
DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL STUDIES IN TURKEY FROM 1938 TO 1980

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Introduction

Although the concept of social studies first appeared in the United States in 1916 (Moffatt, 1957), it is not known for sure where and when social studies education originated. It is however known that education about the social science disciplines that constitute the content of the social studies course was given in Egyptian, Persian, and Roman civilizations. As for the Turks, this situation is not different. Considering that social studies provides information about life, neither Turks who lived a semi-nomadic life nor Turks who adopted a settled life after the Uighurs can be expected to be far from social studies education. However, given that in Turkish history, a sophisticated understanding of school and education was systematised in the Ottoman Empire, social studies education began to be given in the Ottoman period.

Apropos of republican Turkey, social studies was also incorporated into the education system of the young republic. In the curricula designed in early republican Turkey, education was treated as a means of preparing people to become citizens that keep up with the Republic (Gelen & Beyazıt, 2007, 461). The 1924 curriculum was the first curriculum of the Republic of Turkey and significantly differed from the curricula used prior to the Law on Unification of Education in terms of the objectives, course contents, and teaching methods (Aslan, 2011, p. 723). After the introduction of the 1924 curriculum, history, geography or civics courses, which comprise the main content of social studies, were incorporated into the Turkish education system, although not directly referred to as social studies. With the 1924 curriculum, primary and middle schools were separated (Keskin, 2002, pp. 15-16) and history, geography, moral conversations, and civics¹ courses, which constitute the content of social studies, were integrated into the primary and middle school curricula. Additionally, history, geography, moral conversations, and civics courses, which relate to social studies, were included in the 1338 (1922) Primary and Middle School Curricula which was used for a time and issued by the Ministry of the National Education of the Government of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey in 1922. This was also the case in 1926 curriculum (Akyüz, 2008). The 1926 primary school curriculum defined the objective of the primary school as “*the primary purpose of the primary school is to raise good citizens by actively adapting the young generation to their environment*” (İlk Mekteplerin Müfredat Programı, 1926, p. 71) and put stress on “raising good citizens”, which is one of the main objectives of the social studies course. The 1926 curriculum remained in practice for ten years and was replaced by the

¹ The Moral Conversations and Civics course (Musahabat-ı Ahlakiye ve Malumat-ı Vatanîye in Ottoman Turkish) was renamed Civics in the 1926 curriculum (Akyüz, 2008).

1936 curriculum. The 1936 primary school curriculum was designed in line with the needs of the Turkish revolution (Binbaşıoğlu, 1995). This is because the revolutionary movements of the young republic had largely been completed by 1936 and the new curriculum was reflecting the views of the new regime (Akbaba, 2004). Additionally, the principles of the Republican People's Party were listed under the objectives of the primary school in the 1936 curriculum (Alp, 2016, p. 87). Apropos of the content of the 1936 primary school curriculum, the life science course was included in the programs of first, second, and third grades viewed as the first cycle of primary school, while the history, geography and civics courses were included in the programs of fourth and fifth grades viewed as the second cycle of primary school (İlkokul Programı, 1936). Similarly, the 1938 middle school curriculum incorporated the history, geography, and civics courses. The first-, second-, and third-grade programs included a total of six-hour history and geography classes, each being taught for two hours a week, while the second- and third-grade programs included a total of four-hour civics class taught for two hours a week (Ortaokul Programı, 1938).

Social Studies in the Primary School Curricula from 1938 to 1980

Social Studies in the 1948 Primary School Curriculum

Due to the difference² in the curricula used in the cities and villages in the early periods of the Republic in Turkey, the “Rural Schools Curriculum” was introduced in 1930 and 1938 and the “Rural Primary Schools Curriculum Project” was launched in 1939 (Keskin, 2002, p. 42). The main factor underlying this situation is that 80% of the total population was living in villages during this period. Therefore, the then republican governments considered the issue of primary education as an issue of rural education (Kaplukan, 2012, p. 165; Akman, 2016). Because the implementation of separate programs in cities in villages was against equality of opportunity in education, all teachers were asked for their views on rural and urban school curricula in 1944; consequently, it was decided to unify rural and urban primary school curricula and a new primary school curriculum was introduced in 1948 (Güngördü & Güngördü, 1966). However, the course distributions of rural and urban schools were organized independently, thereby resulting in differences in course contents (İlkokul Programı, 1948).

