consumption", "science, technology, and society", "groups, institutions, and social organizations", "power, government, and society", "global relations", and "time, continuity, and change" (MONE, 2011a, 2011b).

Social studies curricula, with the basic purpose of having children know their essential rights and freedoms and helping them to problem-solve when confronted with problems in life, are significant to organized education in both Turkey and the USA. Looking at the literature, we can say that especially in Turkey various studies have been done on children's rights curricula and books for the elementary level. The volume of research on this subject in Turkey has attracted attention (Aktürk, 2006; Ay Zög, 2008; Çakır Tunç, 2008; Ersoy, 2009; Göc, 2006; Karaman-Kepenekçi, 2006, 2009, 2010; Kavak, 2005; Mery, 2012; Nayır ve Karaman - Kepenekçi, 2011; Özdemir Uluç, 2008; Salman-Osmanğaoglu, 2007; Turanlı, 2004; Uçuş, 2009; Yurtsever, 2009). In the USA, various research studies on human rights education and particularly children's rights education have been done (Adams & Rubel, 2010; Boudin, 2011; Bruyere, 2010; Gardiner, 2010; Hafen, & Hafen, 1996; Hatziavramidis, 2006; Healy, 1994; Limber & Wilcox, 1996; Linde, 2011; Lucas, 2009; Pizzigati, 2010; Rutkow & Lozman, 2006; Svevo-Cianci & Velazquez, 2010; Zolotor, Theodore, Runyan, Chang, & Laskey, 2011). For instance, in one of the studies done in Turkey, it was defined that children's rights and objectives topics in elementary curricula were

assigned randomly, not based on any findings of research done to understand children and adults working with children, knowing children's rights, or attitudes towards children's rights (Özdemir Uluç, 2008). The results of another research project on children's rights at the elementary level found that children's rights are protected and developed accordingly within the program. However, it is concluded that some objectives are directly or indirectly related to children's rights, and this may vary depending on the teacher's knowledge and attitude (Uçuş, 2009).

As can be understood from the above research, it is possible to find a few research studies on children's rights in Turkish elementary curricula. However, looking at the relevant literature, it is not easy to recognize the proportion at which children's rights are taught in elementary social studies curricula in USA. As can be understood from the research, the studies we were able to find focus on the factors that affect attitudes towards and understandings of children's rights, and there are few studies on children's rights in curricula. When the relevant literature was reviewed, we did not come across a comparative study on the proportions of children's rights topics in elementary curricula either within the United States or in comparison with Turkey. We believe that defining the basic similarities and differences in social studies curricula between these nations, with the basic purpose of educating democratic citizens and having children know their basic rights and freedoms, will make a significant contribution in the field.

Purpose of the Study

Purpose of this study is to comparatively define the inclusion levels of children's rights in Turkey and USA social studies elementary (grades 4-6) programs, within UN's Convention of Children's Rights.

Method

Research Model

This study, aiming to define the inclusion levels of children's rights in Turkey and USA social studies elementary (grades 4-6) curricula, is a qualitative study as a document analysis. Document analysis includes the analysis of written materials containing the targeted fact or facts.

Data Collection

For the purposes of this study, the latest editions of elementary (4-7) social studies curricula in Turkey and USA are analyzed. In this study, we analyzed the Turkish social studies curriculum that was approved with Head Council of Education and Morality decision numbered 190118 and dated 28.12.2010 and revised and updated by Department of Publications, Ministry of National Education in 2011. For the USA part of the study, we analyzed the National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies (Expectations of Excellence) and national Curriculum Standards for Social Studies: A Framework for Teaching, Learning and Assessment, prepared by the National Council for the Social Studies in 1994 and revised and recommended for all the states in 2010. These were chosen due to the fact that there isn't one set of standards valid for educational programs nation-wise and different states have different gains and practices in USA. All gains in both countries' social studies curricula and implementation effectiveness of learning areas have been studied. When presenting the findings, we quoted the gains of both countries' curricula directly.

