

# Comparative Analysis of Canada (Ontario) and Turkey Social Studies Curriculum\*

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**Abstract:** In this study, the Canadian Ontario Province and Turkey's 2018 social studies course curricula were compared in terms of target, content, educational status, and evaluation dimensions. In addition, the study addressed the types of citizens that the two curricula intended to create. A case study method, one of the qualitative research methods, was used in the study. The data obtained in the study were analysed with the descriptive analysis approach within the framework of the determined sub-objectives. In Ontario, as in Turkey, social studies courses cover primary and secondary education levels. The Ontario social studies curriculum aims to enable students to become responsible, active citizens by exploring their identities in the context of the diverse (local, national, and global) communities to which they belong. In the Ontario social studies curriculum, it is evident that a national identity that reflects cultural diversity and equality is trying to be built. On the other hand, the Turkish social studies curriculum aims to raise students as good and responsible citizens who adopt national and spiritual values, emphasising a national sense of belonging. The study found that a personally responsible citizenship vision was adopted in Turkey and a participatory and justice-oriented citizenship vision was adopted in Ontario.

**Keywords:** Social studies, curriculum, comparative education, Canada, Turkey.

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## Introduction

Social studies is a field of study that combines the social sciences and humanities to develop citizenship competencies. It provides a coordinated and systematic study area within the school program on appropriate content from mathematics and natural sciences, as well as humanities such as social studies, anthropology, archaeology, economics, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, and sociology. The primary purpose of social studies is to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse democratic society in an interdependent world (National Council of Social Studies NCSS, 2010, p.3). In this context, the definition of NCSS (2010 p.3). emphasizes two different features of social studies. These features are: (1) it is designed to develop civic competencies; and (2) it integrates many disciplines.

Social studies integrate knowledge and skills from many disciplines. Social studies integrate appropriate and relevant content from social and human sciences as well as science, mathematics, the arts, and the natural sciences with an interdisciplinary approach (NCSS, 2010, p.3). This integration enables students to examine events from multiple perspectives and perceive the relationships between societies, cultures, and phenomena. The integrated approach also helps students learn more deeply and evaluate events from a broader perspective.

Developing civic competence means being willing and able to contribute to a democratic society and the common good of the global community. This objective requires students to know the foundations of government, democracy, and democratic processes. In addition, students should know history, geography, economics, and other social sciences to understand the various forces that affect human relations. Citizenship competence also requires critical thinking, problem-solving, analysis, evaluating resources, listening, resolving conflicts, cooperation, moral reasoning, and distinguishing personal good from the common good (NCSS, 2010, p. 3). However, the right qualifications vary according to time and place. Factors such as the type of political constitution, level of economic wealth, degree of socio-political stability, national cohesion, and peaceful international relations significantly impact the public understanding of which competencies are most relevant and beneficial to a citizen. However, all these factors differ between countries and change over time, which is why citizenship education is volatile (European Commission [EC], 2017). Related to this issue, Westheimer and Kahne (2004) stated that three visions of "good" citizens are supported in schools. These are: "personally responsible citizen", "participatory citizen", and "justice-oriented citizen". Below is a brief description of the three visions of good citizens classified by Westheimer and Kahne (2004):

*Personally responsible citizens:* They contribute to food or clothing aid when requested and volunteer to help the less fortunate in institutions such as soup kitchens and nursing homes. They can contribute to charities by spending time, money, or both. The basic

assumption in this vision is that citizens should be honest, self-disciplined, law-abiding, and of good character to solve social problems and develop society. Therefore, character education and community service are advocated in this vision. They also nurture compassion by involving students in voluntary community service. *Participatory citizens*; participate actively in the civic affairs and social life of the community at the local and national levels. Educational programs designed to support the development of participating citizens focus on teaching students how government and other institutions work and the importance of participating in their work. *Justice-oriented citizens*; are individuals who know how to evaluate multiple perspectives critically. They examine social, political, and economic structures and explore strategies for change that address the root causes of problems. Programs that promote this vision of citizenship emphasize the ability to think about issues of justice, equal opportunity, and democratic participation. They share a vision of a participatory citizen and emphasise collective work on society's life and problems, but they prioritize critical participation. This vision encourages students to learn about complex social issues and seek ways to improve society. Programs with this vision are more likely to teach ways to create change in the system than to emphasize the need for philanthropy and volunteerism as goals in themselves. For example, while the personally responsible citizen chooses to provide food aid to the homeless, the participating citizen can organize a protest march. The justice-oriented citizen focuses on questioning why people are hungry, tackling the root causes of hunger (for example, poverty, inequality, or structural barriers to self-sufficiency), and devising possible solutions.

Kahne and Westheimer (2014) stated that democracy requires all three types of citizen visions but that participatory and justice-oriented citizens contribute more to democratic societies. They also emphasized that the justice-oriented citizenship vision is the least implemented in schools. Similarly, Ross (2014, 376) stated that the traditional patterns of social studies curriculum and teacher education little reflect the restructuring vision of the future, and practices in this field move away from developing a vision of a socially just world and promoting critical, active, and democratic citizenship.

Studies focusing on students' perspectives on citizenship and democracy have revealed that students generally embrace "weak" definitions of citizenship, such as the above-mentioned concept of the individually responsible citizen. Studies have found that while students seem likely to vote, they are less willing to act, such as by collecting money, collecting signatures with a petition, participating in a protest or a political party, engaging in local politics, or expressing opinions in newspapers (Castro & Knowles, 2015). In addition, Castro and Knowles (2015) stated that the lack of action to support democratic values necessitates more participatory and justice-oriented citizenship vision education.