The 1948 primary school curriculum was more advanced and had clearly defined objectives compared to the 1926 and 1936 curricula (Arslan, 2000). In view of the social studies-relevant courses in the curriculum, for urban primary schools, two-hour history and geography classes per week were integrated into the programs of fourth and fifth

² The separation of rural and urban schools was first stated in detail in Article 5 of “Law No. 789 on Educational Organization” published in the Official Gazette dated April 4, 1926 and No. 338. Accordingly, primary schools were listed as follows: 1. rural and urban day schools, 2. rural and urban boarding schools, 3. rural day schools, and 4. rural boarding schools. Pursuant to Article 7 thereof, middle schools were as follows: 1. high schools, 2. middle schools, 3. teaching schools, and 4. rural teaching schools (Yücel, 1994, pp. 270-271).

grades viewed as the second cycle of primary school, while a two-hour civics class per week was integrated into the fourth-grade program and a one-hour civics class per week was integrated into the fifth-grade program. For rural primary schools, two-hour history and geography classes and a one-hour civics class per week were also integrated into the fourth- and fifth-grade programs (İlkokul Programı, 1948). The contents of the history, geography, and civics courses which are relevant to the social studies course are as follows:

Table 1. History Course Topics in the 1948 Primary School Curriculum

	4 th Grade	5 th Grade
1	The Lives of the First Humans	Anatolian Seljuk Sultanate
2	Homeland of Turks	Ottoman Empire
3	Sumerians	The Conquest of Istanbul by the Turks
4	The Hittites	The Rise of the Ottoman Empire
5	Greeks	Slowdown Period of the Ottoman Empire
6	The Roman Civilization	Decline Period
7	Turks Who Stayed in the Homeland	Ottoman Turkish Civilization
8	The Birth of Islam	Major Changes in Europe
9	Spread of Islam among Central Asian Turks and the Muslim Turkic States	The Reformation Period in the Ottoman Empire
10	Great Seljuq Empire	The Tanzimat (Reform) Period and Constitutional Era
11	-	The Turkish War of Independence
12	-	Turkish Revolution
13	-	World War II

(İlkokul Programı, 1948, pp. 135-138)

Looking at the topics covered in the fourth- and fifth-grade history course plan of the 1948 primary school curriculum, it stands out that the course has a heavy content load. Furthermore, Turkish culture and history occupy a significant place in both grades.

Table 2. Geography Course Topics in the 1948 Primary School Curriculum

	4 th Grade	5 th Grade
1	Deepening the Geography Observations in First-Cycle Grades and Expanding the Understanding of Plans and Maps	Earth
2	Geography of Nearby Villages, Towns, Districts and Cities	Volcanoes
3	Geographical Regions of Turkey	Europe
4	Overview of the Geography of Turkey	Asia
5	Neighbours of Turkey	Africa
6	Overview of the World	Americas
7	-	Oceania and Australia
8	-	Overview of the World
9	-	Outline of the Geography of Turkey
10	-	Turks on Earth

(İlkokul Programı, 1948, pp. 144-146)

Looking at the geography topics covered in the 1948 primary school curriculum, it is apparent that a from-near-to-far principle was applied. Accordingly, the fourth-grade topics were mainly centred around the geography of Turkey, while the fifth-grade topics were mainly centred around the geography of the continents.

Table 3. Civics Course Topics in the 1948 Primary School Curriculum

	4 th Grade	5 th Grade
1	Social Life	What Does the Government Do?
2	Life in Family and School	Government Expenditures
3	My Great Nation	Relationship between State and Citizens
4	Life in Villages	Levels of Administration in Turkey
5	Life in Cities and Towns	Social Affairs and Governmental Agencies in Our Country
6	The Administration of Our Country and the Turkish State	Institutions and Instruments That Serve Public Enlightenment
7	-	National Economy
8	-	Youth and Sports
9	-	Democracy
10	-	Everyone Has to Have a Means of Livelihood According to Their Abilities

(İlkokul Programı, 1948, pp. 152-157)

Given the civics topics covered in the 1948 primary school curriculum, the fourth-grade topics were mainly centred around the theme of adjustment to the local and national environment, while the fifth-grade topics were mainly centred around the functioning of the state mechanism.

