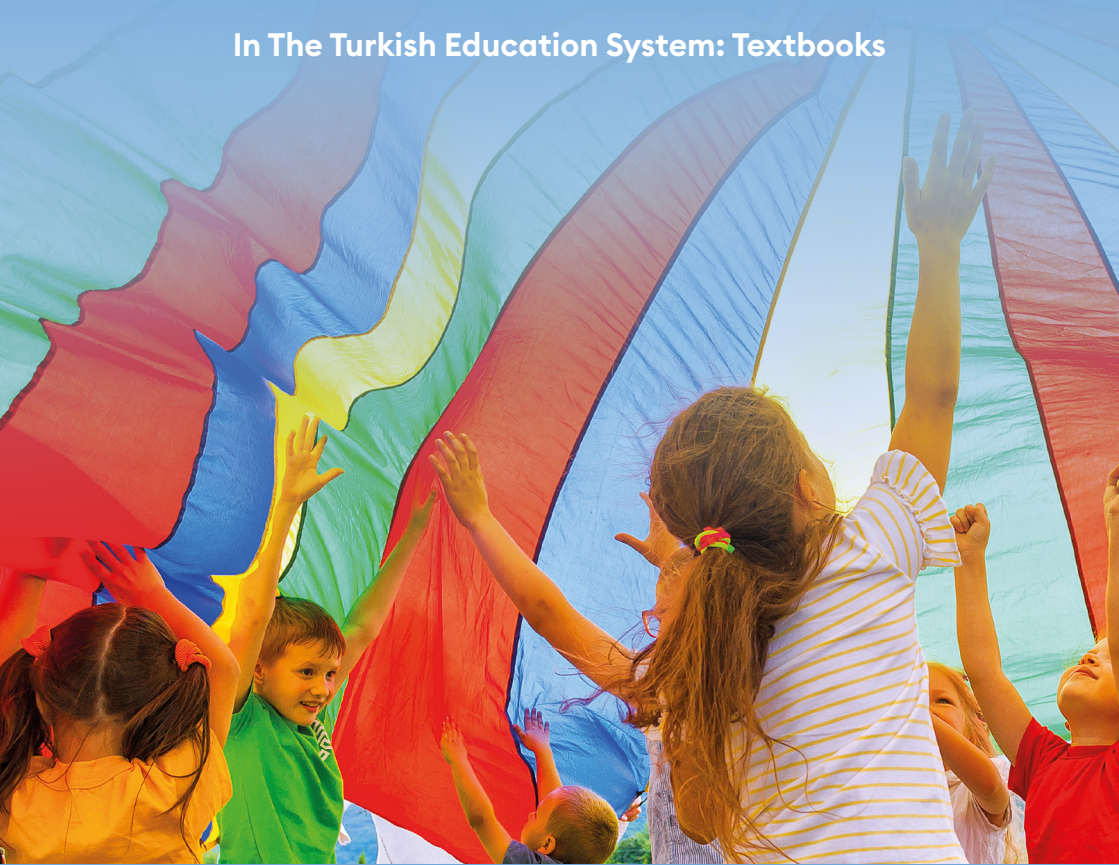




Dr. Canan ARATEMUR ÇİMEN
Dr. Sezen BAYHAN

DEMOCRATIC VALUES AND DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP

In The Turkish Education System: Textbooks



**FRIEDRICH NAUMANN
FOUNDATION** For Freedom.

Turkey

Dr. Canan ARATEMUR ÇİMEN
Dr. Sezen BAYHAN

DEMOCRATIC VALUES AND DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP

In The Turkish Education System: Textbooks



Dr. Canan ARATEMUR ÇİMEN
Dr. Sezen BAYHAN

DEMOCRATIC VALUES AND DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP
IN THE TURKISH EDUCATION SYSTEM: TEXTBOOKS

Editor:
Soner Şimşek

Graphic design: Epique Studio

European Liberal Forum,
Rue d'Idalie 9-13, 1050 Ixelles, Belgium.
info@liberalforum.eu
www.liberalforum.eu

ISBN: 978-2-9602333-1-5

Published by the European Liberal Forum asbl with the support of Fores. Co-funded by the European Parliament. Neither the European Parliament nor the European Liberal Forum asbl are responsible for the content of this publication, or for any use that may be made of it. The views expressed herein are those of the authors alone. These views do not necessarily reflect those of the European Parliament and/or the European Liberal Forum asbl.