According to Barr, Barth, and Shermis (1977), who advocate another view on promoting citizenship education in the literature, three citizenship education traditions related to social studies have been identified. The first is social studies teaching as a transfer of citizenship: This tradition emphasizes fixed core knowledge and skills for students to

learn and believe in. Therefore, education ensures continuity by leading to passive citizenship behaviours and attitudes. In this tradition, multiculturalism is belittled, ignored, or actively challenged. In this tradition, cultural and social unity is proclaimed and praised. The second tradition is the teaching of social studies as a social science: In this tradition, students are tried to gain the necessary skills to understand human behaviour using scientific methods specific to anthropology, political science, historiography, and geography. The aim here is to provide students with the ability to evaluate the world by avoiding prejudices or subjective views based on prejudices. In general, teaching methods include features of the social sciences and methods of strategic inquiry. The third tradition is teaching social studies as reflective inquiry: This tradition focuses on students' work in choosing and solving problems themselves. Thus, students can explore issues related to themselves and ultimately address real social problems (Barr et al., 1977). Criticisms of these three citizenship educations in the literature focus on two main issues: First, the frameworks discussed do not address issues of group membership and identity, such as structural inequality, gender inequality, and LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex) issues. Second, traditional citizenship education overemphasizes the nation-state and neglects increasingly important global perspectives (Castro & Knowles, 2015). Similarly, Ross (2014, pp 377-378) stated that traditional citizenship education focuses on conveying the facts and rejects pluralism in favour of nationalism and monoculturalism. He also stated that the dominant approach applied in schools in the USA is citizenship transfer or conservative cultural continuity.

Given that there is no unique ideal citizen, there is no single civic education. This research focused on Turkey's and Canada's (Ontario's) social studies curricula, and a comparison of how both programs target citizens was conducted. Creating a national identity is difficult, especially in multinational states such as Canada, whose demographic structure is changing rapidly. Canada was chosen in the study to reveal how this multicultural structure shapes citizenship education. Canada's Ontario Province is the country's most populous province in terms of population and the second-largest province in terms of surface area. There are 51 cities in the Province of Ontario, and the fact that it includes Toronto, the most populous city, and the capital, Ottawa, further increases the province's importance. In addition, only a few studies have been found in the literature in which the Canadian (Ontario) and Turkish social studies teaching programs have been examined comparatively. İnci (2009), Öztürk-Zayimoğlu and Öztürk (2013) focused on the comparison of the 2004 Canadian (Ontario) social studies curriculum with the 2005 Turkish social studies curriculum in their studies. Özkartal and Karauğuz (2015) examined the social studies curriculum at the primary and secondary school levels in Canada (Ontario), Finland, the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Korea, the People's Republic of China, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, the Republic of South Africa, and Australia. Within the scope of the studies of Özkartal and Karauğuz, the Canadian (Ontario) social studies program of 2013 and the Turkish social studies program of 2005 were compared. In their study, Bursa and Çengelci-Kose (2017) compared the social studies education programs of Turkey and

the Canadian Province of Alberta from 2005 in terms of values education. Dere and Akdeniz (2021) focused on comparing Canadian (Ontario) and Turkish social studies curricula in terms of citizenship education. In the reviewed literature, no study was found to compare the 2018 Canadian (Ontario) and Turkish social studies curricula with a holistic approach. In this study, unlike the literature, the last updated 2018 social studies curriculum of both countries was compared in terms of the elements of the curriculum and discussed based on theory (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004) what kind of citizenship vision both programs support.

The literature comparing the citizenship/social studies curriculum in different countries with Turkey is as follows: Bektaş and Zabun (2019) compared citizenship education in Turkey and France, and Alkın (2007) compared citizenship education in primary education programs in England and Turkey. Gün (2007), Turkey and England, Yılmaz-Önkür (2004) France and Turkey, Şeker (2014), Singapore and Turkey, Yazıcı (2009), and Yeşilyurt (2020) analyzed the social studies curriculum of New Zealand and Turkey comparatively.

The purpose of social studies in the literature of "citizenship education" is to prepare young people for active participation in society with the necessary knowledge, skills, and values. There is a common agreement that, although there is disagreement about what "citizenship" means, there is a consensus about its effects on curriculum and teaching. Because of this, the traditional goal of social studies is to increase democratic citizenship. However, this objective should not be regarded as a "fixed end" but rather as a concept that must be built continuously as one lives (Ross, 2006, p. 20). Therefore, comparative studies on social studies curricula are essential in revealing the differences of opinion about the nature, purpose, and organization of social studies and serving to energize this field. It is also believed that such comparative studies will provide an opportunity to see the present status of the programs and contribute to future program development studies. The study sought answers to the following questions:

1. What are the similarities and differences in terms of the elements (objective, content, educational background, and assessment dimension) of both programs?
2. What kind of citizens do both programs aim to raise?

## **Method**

### **Research Design**

A case study, one of the qualitative research methods, was used in this study. A case study is a research method that helps to investigate a phenomenon in a specific context through various data sources and examines research through various lenses to reveal many aspects of the phenomenon (Baxter & Jack, 2008). In the case study, a real-time phenomenon is investigated in a naturally occurring environment, considering that the

environment will make a difference (Kaarbo & Beasley, 1999). The aim is not to reach general conclusions but to describe and interpret the phenomenon in its original environment in detail (Paker, 2015).