Social Studies in the Draft Primary School Curriculum of 1962

After the 1948 primary school curriculum was implemented for more than ten years, a clear need was felt in the 1960s to address shortcomings in the current curriculum and make revisions in line with the developments of the time. To this end, a joint commission set up by the Board of Education and Discipline and the General Directorate of Primary Education drew up a report and sent it to all cities and districts to ask views. A new commission set up by the General Directorate of Primary Education designed a new primary school curriculum as a draft in line with the feedback received and the draft curriculum was implemented in 1962 (Güngördü & Güngördü, 1966; Tekişik, 1992). However, this draft curriculum was implemented in pilot schools, not across the country. In relation to the social studies-relevant courses, a major change stands out in the draft primary school curriculum draft of 1962. The history, geography and civics courses used to be taught separately according to the previous curricula but were merged with an interdisciplinary approach into a single course called “*Society and Country Studies*” in the draft curriculum of 1962 (Öztürk & Dilek, 2005; Akman, 2017). In view of the hours allocated for the society and country studies course in the curriculum, the programs of the first, second, third grades viewed as the first cycle of primary education did not include

the society and country studies course but the life science course, while in the second cycle of primary education, the fourth-grade program included a six-hour society and country studies class per week and the fifth-grade program included a five-hour society and country studies class per week (İlkokul Program Taslağı, 1962). The contents of the society and country studies course for the fourth and fifth grades are as follows:

Table 4. Society and Country Studies Course Topics in the Draft Primary School Curriculum of 1962

	4 th Grade	5 th Grade
1	Our City and Region	Turkey and Its Neighbours
2	Life in Our Family, School and Immediate Environment	Foundation of the Ottoman Empire
3	Governing Organizations	Inventions in Europe, Major Geographical Discoveries, and Renaissance
4	Traffic Rules	Reasons for the Slowdown in the Ottomans
5	Let us Know the Early Civilizations in Established Our City and Region	Reformation Movements
6	Our Turkey	Constitutional Era
7	Where Did We Come from in Turkey?	The Turkish War of Independence
8	Islam - Acceptance of Islam by the Turks	World War II and the United Nations
9	Great Seljuq Empire	The Development of Our Democracy and the Transition to Multi-Party System. May 27 and Our New Constitution
10	The Administration of Our Country and the Turkish State	Social Affairs and Governmental Agencies in Our Country
11		Overview of Our World
12	-	Tourism
13	-	Career Choice
14	-	Becoming a Constructive, Creative and Distinguished Partner of Western Civilization

(İlkokul Program Taslağı, 1962, pp. 43-45).

The interdisciplinary approach is particularly noticeable in the content of the society and country studies course included in the draft primary school curriculum of 1962. The fourth-grade course plan contains 11 topics which relate to the knowledge of geography, history and civics. The fifth-grade course plan contains 14 topics which focus on history issues that took place from the foundation of the Ottoman Empire until that time.

Social Studies in the 1968 Primary School Curriculum

The draft primary school curriculum introduced in 1962 was implemented at the pilot level, in a sense, formed the basis for the 1968 primary school curriculum. The 1968 primary school curriculum was introduced as a result of the efforts and new regulations made by a commission set up by the Ministry of National Education in light of the pilot implementations in the 1967-1968 academic year (Cicioğlu, 1985). The 1968 curriculum is the longest-lasting primary school curriculum among those introduced in the republican period. The 1968 primary school curriculum was the first curriculum that included the social studies course under the title of social studies. In other words, the topics and

