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COMPARISON OF THE TURKISH NATIONAL SOCIAL SCIENCE  
CURRICULUM AT THE PRIMARY LEVEL WITH THAT OF NEBRASKA AT  
THE ELEMENTARY LEVEL

By

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A THESIS

Presented to the faculty of  
The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska  
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COMPARISON OF THE TURKISH NATIONAL SOCIAL SCIENCE  
CURRICULUM AT THE PRIMARY LEVEL WITH THAT OF NEBRASKA AT  
THE ELEMENTARY LEVEL

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University of Nebraska, 1999

**Advisor: F. Willam Sesow**

The purpose of this study was to compare the Turkish National Social Science curriculum at the primary level with that of Nebraska at the elementary level. The importance of this study arises social science and its teaching are very complex and require well-organized instructional methods to attain curricula outcomes.

This study addressed several questions: 1) what are the components of the Turkish National Social Science curriculum at the primary level? 2) What are the components of the Nebraska Social Science Curriculum at the elementary level? 3) what are the similarities and differences between the curricula?

The main findings of the study are: 1) the Nebraska Social Science curriculum has supporting social studies subject areas which the Turkish National Social Science curriculum does not have (these subject areas include archaeology, anthropology, psychology, sociology, philosophy, and religion). 2) The other main finding of the study is that the Turkish National Social Science curriculum is full of nationalist concepts and units that do not allow children to think differently by themselves.

## DEDICATION

To my father, Mehmet, who took care for my education and encouraged me to complete it. He is my best teacher.

To my mother, Rafiye, who took care of me on my journey of learning, she is the one I trust, and the one who knows all my secrets.

To my wife, Lale, who has shared both happiness and the struggles of my life for many years, and who sacrificed so much to help me and wants my life to be happy and fulfilled.

To my friend, Lutfullah, who helped me throughout this study.

To my brothers, Tekin Hoca, Halit, Gurcan, Apo and All in Cigdem Mah, who have been in my heart for many years.

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## CHAPTER I

### Context of the Problem

In the context of the problem, I will introduce the purpose of the study. This study was conducted to compare Turkish educational system and social science curriculum in the primary level with that of Nebraska. The reason the researcher chose this study was that Turkish social science curriculum needs to be replaced with recent improvement in social science teaching.

As we know, life in modern societies is so complex and the need for knowledge and skills are so great that the family is simply not able to teach children and youth all they need to know. Accordingly, schools assume a major responsibility for the transmission of certain knowledge to the young. Skills, attitudes and values are deemed important. (Jarolimek, 1990)

Once we have stated the importance of schooling shortly, we will need to deal with schools and educational systems in both Turkey and Nebraska. Throughout this work, the similarities and differences between the Turkish and United States educational systems and their social science curricula at the elementary level will be analyzed. Viewing changes of social realities in historical perspective in Turkey is necessary in describing Turkish educational system. After the Republic, social changes under the leadership of Ataturk, a highly respected army general from World War I, led the Turkish people in their War of Independence (1919-1922) against the allied occupiers. As the first president of a National Turkish state, Ataturk created the foundations for a modern, secular state based on human rights and fundamental freedoms. We can summarize these as follows:

## Social Changes in Turkey

### 1. Transformation of the state from an empire into a republic

Turks, who came from central Asia and settled in Anatolia, established the Ottoman Empire apart from several states and lived there for 600 years. After the fall of the empire they again managed to find their last state in Anatolia. It is believed that the Modern Turkish State will exist forever and always be governed by a republic. Racial, social and cultural changes under the leadership of Ataturk began early in the republican era.

The most significant changes were:

- a. The proclamation of the republic (with the signing of the Lausanne Peace Treaty, the need arose for a name for the new state. Throughout the Turkish Independence War, nothing had been done to the sultan, who had viewed very coldly the struggle for independence. After the Independence War, the sultanate was abolished, and on October 29, 1923, the name of the new state was officially declared by the National Assembly to be the Republic of Turkey).
- b. The abolition of the caliphate (the Ottoman Emperors were also the religious leaders of Muslim all over the world).
- c. The abolition of the Sultanate.
- d. Introduction of the Latin alphabet versus Arabic alphabet (because Koran was written in Arabic so the latinization of the alphabet at that time was one of the most far-reaching reforms in the 1920's).
- e. Civil law instead of Islamic law.
- f. The law of unifying and modernizing the educational system (secularized education) (Demirel, 1991).

## **2. Social changes related to population explosion**

The population of Turkey, estimated to be 12.5 million in 1923, increased to 13.5 million in 1927 and 50.7 million in 1985. According to the 1997 population census, Turkey has approximately 63 million inhabitants. The expanding annual growth rate increased the needs of education of a younger generation (Demirel, 1991).

## **3. Migration from rural areas to urban areas**

Because of the high rate of industrialization taking place, intensive migration from rural to urban areas started in the 1950's and continues to the present day. As a result, the rural population rapidly decreased as a proportion of the total population. Social and cultural change is one of the most evident phenomena in Turkey (Demirel, 1991).

## **4. Changes in family life**

Although extended families were common in Turkey, at present nuclear families have been common throughout the country since the republican era. Family life and interaction in the family are changing. The number of children is decreasing; females are attending schools regularly and work in business life. Literary rates among women are gradually increasing. Education is a facilitator and initiator of social change in the country. Change is constant under the conditions mentioned above; social studies have played an important role for the Turkish people as a link to their past (Demirel, 1991).

### **Turkish Educational System**

Since 1923, education has been assigned a dominant role in the life and development of the nation. Public education is compulsory, free and secular; owing to the inadequate supply of school buildings and teachers, however, compulsory education cannot be enforced in all localities. (Yahya, 1984, p. 22)

In 1926, the Ministry of Public Instruction invited the American educational philosopher John Dewey to come to Turkey. Many of his suggestions were adopted in the new system, particularly those concerned with method. The official program of the People's Party of the Republic, as adopted in May 1935, set forth in specific form the main aims and guiding principles for national educational development (Ministry of Education, 1995).

The Turkish educational system consists of two main components referred to as "Formal education" and "Non-formal education."

#### **Formal Education**

Turkish formal education covers the institutions of pre-school education, primary education, secondary education, and higher education.

#### **Pre-School Education**

Pre-school education (between 0-72 months) is carried out by the Ministry of National Education and other ministries, institutions, kindergartens, playschools, day nurseries, and children's homes. It is optional. A regulation prepared by the Ministry of National Education determines the place and priorities for pre-schools.

The aim of pre-school education is to develop the physical, mental and emotional abilities of children; to prepare them for basic education, and to help them improve their language skills. Classes may be either a half or full day. Families pay a monthly fee to pre-school educational institutions.

#### **Primary School Education**

Primary education institutions consist of eight-year schools in which education is uninterrupted. Pupils are given a diploma when graduating from primary school.

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Guidance services are offered to students in the second term of the last year of primary school to inform them about schools and programs in secondary schools. These schools direct them towards professions and the future lifestyle these professions will bring.

### **Secondary Education**

The aims of secondary education are to prepare the students for higher education and for vocation that helps them take their place in society.

Secondary education encompasses general high schools, vocational and technical schools offering at least three years of education. There are two kinds of secondary schools in Turkey called private high schools and state high schools. If a student decides to go to a private high school, he is required to pay his own tuition. He is not required to pay tuition if he chooses to attend a state high school.

### **Higher Education**

Higher education covers all educational institutions that provide at least two years of education after secondary education. Most universities cover four years of education. There are two kinds of universities in Turkey: private universities, which are sponsored by some organizations or individuals, and state universities, which are sponsored by the Turkish government. According to the Ministry of National Education, there are 69 universities in Turkey, 552 faculties, 183 academies, 251 institutions, and 474 apprenticeship colleges are affiliated with these universities. The student population of these universities is 1,222,362 and the staff population is 53,805. These institutions issue two-year degrees. Tuition is charged for higher education. Financial aid equaling

approximately 50 U.S. dollars for three months may be given to needy students of proven ability (Ministry of National Education, 1998, p. 56).

### Non-Formal Education

Non-formal education provides educational opportunities for those who either have never been within the formal system or who are currently at a certain stage in their formal learning. The aim of non-formal education is to teach reading and writing to adults to provide basic knowledge and skills after formal education and to provide new skills for employment after formal education.

Non-formal education includes general and vocational components and is carried out in 749 adult education centers in Turkey. The new apprenticeship system developed by the Apprenticeship and Vocational Training act in 1986 enables on the job training, and includes both general and vocational education.