Merriam (2013) defined a case study as an intense, holistic description and analysis of a limited phenomenon such as a programme, institution, person, process, or social unit. The defining features of the case study are Specific (focus on a particular situation, event, program, or phenomenon); descriptive (giving a rich and detailed description of the phenomenon under study); and intuitive (allowing the reader to understand the phenomenon under study). In the case study, the researcher must acquire the necessary skills and follow specific procedures to conduct compelling interviews, careful observations, and data mining from documents. The case study uses three data collection techniques: interview, observation, and document analysis.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

In this study, documents were used as data collection tools. Documents contain recorded text (words) and images without the intervention of a researcher. Atkinson and Coffey (1997, 47) refer to documents as "social facts" that are produced, shared, and used in socially organized ways. Using documents in qualitative research provides a rich (Patton, 2014) and ready source of data (Merriam, 2013). In addition, the documents enable researchers to obtain the data they need without the need for observation or interview (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). This study's data sources are: Published in Turkey in 2018, Primary and Secondary Schools 4-7. Social Studies Curriculum and Canada (Ontario) 2018 Primary School, 1-6, constitute the Social Studies Course Curriculum taught in the classrooms.

The descriptive analysis method, a qualitative research technique, was used in the data analysis. According to Yıldırım and Şimşek (2013), the data obtained in the descriptive analysis are summarized and interpreted according to the previously determined themes. In this study, the data were analyzed according to the similarities and differences within the framework of sub-problems, especially in the four essential elements of the program, namely, the objectives, content, educational status, measurement, and evaluation dimensions. In addition, the citizenship vision in both programs was analyzed by considering the three citizenship vision frameworks determined by Westheimer and Kahne (2004, 2014). The findings obtained at the end of the analyses were systematically described. Then, with the help of these descriptions, similarities and differences were tried to be determined.

## **Results**

### **Similarities and Differences of the Programs in Terms of Goals**

In Ontario, the social studies course is taught in primary education from grades 1 to 6 without interruption and with an interdisciplinary approach. The Grade 1 to 8 social

studies, history, and geography curriculum shares a common vision with the Grade 9 to 12 Canadian and world studies curriculum.

*The vision of the Program:* Social Studies, History, Geography, Canadian, and World Studies programs will enable students to become responsible, active citizens within the diverse communities to which they belong. Students will acquire the skills they need to solve problems, make decisions about significant developments, events, and issues, and be critically thinking and knowledgeable citizens who value an inclusive society (Ministry of Education Ontario [MOEO], 2018, p. 6).

*Goals of the Program:* The objectives of the Social Studies, History, Geography, Canada, and World Studies curriculum are as follows:

- To develop the ability of students to use discipline-specific thinking concepts to investigate problems, events, and developments,
- To develop students' ability to evaluate information and evidence, to determine and apply appropriate criteria to make decisions,
- To develop skills and personal characteristics that are necessary for discipline-specific inquiry in students and that can be transferred to other areas of life,
- To develop students' collaborative working skills,
- To enable students to use appropriate technology to help them gather, analyze, solve problems, and communicate information.

Table 1 summarizes how students will achieve the objectives of each subject (social studies, history, and geography) of the primary education curriculum and how these topics will prepare them to realize the program's vision (MOEO, 2018, p.7).



**Table 1.**

*Goals of Social Studies, History, and Geography Curriculum*

Goals of Social Studies – Developing a sense of who I am, and who we are  <i>Where have I come from? What makes me belong? Where are we now? How can I contribute to society?</i>	Goals of History – Developing a sense of time  <i>Who are we? Who came before us? How have we changed?</i>	Goals of Geography – Developing a sense of place  <i>What is where, why there, and why care?</i>
<p>Students will work towards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• developing an understanding of responsible citizenship;</li> <li>• developing an understanding of the diversity within local, national, and global communities, both past and present;</li> <li>• developing an understanding of interrelationships within and between the natural environment and human communities;</li> <li>• developing the knowledge, understanding, and skills that lay the foundation for future studies in geography, history, economics, law, and politics;</li> <li>• developing the personal attributes that foster curiosity and the skills that enable them to investigate developments, events, and issues.</li> </ul>	<p>Students will work towards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• developing an understanding of past societies, developments, and events that enables them to interpret and analyse historical, as well as current, issues;</li> <li>• analysing how people from diverse groups have interacted and how they have changed over time;</li> <li>• understanding the experiences of and empathizing with people in past societies;</li> <li>• developing historical literacy skills by analysing and interpreting evidence from primary and secondary sources.</li> </ul>	<p>Students will work towards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• developing an understanding of the characteristics and spatial diversity of natural and human environments and communities, on a local to a global scale;</li> <li>• analysing the connections within and between natural and human environments and communities;</li> <li>• developing spatial skills through the use of spatial technologies and the interpretation, analysis, and construction of various types of maps, globes, and graphs;</li> <li>• being responsible stewards of the Earth by developing an appreciation and respect for both natural and human environments and communities.</li> </ul>

Ontario social studies education program, the program's vision, aims and general objectives, specific objectives, expected outcomes, and educational status, including an evaluation of all the dimensions in detail. Social Studies education has been integrated into primary and secondary education programs as an interdisciplinary course in both countries. In Turkey, the social studies course only covers practical goals and issues. In contrast, all the titles in this program contain general information about the teaching programs in Turkey. In this respect, the Ontario program offers teachers more detailed and concrete guidance on what is expected of them and students within the scope of the course.

The principle of valuing equality and inclusion forms the vision of the Ontario Social Studies, History, Geography, and Canadian and World Studies programs. Therefore, the programs encourage pupils to recognize and appreciate differences. Respecting diversity, supporting inclusive education, and recognizing and eradicating discriminatory prejudices, systematic hurdles, and power dynamics that impede students'



ability to learn, grow, and contribute to society are the primary goals of Ontario's equity and inclusive education strategy. Anti-discrimination education is recognized as an essential and integral part of the equality and inclusive education strategy. An environment based on the principles of inclusive education in the Ontario program is described as follows:

"In an environment based on the principles of inclusive education, all students, parents, caregivers, and other members of the school community – regardless of ancestry, culture, ethnicity, sex, physical or intellectual ability, race, religion, creed, gender identity/expression, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, or other factors – are welcomed, included, treated fairly, and respected. Diversity is valued when all school community members feel safe, welcomed, and accepted." (MOEO, 2018, p.47).