In Turkey, social studies classes start at 4th grade and continue up to 7th grade. In other words, social studies subjects are taught between 4th and 7th grades. On the other hand, in USA throughout, social studies subjects, depending on the area, are taught from kindergarten to 12th grade. In addition, within curricula recommended by NCSS (1994; 2010), subjects, gains and implementation examples are structured on early, middle, and higher grades. Therefore, this study was conducted based on the social studies match between Turkish primary level (4-5) and the US early grades; and Turkish secondary level and the US early and middle grades.

Data Analysis

We used content analysis for the data analysis of this study. Main activity in the content analysis is to gather similar data around certain concepts and themes, and to organize and interpret them in a style the audience can understand. Briefly, it is to reveal the concepts and relations to explain the gathered data. It is essential in a study to define the analysis unit to be used (Baş & Akturan, 2008). Later, sentences that form a meaningful whole are

coded. The coding could take place in advance according to the concepts that the study is based on. Further, the findings are interpreted. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), defining the categories and subcategories is central to the content analysis. The main category considered in this study is "the Children's Rights". UN Bill of Children's Rights is subcategorized under: life-survival, developmental, protection, and participation rights. Sub-categories in this study are defined below (Akyüz, 2000; Karaman-Kepepekçi, 2010; Karaman-Kepepekçi & Aslan, 2011):

Right to Survive: According to the Bill of Children's Rights, includes the rights that provide the most fundamental needs such as to live and have convenient life standards, not to be discriminated by social institutions (family, school, society, etc.), to have a name, medical care, nutrition, and accommodation.

Right to Development: Refers to the rights such as education, play and rest, information, religion, and freedom of conscience and thought.

Right to Protection: Includes rights to be protected against any kind of abuse and exploitation. These are the rights that protect children in judicial system and against fights with weapons, child labor, physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, drug addiction, and the rights for refugee children's special care.

Right to Participation: Refers to the rights that provide children with an active role in family and society. These are the rights to express opinion and participate in the decision that affects himself or herself, to establish an association, and to have a peaceful meeting.

The analysis unit of this study is the sentence. Frequency of appearance of defined categories and sub-categories in each sentence is found. We considered both open and hidden contents when defining this frequency. We assigned a value of "1" for a subcategory in a curriculum and defined how many times a subcategory is repeated. Total value of the subcategory forms the number of times the category is repeated in curricula. We quoted gains directly when presenting the findings.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability in qualitative studies means whether the same results will be obtained in similar envi-

ronments and whether other researchers are able to get the same results with the same set of data. For the purposes of reliability in this study, Inal's (1998) example was applied and researchers randomly coded for both countries' curricula (4-6th grades Social Sciences Curricula Gains) at different times. For the reliability of coding, two researchers separately read all gains in the book and coded the gains meaningfully related in the relevant boxes. Researchers compared the two sets of separate analysis results and controlled consistency. Yıldırım and Şimşek (2005) state that at least a 70% agreement between coders is required for reliability in qualitative studies. In this reliability study, a 90% agreement between the researchers/coders is reached. Validity in qualitative studies means observing the researched phenomenon as it is and through an impartial lens. In order to provide the validity of this research, we studied all gains in both countries' elementary social studies curricula.

Findings

Analysis of Turkish Social Studies Curricula

Turkish social studies curricula consist of nine themes in 4th and 5th grades and eight themes in the 6th and 7. In Turkey, the elementary social studies learning themes include: "individual and society", "culture and heritage", "people, places, and environments", "production, distribution, and consumption", "science, technology, and society", "groups, institutions, and social organizations", "power, government, and society", "global relations", and "time, continuity, and change" (MONE, 2011a, 2011b).