courses which overlap with the scope of social studies and were treated separately in the previous curricula were merged into a single course called “Social Studies” for the first time in the 1968 primary school curriculum (Dilek, 2001; İnan, 2014; Kan, 2010; Keskin & Keskin, 2013; Öztürk & Otluoğlu, 2003; Safran, 2011; Sağlamer, 1997; Sönmez, 1998; Sözer, 1998). Accordingly, the 1968 primary school curriculum reads as follows: *“The history, geography, and civics courses, which were independent courses in the previous fourth- and fifth-grade programs were joined together as a single integrated social studies course in view of their interconnected nature and suitability for children. The topics of the social studies course should be treated as a multifaceted whole based on the knowledge of history, geography, and civics.”* Similarly, the 1970-1971 middle school curriculum published in 1973 described the motivation behind the coalescence of history, geography, and civics courses into the social studies course as a necessity to make the curriculum content more appropriate to students and develop positive behaviours and traits in students (MEB, 1973). The approach of coalescence, previously adopted for the life science course, was also used for the social studies course in the 1968 primary school curriculum. With the 1968 primary school curriculum, social studies was recognized as a pivotal course just like as the science course (Baysal, 2006; Akman and Meydan, 2018). In this connection, the social studies course was allocated six hours a week in the fourth-grade program and five hours a week in the fifth-grade program. Another point that stands out in the 1968 curriculum in relation to social studies is that the concept of “unit” was introduced. At each grade level, the course content was designed by subsuming topics under the main units. Accordingly, the 1968 primary school curriculum reads as follows: *“The topics of the social studies course were merged into units. There is no obligation to follow the same order in the curriculum while teaching the units. Teachers can make any change where they deem appropriate”* (MEB, 1968). The social studies units in the fourth- and fifth-grade programs of the 1968 curriculum are as follows:

Table 5. Social Studies Course Units in the 1968 Primary School Curriculum

	4th Grade	5th Grade
1	Our City and Region	Our Country and Neighbours
2	Our Turkey	Ottoman Empire (Foundation and Rise)
3	Present Life in Our Country	Overview of the World
4	Islam - Acceptance of Islam by the Turks	Ottoman Empire (Slowdown and Decline)
5	Settlement of Turks in Anatolia	Major Countries of the World
6		Our Republic

(İlkokul Programı, 1968, pp. 75-79)

Looking at the social studies units in the 1968 primary school curriculum, it is apparent that the fourth-grade units were designed based on an interdisciplinary approach. Thus, the first and second units were composed of geography topics, the third unit was composed of civics topics, and the fourth and fifth units were composed of history topics.

Among the fifth-grade units, the first, third, and fifth units were composed of geography topics, the second and fourth units were composed of history topics, and the sixth unit was composed of civics topics.

After remaining in use for nearly ten years, the 1968 primary school curriculum was revised in the Journal of Communiques dated April 25, 1977, and No. 1931. The reason for the revision of the 1968 primary school curriculum was cited as follows: *“Curricula are not subject to a fixed form but in a state of continuous progress in parallel with the political, social, and economic situation of each country, especially with the recent rapid advancement in science and technology. From time to time since the foundation of the republic in our country, revisions have been made in the primary and middle school curricula in close touch with needs and opportunities. Great care has been taken to reflect the intended democracy and lifestyle on the school curricula and raise citizens who believe in the power of our nation and democracy and successfully adapt to democratic life. The primary aim of our national education is thus to educate students to become citizens who know and fulfil their duties and responsibilities towards the Republic of Turkey”* (MEB, 1977). In line with this revision, both the objectives and content of the social studies course were also updated.

Table 6. Social Studies Course Units After the Revision of the 1968 Primary School Curriculum

	4 th Grade	5 th Grade
1	Where and How Do Our Days Pass?	Our Country and Neighbours
2	Do We Know the Area We Live in?	Overview of the World and Countries with Which We Have Relations
3	Overview of Our Country	Foundation and Rise of the Ottoman Empire
4	When and How Did We Settle in Our Country?	Slowdown and Decline Period of the Ottoman Empire and Dissolution of the Empire
5		How We Built Our Republic

(MEB, Tebliğler Dergisi, 1977, pp. 11-13)

Given the revision made in 1977, the social studies units in the 1968 primary school curriculum underwent slight changes. The particularly noticeable change is that the “Islam - Acceptance of Islam by the Turks” unit included in the fourth-grade program in the 1968 curriculum was excluded by the 1977 revision.

Social Studies in the Middle School Curricula from 1938 to 1980

Social Studies in the 1938 Middle School Curriculum

The content of the social studies course, which incorporates history, geography and civics topics, was included in the middle school curricula of 1924, 1927, and 1932, which were implemented before 1938 in Republican Turkey. However, the content of social studies was included more extensively as a single discipline in the 1938 middle

school curriculum. In view of the 1938 middle school curriculum, the first-, second-, and third-grade programs included a total of six-hour history and geography classes, each being taught for two hours a week, while the second- and third-grade programs included a total of four-hour civics class taught for two hours a week (Ortaokul Programı, 1938). The history, geography, and civics topics constituting the content of social studies for middle school first, second, and third grades are given in the tables below.