In the Ontario program, social studies, history, and geography teachers are recommended to create an environment that fosters a sense of community where all students feel included and appreciated. It is assumed that students who see themselves as respected will thus respect the differences in their classrooms and larger communities. The Ontario program's construction of a national identity that reflects cultural diversity draws attention. In Ontario, primary school students learn that there are differences within families and communities. In later grades, students explore the concepts of power and exclusion, learning about the living conditions of societies, past and present, including women, First Nations and people in developing countries. The program also offers students the opportunity to learn about how people from all walks of life contribute to society. It provides numerous opportunities to break stereotypes and learn about various religious, social, and ethnocultural groups, including First Nations, Métis and Inuit, and their diverse traditions. Students examine case studies/personals related to injustices and inequalities as tools of change and role models for active citizenship rather than through the lens of victimization (MOEO, 2018, p.48).

It is seen that individual differences are considered in the social studies curriculum in Turkey. For example, in SB.6.1.3. gain (Social Union individuals with special needs, as well as those belonging to different socio-economic groups with different ethnic, religious, and sectarian affiliations in respect to focusing on required) is emphasized that the differences should be respected (MEB, 2018). However, it was observed that the concept of "inclusiveness" was not emphasized in Turkey's social studies course program as it was in the Ontario program. This finding can be interpreted as a reflection of the multicultural social structure of Canada in the program, considering that the content of the social studies program is structured in accordance with the needs of society and the individual.

Being healthy is included in the Ontario social studies program. Supporting the healthy development of all students and enabling them to reach their full potential is a priority for educators. An educator's awareness of and responsiveness to students' cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development and their sense of self and spirit are critical to their success in school. For example, the personal development of students (self-concept, self-efficacy, self-esteem) within the scope of teachers' social development;

identity formation (gender identity, social group identity, spiritual identity); Awareness of relationships (peer, family, romantic) and being able to respond to problems on these issues are among the primary goals of the program. Educators are expected to help develop positive mental health in the classroom by nurturing and supporting students' strengths and assets to identify students who need additional support and refer them to appropriate services (MOEO, 2018). Accordingly, raising healthy citizens for a healthy society is among the priorities of Ontario citizenship education. It is seen that the social studies curriculum in Turkey does not emphasize the individual's well-being. It is seen that the only explanation on this subject is included in the title of the general objectives of the curriculum and covers only preschool education: "*To support the healthy development of students who have completed preschool education in physical, mental and emotional areas by considering their development processes*" (MEB, 2018). In the Ontario social studies curriculum, it is seen that the student's health and well-being are one of the priorities of the program. In this respect, we can say that the scope of the Ontario social studies program is broadly defined so that citizenship education is a variable concept and not just a political dimension.

The responsibilities of *Parents, Principals and Community Partners* are included in the Ontario social studies curriculum (MOEO, 2018, p.15-18). Effective ways in which parents can support their children's learning include the following: participating in parent-teacher interviews, attending parent workshops and school council events, and encouraging their children to complete homework at home. The principal works with teachers and parents to ensure every student has access to the best educational experience. The principal is a community builder who creates a welcoming environment and ensures that all members of the school community are well-informed. In addition, the principal works with teachers to facilitate teachers' participation in professional development activities. Community partners are service providers such as provincial and national parks, fire brigades and social service organizations; non-governmental organizations, museums, and historical societies; First Nations, Métis and Inuit fellowship centres; veteran groups, cultural centers and other community organizations and businesses. Community partners can be involved in events held at the school, such as skills competitions, ceremonies, information events, career days, heritage fairs and environment days. Local museums, heritage sites, preserves, parks and neighbourhoods can provide rich environments for local people and their resources to be explored (MOEO, 2018). It is recommended to benefit from out-of-school environments in the social studies program in Turkey. However, such activities are not stated as the responsibility of the program's parents, principals, and community partners.

### **Similarities and Differences of the Programs in Terms of Content**

Ontario social studies (Grades 1-6) curriculum consists of two learning areas. The spiral and expanding environment approaches were used together in the preparation of the program. The learning areas in the program are as follows (MOEO, 2018, p.24):

- A. Heritage and Identity:** In this context, students are allowed to explore various topics that will enable them to understand the connections between past and present; Interactions within and between various communities, including First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities, students' communities, the impact of colonialism, and rights and responsibilities related to citizenship. It is aimed that students develop an understanding of personal, cultural and national identities, both past and present, and the various contributions to Canadian heritage.
- B. People and Environments:** This learning area focuses on the natural and human environments and the connections between the two. Students explore geographic, social, political, economic, and environmental issues in the context of local, regional, national, and global communities and develop an understanding of the social and environmental responsibilities of citizens and various levels of government.