According to Table 1, among all the grades, 7th grade (%27.8, n=148) curriculum gives the most place related to children's rights. This is followed by 6th grade (%24.5 n=129), 4th grade (%24.3, n=129), and 5th grade (%23.4, n=124). On both levels, middle grades (%52.3, n=278) are followed by early grades (%47.7, n=253). In addition, when the distribution of children rights in elementary curricula is studied, we see that statements about the right to participation are given the largest place (%57.1, n=303). This is followed by statements about the right to development (%38.4, n=204), and statements about the right to survival (%4.5, n=24). Statements about the right to protection are not given any place in Turkish curricula.

Table 1.
The Discrimination of the Sub-categories in Turkish Social Studies Curricula

	Curricula	Survival Rights		Development Rights		Protection Rights		Participation Rights		Total	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Early Grades	Grade 4	9	37.6	50	24.5	--	--	70	23.1	129	24.3
	Grade 5	5	20.8	51	25	--	--	68	22.4	124	23.4
	Early Grade	14	58.4	101	49.5	--	--	138	45.5	253	47.7
Middle Grades	Grade 6	5	20.8	48	23.5	--	--	77	25.4	130	24.5
	Grade 7	5	20.8	55	27	--	--	88	29.1	148	27.8
	Middle Grade	10	41.6	103	50.5	--	--	165	54.5	278	52.3
Total (Early + Middle)		24	4.5	204	38.4	--	--	303	57.1	531	100

Right to Survival in Social Studies Curricula: In Turkish social studies curricula, right to survival has the highest inclusion level in 4th grade (%37.6, n=9) among the grades learning social studies classes. This is followed by 5th, 6th, and 7th grades (% 20.8, n=5). The below gains statements quoted from Turkish social studies curricula can be given as examples for the survival rights sub-category.

- *Students distinguish between wants and needs (Early Grades, 4th grade).*
- *Students realize the people’s impact on the economy (Early Grades, 5th grade).*
- *Students realize their rights as children (Early Grades, 5th grade).*
- *Students meet their needs with available resources (Early Grades, 4th grade).*
- *Students realize the economic activities that are prominent in their geographical area (Early Grades, 4th grade).*

Right to Development in Social Studies Curricula: In Turkish social studies curricula, right to development has the highest inclusion level in 7th grade (%27, n=55) among the grades learning social studies classes. This is followed by 5th grade (%25, n=51), 4th grade (%24.5, n=50), and 6th grades (%23.5, n=5). The below gains statements quoted form Turkish social studies curricula can be given as examples for the development rights sub-category.

- *Students understand connections among the right to accurate information, freedom for speech and freedom of communication (Middle Grades, 7th Grade),*
- *Students relate to this issue by using the Right to*

Education between responsibilities of government and citizens (Early Grades, 4th grade).

- *Students research education, skill, and personality traits that are associated with professions (Middle Grades, 6th grade),*
- *Students realize the relationship between feelings and thoughts (Early Grades, 4th grade),.*
- *Students explain freedom of settlement and travel (Middle Grades, 7th grade),*

Right to Participation in Social Studies Curricula: In Turkish social studies curricula, right to participation has the highest inclusion level in 7th grade (%29.1, n=88) among the grades learning social studies classes. This is followed by 6th grade (%25.4 n=77), 4th grade (%23.1, n=50), and 5th grades (% 22.4, n=124). The below gains statements quoted form Turkey social studies curricula can be given as examples for the participation rights sub-category.

- *Students should know the right to life, personal inviolability, freedom of thought and freedom of religion and conscience in democratic government (Middle Grades, 6th Grade),*
- *Students recognize the residence of the units of local government (Early Grades, 5th grade).*
- *Students decide to participate in social and educational activities in the life of the school and its surroundings (Middle Grades, 7th Grade),*
- *Students express their feelings and thoughts as they apply to different situations (Early Grades, 4th Grade).*
- *Students encounter the respect of others’ feelings and thoughts (Early Grades, 4th Grade).*

Table 2.
The Discrimination of the Sub-categories in the United States Social Studies Curricula

