

## **Inclusion Level of Children Rights Issues In Social Studies Textbooks: (Case of Turkey and the United States) \***

Zihni MEREY<sup>1</sup>

Gazi University, Faculty of Education, Social Studies Education

Harun PARPUCU

University of Northern Iowa, College of Education, Curriculum and Instruction

### **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to compare the level of allocation of children rights issues in social studies textbooks in Turkey and the United States. For this aim, six social studies textbooks from both countries were examined. These textbooks were analyzed in terms of their level of “children rights issues,” in line of the Convention of Children Rights (CRC). This study is a qualitative study as a document analysis. A content analysis method was used to analyze the textbooks. As a result, it was observed that children rights issues were included more in Turkish textbooks. While the intensity scores of the “survival rights” subcategory was listed the highest in Turkish textbooks, on the other hand, the intensity scores of the “development rights” subcategory were placed the most in the United States textbooks.

**Key words:** Children’s Rights, The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Child, Social Studies, Textbooks, Turkey, The United States.

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<sup>1</sup>Zihni MEREY is currently a PhD at the Department of Social Studies Teaching. Her research interests include citizenship education, human rights (children rights), human rights education, democracy education, values education, and social studies education.

Correspondence: PhD. Zihni MEREY, Gazi University, Faculty of Education, Department of Social Studies Teaching. 06400 Ankara/Turkey. E-mail: zihnimerey@yahoo.com Phone: +90 312 212 9806.

## **Introduction**

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) emerged after the adoption of several important human rights treaties large numbers of human of declarations, and several UN resolutions about human rights. For example, the Declaration of Geneva (1924), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the Declaration of Children’s Rights (1959), Declaration on the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (1966) were drawn up to create formal obligations for human rights and serve as the background for the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.” However, a large number of problems emerged regarding human rights implementation, needing special conventions to assure the implementation of the guaranteed rights. In addition to these treaties, there was also the history of special documents or special provisions for children’s rights (Flekkoy & Kaufman, 1998; UNICEF, 2011). In 1978, on the eve of the United Nations-sponsored International Year of the Child, a draft text was proposed for the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Drawing heavily from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, a working group within the United Nations collaborated on a draft, finally agreeing on became the articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Final approval from United Nations Member States came when the UN General Assembly unanimously adopted the text of the Convention on the Rights of the Child on November 20<sup>th</sup>, 1989.” The Convention then became legally binding in September of 1990, after 20 States had ratified it. Many countries ratified the Convention very soon after it was adopted and others continued to ratify or accede to it, making it the most widely ratified human rights treaty (UNICEF, 2011). The concept of “the child” has become more clearly

defined and protected through the Convention, which has been ratified by every government in the world except for Somalia and the United States which have not ratified this UN treaty (Alderson, 2008; Save and Children, 1999). The recognition of the child's interests and rights became real on the twentieth of November, 1989 with the adoption of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child which is the first and only international legally binding text recognizing all the fundamental rights of the child. The Convention made clear the relationship between children's rights and human rights, equating the two and protecting the child as a human being. As part of human rights, children's rights are constituted by the fundamental guarantees and essential rights granted to all humans (UNICEF, 2011).

The most straightforward statement of children's rights as human rights exists in the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child (Cohen, 1980). However, the CRC is equally important as the major international covenant for moral and legal subjects possessed of fundamental entitlements. The CRC has also generated further international commitments and agreements in respect to children's rights in key areas. For example, children involved in armed conflict, sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography were entered and enforced in the Optional Protocol in 2002 (Archard, 2004). The Convention protects the full range of human rights- civil, political, economic, social, cultural, and humanitarian all of which have been modified to suit the requirements of children (Cohen, 1995). In Convention, 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, 1999; Karaman - Kepenekçi, 2010a; Karaman - Kepenekçi & Aslan, 2011)

Survival rights are a prerequisite for human rights. The Convention explains survival rights explicitly in Article 6, survival rights are understood to include human basic survival needs, such as “inherent right to life” (Article 6), “survival and development” (Article 6), avoiding “separation from parents” (Article 9), “health and health service” (Article 24), “social security” (Article 26), “leisure, recreation and cultural activities” (Article 31), an adequate standard of living (Article 27), and the overall “implementation of rights” (Article, 4). The child has the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standards of health and to facilities for the treatment of illness and rehabilitation of health, especially to “diminish infant and child mortality” (Article 24). According to this article, state parties shall develop primary health care, and provide adequate nutritious foods and clean drinking water, health education, and family planning services (Alderson, 2008). Every child has the right to standards of living adequate for the child’s physical, mental, spiritual, and social development. State parties should assist families in need with necessary assistance, for example: food, clothing, and housing (Article, 27). Survival rights should be considered to include most of the child’s needs (Alderson 2008; Flekkoy & Kaufman, 1998), and these rights are often repeated in other categories.