Non-formal education in Turkey will gain a greater significance during the current plan period with the development of international relations, the innovations in science and technology, the improvement of communication capabilities, the advent of the "information society" age, the rapid changes in the structures of professions, and the occurrence of sudden demands in the labor market (Demirel, 1991).

Courses in formal education are generally about vocational skills and some basic knowledge. Social science also is taught with the same procedures used in formal education. The same social science curriculum, Turkish national social science curriculum, is followed in the teaching of social science in non-formal education.

## Social Science in Turkey

Like other developing countries, Turkey pays great attention to education. A majority of Turkish people believes that reach the level of developed countries can only be accomplished through education, especially social science education. (Turkmen, 1997, p. 22)

In the field of social sciences, the strategy of the opening towards the world and recognizing new developments in the field has been adopted from the beginning of the 1940's. With this new strategy, subjects such as world history, geographical information on world countries, and western music gained both weight and importance. Meanwhile, courses within the philosophy group left the stage entirely to western philosophers.

This attitude in social science disciplines continued until 1982. As of 1982, emphasis was granted to both Turkish history and geography academic curricula. In music classes, Turkish music and western music were placed in the curriculum on a half-and-half basis.

Turkish philosophers were included in philosophy programs to some extent. However, since Turkey has entered the cycle of entering the European Community, renovation and development studies have been required from the viewpoints of curricula contents for the purpose of conforming to new technological developments and the standards of developed countries in the fields of mathematics and science (Ministry of National Education, 1995).

Turkish social science curriculum at the elementary level presently focuses on Turkish and world history and geography, national economy and participatory citizenship. Furthermore, there are some themes of keeping healthy that are necessary for a primary school student in real life.

## Education in Nebraska

Nebraska's present public education system is based on the state constitution adopted in 1875. This constitution directs the legislature to provide free instruction in public schools for people between 5 and 21 years old. For children 7 to 15 years old, school attendance is mandatory. Public schools also provide special education for verifiably handicapped children. Nebraska's educational system is supervised by Department of Education which consists of eight nonpartisan members elected to four-year terms.

The State Board of Education has many functions. Primarily it is a policy making body with the responsibility of seeing that the State Department of Education functions effectively within the framework developed by the Legislature and by the Board. Stated simply, the State Board and the Department of Education are obligated by statute to perform a broad leadership function and to accept the responsibility for promoting the efficiency, welfare, and improvement in the state school system in every way possible. The Department is responsible for administering regulatory controls that are designed to provide a basis for education programs so at least minimum the standards will be insured in any school system. (Nebraska State Board of Education, 1977, p. 1)

Although Board of Education recommends social science standards and framework for the elementary schools, Nebraska is a state where there are a lot of local option, and where local school boards determine what should be taught in their districts. This local school board consists of social science teachers, community members, and parents. They are involved in the process of determining what should be taught in their districts.

### Social Studies in Nebraska

Social studies are taught from kindergarten through 12th grade in schools across Nebraska. As a field of study, the objective of social studies education is to encourage students to develop a core of basic knowledge and a way of thinking drawn from many academic disciplines, to analyze this core of knowledge, and to become participating and informed citizens, (Nebraska State Board of Education, 1998, p. 1)

A school district's traditional curriculum consist of history, geography, civics and government, and economics. However, the Department of Education has developed a framework that centers on ten themes for social studies instruction. In addition to the traditional social studies curriculum, a complement of supporting social studies are offered to students by school districts. These are archaeology, anthropology, psychology, sociology, philosophy, and religion.

### Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to examine the similarities and differences between social science curriculum at primary schools in Turkey and those of elementary schools in Nebraska.

This study focused on social science curriculum for the elementary level, which covers from first grade through fifth grade.

### Research Questions

1. What are the components of the national social science curriculum at the primary level in Turkey?
2. What are the components of the social science curriculum at the elementary level in Nebraska?
3. What are the similarities and differences of the national social science curriculum at the primary level in Turkey and the social science curriculum at the elementary level in Nebraska?

### Definitions

**National Curriculum.** It is the content or objectives for which schools are held accountable for a particular course of study in one subject. When approved

by the Ministry of National Education, it is applied to all of that country's schools.

**Traditional Social Science Curriculum.** This term refers to a curriculum, which has social studies subjects such as history, geography, civics and government, and economics.

**Scope.** Substantive content, the subject matter, skills, values, attitudes, and beliefs that the curriculum is to include.

**Sequence.** Once the scope of the curriculum is determined, the subject matter, skills, and values must be arranged in some fashion. The order in which the curriculum is arranged is referred to as the sequence of the curriculum.

**Social Science.** The study of people and their relationship to their environment in terms of the physical world, social world, spiritual world and also the past, present and future.

**Elementary Level.** The school periods that provide the first part of a child's education for children between five and eleven years old in Nebraska.

**Primary Education.** Covers the education and training of children from seven to twelve years and is compulsory for both boys and girls. It is comprised of grades one through five in Turkey.

**Objective.** This term refers to a written statement in a curriculum. This statement shows a direction for the way a student should be changed or attempts to get him to gain intended behavior.

### **Assumptions**

In this study, it is assumed that all educational programs at the elementary schools in Nebraska and the primary schools in Turkey have been designed to meet the countries' needs and future expectations.

It is assumed that the documents the researcher examined are representative of most social science curriculum in Nebraska.

### **Delimitations**

This study was limited to the comparison of social science curriculum in primary schools in Turkey and in elementary schools in Nebraska. In this investigation, Houghton Mifflin Social Studies textbooks series were chosen to represent a typical social studies curriculum in Nebraska.

Furthermore, the national social science curriculum for all primary schools in Turkey was studied to determine its characteristics. Both of the curricula were analyzed in terms of their content, scope, and sequence. Their similarities and differences also were identified.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study was one that compared the Turkish national social science curriculum for primary schools with social science curriculum for elementary schools in Nebraska.

This study's results may contribute to the literature written about the similarities and differences between Turkish social science curriculum and Nebraska's social science curriculum.

### **Summary**

The purpose of social science is to help children learn about the social world in which they live and learn to cope with social realities. Social science education, especially at elementary level, plays an important role in the process of moving forward internationally in Turkey.

Turkey is a developing country and needs to give much emphasis on education, especially on social science education. The first five-year period of

social science education, from first grade through fifth grades, is the most important period in the process of preparing a good citizen. For this reason Turkish educators or curriculum designers working at Ministry of Education should be aware of recent studies and new improvements in the field of social studies in order to prepare good citizens.

The emphasis on social science education gains much more importance in the last two years. The Ministry of National Education designed a new supplementary documents in social science teaching especially for the elementary school children.

In Nebraska, The Department of Education has developed a framework that centers on ten themes for social studies instruction. In addition to the traditional social studies curriculum, a complement of supporting social studies are offered students by school districts. These are archaeology, anthropology, psychology, sociology, philosophy, and religion.

Social studies is taught in kindergarten through grade 12 in Nebraska. Nebraska K-12 social studies standards were adopted by the state of Education in may of 1998. Those standards have been taken from the state of Virginia as model.

This study addressed to social science curriculum for the elementary level, which covers from first grade through fifth grade in Nebraska.

2. To increase the rate of literacy of the society which has already reached 85%.
3. To emphasize technical and vocational education.
4. To extend comprehensive schools where multi-purpose programs 60% of secondary students by 1995-1996 period.
5. Raise the quality of national education.
6. To expand the provision of pre-school education to fully meet the demand for it (Ministry of National Education, 1995).

According to the Ministry of National Education, the Turkish educational system is divided into two parts, formal education and non-formal education.

Following description is a translation of an official Turkish government document explaining school structure in Turkey (p. 19-27).

### Formal Education

Pre-school education, primary, secondary and higher education are included in this group.

#### 1. Pre-school Education

Pre-school education is carried out by the Ministry of National Education and other ministries, institutions, day nurseries, and children's homes. Pre-school education consists of the period in which children are not old enough to attend primary schools. It is optional. A regulation prepared by the Ministry of National Education determines the place and priorities for pre-schools.

The aim of pre-school education is to develop the physical, mental and emotional abilities of children; to prepare them for basic education; and to help them improve their language skills. Classes may either be a half or full day. Families pay a monthly fee to pre-school educational institutions.

## 2. Primary Education

In general, primary education constitutes the period of education of children in the 6-14 age group. The aims and duties of primary education are:

a. To provide every Turkish child with basic knowledge, skills and manners to be good citizens through education, and to impart to these children a feeling of national awareness.

b. To prepare them for life and motivate them to get a higher education in line with their interests and abilities. The Constitution, The National Education Basic Law, and Primary School and Education Law all guarantee that primary education is compulsory for all Turkish citizens and free of charge in state and schools.