Table 6. History Course Topics in the 1938 Middle School Curriculum

	Middle School 1st Grade	Middle School 2nd Grade	Middle School 3rd Grade³
1	Introduction to Human History	Entering the Middle Ages	Ottoman Empire
2	A General Overview of the Great Turkish History and Civilization	The Alans and Their Invasions of Europe	Europe from the Middle of the Fifteenth Century to the End of the Sixteenth Century
3	China	Turkish Hun Empire in Europe	The Decline of the Empire
4	Ancient States in the Homeland	Europe in the Fifth Century	The Disintegration of the Ottoman Empire
5	Scythian Turkish Empire	Avar Empire	The Far East in the Nineteenth Century: China and Japan
6	Indian	Byzantine	The Turkish Nation Establishing a New State
7	Chaldea, Elam and Assyria	The Göktürk Khanate in Asia	The War of Independence
8	Egypt	Türgesh State	From the Treaty of Lausanne to the Proclamation of the Republic
9	Anatolia	Karluik State	Proclamation of the Republic
10	Phoenicians	Uighur State	Abolition of the Caliphate
11	Hebrews	Western Asian Eastern European Turkish States	Political Movements in the Republican Era
12	Iran	Invaders from the Orient to Europe After the Fifth Century	Revolutions and Reforms in Religion and Law
13	Aegean Basin	History of Islam	Revolution and Reform Movements in Education and Discipline
14	-	First Muslim Turkic States	Economic and Financial Revolution and Reform Movements
15	-	The Carolingian Empire	-
16	-	The Normans	-
17	-	German Duchies and the Foundation of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation	-
18	--	The Struggle of Popes and Emperors	-
19	-	Feudalism	-
20	-	Great Seljuq Empire	-
21	-	The Crusades	-
22	-	The Khwarazmian State	-
23	-	Turkic Mongol Empire	-
24	-	Turkish States of Egypt and Syria	-
25	-	Anatolian Turkish States in the Middle Ages	-
26	-	Anatolian Principalities	-
27	-	Civilization in Anatolian Turkish States	-

³ History topics in the middle school third grade are composed of two parts: the first five topics make up the “New and Recent Times” heading, while the next nine topics cover the history of the Republic of Turkey.

28	-	Indian under the Rule of Muslim Turks	-
29	-	Ottomans	-
30	-	Timur	-
31	-	Ottomans After Bayezid I	-
32	-	Mughal Empire in India	-

(Ortaokul Programı, 1938)

Looking at the content of the history course in the 1938 middle school curriculum, the first-grade program had 13 main subjects, the second-grade program had 32 main subjects, and the third- grade program had 14 main subjects. Considering that each of the main subjects had subtopics, it is apparent that a really broad curriculum was designed. In particular, it is almost impossible to teach 32 main subjects covered in the middle second-grade program within two class hours per week, which were allocated for the history course in the 1938 curriculum. The history topics covered in the third-grade program were mainly centred around reform movements and the new regime.

Table 7. Geography Course Topics in the 1938 Middle School Curriculum

	Middle School 1 st Grade	Middle School 2 nd Grade	Middle School 3 rd Grade
1	Research and Investigations into Landforms	Continental Europe	Physical Geography of Turkey
2	Showing Landforms on Paper	Americas	Human and Administrative Geography
3	Definition, Branches, Importance, and Benefits of Geography	Oceania and Australia	Economic Geography
4	Asia	Antarctica	Position and Importance of Turkey among Nations
5	Africa	-	Turkey's relations with the Neighbouring States and the Great World States
6	-	-	Proper Evaluation of the Most Important and Characteristic Phases of the Human and Economic Geography of the Place of Residence

(Ortaokul Programı, 1938)

In view of the subjects that constitute the content of the geography course of the 1938 middle school curriculum, the first-grade program focused on the general knowledge of geography and the geography of continents. The second-grade program entirely dealt with the geography of continents, while the third-grade program dwelt on the geography of Turkey.