Development rights stress the importance of fostering and nurturing the many dimensions of the child. According to the UNCR, Article 6 includes the rights to development. Development rights include, among others, the child’s rights to “parental guidance and the child’s evolving capacities” (Article 5), “to give name and nationality” (Article 7), “the preservation of identity” (Article 8), “family reunification” (Article 10), “the highest attainable standard of health and benefit from social insurance” (Article 26), “education” (Article 28 and 29), “the enjoyment of one’s culture, language and religion”

(Article 30), and that the same rights apply to “handicapped children” (Article 23), (Flekkoy & Kaufman, 1998; Özdemir Uluç, 2008). This final article reflects is reflected concern about development in the Convention, providing specific development assistance for disabled children.

Protection rights result from the Convention’s core value of human dignity. These rights, among others, include: “the right to be protected from economic situations” (Article 32), “from the illicit use of ...drugs” (Article 33), “from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse” (Article, 34), “from torture and deprivation of liberty” (Article 37 ), “from armed conflict” (Article 38), “from abduction” (Article 35), “from denial of due process or other criminal and judicial safeguards” (Article 40) “the right to protect children from any form of discrimination” (Article 2), “from the kidnapping and retention of children abroad” (Article 11), “from maltreatment” (Article 19), “from deprived family” (Article 20/21), with “special protection to be granted to children who are refugees” (Article 22), from “all other forms of exploitation” (Article 36), and from “lack of rehabilitative care” (Article 39), (Akyüz,1999; Flekkoy & Kaufman, 1998; Özdemir Uluç, 2008). The Convention protects children from all forms of physical or mental injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, and maltreatment or exploitation and has provoked significant policy changes throughout the world (Franklin, 1986). According to the Convention the only restrictions are to protect the rights and reputations of others and to protect national security and public order as well as public health and morals (Freeman, 1997).

In the UN Convention participation rights mainly appear in Articles 12-16, including rights to information (Flekkoy & Kaufman, 1998). Children’s participation rights can be separated into two groups of rights in the Convention. The group articles focus on the forms of

participation and the condition of participation, covering articles 12, 13, 14, 15, 31 and 40 (Flekkoy & Kaufman, 1998). These articles include: “The child’s rights to express an opinion” (Article 12), The key article of the Convention on participation is Article 12. Article 12, which applies to decision making within families as well as within other institutions (Howe & Covell, 2005), requires “states parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child” (Article 12). “This Convention encourages adults to listen to the opinions of children and involve them in decision-making -- not give children authority over adults. Article 12 does not interfere with parents' right and responsibility to express their views on matters affecting their children” (UNICEF, 2011). The Convention says that children shall have the “right to freedom of expression” (Article 13), including freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, as well as the right to obtain and make known information. The child’s right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion is also protected (Article 14), alongside ‘the child’s right to meet with others and join or set up associations” (Article, 15). The child’s right to protection from interference with privacy, family, and home (Article, 16), their access to appropriate information and protections from harmful materials (Article, 17), the right to leisure, play, and participation in cultural and artistic activities (Article, 31), and the administration of juvenile justice (Article, 40) are all part of the Convention. The participation rights complement and overlap with protection and survival rights (Alderson, 2008). In the articles, the Convention gives all the children participation rights regardless of race, region, color, religion, or nationality and promotes their participation in activities of society, family, school, and local community. The other groups of participation rights focus on the requirements of participation. According to the Convention, the responsibilities of parents

are not only in bringing up their children in a way that is appropriate to their evolving capacities. Parents are also responsible for appropriate direction and guidance. The Convention also asserts that the state is responsible for assistance to the parents (Flekkoy & Kaufman, 1998). Children participate in countless activities and relationship in pairs or groups, such as playing games, digging ponds, acting, and cooking.

### **The Place of Social Studies Textbooks in Children's Rights Education**

The purpose of social studies in the elementary schools is to introduce children to the world of people. The main aim of the social studies courses that have been practiced in Turkey is expressed so as to provide an environment and opportunity for an individual to understand and to make contributions to himself/ herself, to the society in which he/ she lives, and to the world, through his/ her own wishes and skills. In other words, the main purpose for teaching social studies is citizenship education (Safran, 2005; MONE, 2005; Tezgel, 2006). In the United States, elementary schools have similar objectives for social studies, and they are considered part of citizenship education as the basic purpose of social studies (Chapin & Messick, 2002; Ellis, 2002).