Primary education institutions consist of eight-year schools in which education is uninterrupted. Pupils are given a diploma upon graduating from primary school. During the second term of the last year of primary school guidance services are offered to students to inform them of schools and programs in secondary school. These direct them towards the professional lifestyle.

## 3. Secondary Education

After graduating from primary school, students may attend an academic high school for at least three years which prepares them for a higher education, or vocational and technical high schools. These schools prepare them for a trade.

**General high schools.** General high schools offer at a three-year program above primary level. These high schools prepare students for institutions of higher learning. The purposes are to acquaint them with problems of an individual and communal nature, to motivate them towards finding solutions,

and to instill in them the strength and knowledge to participate in the economic, social and cultural developments of the country. Within the scope of general high schools, there are high Schools, Anatolia high schools, Science high schools, schools which have foreign languages, Annatolian teachers' training Schools, Anatolia Fine Arts high Schools, Comprehensive Schools (for all girls and boys), Evening high schools, and Private high schools.

**Vocational and technical high schools.** These schools prepare students for the professions and institutions of higher learning. Vocational and technical high schools are divided into four groups: Technical Training High Schools for boys; Technical Training High Schools for girls; High Schools of Commerce and Tourism; and Religious Education Schools.

**a. Technical training high school for boys.** These schools train young students to meet the requirements in line with rapid developments in technology.

**b. Technical training high school for girls.** These schools train students to contribute to the economy of their families and to the country.

**c. High schools of commerce and tourism.** Commercial and Tourism High Schools train young people in many sectors. Students learn a foreign language to meet the requirements of the public and private sectors in trade, tourism, finance, computer science, accounting, marketing, banking, secretarial work, operation of cooperatives, real estate, stock-exchange activities, insurance, and communications.

**d. Religious education schools.** Religions Education High Schools train in line with Article 4 of the Education Unity Law No. 430 and Article 32 of the

A school district's traditional curriculum consist of history, geography, civics and government, and economics. However, the Department of Education has developed a framework that centers on ten themes for social studies instruction. In addition to the traditional social studies curriculum, a complement of supporting social studies are offered to students by school districts. These are archaeology, anthropology, psychology, sociology, philosophy, and religion.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The purpose of this study is to examine the similarities and differences between social science curriculum at primary schools in Turkey and those of elementary schools in Nebraska.

This study focused on social science curriculum for the elementary level, which covers from first grade through fifth grade.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the components of the national social science curriculum at the primary level in Turkey?
2. What are the components of the social science curriculum at the elementary level in Nebraska?
3. What are the similarities and differences of the national social science curriculum at the primary level in Turkey and the social science curriculum at the elementary level in Nebraska?

### **Definitions**

**National Curriculum.** It is the content or objectives for which schools are held accountable for a particular course of study in one subject. When approved

## CHAPTER II

### Context of the Problem

This chapter is divided into four basic sections. The first section describes the Turkish educational system while the second section discusses social science education at the primary level in Turkey. Section three provides information about Nebraska's educational system. Finally, the fourth section discusses social studies at the elementary level in Nebraska.

### Turkish Educational System

Turkey is attempting to solve both its qualitative and quantitative problems in education. These problems can be defined as instruction, teacher preparations, curriculum and physical facilities. Turkish schools need to expand learning opportunities. Adequate infrastructure is necessary to meet demands of the society. For seventy years, Turkey has been making efforts to improve its educational system, education programs, infrastructure, education facilities and technology, and faculty and staff. The goal has been to prepare Turks to contribute to culture and technology of the world. With this aim in mind, the Main Education Plan for the years 1996-2010 has been designed to make education more flexible in meeting personal, national and global needs (Karsli & Esen, 1996).

As of 1995, Turkish government identified following goals of education.

They are:

1. To achieve 100 percent participation rate in primary education. Previous rate was 95 percent in 1986.

2. To increase the rate of literacy of the society which has already reached 85%.
3. To emphasize technical and vocational education.
4. To extend comprehensive schools where multi-purpose programs 60% of secondary students by 1995-1996 period.
5. Raise the quality of national education.
6. To expand the provision of pre-school education to fully meet the demand for it (Ministry of National Education, 1995).

According to the Ministry of National Education, the Turkish educational system is divided into two parts, formal education and non-formal education.

Following description is a translation of an official Turkish government document explaining school structure in Turkey (p. 19-27).

### **Formal Education**

Pre-school education, primary, secondary and higher education are included in this group.

#### **1. Pre-school Education**

Pre-school education is carried out by the Ministry of National Education and other ministries, institutions, day nurseries, and children's homes. Pre-school education consists of the period in which children are not old enough to attend primary schools. It is optional. A regulation prepared by the Ministry of National Education determines the place and priorities for pre-schools.

The aim of pre-school education is to develop the physical, mental and emotional abilities of children; to prepare them for basic education; and to help them improve their language skills. Classes may either be a half or full day. Families pay a monthly fee to pre-school educational institutions.

curriculum at the primary level with that of Nebraska is that the Turkish National Social Science curriculum is in need of reform. Turkey will need to remove much of the emphasis on nationalism in its social science curriculum in order to meet the requirements of globalization in the next century. The present emphasis on nationalism, especially in social science teaching, limits children and reduces their horizons and their view of global reality.

Let us recall one of the assumptions of this study. It was that all educational programs in elementary level schools in Nebraska and primary schools in Turkey have been designed to meet the country's needs and expectations for the future. With respect to this assumption, the Turkish National Social Science curriculum should be redesigned so that primary level students focus more on practical rather than theoretical elements which are not practical for students to use in their daily lives. Local considerations need to be encouraged in the Turkish social science curriculum. More power would be given over decisions making at the local level as it is in Nebraska.

In my opinion, Turkey cannot be a developed country without independent thinking among the youth in the future. In the current Turkish National Social Science curriculum, there are very nationalistic components. Turkey is studied as nation state as prescribed by Kemalism which was originated by Ataturk. In other words, Kemalism has six tenets which are nationalism, secularism, republicanism, revolutionarism, patriotism and populism. Today, the Turkish National Social Science Curriculum is grounded on these six ideas. The intent is to create one nation, ignoring the many different cultural identities in Turkey's past.

National Education Basic Law No. 1739 which envisages educating individuals seeking careers in religious services.

#### **4. Higher Education**

This includes all educational institutions where an educational program of at least two years above secondary education is implemented. The aims of higher education are to educate individuals who will contribute to the development of the country in various fields.

Higher institutions of learning comprise universities, institutes, higher learning institutions, conservatories, and practice and research centers.

In accordance with Law No. 2547, a council of Higher Education (YOK) was established with the prime duty of planning, coordinating and controlling higher education. On the basis of this law in accordance with proposals submitted by the Council of Higher Education, the President of the Republic finally appoints rectors.

There are 69 universities in Turkey; 552 faculties, 183 academies, 251 institutions, and 474 apprenticeship colleges are affiliated with these universities. They have a total of about 1,222,362 students. There is a total teaching staff of 53,805 at these institutions of higher learning.

The center for student Selection and Placing (OSYM) is attached to the Council of Higher Education and prepares a two-phase examination once a year to place students in these faculties, colleges and universities.

#### **Informal Education (Non-Formal Education)**

Non-formal education comprises education, teaching, guidance and other implementations, which may take place alongside formal education.

The purpose of this form of education is to teach citizens to read and write, to provide basic knowledge and to enable them to develop their knowledge and skills in order to improve their standard of living. Informal education is divided in two parts: general educational programs and vocational and technical educational programs.

There were 41,843 teachers in 5,831 informal education institutions during the 1997 -1998 school year training 1,174,923 students.

Because the purpose of this study is to compare Turkish National social science curriculum at primary level with that of Nebraska at elementary level, it is necessary to give information about primary education and social science curriculum at primary level in Turkey.

### **Primary Education in Turkey**

The primary education in Turkey has been changed from a five year program into an eight year program by a regulation effective since 1997. The main purpose in this change is to prevent the growing Islamic movements in Turkey and to preserve secular and democratic system. This eight year primary education is still mandatory and free of charge.

The primary education curricula especially in social science have been redesigned by the Ministry of National Education in accordance with this eight year program in the same year. The social science curriculum at the primary school level has been dominated mainly by history and geography classes since 1940's. After this change the social science curriculum at the primary level also focuses on civic and participatory citizenship. This new era enabled the government to control the tendency towards radical Islam among primary school students.