Curricula	Survival Rights		Development Rights		Protection Rights		Participation Rights		Total	
	F	%	F	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
	Early Grades	12	80	25	96.6	--	--	75	83.3	112
Middle Grades	3	20	1	3.4	--	--	15	16.7	19	14.5
Total	15	11.5	26	19.8	--	--	90	68.7	131	100

Analysis of the United States Social Studies Curricula

The United States social studies curricula consist of 10 learning themes. In the United States, the elementary social studies learning themes include: culture, "time, continuity, and change", "people, places, and environments", "individual development and identity", "individuals, groups, and institutions", "power, Authority and Governance", "production, distribution, and consumption", "science, technology, and society", global connections", and "civic ideals and practices" (NCSS, 1994, 2010). United States learning theme demonstrate similar themes.

According to Table 2, among the grades, early grades (%83, n=112) curricula give the largest inclusion related to children rights and then come middle grades curricula (%16.7 n=19). In all curricula statements, the right to participation can be observed to be given the largest inclusion (%68.7, n=90). This is followed by statements about the right to development (%19.8, n=26), and then comes the right to survival (%11.5, n=15). Statements about the right to protection are not included in the United States curricula

Right to Survival in Social Studies Curricula: In the United States social studies curricula, right to survival has higher inclusion level in early grades (%80, n=12) than middle grades (%20, n=3) among the grades learning social studies classes. The below gains statements quoted from the US social studies curricula can be given as examples for the survival rights sub-category.

Learners will be able to:

- *Examine persistent issues involving the rights of individuals and groups in relation to the general welfare* (Middle Grades, NCSS, 2010, p. 48).
- *Examine issues involving the rights and responsibility of individual* (Early Grades, NCSS, 2010, p. 48).

- *Analyze the differences between wants and needs* (Early Grades, NCSS, 2010, p. 48).
- *Examine and evaluate different methods for allocating scarce goods and services in the school and community* (Early Grades, NCSS, 2010, p. 52).
- *Assess how consumers will react to rising and falling prices for goods and services* (Early Grades, NCSS, 2010, p. 52).

Right to Development in Social Studies Curricula: In the United States social studies curricula, right to development has higher inclusion level in early grades (%96.6, n=25) than middle grades (%20, n=1) among the grades learning social studies classes. The below gains statements quoted from the US social studies curricula can be given as examples for the development rights sub-category.

Learners will be able to:

- *Explore their personal characteristics, including their interest, capabilities, and perceptions* (Early Grades, NCSS, 2010, p. 40).
- *Evaluate how they can express their own identity and work productively with others* (Early Grades, NCSS, 2010, p. 40).
- *Evaluate how group and institutions work to meet individual needs and promote or fail to promote the common good* (Middle Grades, NCSS, 2010, p. 40).
- *Identify the points of view expressed in information sources regarding science and technology* (Early Grades, NCSS, 2010, p. 56).

Right to Participation in Social Studies Curricula: In the United States social studies curricula, right to participation has higher inclusion level in early grades (%83.3, n=75) than middle grades (%15, n=16.7) among the grades learning social studies classes. The below gains statements quoted from the US social studies instruction curricula

can be given as examples for the participation rights sub-category.

Learners will be able to:

- *Gather information about groups in their school through such tools as surveys and interviews* (Early Grades, NCSS, 2010, p. 44).
- *Participate in the process of persuading, compromising, debating, and negotiating in the resolution of conflicts and differences* (Middle Grades, NCSS, 2010, p. 64).
- *Evaluate the significance of public opinion and positions of policymakers in influencing public policy development and decision-making* (Middle Grades, NCSS, 2010, p. 64).
- *Develop a position on a school or local issues, and defend it with evidence* (Middle Grades, NCSS, 2010, p. 64).
- *Identify and describe the role of citizen in various forms of government, past and present* (Middle Grades, NCSS, 2010, p. 64).