Social studies classes provide students as citizens who adopt democratic values with adjustment in the society and let them apply their information and richness in the life. Social studies classes always present the most significant possibilities for human rights education. Students learn about democratic governments and functions of these governments, and beliefs and values within the country's rich cultural mosaic. Thus, students start developing the consciousness of responsibility they need to feel towards their countries. In this context, social studies classes provide benefit for individual to fulfill responsibilities as a member of world and country family in order to get human rights and democracy develop and spread around

(Tezgel, 2008). Social studies classes educate students as citizens who adopt democratic values with adjustment in the society and let them apply their information and richness in the life. Social studies classes are the ones that include human rights education in the first place.

According to 42<sup>nd</sup> article of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), “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. Also in accordance with this provision, in education children’s awareness is to be raised about rights which are given and recognized by CRC. This awareness in education can be achieved initially by textbooks (Karaman - Kepenekçi, 2010b). Textbooks are basic instructional materials that are prepared in accordance with a particular course’s teaching program. Textbooks are the most basic learning resources (Turner, 2004). They provide many advantages for educators, enabling them to animate the curricula and give life to subjects taught in the classroom (UNESCO, 2007; Aslan & Karaman - Kepenekçi, 2008). In social studies teaching, textbooks are not only the most important assistants of the teacher while giving the course but also they play the most important role in human rights education (Karaman - Kepenekçi, 2010b).

Social studies courses are one of the most important courses of elementary education in both countries. They include history, philosophy, geography, law, sociology, and political sciences (citizenship education). Besides these issues, in social studies classes in Turkey, human rights issues are presented as interdisciplinary topics (MONE, 2005); and children are raised as individuals who know their rights and use them to fulfill their responsibilities (Karaman - Kepenekçi, 2010b).

On the other hand, United States textbooks in elementary education are textbooks programs. They contain an array of resources such as primary documents, art work, narrative histories, vocabulary lessons, skills lessons, and activities. In the United States, students are introduced to the Constitution of the United States as a part of the fifth-grade social studies curriculum in U.S. elementary schools. In primary schools, a paraphrased version of the Constitution is usually included in fifth-grade textbooks. It contains all of the parts, for example, the preamble, the 7 articles containing the rules by which citizens agree to live, and 27 changes or amendments (Parker, 2009). In addition, Individual rights are taught as fundamental values and principles in values education (Chapin & Messick, 2002; Chapin, 2009; Hoge, Field, Foster & Nickell, 2004; Parker, 2009; Seefeldt, 1997; Sunal & Haas, 2005; Van Cleaf, 1991; Zarrillo, 2004).

Children's rights education issues have been increasing since CRC (1989) was adopted by United Nations, and it is seen as one of the most challenging issues in the world, in relation to how to teach and protect children's rights. Therefore, recently there have been a number of studies that focus on Akengin, 2008; Çakir Tunc, 2008; Ersoy & Ersoy, 2008; Ersoy, 2011; Covell, Howe & Polegato, 2011; Howe and Covell, 2009; Habashi & at el, 2010; Karaman-Kepenekçi, 2006; Kop & Gül, 2010; Naqvi, 2001; Neslitürk & Ersoy, 2007; Özdemir Uluç, 2008; Merey, 2012a,; Reynaert, Bouverne & Vandavelde, 2009; Salman Osmanağaoğlu, 2007; Smith, 2007; Taylor & Percy-smith, 2008; Thomas, 2007; Uçuş, 2009; Ulusavaş, 2008; Yurtsever, 2009) children's rights education. However, very few studies in the literature have attempted to examine the inclusion of children's rights issues in textbooks for students (Karaman-Kepenekçi, 2009, 2010a; 2010b; Karaman - Kepenekçi & Aslan, 2011; Nayir and Karaman - Kepenekçi, 2011).

As it can be seen there is not any research about children's rights issues in the United States social studies textbooks. On the other hand, as the above studies demonstrate in Turkey, there have been a number of studies about children rights issues conducted by Karaman – Kepenekçi. For example; Karaman-Kepenekçi & Aslan (2011)'s "Children's Rights in School Level Books" study aimed to determine level of allocation of children's rights in books, and Karaman-Kepenekçi (2010a)'s study determined to what extend and how children's rights are allocated in the stories in the 100 Basic Literary Works list recommended for children in Turkey. Both studies found that statements about development rights were higher than the others. In Nayir and Karaman – Kepenekçi's (2011) study on "children's participation rights in elementary schools' Turkish Textbooks ", it has been observed that the right to set up an association and the right to assemble peacefully were given less places when compared with the right to express opinions and right to participate in decisions.

The level of allocation to children's rights issues in United States social studies textbooks has not been examined yet. Therefore, it may be important to examine the children's rights issues in both countries' textbooks. Comparing both countries' textbooks will help to investigate and explain the instruments that textbook authors should develop in order to include not only the well-established local, regional and national dimension but also the global dimension in textbooks.

## **Purpose**

The main objective of this study is to make a comparison between social studies textbooks in Turkey and the United States in terms of their level of allocation to children rights issues.