In 1924 John Dewey suggested that localization had to be emphasized in Turkish education system. This suggestion was not valid anymore after the reform performed in the primary education system in 1997. The main reason for this is that the radical Islamic movements mostly originated from eastern rural areas. Therefore the privileges that have been given to the Eastern rural areas would not hold anymore.

The primary education system or curricula, which already had nationalistic features for years, has been even more nationalistic after being furnished by Ataturk's ideas and principles.

### **General Foundations of the Curriculum in Practice**

According to the Turkish Ministry of National Education Teachers, school setting, and programs are the main components for an educational system. The most important thing is all placed that parts educational system can be applicable, if students' talents and interests are taken into account physically, mentally, and socially in the school system. The purposes of the schooling are to educate students with national aims, to gain necessary skills and behaviors according to students' talents and interests, to comprehend the importance of scientific thinking and inquiry, to apply new learning approaches, and to teach them how they establish positive relationships with others in Turkish society. Therefore, rather than giving information to students, let them discover themselves by their own efforts, and guide them when it is necessary.

This part was translated from Turkish Ministry of Education's book.

#### **A. Neighbors Student Peers**

There are main themes included throughout primary schooling. Neighbors play an important role on the student's development. Students

generally join in groups where they influence each other. These groups are very important to students. Therefore, if we want to meet the aims of education, we can consider utilizing this environment. Such groups may determine how much a student will want to learn. If a student finds himself/herself in a group of peers that consists of less motivated students, his /her success may be affected directly. The opposite of this example may also be said for the success of a student.

In addition, a student who desires to learn new things about where he/she lives may have a better understanding and respect his/her surroundings. For this reason students must examine their environment carefully in terms of nature, culture, society, tourism, agriculture, health, administration, industry, and transportation. He/she must have information about the needs and problem of the environment he/she lives in. Students should be educated in order to control and eliminate negative conditions of the environment and try to make conditions better.

Because peers and other people interact with students, some "new behaviors" may be observed and these new behaviors may help students make good relationships with others. In order to reach the aims of primary education, the environment that students face with peers should be manipulated in such a way that those students do not have trouble or conflict with what has been taught in courses and in school. However, this appears to be a contradiction with the emphasis of inquiring self discovery approach.

Turkish educational system suggests operation of parental need and teacher are encouraged invited them to school meetings and on trips to increase awareness of their children's school lives.

### **B. Put All Subjects Together in Teaching**

A student in primary school cannot comprehend subjects separately. He/she tends to understand topics, science subjects in a general and non-specific way. Therefore, educators need to combine subjects in order to provide a better understanding. This is why history, geography, and civics are combined as social sciences enabling children to understand and comprehend subject areas.

### **C. Subjects and Units**

It is very important to pay attention to students' needs in selecting topics and designing units. Students are then able to apply what they have learned in class to their real lives. At the same time, curriculum units must be designed to reflect the national objectives.

Teachers are not obligated to follow strictly the curriculum guide. They make decisions based upon class environment. Some subjects are difficult to reach in class environment. Teachers may take such subjects out of units (Akyuz, 1998).

The purposes of elementary education are related to the following ways in summary.

1. Every Turkish child is educated who has gained necessary basic knowledge, skills, and responsibilities to be a good citizen.
2. Every Turkish child is educated according to his/her talents and capacities to be ready for his/her real life and further education.

### **Turkish Primary Education Objectives**

The general aims of Turkish National Education at elementary level consist of three sections:

Elementary education plays an important role on students in making them aware of their physical and spiritual values and their responsibilities to the society in which they live. It also tries to create a good citizen who has completed his/her character development. One who has graduated from elementary school in Turkey is expected to do the following:

1. Gain basic knowledge to be healthy.
2. He/she pay attention and take steps to prevent accidents.
3. Protect all living and un-living things around him/her.
4. Comprehend some basic skills in reading, writing, calculating etc.
5. Have the curiosity and interest to learn new things.
6. Think critically and make correct decisions.
7. Be patriotic both at home and internationally.
8. Use his/her spare time effectively.
9. Be persistent.

Elementary education also teaches students to live well in a family and society by forming good relationships with others. One who has graduated from elementary school is expected to do the following:

1. Comprehend and practice basic principles of family life.
2. Can live with others cooperatively.

Primary education helps students to see that human resources and its development are the most important factor and investment for a developing country. So, one who has graduated from primary school is expected to do the following:

1. Realize that human and natural resources play an important role in developing a country.

2. Believe that he/she should be productive.
3. Comprehend the importance of being an informed consumer for national economy.

The fourth area of primary education focuses upon social lives. Students learn the followings:

1. Turkish republic is a secular, democratic, and social country.
2. Knows that Turkish republic has an honorable history. He/she is proud of being Turk.
3. Know the principles of democracy and apply them in his relationships.
4. Recognize the importance of science in national development.
5. Understand the relationship between Turkish republic with other countries in the world.

#### **Turkish National Social Science Curriculum at the Primary Level**

The Turkish Ministry of National Education designs the Turkish national social science primary school curriculum like other educational programs. A committee, appointed by the Ministry of National education, consists of curriculum experts, measurement and evaluation experts, and subjects areas teachers, designs the national social science curriculum for all primary schools in Turkey. The committee considers not only the needs and expectations for the nation's future, but also the changes in social science teaching and world affairs. Once the committee designs the curriculum, it needs to be approved by The Ministry of National Education. The national social science primary curriculum, designed by this process, is implemented in all primary schools in Turkey.

The main components of the Turkish national social science curriculum are history (basically Turkish history and world history), geography (main focus

on Turkish geography and world geography), economics, and participatory citizenship. It is obvious that we can call this curriculum a traditional curriculum, without supportive social science subjects such as anthropology, archaeology, psychology, sociology, and philosophy.

According to the Turkish national social science curriculum, in history classes, students learn about Turks and Turkish civilizations and Islamic religion and finally the Ottoman Empire. Other important content is Atatürk's life and the importance of some national festivals such as the 29 October festival, which is a celebration of the republic; the 23 April national festival (the children's festival); and other major events that make an impact on the city in which they live.

In geography classes, the main focus is Turkish and world geography. Students learn the four seasons, geographic features of their own city, and the use of globes and maps.

In economics classes, primary school children learn characteristics of the economic life in Turkey. And they also focus on their family's needs, the characteristics of rural and urban resources, and to know conservation of the natural and economic resources of Turkey (industry, agriculture, breeding etc.).

In participatory citizenship classes, children learn to obey all school rules (listening, sharing, and showing respect for others) and obeying traffic rules. An emphasis is on knowing his rights and responsibilities in the community, working with other family members cooperatively, and knowing the administration of the city. Other topics to be emphasized are responsibilities of the individual in a democratic system, and understanding the responsibilities

and duties of government in a democratic system under the Turkish Constitution.

The format of the Turkish national social science curriculum for primary schools is an expanding environment curriculum format. "Its basic premise is that children should consider social studies topics related to their familiarity with the world. The subject matter of an expanding environment curriculum proceeds from topics with which children are familiar and proceeds, from grade level to grade level, and subject matter representing progressively more distant environments" (Van Cleaf & David, 1991, p. 32-33).

The Turkish National Social Science curriculum is sequenced as follows:

Grade level 1	Family and School
Grade level 2	Neighborhood
Grade level 3	City and Town
Grade level 4	Turkey and Its Regions
Grade level 5	The World and Its Geographic Characteristics

According to the Turkish national social science curriculum, a first grader should focus on family, family roles, family structures, and family history and so on. A second grader should focus on the school community including classroom life, school procedures, and the role of teacher and students. Third graders should focus on the neighborhood, local region, town, and city. A fourth grader should deal with Turkey and its regions in terms of the economy and geographic conditions. Finally, fifth graders should study the world and world geography.