Discussion and Conclusion

According to 42nd article of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, "States Parties undertake to make the principles and provisions of the Convention widely known, by appropriate and active means, to adults and children alike". This article emphasizes that it is required to actualize the convention. As this article states, parties have responsibility to teach the children their rights. A person who does not know his/her rights cannot be expected to have awareness of and skill to use rights. Integrating knowledgeable and responsible children with developed skill to use rights into society depends on providing children with a sound basic education. 28th article of the convention declares that all children have right to education, with no discrimination, and a framework of education quality is depicted. 29th article proposes a child-centered teaching and learning model, and thus, it puts forward a structure where students actively participate in education process, solve their problems on their own, and gain the self-confidence to learn lifelong and to make right decisions (Aktürk, 2006). Children informed of rights they have will be individuals with awareness to use and protect these rights, and they will respect others' rights (Karaman - Kepenekçi, 2000).

When the principles put forward by the convention are studied, it can be seen that individual (civ-

il), social, cultural, and economic rights of children are handled in a universal understanding. Providing individuals (each child) with physical, intellectual, spiritual, ethical, and societal development is adopted as the basic principle both in National Education Basic Law and Convention on the Rights of the Children. This principle is considered as a condition to create a democratic, secular and social state of law (Sever, 2002). The bill focuses on protection of physical, intellectual, emotional, social and moral safety, in details, and parties that signed under the bill are demanded to actualize the principles on the bill (Akyüz, 1999). The bill is directed towards regulating basics for educating child and the young person within pluralist society in culture of democracy. Thus, the regulations on the bill are based on the understanding of "child and the young person with rights". This understanding places the principles of pluralist democracy on the axis of the bill (Çilga, 1999).

This bill, like other human rights documents, is an internationally recognized valid document including children's political, economic, social, cultural and citizenship rights (Cook, 1996). Bill of Children's Rights, with the rights and standards it brings along, defines raising "qualified human" as the main goal. Educating children and young people in all aspects as individual and social beings is effective in creating a society socially, culturally, economically and politically qualified (cited in Çilga, 1999).

The most striking finding in this study on inclusion level of children's rights in Turkey and USA Social Studies curricula, thus, is that Turkish social studies curriculum allocates more space for children's rights than USA social studies curriculum. When the literature is studied, we cannot find any direct study on the comparison of inclusion levels of children's rights. However, result of this study is similar to comparison studies of human rights education. For instance; Karaman - Kepenekçi (2005) obtained similar findings in their comparison of Turkey and USA citizenship and human rights textbooks, and so did Aslan and Karaman - Kepenekçi (2008) in their comparison of Turkey and France Turkish language textbooks. This can be explained as indication of sensitivity towards human rights in educational materials in Turkey. Another reason why Turkish curricula include more human rights subjects than USA curricula can be the adoption of interdisciplinary approach in curricula starting from 2005. As a result of this approach, some interdisciplinary subjects have been defined. One of

these subjects is the “Human Rights and Citizenship Education”. Since 2005, “Citizenship Education” has been scattered into elementary education through these interdisciplinary subjects. Now, Social Studies subject has an important place in human rights education through interdisciplinary relations in Turkish curricula.

On the other hand, the findings about USA social studies curricula can be explained as the following: the main reason for that could be that USA is yet to sign the Bill of Children’s Rights. USA has not signed under the Bill of Children’s Rights for demographic, political, and cultural reasons (Save the Children, 1999). Thus, we cannot expect the children’s rights subjects to be reflected in curricula. Another main reason could be the fact that citizenship, democracy, and human rights subjects are not generally included in elementary level curricula in the states except bigger ones such as New York, California, and New Jersey. Human rights and citizenship are taught only within Government and Civilization subjects on high school level. Another important reason could be that teaching basic human rights and freedoms as democratic values takes place only as a suggestion in USA social studies curricula. Human rights subjects as individual rights, freedoms, and responsibilities are suggested under the title of democratic values and beliefs within social studies curriculum (NCSS, 1994, 2010). Although NCSS (1994; 2010) recommends human rights as a democratic value to be taught in social studies curricula for all states, it does not appear enough in social studies curricula.