## **Research Model**

This study, aiming to define the inclusion levels of children's rights in Turkey and USA social studies elementary (4-6 grades) textbooks, is a qualitative study as a document analysis. Document analysis includes the analysis of written materials containing the targeted fact or facts (Yıldırım ve Şimşek, 2005).

## **Data Collection**

In this study, the elementary (4-6) social studies textbooks in Turkey and USA are analyzed. For the purposes of this study, we analyzed the Turkish social studies textbooks was approved with Head Council of Education and Morality decision numbered 190118 and revised and updated by Department of Publications, Ministry of National Education in 2011. For the USA part of the study, we analyzed the United States social studies textbooks prepared by the Harcourt Horizons School Publishers in 2005 and revised and recommended for all the states in 2008 and has taken Award Winning program. These were chosen due to the fact that there isn't one set of standards valid for educational textbooks nation-wise and different states have different textbooks and practices in USA. When presenting the findings, we quoted the gains of both countries' textbooks directly.

Since first level (4th and 5th grade), and second level (6th and 7th grade) are the levels at which social Studies Education is presented in Turkey, these levels were selected for our study. Accordingly, a second a sample group was formed comprising social studies curricula in the United States that are taught to students of the same age group.

## 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 (Yıldırım ve Şimşek, 2005). It is essential in a study to define the analysis unit to be used (Baş ve 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. In this research, the analysis category is defined as "Children's Rights". This analysis is divided into four sub-categories: "Right to Development", "Right to Survival", "Right to Protection," and "Right to Participation". Each subcategory is related to relevant article of Bill of Children's Rights. For instance: *right to survive is related to articles 6, 9, 18, 24, 26, 27, and 31 in Bill of Children's Rights; right to develop is related to articles 5, 7, 8, 10, 21, 23, 28, and 29; right for protection is related to articles 2, 11, 19, 20, 22, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, and 40; finally right for participation is related to articles 3, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17* (Özdemir Uluç, 2008). These sub-categories are defined according to the Convention on Children's Rights, as follows:

**Survival Rights:** These rights include the provisions that meet the basic needs of a child, such as: the child's right to live, proper living standards, medical assistance, diminishing infant and child mortality, nutrition, shelter, and so on.

**Development Rights:** These rights consist of the right to education, the right to play and rest, cultural rights, religion, conscience and freedom of thought, and other rights such as the right to receive information, which children need in order to perform at the highest level..

**Protection Rights:** These rights require children to be protected against every kind of child neglect, abuse, and exploitation. For refugee children, these rights include topics such as: special care, the protection of the child in the judicial system, children in situations where there is armed conflict, child labor, sexual exploitation, and substance abuse.

**Participation Rights:** These rights allow the child to gain an active role in society; these rights are freedom to express his opinions, active participation in matters concerning the child, and taking part in associations, such as the right of peaceful assembly.

### **Reliability and Validity**

Reliability in qualitative studies means whether the same results will be obtained in similar environments and whether other researchers are able to get the same results with the same set of data (Yıldırım ve Şimşek, 2005). For the purposes of reliability in this study, Inal's (1998) example was applied and researchers coded for both countries' textbooks (4-6<sup>th</sup> grades Social Studies student Textbooks) at different times. For examples two subcategories and a textbook were arbitrarily selected and coded by the co-authors of the paper (namely the 'Survival Rights' and 'Development Rights and 'Turkish and United States Textbook 5 and 6 Grades'). 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. In order to assure the validity of the work, when analyzing books, books are examined as a whole, except for the table of contents, chronology, bibliography, glossary, pictures, photos, maps, and graphics were not

excluded in the coding process. Hall & Houten (1983) and 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 95-% agreement between the researchers/coders is reached. Validity in qualitative studies means observing the researched phenomenon as it is and through an impartial lens (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2005).

In the study, as a unit in an analysis, a sentence is chosen and how often the sub-categories are seen in each sentence is detected. While analyzing the books, both the apparent and the hidden content are taken into consideration. In plain words, the words corresponding to sub-categories in every sentence are considered as the sentences or statements that are defined by the stated sub-categories. The significance of every topic is assessed through categorizing, defining, and coding processes (Karaman - Kepenekçi, 2011). To determine the total number of words in the texts, each word was counted individually and, accordingly, the values of the subcategories within the textbooks are expressed as percentage, frequency, and intensity values in the tables.