#### **Education in Nebraska**

In Nebraska education system, there is a State Board of Education representing eight geographic districts. This non-partisan committee represents

Table 1

Traditional Social Science Curriculum in Nebraska

Social Studies Themes	History	Geography	Economics	Civics and Law	Government Political Science
1-Civic ideals & practices	Major Emphasis	Support	Support	Major Emphasis	Major Emphasis
2- Culture	Major Emphasis	Major Emphasis	Support	Major Emphasis	Major Emphasis
3- Global connections	Support	Major Emphasis	Major Emphasis	Major Emphasis	Support
4-Individual development institutions	Major Emphasis	Major Emphasis	Major Emphasis	Support	Major Emphasis
5-Individuals group and development & institutions	Major Emphasis	Support	Support	Major Emphasis	Major Emphasis
6-People, Places, and environment	Major Emphasis	Major Emphasis	Support	Major Emphasis	Support
7- Power, Authority & Governance	Major Emphasis	Support	Major Emphasis	Major Emphasis	Major Emphasis
8-Production, Distribution & Consumption	Major Emphasis	Major Emphasis	Major Emphasis	Major Emphasis	Major Emphasis
9-Science, Technology, & Society	Major Emphasis	Support	Major Emphasis	Major Emphasis	Major Emphasis
10-Time, Continuity, & Change	Major Emphasis	Major Emphasis	Major Emphasis	Major Emphasis	Major Emphasis

(K-12 Social Studies Framework DRAFT, 1995)

In Nebraska social science or studies is taught from kindergarten through 12th grade. This education is performed in accordance with Nebraska's K-12 Social Studies Framework. However, many decisions are made at the local level. One of the decisions made is choosing the textbook series to be taught in social science.

This study focuses on social science education in Nebraska from first through 12th grades.

Table 2

### Complementary Social Studies Subject Areas

Social Studies Themes	Archeology	Anthropology	Psychology	Sociology	Philosophy	Religion
1-Civic ideals & practices	Support	Major Emphasis	Major Emphasis	Support	Major Emphasis	Major Emphasis
2- Culture	Major Emphasis	Major Emphasis	Support	Major Emphasis	Support	Major Emphasis
3-Global connections	Major Emphasis	Major Emphasis	Support	Support	Support	Support
4-Individual development and identity institutions	Support	Support	Major Emphasis	Major Emphasis	Support	Major Emphasis
5- Individuals, groups, and institutions	Major Emphasis	Major Emphasis	Major Emphasis	Major Emphasis	Support	Major Emphasis
6-People, places, & environment	Major Emphasis	Major Emphasis	Support	Major Emphasis	Support	Support
7-Power, Authority & Governance	Support	Support	Support	Major Emphasis	Major Emphasis	Major Emphasis
8-Production, Distribution, & Consumption	Support	Support	Major Emphasis	Major Emphasis	Support	Support
9-Science, Technology, & Society	Major Emphasis	Support	Major Emphasis	Major Emphasis	Support	Support
10-Time, Continuity, & Change	Major Emphasis	Major Emphasis	Support	Major Emphasis	Major Emphasis	Major Emphasis

(K-12 Social Studies Framework DRAFT, 1995)

In Nebraska social science or studies is taught from kindergarten through 12th grade. This education is performed in accordance with Nebraska K-12 Social Studies Framework. However, many decisions are made at the local level. One of the decisions made is choosing the textbook series to be taught in social science.

This study focuses on social science education in Nebraska from first through fifth grades.

## CHAPTER III

### Methods and Findings

The purpose of this study is to examine the similarities and differences in social science curriculum between primary schools in Turkey and elementary schools in Nebraska. This chapter describes the research procedures of the study, its main findings, and discussion of the results.

An overview of social science education in Turkey and Nebraska was explained in Chapter 2. In Chapter 3 there is a detailed analysis of social science in these locations. The analysis is based on social science curriculum materials, notably textbooks.

#### Method

In this study, the Turkish Social Science curriculum for the primary level is analyzed in terms of its content, scope and sequence as revealed in student's textbook. The textbook series are a main source for this analysis. In Turkish primary schools, first grade through fifth grades, social science textbook series are prepared and published by the Ministry of National Education. In the first three years, social sciences are called "*Life Science*" (this is a literal translation from Turkish and not to be confused with the biological sciences), and fourth and fifth grades the course is called "*Social Sciences*" (as in the United States).

In 1997 primary education was extended from five grades to eight grades. Textbooks for all subjects including social studies continue to be revised and published by the Ministry of National Education in the same year.

Textbooks for the first three years include mostly pictures and stories. In fourth and fifth grades, these textbooks mainly address abstract knowledge.

In addition to textbook analysis, the Turkish social science curriculum was analyzed. Turkish national social science curriculum is the one and only curriculum in social science teaching at the primary level in Turkey. Therefore, it was analyzed to see how social science education at the primary level was in Turkey.

There is no equivalent of national social studies curriculum in the United States. Traditionally, textbooks have very influential and determining local social studies curriculum.

Houghton Mifflin social studies textbooks series, published in 1991, are well known textbooks series in many states in the United States. Therefore, it was thought as a good example of social science curriculum at the elementary level including in Nebraska, and analyzed in terms of its content, scope, and sequence to obtain information about social science education in Nebraska.

Although there are some criticisms about Houghton Mifflin Social studies textbook series, such as gap between theory and practice in textbook series (Mifflin social studies attempts to teach pluralism rather than melt people into a single American pot in their textbook series), however, some say that "Houghton Mifflin's books are meant to show students that history is not just a lot of dates and that these new books are superior to the soporific history texts used by generations of American students" (New York Times, 1991, pp. 27-52). Never before have elementary school texts made such an effort to include the broad sweep of history and the divergent cultures that flow into the American mainstream.

The researcher analyzed all units in both Turkish and Houghton Mifflin textbook series. Firstly, contents of units were read carefully to find answers for

each research question. Next, the differences and similarities between textbook series were found systematically. This technique is called a content analysis. Content analysis is as much an art as a science. It is a technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of message. It is a way of asking a fixed set of questions about data in such a way as to produce countable results (Marshall, 1989 pp. 99-100).

Findings of the study cannot be generalized; rather it can be foundation for further researches as often true of qualitative research.

All documents, examined by the researcher about Nebraska social science curriculum and Turkish National social science curriculum, provided necessary information to make this comparison.

The researcher did not use any statistical method to analyze the data. All documents have been examined carefully and translated from Turkish to English when it was needed. Verbal descriptions were basis for analyzing data.

### Comparison of Textbook Series

#### First grade

The first grade book 1, titled, I know a Place begins with information given about the book itself. School unit is the first unit. Children learn how to be a good friend, working together and doing their part in this unit. A story called The Lion and the Mouse helps students to understand the ideas of this unit. Unit 2, Town and Country, begins with a story "Too Much Zucchini." After that, children learn to distinguish between different forms of city life and learn beginning map reading skills. Grandma's Album is main theme of Unit 2 which helps students grasp the idea of dealing with families and generations. In addition, The Farm section provides information to students about where and

how foods are produced, and the importance of farming. Children also are introduced to think about earth by providing them explanations of the North and South Pole. Unit 3 City and Suburb begins with literature with titled Skyscraper, and children learn how a city is different from a town and how life in a suburb differs from that in a city. Factories and work life are given as examples of life in a city. Unit 4, Our Country and Our World, focuses on the United States of America and its neighbors. Children are taught that there are fifty states in the U.S. Information is presented about Canada and Mexico. Children also learn how the countries depend upon one another.

The examination of Turkish textbooks reveal that children learn school life and how to be a friend in Unit 1. A typical day in school and the preparations such as being on time and doing homework is reflected in this unit. In the second unit, children learn "the Festival of Being a Republic," its importance and necessary preparations for that festival. In addition, the life of Ataturk, who is a founder of the Turkish republic, is included in this unit. In Unit 3, children focus on their houses and families. The location of children's homes, relationships, and roles within the family are in Unit 3. The concept of the New Year, calendars and their usage are taught to children in Unit 4. The four seasons and how they differ from each other and what information a calendar provides us are the main themes of this unit. Unit 5 is related to children's health and teaches them how to be healthy. The importance of sunlight and fresh air on one's health is taught to children in order to make them aware of the importance of sunlight and fresh air. The focus of Unit 6 is "April 23rd, Children Festival" and its importance in Turkish history. Children learn about the preparations for this festival at school, at home, and in classroom as well as why we celebrate this festival. Ataturk's

ideas and nationalism are introduced in this unit. Unit 7, "End of the Academic Year," focuses on what children have learned this year and what they should do in order to learn new things during their summer holidays. Children take their report cards at the end of this unit.

Children learn how to be a friend, develop good relationships, and know how their families develop and family structures in both textbook series in the first grade. While Turkish primary school children in first grade learn how to be healthy and about the seasons of a year and national festivals, children in Nebraska focus on reading maps and studying neighbors of the United States.

Figure 1. Comparison of first grade textbooks.