When subcategories in Turkey and USA curricula are studied, right to participation sub category ranks the highest. Similarly, right to participation subcategory ranks higher in a study by Merey (2012) of Turkey social studies textbooks and in a study by Özdemir Uluç (2008) of children’s rights in Turkey elementary curricula. Özdemir Uluç (2008) showed that right to development was allocated the largest place in subjects, except Social Studies and Thought Education classes, of elementary curricula. In the mentioned two subjects, on the other hand, right to participation was studied more than right to development (Özdemir Uluç). Furthermore, this finding for Turkish social studies curriculum can be explained with including excessive amount of in-and-extra-curricular activities within a “constructivist” understanding of education. This, for USA curricula, can be explained with teaching of citizenship, social and political participation skills at elementary schools (Lind-

quist & Selwyn, 2000). However, there were findings on children’s participation in social activities in Turkey’s elementary curricula, by Uçuş’s (2009) study, whereas there weren’t enough findings of gain, content, and activities on children’s rights to establish associations and to gather peacefully. Findings of this study are in consistence with Nayir and Karaman-Kepenekçi’s (2010) findings. Nayir and Karaman-Kepenekçi’s study showed that children’s rights “to establish associations and to gather peacefully” take more place than children’s rights “to state their opinion and to involve in decision making” in Turkish textbooks whereas gains on children’s rights “to gather peacefully and establish associations” did not take place in elementary Turkish language curriculum. The reason for “the right to participation” to take more place in the curriculum is not that an understanding of children’s rights is adopted but it is more due to the interaction among efforts of restructuring the curricula when updating, the theory of multiple intelligences, and children’s rights (Özdemir Uluç).

A second striking finding that subcategories related to right to life and development took more place in Turkish social studies. This finding is in consistence with Uçuş’s (2009) findings. Findings on children’s right to education (in terms of equal opportunity, directing and orientation, and characteristics of education) and right to play in Turkey’s elementary curricula were obtained in Uçuş’s study. Unlike expressions related to right to participation in curricula, expressions related to right to life and right to development do not have ample space. Gains and expressions related to these two subcategories take place as expressions that inspire these.

Another important finding of this study is that children’s right to protection is not found in neither of the two countries’ social studies curricula. This finding resonates with Özdemir Uluç’s (2008) findings in the study on “level of inclusion of children’s rights in Turkish elementary curricula”. In his study, he concludes that right to protection is not mentioned in social studies curricula. Thus, a scientific consistency is not directly or indirectly observed in the distribution of children’s rights subjects in both countries’ social studies curricula.

Briefly summarized, we have the impression that in both countries, children’s rights subjects and gains, do not take place as a result of scientific researches on these subjects and gains, adults’ information level on these, and children’s information and attitudes towards these, but randomly in social

studies curricula. Similar themes could take place within different subjects on different levels. This result has been obtained through scientific research. It can be seen that current curricula partly ignore Bill of Children's Rights. In Turkey, as party to sign under UN Bill of Children's Rights, the education system where children are emphasized needs to be constructed based on the bill and its principles, and also an understanding based on rights needs to be actualized (Gündem Çocuk, 2008).

Based on the findings of this study:

- 1- Elementary social studies curricula should be studied in details in order to investigate if the curricula are formed in consistence with Bill of Children's Rights. Karaman-Kepenekçi and Aslan (2011), based on findings of their study on "children's rights in pre-school level books", recommend the same. This study suggests that instruction materials should be evaluated based on Bill of Children's Rights.
- 2- In these studies, levels of inclusion of children's rights in textbooks and curricula are not paralleled. This is the same with social studies textbooks and curricula. Therefore, a balance should be established between topics in textbooks and topics in curricula. Topics on children's rights in textbooks and gains in the curricula should develop child's awareness of own rights.
- 3- Topics such as power, production, science, globalism, and citizenship, recommended by NCSS for the US social studies curricula (Tibbitts, 1996 cited in Lucas, 2009), and similar learning areas in Turkey should be taught in relation to human rights in general and children's rights in particular.

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