In order to find out the approximate total word number in each textbook, the remaining number of pages has been calculated and then multiplied by an average number of words on a page. The average number of words on a page was determined by calculating the average number of words from the three pages chosen randomly from the beginning, middle, and end of each textbook. The values of categories in the textbooks have been indicated in the tables as frequency, percentage, and intensity values. Coding was done by the researcher. For each textbook, the subcategory percentages and the subcategory intensity scores were obtained using the formulas given below (Aslan & Karaman- Kepenekçi, 2008; Karaman – Kepenekçi, 1999; 2005).

$$\text{Subcategory percentage} = \frac{\text{Subcategory frequency}}{\text{Total frequency of all subcategories}} \times 100$$

$$\text{Subcategory intensity score} = \frac{\text{Subcategory frequency}}{\text{Total word number of the texts}} \times 1000$$

Due to small values in the original calculation, the intensity scores of all subcategories were multiplied by 1000 in order to avoid complications while interpreting. This modified operation on intensity scores was merely a matter of convenience.

#### **4. Findings**

When Turkish social studies elementary education textbooks from fourth through sixth grades are examined, as can be seen in the table, in Turkish social studies textbooks, the intensity score related to children's rights are given the utmost place in SS4 (%33.3, n=727) textbooks and followed respectively by SS5 (%29.1, n=706) and SS6 (%23.6, n=644) textbooks. When sub-categories about children's rights are examined as a whole, in Turkish social studies textbooks, the intensity score related to the right to survival are given the utmost place in SS4 textbooks (%36.6, n=882) and then are followed respectively with the development of rights (%31.4, n=767), and the right to participation (%16.6, n=390). Also, the intensity score about the right to protection are rarely given (%1.5, n=38).

**Table 1: Dissemination of all of the subcategories in Turkish social studies textbooks according to frequency (f), percentage (%), and intensity score (IS)**

Turkish social studies textbooks												
Scores												
Categories	Social Studies 4 (21.750)*			Social Studies 5 (24.100)*			Social Studies 6 (27.245)*			Total		
	f	%	IS	f	%	IS	f	%	IS	f	%	IS
Survival Rights	321	44.2	14.7	291	41.2	12.0	270	41.9	9.9	882	42.5	36.6
Development Rights	220	30.3	10.1	256	36.2	10.6	291	45.3	10.7	767	36.9	31.4
Protection Rights	16	2.2	0.7	13	1.9	0.5	9	1.3	0.3	38	1.8	1.5
Participation Rights	170	23.3	7.8	146	20.7	6.0	74	11.5	2.7	390	18.8	16.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>727</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>33.3</b>	<b>706</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>29.1</b>	<b>644</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>23.6</b>	<b>2077</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>86</b>

\*Approximate total word numbers of the social studies student textbooks

#### 4.1. Survival rights of children in Turkish social studies textbooks

As can be seen in table one, in Turkish social studies textbooks, the intensity scores related to right to survival are given the utmost place in SS4 (%14.7, n=321) textbooks. SS4 is followed respectively by SS5 (%12.0, n=291) and SS6 (%9.9, n=270) textbooks. The following sentences, quoted from the Turkish textbooks, can be given as examples of the statements related to right to survival.

- *In order to maintain a healthy and happy life, basic needs are required and then other needs must be met. (SS4, p.84)*
- *Do you know what is your most important right? It is survival right, isn't it? (SS5, p. 28)*
- *I know that I have the right to benefit from health services. (SS6, p.161)*

#### **4.2. Development rights of children in Turkish social studies textbooks**

As can be seen in table one, in Turkish social studies textbooks, the intensity scores related to right to development are given the utmost place in the SS6 (%10.7, n=291) textbook. SS6 is followed respectively by SS5 (%10.6, n=256) and SS4 (%10.1, n=220) textbooks. The following sentences, quoted from the Turkish textbooks, can be given as examples of the statements related to right to development.

- *The City Council opened a new center for the visually handicapped. Suna and Ceren went there. Suna goes there everyday no., She is reading aloud from textbooks and is recording them to tape. (SS4, p.119)*
- *We have fun a lot when I play with my friends, We joke with each other and laugh...Our game's group is growing day by day. (SS5, p.16)*
- *I can explain my opinion freely (SS6, p.1161)*

#### **4.3. Protection rights of children in Turkish social studies textbooks**

As can be seen in table one, in Turkish social studies textbooks, the intensity scores related to right to protection are given the utmost place in the SS4 (%0.7, n=16) textbook. SS4 is followed respectively by SS5 (%0.5, n=13) and SS6 (%0.3, n=9) textbooks. The following sentences, quoted from the Turkish textbooks, can be given as examples of the statements related to right to protection.

- *If the basic rights of a child are disobeyed anywhere in the world, this must be stopped with legal regulations (SS4, p.45)*

- *The Social Services and Child Protection Agency (SHCEK) in Turkey performs implementation and follow-up of the Convention of Children's Rights Treaty. (SS5, p.22)*
- *I know that I have safety of life and property by the state (SS6, p.161)*

#### **4.4. Participation rights of children in Turkish social studies textbooks**

As can be seen in table one, in Turkish social studies textbooks, the intensity scores related to right to survival are given the utmost place in the SS4 (%7.8, n=170) textbook. SS5 is followed respectively by SS5 (%6.0, n=146) and SS6 (%2.7, n=74) textbooks. The following sentences, quoted from the Turkish textbooks, can be given as examples of the statements related to right to survival.