<b>Turkish Textbook</b>		<b>Houghton Mifflin</b>
To be healthy seasons national festivals	learn how to be a friend family structure	reading maps studying neighbors of the USA

### Second Grade

The textbook, "Some Place I Know," begins with a conversation on economic dependence on other countries. Children study about people buying, selling, picking, packing, and shipping food products in this unit. Moreover, they also how to read maps and symbols on the maps. The last lesson in this unit focuses on how other people depend on you, and consumerism. Unit 2, "Knowing Your Family," begins teaching children about their ancestors. Children are expected to think about how their ancestors are important to them and what they have received from their ancestors. In addition, a life in Cambodia is contrasted with life in the United States. Reading maps, working together and

sharing are addressed in this unit. Unit 3, "Living in our Country," mainly emphasizes on the concept of a country being like a big family. Celebrating national days together such as Thanksgiving, Fourth of July is given as an example. Besides this, children also learn about the significance of symbols such as the fifty stars on the American flag and the Statue of Liberty. Throughout Unit 4, "People Who Have Made a Difference," includes important figures who have contributed to the American society. Several examples are Alexa Canady, Roberto Clemente, and Eleanor Roosevelt.

In Turkish second grade textbook, children begin with a lesson of what they did during their summer holidays and what they are going to learn this academic year. The importance of traffic and safety are included in this unit. Unit 2, "Fall Season," offers information on changes in whether, plants, animals and food in autumn. Unit 3, "Festival of Being a Republic and Ataturk," focuses on how the Ottoman Empire turned into a republic. Individuals involved in forming the Republic and the necessary preparations for that festival are stressed. Children revisit Ataturk's life and other national festivals paying respect to Turkish flag. Unit 4, "Winter Season," is mainly consists of materials on preparations for winter. Changes in whether air, plants, animals, and sicknesses facing children are addressed. Children focus on traffic rules and types of vehicles. Basic traffic rules and types of vehicles, their importance on one's life and others are included. Energy sources and types of public transportation are the main themes. Unit 6, "Spring Season," starts with preparations for the season. Children study changes in whether, plants and animals. "Communication" is the title of Unit 7. They learn about types of communication such as by mail, phone and television. Ataturk's ideas about

communication and his contributions are also incorporated. The Unit 8, "End of This Academic Year," focuses on review of trips, experiments and school works completed by children throughout year. Furthermore, signs of summer seasons are also included in this unit. Finally, children receive their report cards as in first grade at the end of this unit.

In summary, children in Turkish second grade learn traffic rules and their importance. And they learn about the acclamation of the Republic of Turkey, and types of communications. Meanwhile, children in Nebraska learn about dependence on others, knowing their ancestors, and recognizing different cultures with their country being described as being like a big family, and people made a difference.

**Figure 2.** Comparison of second grade textbooks.

Turkish Textbook		Houghton Mifflin
obeying traffic rules acclamation of Turkish Republic Communication		depending on others knowing ancestors different cultures country like a big family people make difference

### Third Grade

In the Houghton Mifflin series, the third grade text "Listen to the Land" begins Unit 1 which consists of three chapters. Children learn about oceans and rivers in the first chapter, and they are expected to understand about how oceans change the land and how rivers affect. The differences between oceans and lakes are also introduced. Chapter 2 focuses on forests and their importance to animals' and plants' lives. Additionally, children learn about line and circle

graph skills. "Majestic Peaks and Deserts" is title of Chapter 3. It focuses on how mountains affect the land around them, and on reading a physical map. Children learn about life in a desert and how plants and animals adjust to this environment. Unit 2, "The Land and First Americans," has three chapters. In the first chapter, children learn about Kwakiult people and where they have lived and how they depended on the land and the sea for all their needs. Children also use the time lines in this chapter.

In the second chapter, children investigate Cheyenne's lives in the central United States. Their dependence on buffalo and how they acquired additional food are main ideas of this chapter. Chapter 3, "In Red Rock Country," explains Navajo's life and how they use the natural resources. Navajo's Logans are compared to Kwakiutl's houses and Cheyenne tipi's. Unit 3, "Settling the Land," has two chapters. Chapter 1, "Settling the Northeast," describes Pilgrims' adoption to the land, who helped them, and the challenges they faced during the first year in their new homeland. Children also are taught to compare the materials used by the Navajo in order to build their logans with the materials used by the Pilgrims. At the conclusion, children learn about life in the Eastern forests. Chapter 2, "Beyond the Appalachians," focuses on the journey of many settlers to the new land in the west, and challenges they faced during this journey. A story with the title of "Wagon Wheels" helps provide students a better understanding of this journey. Unit 4, "The Land Today," has three chapters. Chapter 1 begins with farming in the San Joaquin Valley. Children learn what kinds of crops grow in this valley and why they grow so well. How to use tables, Pittsburgh steel, and its importance are taught students in this chapter as well. Chapter 2, "Taking Care of Our Land," starts with a story titled "Once

there was a Tree." Children learn how to conserve their natural resources and its importance. They also learn the importance of recycling. Chapter 3, "Our Holidays and Symbols," is an important chapter for children to understand their heritage. Reasons are stated for celebration of national holidays, national symbols for those national holidays, and they're national symbols and their importance. Children are taught key concepts mentioned above in this chapter.

In the Turkish Textbook, Unit 1 focuses on concepts of family and neighborhood. Children are expected to think about their families, cooperation in their families, in their neighborhoods. In addition to this, children are taught Ataturk's ideas about Turkish family structure. Unit 2, "Festival of Being a Republic and Ataturk" informs students about preparations for this festival and the history of the Republic. Children also read stories about the War of Turkish Independence. Similarly, Ataturk's ideas and policies are taught to children at the end of Unit 1. Unit 3, "Our Town," focuses on the geographic and physical features of the town in which the student live. Governmental administration of a town is also covered in this unit. Again, Ataturk's ideas about administration take place at the end of the unit. Unit 4, "Caring for Our Health," teaches students how to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Children learn to be aware of sicknesses, and how they can protect themselves. The first aid is also taught. "Knowing Our Village" is the title of Unit 5. Children learn what a typical village looks like and they study the life of a farmer. Governmental village administration and the importance of farming for city life are the main themes of this unit. Unit 6, "The Machines That We Use," provides information about machines and tools that we use in our daily life. Resources and their importance for machinery are also included. Students also learn how to use and repair the

machines. Unit 7, "End of This Academic Year," review what students have learned this year. Children are expected to think and plan for their summer holidays. At the end of this unit, Ataturk's ideas about the role Turkish women and place in the society are stressed.

In conclusion, children at third grade learn the geographic features of their town including mountain, rivers, forests and other features in both textbooks. While Turkish primary school children learn the concepts of caring neighborhood as well as their families at the same level, their own health, and machines and tools that they use in their daily lives, children in Nebraska focus on the first Americans, their lives in the past and present, and national symbols.

Figure 3. Comparison of third grade.

Turkish Textbook		Houghton Mifflin
neighbors of Turkey	geographic features of town	First Americans
care for health		America now and then
machines and tools		national symbols

#### Fourth Grade

The textbook titled "This is My Country" is used in the fourth grade. The textbook begins with a section describing how to use maps and the globe. Unit 1, "Our Land and People," focuses on the United States. Children learn that people from different places can live together as a nation. Some geographic features of the United States such as mountains and rivers are included. Other main themes are natural resources, corporation and a good citizen. Children focus on regions and borders of the United States in Unit 2. In the beginning of this unit, economic resources and historical development of the Southeast are explained. Next, the

economic and physical characteristics of the Northeast as well as the history of industrialization are explained. Children can compare the Northeast in the past with the Northeast in the present. Thirdly, students learn about the Midwest, *the nation's heartland*, and its importance in the United States economy. There is information about farmers and farming, the steel industry in the Midwest. Students learn about farming, ranching and Spanish mission style in the Southwest in Unit 5. A story about George McJunkin provides student information about cowboy traditions in that region. The growth of many modern cities after the industrialization in the Southwest is also included. The West, a land of opposites, covers the history of gold and mining and contribution to the West. Technology and aerospace industry is highlighted. "One Nation One Globe" links among the regions are explained. These include highways, network-communication, and television broadcast.