Learning areas and topics for grades 1 to 6 are listed below by grade level:

1st Class	A. Our Changing Roles and Responsibilities B. The Local Community
2nd Class	A. Changing Family and Community Traditions B. Global Communities
3rd Class	A. Communities in Canada, 1780–1850 B. Living and Working in Ontario
4th Class	A. Early Societies to 1500 CE B. Political and Physical Regions of Canada
5th Class	A. Interactions of Indigenous Peoples and Europeans prior to 1713 in What Would Eventually Become Canada B. The Role of Government and Responsible Citizenship
6th Class	A. Communities in Canada, Past and Present B. Canada's Interactions with the Global Community

The social studies program for grades 1 through 6 aims to help students understand who they are, where they come from, where they belong, and how they contribute to the society in which they live. Students develop a sense of who they are by exploring their identities in the context of the various local, national, and global communities in which they participate. Students develop an understanding of where they came from by examining past societies, analyzing the links between past and present, and exploring past societies' contributions to Canada's heritage. Students develop an understanding of the diverse Indigenous communities that will eventually develop into Canada, both before and after European contact. Students also examine colonialism's role in Canada and its impact on various communities and individuals. They discover where they belong and develop a sense of place by exploring the various physical, social, and cultural areas in which they live. Finally, students develop the knowledge, skills, and qualities they need to become responsible citizens who contribute positively to their communities and how they can contribute to them (MOEO, 2018, p.22).

The program in Turkey consists of seven learning areas: "Individual and Society, Culture and Heritage, People, Places and Environments, Science, Technology and Society, Production, Distribution and Consumption, Active Citizenship and Global Connections" (MEB, 2018, p.11-12). The content of the programs in both countries is based on both the expanding environmental program and the spiral program approaches. The Ontario social studies curriculum consists of two learning areas: contributing to students' research projects and learning the content more deeply instead of superficially. In this respect, the number of learning areas in the Turkish curriculum should be reevaluated.

### Similarities and Differences of the Programs in Terms of Educational Status

Ontario social studies, history and geography programs offer opportunities for teachers and students to choose research topics within a wide range of parameters. This flexibility allows teachers to tailor topics to their students' interests and readiness and to address local communities. It also allows students to focus on the process of "doing" history, geography, or social studies rather than absorbing content. Six concepts form the basis of all thinking and learning in the Ontario social studies program: importance, cause and effect, continuity and change, patterns and trends, interrelationships, and perspective. These concepts enable students to develop critical thinking skills about important events, developments, and problems inside and outside the classroom. In addition, students use components of the inquiry process to explore issues related to important events, developments, and problems and to communicate their findings. By practising the inquiry process, students develop the skills to think critically, solve problems, make informed judgments, and communicate their ideas.

Ontario's social studies curriculum includes tools and strategies to help achieve the program's vision. One of these strategies is "Big ideas." Here, students aimed to address fundamental questions such as "Why am I learning this?" or "What is the point?" The discovery of big ideas encourages students to be creators of their understanding rather than passive recipients of the information. Big ideas also enable students to think in an interdisciplinary, integrated way (MOEO, 2018, p.14). Other elements that the Ontario social studies curriculum emphasizes are as follows: current events, issues, contacts, and training opportunities for students through the provision of practical field studies of students with special educational needs to be made to the plan based on the students on the subject of promoting healthy relationships between programs and integrated education, environmental education, equal and inclusive education, financial literacy, mathematical literacy, critical literacy, inquiry, the importance of information and Communication Technology, Career Planning, Health and safety amenities to provide (MOEO, 2018 p.49-56).

In Turkey, the social studies curriculum adopts an activity-based, student-centred approach. Similar to the Ontario program, the following skills are included in the Turkish curriculum: "*Change and continuity detection, communication, empathy, tables, graphs, and diagrams, drawing and interpreting, entrepreneurship, observation, legal literacy, environmental literacy, use of evidence, critical thinking, decision making, media literacy, innovative thinking, perception, space,*

*digital citizenship, chronology and time perception, self-regulatory, political literacy, problem-solving, social participation, mould and judicial bias, recognizing financial literacy, research, collaboration, literacy and map location analysis" (MEB, 2018, p.9).*

In both programs, a student-centered, constructivist approach is adopted in educational situations. In addition, it is seen that active learning and cooperative learning are emphasized in both programs and importance is given to the use of different teaching strategies.

### **Similarities and Differences of Programs in Terms of Evaluation**

The primary purpose of assessment in the Ontario social studies curriculum is to improve learning. In the program, explanations were provided to teachers to ensure that assessment and reporting were valid and reliable. In addition, it was emphasized that the assessment should be equal, transparent, and fair for all students and that it should be planned in a way that provides clear, specific, meaningful, and timely explanatory feedback to support students' learning and success. Developing learning skills and study habits in the Ontario program is integral to student learning. Evaluation and reporting on meeting curriculum expectations and demonstrating learning skills and study habits are not considered in determining student grades but allow teachers to provide parents and students with information specific to these two areas of achievement. The program includes six learning skills and work habits: responsibility, organization, independent work, collaboration, initiative, and self-control (MOEO, 2018, p.28).

In Ontario, Grades 1 to 12 assessment is based on content and performance standards. Content standards are the general and specific objectives defined in the program for each subject and discipline. Performance standards are state-wide guidelines used by all teachers as a framework for assessing student expectations in a particular subject or discipline. Content and performance standards enable teachers to make consistent decisions about the quality of student learning. In addition, these standards provide a basis for teachers to give clear and specific feedback to students and parents. In Ontario, emphasis is placed on teachers' assessment to help all students develop their capacity to be independent, autonomous learners who can set individual goals, monitor their progress, identify next steps, and reflect on their learning (MOEO, 2018, p.28).

In the Turkish social studies curriculum, it is recommended that individual differences be considered in the evaluation and to act with an understanding of maximum diversity and flexibility. In addition to the cognitive domain, measuring and evaluating the affective and psychomotor domains in the program is recommended. In addition, it is recommended to measure and evaluate students' academic development with different measurement and evaluation methods in the program, and the active participation of teachers and students in measurement and evaluation practices is emphasized (MEB, 2018).