- *I am a fourth grade student; I like school a lot, (including) my teacher and my classmates. I participate in social activities in my school. (SS4, p.25)*
- *The basketball team is one of the favorite groups in our school. I am a member of the basketball team. (SS5, p.19)*
- *I know that I have the right to vote and be elected. (SS6 p.161)*

When the United States social studies textbooks for elementary education are examined for fourth and sixth grades, as can be seen in table, the intensity scores related to children's rights are given the utmost place in the SS4 (%1.9, n=217) textbook, followed respectively by SS5 (%1.4, n=211) and SS6 (%1.0, n=146) textbooks. When examining sub-categories about children's rights as a whole, in United States social studies textbooks, the statements related to right to development are given the utmost place (%1.9, n=249), which is followed respectively by right to participation (%1.5, n=195), and the right to survival (%0.9, n=130). However, the statements about protection rights are not given in United States textbooks.

**Table 2: Dissemination of all of the subcategories in the United States social studies textbooks according to frequency (f), percentage (%), and intensity score (IS)**

in the United States social studies textbooks												
Scores												
Categories	Social Studies 4 (21.750)*			Social Studies 5 (24.100)*			Social Studies 6 (27.245)*			Total		
	f	%	IS	f	%	IS	f	%	IS	f	%	IS
Survival Rights	50	23.0	0.4	45	21.3	0.3	35	24.0	0.2	130	22.6	0.9
Development Rights	105	48.4	0.9	76	36.0	0.5	68	46.6	0.5	249	43.4	1.9
Protection Rights	0	--	--	0	--	--	0	--	--	--	--	--
Participation Rights	62	28.6	0.6	90	42.7	0.6	43	29.4	0.3	195	34.0	1.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>574</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>4.3</b>

\*Approximate total word numbers of the social studies student textbooks

#### 4.3. *Survival rights of children in United States social studies textbooks*

As can be seen in table one, in United States social studies textbooks, the intensity scores related to right to survival are given the utmost place in the SS4 (%0.4, n=50) textbook. SS4 is followed respectively by SS5 (%0.3, n=45) and SS6 (%0.2, n=35) textbooks. The following sentences, quoted from the United States textbooks, can be given as examples of the statements related to right to survival.

- *I ran away from slavery. I earn an honest living as a printer. (SS5, p.436)*
- *Americans have the right to own property. They also have the right to privacy or to keep secrets. (SS4, p.212).*
- *Marisa chose to go to the store with lower prices. But once she arrived, she saw only one maroon jacket. The clerk told her that there was a scarcity of them (SS6, p.276).*

#### 4.3. *Development rights of children in social studies textbooks in the United States*

As can be seen in table one, in United States social studies textbooks, the intensity scores related to right to development are given the utmost place in the SS4 (%0.9, n=105) textbook. SS4 is followed respectively by SS5 (%0.5, n=76) and SS6 (%0.5, n=68) textbooks. The following sentences, quoted from the United States textbooks, can be given as examples of the statements related to right to development.

- *Today, 14 year old Jacob Fielding will learn how to place type into the printing press at the print shop where he lives and works as an apprentice (SS5, p.200)*
- *In the United States, however, children are free to go to public school. The freedom to learn brings with it the duty to learn. (SS4, p.212)*
- *Six students from all across Canada are working together on a project (SS6, p.130)*

#### **4.4. Participation rights of children in social studies textbooks in the United States**

As can be seen in table one, in United States social studies textbooks, the intensity scores related to right to survival are given the utmost place in the SS4 (%0.6, n=62) textbook. SS4 is followed respectively by SS5 (%0.6, n=90) and SS6 (%0.3, n=43) textbooks. The following sentences, quoted from the United States textbooks, can be given as examples of the statements related to right to survival.

- *Whether you are voting for your favorite dessert or for class president, voting is an important right and responsibility (SS4, p. 216).*
- *I guess we can vote on that in the future. (SS4, p. 217)*
- *We could hold a town meeting in the summer. (SS5, p. 172)*

When all the textbooks are considered generally, today intensity scores for children rights are quite far when the textbooks taught in Turkey (%86) and the United States (%4.3) are

considered; therefore, it could be said that children rights issues are given at least place in the United States social studies textbooks.