Table 8. Civics Course Topics in the 1938 Middle School Curriculum

	Middle School 1 st Grade	Middle School 2 nd Grade	Middle School 3 rd Grade
1	-	The Constitution of 1921	Nation
2	-	Executive Power	State
3	-	Grand National Assembly of Turkey	Democracy

4	-	Organization of Government	Republic
5	-	Duties and Organization of Ministries	First Right and First Duty
6	-	-	Liberty
7	-	-	Equality
8	-	-	General Information on Election
9	-	-	General Information on Tax
10	-	-	Military Duty

(Ortaokul Programı, 1938)

In the 1938 middle school curriculum, the topics of the civics course were included in the second- and third-grade programs. The middle school first-year program did not include the civics course. The main topics and subtopics of the civics course were largely centred around the structure of the State of the Republic of Turkey and citizenship rights and responsibilities.

Social Studies in the 1949 Middle School Curriculum

The 1938 middle school curriculum remained in practice for nearly ten years. A new junior middle school curriculum was designed and put into practice in 1949. The 1949 middle school curriculum included the same courses that constitute the content of social studies, i.e. history, geography, and civics. In the 1949 middle school curriculum, two hours per week were allocated for the history course in the middle school first-, second-, and third-grade programs. The geography course was allocated two hours per week in the first- and second-grade programs and one hour per week in the third-grade program. The civics course was allocated one hour per week in the first-, second-, and third-grade programs (Ortaokul Programı, 1949). The history, geography, and civics course topics constituting the content of social studies, which were covered in the first-, second-, and third-grade programs of the 1949 middle school curriculum, are given in the tables below.

Table 9. History Course Topics in the 1949 Middle School Curriculum

	Middle School 1 st Grade	Middle School 2 nd Grade	Middle School 3 rd Grade
1	Introduction to Human History	Entering the Middle Ages	Europe in the Early Modern Ages
2	The Homeland of Turks and Migrations	History of Islam	Rising Period of the Ottoman Empire
3	Turks Who Stayed in the Homeland After Migrations	The Seljuks	Slowdown Period of the Ottoman Empire
4	History of Asia Minor	Turkish States of Egypt and Syria	Decline Period of the Ottoman Empire
5	Anatolia in Antiquity	Ottoman Empire	Ottoman Turkish Civilization
6	Overview of the Mediterranean Civilization in Antiquity	Conquest of Istanbul	Europe and America in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

7	Aegean Basin		The Extended Reformation Period in the Ottoman Empire
8	Overview of Roman History		The Tanzimat (Reform) Period and Constitutional Era
9			War of Independence
10			Republic of Turkey and the Turkish Revolution
11			World War II and Turkey

(Ortaokul Programı, 1949)

What stands out in the content of the history courses in the 1949 middle school curriculum is a more organized and chronological order at each grade level. The content of the history course in the second-grade program was simplified.

Table 10. Geography Course Topics in the 1949 Middle School Curriculum

	Middle School 1 st Grade	Middle School 2 nd Grade	Middle School 3 rd Grade
1	The Idea of Plan and Map	Africa	Overview of Turkey
2	Turkey's Location on Earth	Continental Europe	Geographical Regions of Turkey
3	Area of Turkey, Area of the Continents, Area and Size of the Earth, and Area of the Seas	Americas	Population of Turkey
4	Landforms in Turkey	Oceania	Economic Life in Turkey
5	Coasts of Turkey	Poles	-
6	Local Time, Time of Turkey, Time Zones, Meridian Circles, and Longitude Movements of the Earth	-	-
7	Climate of Turkey	-	-
8	Distribution of Plants and Animals across Turkey and Earth and Close Connection between Climate and Living Things	-	-
9	Stream Systems in Turkey and Earth	-	-
10	Important Lakes of Turkey and Earth	-	-
11	Distribution of Population in Turkey and in the World	-	-
12	Overview of the Asia Continent	-	-
13	Asia Minor Countries	-	-
14	South Asian Countries	-	-
15	East Asian Countries	-	-
16	Overview of Central Asia	-	-
17	North Asia	-	-

(Ortaokul Programı, 1949)

Considering the 1949 middle school curriculum the content of the geography course was heavier in the first-grade program. The second-grade program completely focused on the geography of continents, while the third-grade program dwelt on the geography of Turkey.