In the Turkish fourth grade social science corresponding text, Unit 1 has three sections. The focuses on geographic features of Turkey in first section include climate, mountains, rivers, land area, floods and erosions. In section two, children deal with Turkish folklore, education, fine arts, and sports. Works of some popular Turkish artists are given as example to provide better understanding of the Turkish culture. The third section addresses social service foundations in Turkey including Red Cross, Green Crescent and National Education Organization. Unit 2 consists of three sections. The first section introduces history, calendar, and the mother country of Turks and Turk civilizations in Anatolia. The rising period of Islamic religion and its acceptance by Turks are explained in the second and third sections. There are four main topics in Unit 3. The first section is about Great Seljuks State, its establishment

and collapse, and wars of the time. The second section focuses on the Anatolia Seljuks State. Section three includes Seljuks civilization, administration of government, economy, social life, science, and fine arts. In conclusion, children learn concepts about their mother country and nationalism represented by oneness in language, culture and religion so on. in the last section.

In the fourth grade, children both in Turkey and Nebraska learn geographic features of their own countries. While main themes are history and nationalism in the Turkish textbook, Nebraska children focus on economic life in the United States as well as concept of one nation and one globe.

Figure 4. Comparison of fourth grade.

Turkish Textbook		Houghton Mifflin
social life	geographic features of their own countries	economic life in the United States
Turkish states in history		one nation, one globe
Turkish nationalism		

#### Fifth Grades

The title of the textbook is "America Will Be" with Unit 1 being "The United States Past And Present." There are three chapters introducing a concept of a nation of many people. Students are taught the United States is and has been a land where people from different places can live together. Additionally, the immigration experience explains why people come to America and settle. Chapter 2 mainly focuses on an understanding about geography and regions of the United States again. Children study maps and globes as representation of the real world. In chapter 3, children are taught what history is and how people learn about events of the past. The methods used by historians to study the past

are also included. There are two chapters in Unit 2. Unit 2, "Exploring and Settling America" opens with First Americans and how the changing environment has affected them. Portuguese, Spanish, French, Dutch, and English explorations as well as reason and political, social conditions of Europe are main themes of this chapter. Unit 3, "Life in English Colonies," has three chapters and begins with the Southern colonies. The concept of slavery and how slave trade began and developed are illustrated. Chapter 2 focuses on the New England colonies and Puritans. How religious beliefs have affected their way of life is incorporated. Economic life and trade of Puritans are mentioned in this chapter as well. Chapter 3 is about the Middle colonies and reasons for colonization, many cultural groups in the Middle colonies. A literature with the title of "What is Big Idea and Ben Franklin" provides students more information about the Middle colonies. Unit 4, "Crisis with Britain" is about the Seven Years War and its results. The impact of the war on social and political condition of the United States as well as the increased conflicts between the colonies and Great Britains are explained. Four chapters make up Unit 5, with chapter 1 covering the life in a growing nation. Children learn about how foreign policies were shaped, the information of political parties as well as economic and social life of the new nation, Chapter 2 deals with the economic life of the new nation and changes in social life between 1783-1824. Chapter 3, "Moving West" teaches students about life on the new frontier and how settlers adapted to environment during the early 1800's. Texas' struggle with Mexico, and the United States' expansion of its southern border, the journey to Oregon, California and Utah are also main topics of this chapter. The impact of white settlers in Indian lives is explained. Unit 6, "A Nation in Conflict" has three chapters. In the first chapter, children take a

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closer look at the slave culture and resistance in the Southern society. In chapter 2, children focus on industrial growth and changes in transportation in the United States. They also learn about life in the North and how reform movements there changed the American society. In chapter 3, conflicts between North and South, its reasons, and impact are explored. In addition to this, the importance of the Civil War and its results on the United States are emphasized in this chapter. Unit 7, "Finding America's Future" focuses on the present day and the effect of rapid industry growth on social life in the United States. Children also study immigration between 1870 and 1914 given better understanding about why people have come to the United States. Children finally are taught the importance of being a good citizen and recognizing other's feelings.

The fifth grade textbook in Turkey opens with Unit 1, "The Ottoman Empire." In the first section, children learn about the establishment of the Ottoman Empire and political condition in Bizanse, Entail, and the Balkans. Children are also taught important events in the period of sultan Osman, Orhan, Murat 1st and Yildirim Beyazit. The second section basically focuses on the rising period of the Ottoman Empire; the third section offers information about the Ottoman civilization and reforms in Europe. The Ottoman civilization is analyzed in terms of administration of government, education, science, fine arts, and economy. Reforms in science and the Renaissance in Europe are taught. Unit 2, "The World, Our Country, and Our Neighbors" has four sections. The first section deals with lands, seas, and oceans. Children also learn about the border of Turkey. The geopolitically importance of location of Turkey (bridge between Asia and Europe) is analyzed. In the second section, the population of

Turkey and its distribution are featured. The third section focuses on economic life in Turkey, the main industries, and the developments and protection of resources. The fourth section, "Our Neighbors" gives information about Greece, Bulgaria, Iran, Iraq, and the Northern Cyprus Turk Republic. In Unit 3, "Standstill and Retrogression Period of the Ottoman Empire" has two sections. While children learn about the political and economic conditions of the Ottoman Empire and important events in the Standstill period such as reforms movements. the main focus goes to the French Revolution and its impact on the Ottoman Empire. Children also study attempts at democracy during the Ottoman Empire, the War against Russia from 1877 to 1878, and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. The subject of Unit 4 is "How Has the Ottoman Empire Turned Into a Republic." First student study the political conditions of the Ottoman Empire after World War II, then the Mondros Treaty, and finally early occupations and Ataturk's policies for those occupations. The second section deals with The Turkish War of Independence, enactment of the Turkish Grand National Assembly, Wars of Inonu I and II, and the Lausanne Treaty. Thirdly, Turkish reforms in law, education, culture and economic life are discussed. There is a story titled "The Place of Turkish Women in History" which helps students see social changes in Turkish society. In the fourth section, children learn about Father of the Turkish Republic, Ataturk, and his life. "General Outlook on the Turkish World" has four sections. The first describes former Turkish republics including Kazakhstan, Kirghizia, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan. The second section emphasizes Turkish politics, international affairs, Montreau agreement on Turkish history, and how the Turkish republic regain the city of Hatay from Syria. Section three recounts the last days and death of Ataturk and its impact on

Turkey and the world. The fourth section defines the definition of Kemalism and Atatürk's reforms for Turkish social life. In Unit 6, "World War II, Democratic Life in Turkey and the Turkish Constitution," there are four sections. In the first section, children learn about World War II, its causes and results, and about some organizations such as UNESCO, NATO and the European Union in this section. The mains on democratic life in Turkey including Multiparty Parliamentary Framework and the importance of democracy for the Turkish Republic are the main themes of the second section. Children learn the principles and ideas of the constitution of Turkish Republic. They also study democratic life, government and citizen life, basic duties of the government as well as both rights and duties of a citizen in the last section.

In both fifth grade textbooks, children learn prevailing outlook of their own countries. In fifth grade, Turkish primary school children focus on the Ottoman Empire, its establishment, its retrogression and its collapse as well as world geography. Children also study World War I, World War II, Turkish neighbors, Turkish democracy, and the Turkish constitution. On Nebraska side, children learn about the United States past and present. Use of maps and globes and the study of exploring and settlement of American including Civil War and English colonies are main themes of the fifth grade.

The scope and sequence of both textbook series can be summarized in tables. The following tables indicate the scopes and sequence of Turkish national social science curriculum and Houghton Mifflin.

Figure 5. Comparison of fifth grade.

Turkish Textbook		Houghton Mifflin
Ottoman Empire world geography main industries neighbors of Turkey World War I and II Democracy in Turkey Turkish constitution	general outlook both country	United States past and present use maps and globe exploring, settling America English Colonies Civil War

Table 3

Scope and sequence of Turkish National Social Science Curriculum

Grade level	1	2	3	4	5
	Understanding school: family life and Ataturk	Seasons: personal communication: Ataturk	Understanding the community we live in and Ataturk's ideas	Turkish history; culture government geography	Advanced Turkish history; International relationships economics government Ottoman Empire The World and Turkey our neighbors Turkish independence war democratic life in Turkey

Grade 1 Family and School

Grade 2 Neighbourhood

Grade 3 City and Town (Community we live in)

Scope and sequence of Nebraska Social Science Program (Houghton Mifflin)

Grade level	1	2	3	4	5
	Understanding self in the family setting and at school	Living a neighborhood	Living in a community	United States' regions The Southeast; The Northeast; The Midwest; The Southwest;	Advanced U.S. geography and U.S. history; Diverse cultures and contributions of all Americans; exploration, colonization, American revolution, constitution, Civil War, civil rights movements; five themes of geography

Both textbook series have been designed in the expanding environments format.