**Table 3. Total Intensity of the Issues of Children Rights in the Textbooks**

	Textbooks	Intensity Scores (%)
<b>Turkey</b>	Social Studies Students 4	33.3
	Social Studies Students 5	29.1
	Social Studies Students 6	23.6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>The United States</b>	Social Studies Students 4	1.9
	Social Studies Students 5	1.4
	Social Studies Students 6	1.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>4.3</b>

### Discussion and Conclusion

The UNCHR is part of international law and states parties are bound by international law to implement the rights of the child. Therefore, states parties have the obligation to bring their law, policies, and practices in accordance with the standards of the Convention (Howe and Covell, 2005). In the Convention, a number of article deals with education and children's rights education. We can divide the Convention's provision on education into three categories. First, there is the child's right to education (Article 28 and 23). This category covers the rights to free primary education, the right to accessible secondary and higher education and providing the handicapped with appropriate education. Second category includes the rights of education (Articles 2, 12, 13, 14, and 15). These are related to the rights to non-discrimination, participation, and the fundamental freedoms such as freedoms of expression, thought, and religion. Third category deals with education rights (Article 29, 42). These articles refer to

education in which children are able to know their rights and to develop respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms (Verhellen, 1993; Cited in, Howe & Covell, 2005). Children's rights education is a form of citizenship education that gives primary attention to educating children on their basic rights and responsibilities under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Howe & Covell, 2005, 2009; Johnny, 2005; Krappmann, 2006; Osler & Starkey, 1998). According to 42<sup>nd</sup> articles 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. 28<sup>th</sup> article of the convention declares that all children have right to education, with no discrimination, and a framework of education quality is depicted. 29<sup>th</sup> 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).

In this comparison study, Turkish and the United States social studies student's textbooks are analyzed in terms of their level of children rights in line with "UNCHR." Accordingly, the most striking finding at the end of this study is that the number of children rights references in Turkish textbooks is much more than in United States textbooks. This 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 Aslan & Karaman - Kepenekçi (2008) found the same in their comparison of Turkey and France Turkish language textbooks, and so did Merey (2012a) in their comparison of The United States and Turkish curricula. These results are most likely related to elementary education curricula. The most recently updated elementary curricula have been implemented in Turkey since the 2004- 2005 school year, when it was implemented in elementary schools. Inclusion of the human rights issues in each textbook as an intermediary discipline was accepted as a principle; in other words, human rights education issues are interspersed in elementary education curricula (Aslan & Karaman-Kepenekçi 2008; Ceyhan & Yigit 2004; Gözütok & Senar, 2008; Primary National Education Program, 2005). The most important reason for the Turkish social studies textbooks to have so much emphasis on human rights and particularly on children's rights is due to human rights intermediary discipline, which was taken into consideration while social studies textbooks were being written. Now, Social Studies subject has an important place in human rights education through interdisciplinary relations in Turkish curricula. Another reason to have so much emphasis on human rights issues is that Turkish social studies textbooks are being used as a tool to raise awareness in students directly about children's rights issues through contents of textbooks. Turkish social studies textbooks focus on human rights issues, in particular children's rights issues. When studying textbooks, topics such as "Active Citizen" (TT, 4, P136), "How Can I Express My Thought" (TT, 4 P.16), "I Respect others" (TT4, P.20), "People and Government" (TT4, P.146), "I Learn My Rights" (TT5, P.12), "We Have Rights and Responsibility towards Children's Rights" (TT5, P.22), "Children's Rights" (TT5, P.26), and "Living Democracy"

(TT6, P.202) are learned. This is consistent with social studies gains within curricula (MEB, 2011).

The intensity scores for the children's rights issues in the United States social studies textbooks are less than that of Turkish social studies textbooks. Reasons for the lesser inclusion of children rights in United States textbooks may be summarized as follows: the most important 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 (Chapin & Messick, 2002). 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 (e.g., *right to liberty, right to dignity, right to security*) freedoms (e.g., *freedom of worship, freedom of thought, freedom to participate in the political process*), and responsibilities (e.g., *to respect human life, to respect the rights of others, to be tolerant of different points of view*) are suggested under the title of democratic values and beliefs within social studies curriculum. In other words, human rights issues are recommended to be taught as democratic values by National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) within social studies curricula (NCSS, 1994; 2010). There is a very important place for values education in the United States, with the Center for Civic Education establishing certain standards for values education. Several values have been treated as basic values in social studies teaching, and they have been recommended to be taught at the elementary level as basic values. Individual rights are taught as fundamental values and principles of American democracy in values education (Chapin & Messick, 2002; Chapin, 2009; Hoge, Field, Foster

& Nickell, 2004; Parker, 2009; Seefeldt, 1997; Sunal & Haas, 2005; Van Cleaf, 1991; Zarrillo, 2004).