Table 11. Civics Course Topics in the 1949 Middle School Curriculum

	Middle School 1st Grade	Middle School 2nd Grade	Middle School 3rd Grade
1	Our School	Institutions That Keep the Society Alive	Democracy
2	Our Family	National Society	Rights and Assignments
3	Our Environment	Legislative Duty of the State	Our Citizenship Assignments
4	Our Municipality	Executive Duty of the State	Career Choice
5	Our Citizenship Assignments	Judicial Power of the State	United Nations and UNESCO

(Ortaokul Programı, 1949)

It is apparent from the table above that the all-grade civics course in the 1949 middle school curriculum aimed to help students learn citizenship rights and responsibilities based on a from-near-to-far principle. Additionally, the middle school second-grade program addressed each of the legislative, executive and judicial powers separately.

Social Studies in the Middle School Curriculum from 1970 to 1971

For the first time in Turkey, the 1968 primary school curriculum merged social studies-relevant courses and topics into one course called “Social Studies” (Dilek, 2001; Sağlamer, 1997; Sönmez, 1998; Sözer, 1998). In 1970, in accordance with the decision of the Board of Education, the middle school curriculum was revised and the 1970-1971 middle school curriculum was put into practice (Çatak, 2015, p. 81). This curriculum was published in 1973 (Keskin, 2002, p. 266). In the 1970-1971 middle school curriculum, the social studies course was planned with an interdisciplinary approach and allocated five hours per week in the first- and second-grade programs and four hours per week in the third-grade program (MEB, 1973). The table below shows the social studies units covered in the first-, second-, and third-grade programs of the 1970-1971 middle school curriculum.

Table 12. Social Studies Units in the 1970-1971 Middle School Curriculum

	Middle School 1st Grade	Middle School 2nd Grade	Middle School 3rd Grade
1	Where and How Our Days Pass	Major Turkish States and Civilizations before Islam in the Middle Ages	What is Democracy? Democracy in Turkey
2	What are our Village, City, and Town like?	Where and How Islam Was Born and Where and How Islam Spread	Ottoman Empire in the Nineteenth and Twelfth Centuries - the Fall of the Empire and Major World Events
3	Where Are We in Turkey?	Muslim Turkic States	Foundation of the New Turkish State
4	Who Lived Before Us in Our Country and How They Lived	Anatolia After the Tenth Century	United Nations and UNESCO
5	Apenine Peninsula and the Roman Empire	A New Era Begins	Our Population
6	Medieval Europe and the Roman Empire	Rising Period of the Ottomans	How We Meet Our Needs
7		Major and Important Regions of Europe	Some Important Problems of Our Economic Life

8		Slowdown and Decline Period of the Ottoman Empire	Energy Resources in Turkey
9		The Neighbouring States and Our Relations with Them	Industrialization in Turkey
10		There are More Countries and Nations in the World	Transportation and Communication in Turkey
			Domestic and Foreign Trade in Turkey

(MEB, 1973, pp. 51-59)

With the 1970-1971 middle school curriculum, the social studies course began to be taught for the first time under the title of social studies. However, this practice was not implemented throughout the country but in pilot schools. Another important improvement that stands out in this curriculum is the increasing importance of history issues within the units.

Conclusion

The social studies course that first appeared in the USA is a course that prepares individuals for life in terms of both its content and subdisciplines. Due to its multidisciplinary structure, the social studies course provides individuals with almost any information that they need not only during but also after their education life, thereby making their lives easier. Although not directly referred to as social studies, the social studies course was incorporated into the Turkish education system with the 1924 primary school curriculum, the first curriculum of the Republic, due to the similar content of history, geography and civics courses. The revised and newly designed curricula also incorporated the social studies course. This study examined the development of the social studies course in Turkey from 1938 to 1980. It demonstrated the content and development of the social studies course in the primary school and middle school curricula discussing the content of social studies-relevant courses (until 1968) and the content of the social studies course itself, which was introduced as a separate course in 1968. The social studies course has remained important since it was first included in the Turkish National Education System. Accordingly, the 1973 middle school curriculum highlights the importance of the social studies course as follows: “... to become good citizens, students need solid basic knowledge and general culture that help them to know their environment and nation and the world well and solve problems satisfactorily. Therefore, social studies topics have a key place in primary and middle school curricula” (MEB, 1973). The social studies course was long recognized as the fundamental discipline to prepare students to be “good citizens” and is still treated as a pivotal course that helps create “effective citizenship” desired in every society.

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