© 2019 The European Liberal Forum (ELF). This publication can be downloaded for free on www.liberalforum.eu or www.fores.se. We use Creative Commons, meaning that it is allowed to copy and distribute the content for a non-profit purpose if the author and the European Liberal Forum are mentioned as copyright owners. (Read more about creative commons here: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0>)



Content

Preface	8
Introduction	10
Democratic Values And Democratic Citizenship In Turkey's Textbooks	11
Democracy, Institutions, Rights and Responsibilities	12
The Concept of Democracy	12
Institutions and Practices	18
Citizenship, Citizenship Duties, and Obligations	20
Rights and Freedoms	26
National Identity and International Relations	31
(Re)Construction of the National Identity	31
National Symbols That must be Respected	36
Groups Portrayed as Past, Present, and Future Threats	45
Social Cohesion and Social Diversity	37
Conclusion	50
References	53
Appendices	55
Appendix 1: Framing Questions	55
Appendix 2: Textbooks That Have Been Analysed	58

The European Liberal Forum

The European Liberal Forum (ELF): The European Liberal Forum (ELF) is the foundation of the European Liberal Democrats, the ALDE Party. A core aspect of our work consists in issuing publications on Liberalism and European public policy issues. We also provide a space for the discussion of European politics, and offer training for liberal-minded citizens. Our aim is to promote active citizenship in all of this. Our foundation is made up of a number of European think tanks, political foundations, and institutes. The diversity of our membership provides us with a wealth of knowledge and is a constant source of innovation. In turn, we create an opportunity for our members to cooperate on European projects under the ELF umbrella. We work throughout Europe as well as in the EU Neighbourhood countries. The youthful and dynamic nature of ELF allows us to be at the forefront in promoting active citizenship, getting the citizen involved with European issues and building an open, Liberal Europe.

Friedrich Naumann Foundation

Friedrich Naumann Foundation Turkey Office: The Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF) is an independent, non-profit and nongovernmental organization from Germany working for adult civic education on an international scale. According to our mission, we are committed to promoting the values of liberalism: Individual freedom, democracy, the rule of law, and market economy. Tolerance, the full respect for human rights, and a secular state, which respects the religious beliefs of every citizen, are crucial for our understanding of liberalism. The FNF has been acting in Turkey with partners from civil society, academia, economy, and politics since the first office was opened in Ankara in 1991. In 2002, we moved to Istanbul.

About Authors

CANAN ARATEMUR ÇİMEN

Received her PhD degree in 2016 from the Department of Educational Sciences, Boğaziçi University, İstanbul. Since 1999, she has been working in the field of adult education and training. She has been involved as a consultant in several training projects carried out by various civil society organizations. In 2018, she worked as a coordinator in a school climate development project. In the same year, she also worked as a researcher in the research project entitled “Secularism and Gender Equality in Turkey’s New Textbooks”, which was conducted by the Comparative Education Society for Friedrich Naumann Foundation. Her research interests include class analysis in education, education policy, critical studies in education, gender studies and adult education.

SEZEN BAYHAN

Sezen Bayhan received her PhD degree in 2016 from the Department of Educational Sciences, Boğaziçi University, İstanbul. She was awarded Boğaziçi University Doctoral Dissertation Award in the same year. Between 2006 and 2018, she worked as an instructor at Istanbul Technical University (ITU), School of Foreign Languages, where she taught academic English and research paper writing courses and served as the coordinator of the Research and Professional Development Unit. In 2018, she visited the University of Strasbourg as a visiting research fellow and worked as a researcher in the research project entitled “Secularism and Gender Equality in Turkey’s New Textbooks”, which was conducted by the Comparative Education Society for Friedrich Naumann Foundation. Currently, she is an independent researcher carrying out textbook research. Her research interests are urban education, stratification in education, cultural politics of education, and education policy.

About Editor

SONER ŞİMŞEK

Soner Şimşek graduated from Boğaziçi University's Computer Education and Instructional Technology Department. He received his Master's degree from Boğaziçi University's Educational Sciences Department, where he is currently also working on his PhD on the relationship between learning and social media. Between 2005 and 2014, he worked as a research assistant in the Department of Educational Sciences at Boğaziçi University. He gave lectures in the Faculty of Communication at the Department of Public Relations in Kadir Has University Istanbul as well as at the Departments of Basic Education and Pre-School Education at Istanbul Kültür University. He supported the establishment of Boğaziçi University's Educational Policy Research Center, and he is a founding member of the Society of Comparative Education. His studies mainly focus on educational policies, teacher training and teacher capacity building, inclusive learning, technology and learning issues. He is currently working as a project coordinator at Citizens' Assembly Turkey.

Preface

We have undeniably been undergoing a crisis of democracy that manifests itself on a global scale. Debates concerning this crisis have started to revolve around the “death of democracy”. It is highly unlikely that such a gloomy prognosis will prove to be true as long as the struggle for democracy and hopes for a more just world are kept alive; however, coping with this crisis seems a formidable task. Our planet has been surrounded by various simultaneous crises including global warming and climate crisis, natural disasters induced by the climate crisis, depletion of natural resources, wars, and unprecedented waves of migration. Responses given to these crises so far are unfortunately reducing the capabilities to foster democracy. The general tendency is to manage the crises through short-term solutions that tend to favour the powerful, with little regard for justice and equality. Even the much-praised advanced Western democracies are being shaken at a time when discussions have started on whether global capitalism still needs democracy in its current borders. The resurgence of far-right and ultranationalist politics worldwide poses challenges to democracy in various realms, migrant policies in particular.