The first remarkable finding when comparing two countries' textbooks is that intensity score on survival rights sub-category in Turkish textbooks is much more than that in the United States textbooks. In addition, in Turkish textbooks, the survival rights sub-category is given more place when compared to other subcategories. This result is not consistent with earlier studies Karaman - Kepenekçi & Aslan (2011), Merey (2012a), Karaman-Kepenekçi (2010), and Özdemir Uluç (2008). In these studies, survival rights category was not found more than others subcategories. For instance, Karaman-Kepenekçi's (2010a) study determined to what extent and how children's rights are allocated in the stories in the 100 Basic Literary Works list recommended for children in Turkey". This study found that the rate of statements on development rights was higher than the others.

The second finding showed that the intensity score for the category of development rights in Turkish social studies textbooks was almost double that in the United States textbooks. In Turkey, there have been a number of studies by Özdemir Uluç (2008) about children's rights in elementary curricula, and Merey (2012a) added another study on children's rights in social studies curricula in elementary education. They obtained similar findings. Along the lines of the present study, the intensity score of the development rights subcategory in elementary curricula was found to be the most after participation subcategory, in consistence with studies by Özdemir Uluç ( 2008) and Merey (2012a).

In this study, it was observed that the 'Participation Rights' subcategory was more included in Turkish social studies textbooks than in United States textbooks. The result is not

consistent with previous research findings (Meray, 2012a). In the study by Meray (2012a) on children's rights in elementary social studies curricula, a comparative study was conducted and in Meray's (2012b) "Political Rights in Social Studies Textbooks in Turkish Elementary Education", the intensity score of the 'participation rights' subcategories in elementary school textbooks is found to be much higher than the other subcategories. On the other hand, in the United States intensity score of participation rights was the second most included subcategory. This result can be explained by the basic purpose of social studies. Chapin and Messick (2002) said that the main purpose for teaching the social studies is citizenship education. To achieve citizenship education, there are four major goals. These are knowledge, skills, values and participations. In the United States, participation plays the most important role, where student participation in the government of their own school through student councils has long been a tradition in middle and high school. Such participation allows some students to practice democracy and gives students the freedom to initiate issues and solve problems (Sunal & Haas, 2005). The same situation can be seen in Turkish social studies teaching goals. In fact, when we examined the intensity scores, the subcategory "participation of rights" in Turkish textbooks in Turkey was observed to be higher than in the United States textbooks. This situation results most likely from social studies education curricula. In Turkey, the implemented curriculum has included many activities for children since Social Studies Curriculum was prepared with a constructivist education approach in 2005. Turkish social studies curriculum replaced textbook-based teaching with activity-based teaching, containing many activities that encourage student participation (Safran, 2005; Şimşek 2009, Cited in, Meray, 2012b) .

Another important finding is related to protection rights. They can only be found in Turkish studies textbooks. In other words, statements about children's rights to protection are

not found in the United States textbooks. This result in Turkish textbooks is not consistent with research about that by Özdemir Uluç (2008), and Merey (2012a) who found no gains about children's protection rights in elementary education. In addition, Karaman- Kepenekci & Aslan (2011) reached similar results, with the present study on children's rights in early childhood education books. In their study, protection rights were found emphasized less than the other categories. This shows that textbooks and curricula are not parallel to each other and children's rights in elementary curricula are not distributed according to student class level.

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## APPENDIX A

### The Textbooks used in this study

#### Turkish Textbooks

1. Koyuncu Kaya M.,Dag, O., Kocak, E., Yildirim, T., Unal, M. (2010). Primary School Social Studies Turkis Textbook 4 (in Turkish). (Ed, Ismail Hakki Demircioglu). Ankara: Milli Egitim Yayinlari.
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3. Genc, E., Polat, M. M., Basol, S., Kaya, N., Azer, H., Gokce, S., Koyuncu, M., Gok, A., Yildiz, A., Yilmaz, D. & Ozcan, A. (2010). Primary School Social Studies Turkis Textbook 5 (in Turkish). (Ed, Mustafa Safran). Ankara: Milli Egitim Yayinlari.

#### The United States Textbooks

1. Bacon, P., Bencloski, J., Buggedy, J., Cunha, S., Fournier, E., Frank, R., Hardwick, S., Lanegran, D., Kaminski, J.P., Mancke, E., Manson, G., Meyer, M., Miyares, I., McKibben, C., Raboteau, A. & Strong, W. A. (2005). *Primary School Social Studies United States Textbook 4*,(Ed:, Michael J. Berson), Harcourt School Publishers: Newyork.

2. Bacon, P., Deans-Smits, S., Nichols, R., Johnson, J.W., Kaminski, J.P., Mancke, E., Banner, J. M., Egbo, C., Patrick , J.J., Frank, R., Giesburg, J., McKibben, C. & Raboteau, A. A. (2005). *Primary School Social Studies United States Textbook 5*,(Ed.: Michael J. Berson), Harcourt School Publishers: Newyork.
  
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