The goal of assessment in both programs is to support learning. It is recommended to use different assessment methods and techniques in both programs. However, assessment in the Canadian (Ontario) social studies curriculum is based on both content standards and the performance standards guidelines determined throughout the province. Such an assessment process contributes to teachers' making more realistic and consistent decisions about students. In addition, it is seen that the assessment focuses on students' learning skills (responsibility, organization, independent work, cooperation, initiative and self-control) and study habits. Most importantly, in the Canada (Ontario) program, teachers give descriptive feedback to their students and try to develop their capacity to be autonomous learners who can set individual goals and reflect on their learning.

### **Similarities and Differences of the Programs in Terms of Citizen Vision**

Citizenship education in Ontario is an essential component of general education. In Ontario, students are given opportunities to learn what it means to be a responsible, active citizen in the diverse communities to which they belong, in school and out of school, at every grade level and course in the social studies, history, and geography curriculum for grades 1 through 8. The Ontario social studies curriculum tends to develop a "sense of belonging" in students, which means belonging to different (local, national, and global) communities. In Ontario, the social studies curriculum for grades 1 through 6 emphasizes students' understanding of who they are, where they come from, where they belong, and how they contribute to the society in which they live. In addition, the program focuses on students' understanding that they belong to many communities and are ultimately all global citizens (MOEO, 2018, p.3).

In the Ontario social studies curriculum, equality, inclusiveness, anti-discrimination, respect for multiculturalism, and cultural equality are substantial. For example, The First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework is part of the Indigenous Education Strategy that promotes the success and well-being of Indigenous students across the province of Ontario. The strategy also aims to raise awareness of First Nations, Métis and Inuit cultures among all students. In the program, schools and teachers are encouraged to select resources that authentically and respectfully portray the uniqueness of these natives' histories, contributions, and worldviews. Teachers should also create a safe classroom environment where students can express their ideas and needs and feel comfortable with culturally sensitive issues. In other words, the Ontario social studies curriculum emphasizes the importance of creating a respectful learning environment that allows students to feel safe and comfortable not only physically, socially, and emotionally but also in terms of their cultural heritage (MOEO, 2018, p.14-15). In Ontario, it is recognized that applying anti-discrimination principles in education will encourage all students to strive for a high level of achievement, the value of all students will be recognized. It will help students strengthen their sense of identity and develop a positive self-image. It is stated that such education will promote equality, healthy relationships, active and responsible citizenship (MOEO, 2018, p.47). In this respect,



the Ontario social studies curriculum aims to create a more democratic and socially just society.

The Ontario social studies, history, and geography curricula present a common citizenship education framework. Accordingly, the four main elements of citizenship education; are *active participation, identity, attributes, and structures*. Within the scope of *active participation*, it is aimed that students work for the common good in local, national, and global communities, adopt leadership roles in their communities, explore controversial issues, and establish positive relationships with different individuals and groups. Within the scope of *identity*, it is aimed that students develop a sense of personal identity as members of various (local, national, and global) communities, develop self-image, and explore the moral and ethical dimensions of events and problems. Within the scope of the *attribute*, it is aimed that students examine issues related to personal and social rights and responsibilities, develop self-esteem, develop attitudes that foster civic engagement, work in a collaborative and critically thoughtful manner, show respect and empathy to others. Within the scope of *structures*, it is aimed that students understand the importance of rules and laws, understand how political, economic and social institutions affect their lives, understand the power dynamics in society, and understand the dynamic and complex relationships within and between systems (MOEO, 2018, p.201-202). For all these reasons explained in the paragraphs above, it can be said that the "participatory citizen" and "justice-oriented citizen" visions are adopted in the Ontario social studies curriculum according to Westheimer and Kahne's (2004) classification of good citizen vision.

Within the program's scope in Turkey, it aims to raise students as "*Citizens of the Republic of Turkey, who love their homeland and nation, know and use their rights, fulfil their responsibilities, and have national consciousness.*" (MEB, 2018, 8). In Turkey, it is seen that the sense of belonging to national identity is emphasized, and a more traditional citizenship education is aimed. Within the program's scope in Turkey, there is no emphasis on a broader sense of belonging, which means belonging to a local and global community. However, in the field of Global Connections learning, "*Developing ideas and suggestions for the solution of global problems with his friends*" (MEB; 2018, p.25) can develop students' sense of belonging to common humanity and a sense of joint responsibility for finding solutions to global problems.

In the explanation of social and citizenship-related competencies in the social studies curriculum in Turkey, it is seen that the goal of "*Equipping students for full participation in civil life based on knowledge of social and political concepts and structures, and a determination to participate in a democratic and active participation*" (MEB; 2018 p.5). In addition, it is emphasized that the program focuses on the concept of active citizenship within the framework of sociology, political science, and law within the scope of the "active citizenship" learning area. However, when we look at the achievements in the field of active citizenship learning, it is seen that although it is stated that students acquire social participation, political literacy, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills, the gains are generally at the level of knowledge and comprehension (11 of the total

18 achievements). In addition, there needs to be a citizenship vision or framework covering the 1<sup>st</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grades (primary and secondary education) in the social studies curriculum in Turkey. In this respect, the Ontario program can be considered an example.