- The expanding environment curriculum is based on fairly good logic. As children develop, their world expands and they become more capable of understanding more distant places and more abstract information. This curriculum assures that children study progressively more complex social arrangements, moving through the grade levels from family to the world. (Van Cleaf, 1991, p. 33)

The sequence of the Turkish national social science curriculum pursues as follows:

- Grade 1 Family and School
- Grade 2 Neighborhood
- Grade 3 City and Town (community we live in)

Grade 4 Turkey and Its Regions

Grade 5 World

As can be seen, children study the familiar things and progress to more distant and abstract information. Similarly, the Houghton Mifflin social studies textbook series have been designed with the same approach. The sequence of Houghton Mifflin social studies textbook series pursues as follows:

Grade 1 School and Family

Grade 2 Town and City

Grade 3 Community

Grade 4 The United States

Grade 5 The World

The following lists suggest the main finding of this study. In the first list, similarities and differences between Turkish and Nebraska social science curriculum content are identified.

### List 1—Social Studies Content

#### **Similarities**

- Both curricula have the same basic subject areas, including history, geography, economics and participatory citizenship.
- Both curricula focus on school life and making friends at school followed by the study of family life.
- Living in a community is an important issue and stressed in third grade in both curricula.
- According to both curricula, children are expected to learn about their states, regions, and then their countries in the fourth grade.
- In both curricula, national values and traditional beliefs are stressed.

- In fifth grade, children learn advanced Turkish or American history and geography.
- Children learn how to use maps and globes in Nebraska and Turkish social science curriculum.
- In economics classes, children focus on meeting basic economic needs of an individual in the first grade. In both Turkey and Nebraska, human and capital resources as well as natural resources, their conservation and their importance on both Turkish and United States' economic system are stressed in the second grade.
- According to both curricula, children learn cooperation, obeying school rules in the first grade. The rights and responsibilities of the individual in the school and community are studied in second grade. Citizens' rights and responsibilities and social participation are emphasized in the fourth and fifth grades.

#### Differences

- The Turkish national social science curriculum emphasizes on Ataturk's ideas and principles from first grade through fifth grade. Unfortunately, a first grader learns Ataturk's ideas before he/she knows how to keep himself/herself healthy. There is no such nationalism in Houghton Mifflin.
- Nebraska social science curriculum has much more emphasis on the use of maps and globes. Teaching of usage of maps and globes starts in the third grade in Turkey, while Nebraska students begin this study in first grade and continue through fifth grade.

- It is obvious that Turkish social science curriculum pays more attention to national festivals such as the 29th of October "Being a Republic" and 23rd of April "Children Festivals." This is because national events and celebrations play an important role in the Turkish social science curriculum.
- While current events are very important for Nebraska Social Science curriculum, Turkish Social Science curriculum does not allow children to deal with current events. It is thought of as extra-curricular activity.
- While human diversities are main components of Nebraska social science Curriculum, Turkish social science curriculum does not emphasize on diversity. But this is not so difficult to understand. America is a country consisting different cultures and people while Turkey has basically three ethnic groups.
- Protections from diseases and healthy living are stressed in Turkish Social Science Curriculum more than in Nebraska.

In the second list, similarities and differences of Turkish and Nebraska social science curriculum in their scope are identified.

#### List 2—Social Studies Scope

##### **Similarities**

- In both curricula, children start their social science learning with the understanding of self in the family setting and school.
- Living in a neighborhood is stressed in the second grade of both curricula.
- According to both curricula, life in a community and the social life of an individual are third grade content.
- World history and geography are taught in fourth grade in both curricula.

- Children focus on advanced national geography and history in the fifth grade.
- In both curricula, participatory citizenship topics play an important role as a main component of the curriculum across the grade level.
- World geography is much more stressed, particularly in fourth grade in Nebraska Social Science curriculum. Children focus on Turkish history and civilizations in that grade.
- In the Turkish Social Science curriculum, Ataturk's ideas and principles and their effects on Turkish society can be seen in every grade. There is no such an emphasis in the Nebraska Social Science curriculum.

**List 3—Social Studies Sequence**

**Similarities and Differences**

- Both Turkish National Social Science curriculum at primary level and that of Nebraska at elementary level are expanding environment curricula based on fairly good logic. As children develop, their world expands and they become more capable of understanding more distant places and more abstract information. The sequence of both curricula is almost the same. It is difficult to find a significant difference between these Curricula.



## CHAPTER IV

**Conclusions, Recommendations and Implications**

The purpose of conducting this study was to examine the similarities and differences in social science curricula in primary schools in Turkey and in Nebraska. The significance of this study lies in its uniqueness and comparative approach. The results of the study will contribute to the literature on Turkish and Nebraska social science curricula.

The study addressed the following research questions:

1. What are the components of the national social science curriculum at the primary level in Turkey?
2. What are the components of the social science curriculum at the elementary level in Nebraska?
3. What are the similarities and differences between national social science curriculum at the primary level in Turkey and the social science curriculum at the elementary level in Nebraska?

To begin the study, The National Turkish social science curriculum was translated by the author from Turkish to English (see appendix). Turkish social studies textbooks, grade one through five were translated as well as prominent Turkish educators' works. In the second step of this research, Houghton Mifflin social studies textbook series available for Nebraska elementary school classrooms was examined. Additionally, the Nebraska Social Science Framework and other language materials in English were read and analyzed.

As we know, the next century will continue and extend the information age. A primary reason for comparing the Turkish National Social Science

curriculum at the primary level with that of Nebraska is that the Turkish National Social Science curriculum is in need of reform. Turkey will need to remove much of the emphasis on nationalism in its social science curriculum in order to meet the requirements of globalization in the next century. The present emphasis on nationalism, especially in social science teaching, limits children and reduces their horizons and their view of global reality.

Let us recall one of the assumptions of this study. It was that all educational programs in elementary level schools in Nebraska and primary schools in Turkey have been designed to meet the country's needs and expectations for the future. With respect to this assumption, the Turkish National Social Science curriculum should be redesigned so that primary level students focus more on practical rather than theoretical elements which are not practical for students to use in their daily lives. Local considerations need to be encouraged in the Turkish social science curriculum. More power would be given over decisions making at the local level as it is in Nebraska.

In my opinion, Turkey cannot be a developed country without independent thinking among the youth in the future. In the current Turkish National Social Science curriculum, there are very nationalistic components. Turkey is studied as nation state as prescribed by Kemalism which was originated by Ataturk. In other words, Kemalism has six tenets which are nationalism, secularism, republicanism, revolutionarism, patriotism and populism. Today, the Turkish National Social Science Curriculum is grounded on these six ideas. The intent is to create one nation, ignoring the many different cultural identities in Turkey's past.

Turkey was established as a unified system after the Ottoman Empire collapsed in 1923. Along past of this unified system is a centralized curriculum, which eliminates regional and cultural differences, thought not to be good for a developing country like Turkey. The result of this curriculum has been encouragement of a single point of view among the students and adults in Turkey. In the new post cold war era, there is a highly accepted globalization around the world. One of the prominent current goals of Turkey is to be accepted by the European Union. For this to be successful, Turkish National Social Science Curriculum beginning at the primary level will need to reflect more cultural elements including regional and global similarities and differences.

Having carefully studied the Turkish National Social Science Curriculum, Turkish social studies textbook series and the Houghton Mifflin textbook series the following recommendations are made.

**Recommendations**

1. Although the Turkish National Social Science curriculum at the primary level is gradually deviating from the nationalized curriculum, this change is not fast enough for the needs of the next century.
2. The emphasis on nationalism in the Turkish Social Science curriculum at the primary level should be reduced as quickly as possible. Primary school children can then develop their own ideas about the Turkish State and its future. In doing this, the creation of a single-minded generation will be avoided which is something that Turkish society needs most.
3. Turkish Ministry of National Education should take the reality of globalization into account while designing the national social science curriculum.



4. The Turkish National Social Science curriculum should be redesigned in a way that the primary level students focus on practical use of knowledge rather than theoretical elements which are less practical for students to use in their daily lives.

5. The Turkish National Social Science curriculum needs to be enriched by adding a complement of supporting social studies subject areas, including archaeology, anthropology, psychology, sociology and philosophy.

The study of recommendations reveals additional areas for further researches.

### Implications of the Study

1. More primary school social science teachers in Turkey should be interviewed to get their opinion about social science teaching.

2. Social science classrooms should be observed to determine the present content.

3. The experiences and opinions of elementary school students could be collected for an additional point of view.

4. More than one American State's social science curriculum or textbook series should be analyzed to provide a broader perspective for comparison with the Turkish Social Science Curriculum.

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