## Discussion

Social studies are integrated into primary and secondary education in both countries as an interdisciplinary subject. However, this course continues in Ontario from grade 1 to grade 6. Also, the Grade 1 to 8 social studies, history, and geography curriculum shares a common vision with the Grade 9 to 12 Canadian and world studies curricula. In this respect, it is seen that the vision of responsible and active citizenship education continues from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> grade. In Turkey, the social studies course covers 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades. In this respect, Ontario social studies course starts from the 1<sup>st</sup> grade. It continues uninterruptedly until the 6<sup>th</sup> grade of primary education (Zayımoğlu-Öztürk & Öztürk, 2013), and the vision of responsible and active citizenship continues from the 1<sup>st</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade that can be considered as an example for Turkey. In addition, the Ontario social studies curriculum details the program's vision, purpose, general objectives, specific objectives, expected learning outcomes, educational attainment, and all dimensions of assessment, while these topics in the Turkish social studies curriculum provide general information about all curricula. In the social studies course curriculum in Turkey, only particular objectives, and issues to be considered in practice are included in the social studies course. As Öztürk and Kafadar (2020) stated, the social studies course curriculum does not have a different perspective on the course. In this respect, the Ontario social studies curriculum offers teachers more detailed and concrete guidance on what is expected of them and students within the scope of the course.

Another finding of this study is that the Ontario social studies curriculum tends to develop a "sense of belonging", which means belonging to a broader (local, national, and global) community. In addition, the Ontario program emphasizes students' understanding that they belong to many communities and are ultimately all global citizens. The principle of valuing equality and inclusion is the vision of the Ontario Social Studies, History, Geography and Canadian and World Studies programs. Within the social studies course curriculum in Turkey, it was seen that creating a national identity or sense of belonging was emphasized, but the concept of inclusiveness was not included in the curriculum. This finding can be interpreted as Canada's multicultural social structure revealing the need to create a nation-state that embraces everyone. This need is evident in the structuring of the social studies program.

In the literature, it has been stated that the Turkish social studies program mainly emphasizes the citizenship of the Republic of Turkey (Dere & Akdeniz, 2021) and has a structure that puts national interests at the centre (Yazıcı, 2009; Öztürk & Zayımoğlu-Öztürk, 2013), it was also emphasized that the Ontario program included the value of "inclusiveness" (Dere & Akdeniz, 2021). In this respect, it can be said that the social

studies curriculum in Turkey adopts a personally responsible citizen vision rather than the three good citizens vision created by Westheimer and Kahne (2004), while in Ontario, participatory citizenship and justice-oriented citizenship are emphasized within the scope of the program. Like the findings of this study, Şen (2019) stated that the Turkish social studies curriculum is a curriculum that emphasizes learning, does not focus on citizenship skills, is based on a de-politicized citizenship concept, and emphasizes a homogeneous society image and a monist national identity definition. Similarly, Dere and Akdeniz (2021) stated that in Turkey's social studies program, more emphasis is placed on the qualities of *personally responsible citizens*. In Akhan and Çiçek's (2019) study on Turkish and Russian secondary school students' perceptions of good citizens, it was found that Turkish students expressed good citizens as more national, while Russian students expressed them as more universal, liberal, and doing good deeds for the country and the world. Şen (2019), Akhan, and Çiçek (2019) emphasized that traditional citizenship education failed to provide different views of society from what already exists. They also stated that traditional citizenship education promotes the continuation of current political and social realities. In addition, Yüceer (2011) stated that the general objectives of the Danish and Turkish education systems are to fulfil the function of raising an influential citizen, but the concepts of democracy and multiculturalism are significantly emphasized in the general objectives of the Danish education system. Similarly, in this study, it was seen that Canada's multicultural nature caused it to design a national identity curriculum that reflects cultural diversity in terms of the construction of national identity. Castro and Knowles (2015) emphasized that the social studies program should go beyond transferring traditional citizenship behaviours to young people and that citizenship education should focus on more active, participatory citizenship that considers the multicultural structure of societies and global realities.

Global citizenship, unlike national citizenship, is not a legal status. Instead, global citizenship is a way of thinking about the world and one's place in it. Individuals who adopt global citizenship feel a sense of belonging to humanity and a shared responsibility to solve global challenges. Global citizenship education aims to transform students' knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes to contribute to a more inclusive, just, and peaceful world (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, [UNESCO], 2015). For a more peaceful and sustainable world, the program in Turkey should focus on students' discovering their identities as active and responsible citizens at local, national, and global levels.

Another finding of the study is that social studies curricula in both countries were based on the spiral approach and the expanding environment approach. While the Ontario social studies curriculum consists of two learning areas, the Turkish curriculum consists of seven. In this respect, the program in Turkey has broader content that such intense content may encourage superficial and rote learning. In addition, while the Ontario program emphasizes students' questioning of what is taught, how it is taught, and how it is applied to the world in general, the program content in Turkey contains only information on what will be taught. As Öztürk and Kafadar (2020) stated, it may be

important to add such sections to the content section so that students are consciously educated about what they are learning and why. The Ontario program emphasized that an educator's awareness of and responsiveness to students' cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development, and self and spirit perceptions are critical. However, it is seen that the program in Turkey does not emphasize well-being. Similarly, Özkartal (2015) found in her study that some social studies curricula in different countries (Finland, the Republic of Estonia, and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China) include subjects related to health and health education.

A student-centered, constructivist approach was adopted in the educational situations of both programs, and active learning and cooperative learning were emphasized. In both programs, it was seen that students emphasized common skills such as research, problem-solving, critical thinking, decision-making, perception of space, financial literacy, map literacy, and location analysis. Similarly, Yüceer (2011) and Özkartal (2015) stated in their studies that Turkey and the countries compared (Denmark, Canada (Ontario), Finland, the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Korea, and Australia) have similar characteristics in terms of learning-teaching process.

Another finding of this study is that assessment supports learning in both programs and aims to help students see their progress. However, evaluation in the Ontario social studies curriculum is based on content standards (general and specific objectives defined in the program) and the performance standards guidelines determined throughout the province. In addition, in Ontario program, teachers are responsible for providing explanatory feedback to students and coaching to help them develop their capacity to set individual goals, reflect on their learning and become autonomous learners. In the program in Turkey, it is recommended that teachers use different assessment methods, but there are no content standards or performance standards that can be used in the assessment. Özkartal (2015) found that, unlike the Turkish curriculum, there were evaluation criteria in the social studies curriculum in Finland and achievement standards in the curriculum in Australia. Similar to the findings of this study, in the studies conducted by Şeker (2014), Zabun and Öztaşkın (2018), it was stated that the evaluation of the Singapore social studies curriculum was carried out to measure the effectiveness of the education-training program and to follow the developmental levels of the students. The study conducted by Yüceer (2011) also revealed that the education systems of Denmark and Turkey are student-centered and that the programs of both countries have similarities in terms of method, technique, measurement, and evaluation tools.

In this study, it was also found that the visions of "participatory citizen" and "justice-oriented citizen" were adopted in the Ontario social studies curriculum, and the vision of "individually responsible citizen" was adopted in the Turkish curriculum. For some, good citizens are volunteers, while for others, they take an active role in political processes by voting, forming committees, holding protests, and working on campaigns (Westheimer & Kahne, 2014). Therefore, it is not surprising that the educational program aimed at developing democracy by educating "good" citizens includes a wide

range of goals and practices. Westheimer and Kahne (2014) stated that the most common vision in schools is “personally responsible citizenship”, a vision of citizenship devoid of politics. In this vision, they stated that the programs aim to promote community service and character education, not democracy. This vision is oriented towards character (honesty, self-discipline, hard work), volunteerism, and philanthropy, and they stay away from teaching about social movements, social transformation, and systematic change. Westheimer and Kahne (2014) see this emphasis as an inadequate response to the challenges of raising a democratic citizen. Emphasis on the individual's character and behaviour, and society generally specifies that hides the need for public sector initiatives; the analysis of the causes of social problems and attention away from this emphasis systematic solutions; voluntary and have been suggested as ways to avoid the politics of discretion means. They argue that these characteristics distract from other critical democratic priorities, hinder democratic participation, and change rather than making it possible. In addition, Westheimer and Kahne (2014) state that these programs define a vision of citizenship devoid of politics. They even state that in real terms, young people seem to be learning that citizenship does not require government, politics, or even collective efforts. According to educators and theorists who support the justice-oriented vision of citizenship, citizens need the skills related to participation and the skills necessary to critically analyse and act on the root causes of social problems and inequalities. These actions include forms of participation that challenge existing power structures and focus on social change.

This study found that the Turkish social studies course curriculum emphasised the sense of belonging to national identity, and aimed for more traditional citizenship education. Social studies as a transfer of citizenship aim to socialize students to a specific set of values and knowledge at both cognitive and affective levels by focusing on the nation, common culture, and shared values. However, the transfer process falls short of developing thinking skills in students, which is a counter-socialization process required by the global economy (Boon & Sim, 2005). Traditional citizenship education has focused on giving students facts and information about the country's institutional framework. Content can be taught and tested systematically. Such a teaching approach does little to educate citizens in democratic, human rights-based communities. Students must not only know and understand their official responsibilities as citizens. However, they must also be active, willing to contribute to the life of their community, country, and wider world, and actively participate in solving problems (Gollob et al., 2010).

As Gollob et al. (2010) emphasize, modern societies are typically secular and pluralistic. Migration movements throughout Europe contributed to this development. Pluralistic societies are more dynamic and productive but more demanding in terms of social cohesion to integrate people of different beliefs, values, interests, social and ethnic origins. Democracy offers the best opportunity to overcome these challenges, but democracy and human rights are precarious projects, and their survival depends on whether their legacy can be passed on to the younger generation. This can be supported by a shift in the vision of citizenship taught in schools towards participatory and justice-oriented citizenship. Also, applying these visions to social studies education can create

opportunities to address structural social, economic, and political inequalities, thereby promoting a democratic society.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The principle of valuing equality and inclusion is the vision of the Ontario social studies program. Multicultural societies face the challenge of creating nation-states that recognize and unite the diversity of their citizens and embrace an overarching set of values, ideals, and goals to which all citizens adhere. A nation-state can only secure the freedoms of cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and religious groups and allow them to experience freedom, justice, and peace when it is united behind a set of democratic values, such as human rights, justice, and equality. This is only possible with the education of citizens who understand multiculturalism and respect differences. Therefore, encouraging students to understand and value diversity is the focus of the Ontario program.

Citizenship education is not just a matter of learning fundamental truths about the institutions and procedures of political life; it should also include practical experience gained through activities in school and the wider community (local, national, and global) designed to prepare students for their roles as citizens. It should provide opportunities for students to develop social projects to encourage them to participate in social and political life. Political literacy, economic literacy, a critical understanding of democracy, and democratic political institutions and systems are the essential components of citizenship education. In addition to strengthening knowledge about political systems, civic education should promote respect for law, justice, and democracy and foster freedom of thought while nurturing the common good. They should develop thinking, questioning and discussion skills and promote gender equality and positive relations within and between societies.

The social studies program should be designed to stimulate student thinking and make them responsible and active citizens. To prepare students for active citizenship, the social studies program should include appropriate pedagogical practices that promote skills and values for participation. The program should be prepared in detail with all its dimensions, including the vision, purpose, general goals, specific goals, expected learning outcomes, educational status, and evaluation specific to the social studies course. In addition, the program should provide teachers with guidelines on how to evaluate students in social studies education.

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