Then, what does painting such a gloomy global picture offer us other than reaffirming what we already know? Although it might be a bold argument, I can suggest an answer: It can help us figure out how to resuscitate democracy. How can we achieve this? My answer is inspired by the automatic human movements induced by recent mobile technologies. Zooming in on a picture with our thumbs and index fingers, we can reveal new scales, new contexts, and new dimensions. Focusing on minute fractions of the global picture, this report is an attempt to this end. While the report attempts to provide a general discussion on “education and democracy”, at the core of the discussion lay the “education system, democratic values, and democratic citizenship”. Focusing on the zoomed-in image might lead us to the capillaries that feed the larger vessels and provide us with new possibilities for initiating the transformation at and from these points. Focusing on one’s capabilities to transform what stands before one’s eyes, rather than striving to change what might be beyond one’s power to deal with...

Such an approach might constitute a call for fostering democratic values and promoting democratic participation in line with the principles of democratic citizenship. This approach, in my opinion, entails a research position that considers research, understanding, and knowledge production as (transformative) forms of action rather than a research position that situates the researcher as the subject of knowing external to the “researched”. Certainly, this viewpoint can also be considered as a position informed by the subjectivity inherent to any preface.

Returning to the issue above, I find it meaningful to state that the Turkish context, which is the locus of this report, cannot be thought of as independent from the global. During the past few years, the country has been characterised by an increase in political authoritarianism. For instance, Turkey ranked 110th among 167 countries in the 2018 Democracy Index released by the Economist Intelligence Unit, which has published similar reports since 2006¹. This ranking also categorised Turkey as a “hybrid regime”, which is situated between an “authoritarian regime” and “hybrid democracy”. Education is one realm in which the deteriorating situation of the country can be felt the most. The following sections of the report deal with some of the developments that attest to the veracity of this claim.

The education system sits at the centre of the complex and dynamic structure of the social (Gök, 1999). This centrality makes it a site of reproduction for various realms, the realm of the political in particular. It is for this reason that education, as a site of intertwined complex structural relationships, has been among the most affected by the democratic rollback. Hence, it is meaningful to trace the notions of democratic values and democratic citizenship in the way education is conceptualised in general and in the education system in particular. This report is the outcome of such an effort.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to Dr. Canan Aratemur Çimen and Dr. Sezen Bayhan, who have put a great deal of time and effort into writing this report, to Gülçin Sinav of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom, Turkey, who has come to us with the idea for this report and meticulously monitored the project, and to the European Liberal Forum, who supported the writing of this report. I hope the study presented in this report will contribute, albeit in a small way, to the democratisation of the Turkish education system and of the country itself.

Soner Şimşek

August 2019, Istanbul

Introduction

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, education for democratic citizenship attracted renewed attention, both nationally and internationally, because of the challenges raised by globalisation, migration, increasing inequalities and racism (Osler and Starkey, 2006), and the corollary concern for responding to such challenges that could pose a risk to the culture of living together within diversity. As a country home to a broad range of ethnicities and religious orientations as well as increasing numbers of migrants, similar concerns hold for Turkey; hence the need for a civic education capable of cultivating citizens critical of discrimination and violence of all sorts and willing to act in accordance with the principles of human rights and democratic values has become greater than ever. Education is one of the most important instruments for the cultivation of values associated with democratic citizenship. Promoting a worldview that embraces the values of freedom and equality and facilitating peaceful coexistence among people with a diverse set of ideas, lifestyles, and spiritual/religious orientations is only possible through the cultivation and internalisation of democratic values and the culture of democracy. Therefore, it is crucial to practice the principles of democracy at educational institutions and design educational materials that promote democratic citizenship and human rights. By focusing on how Turkey's textbooks² discuss democratic citizenship and democratic values, this report aims to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the textbooks in this regard and serve as a resource for practices and studies that work towards strengthening the culture of democracy.

2 Since 2003, textbooks in Turkey have been selected by the Board of Training and Education, National Ministry of Education, and sent for free to all schools in the country, which are required to use these textbooks.

Democratic values and democratic citizenship in Turkey's textbooks

One reason that this report focuses on textbooks is that most were rewritten due to the 2017 curriculum reform. This study, therefore, examines the new textbooks, focusing on their qualities relevant to democratic citizenship and democratic values. The study analysed the textbooks using the framing questions (Appendix 1) from the project “Civic Education Across Countries,” which was carried out by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). In the IEA study, the questions are grouped under the following three categories (Torney-Purta et al., 1999, pp. 616-618):

- Democracy, institutions, rights, and responsibilities
- National identity and relations between nations
- Social cohesion and social diversity

The research involves an analysis of 26 textbooks taught in primary (Grades 1-8) and secondary levels (Grades 9-12). These books are as follows: Life Knowledge, Turkish, Social Sciences, Religious Culture and Morals, History of Revolutions and Atatürkism, Human Rights, Citizenship, and Democracy textbooks for primary level; History, History of Revolutions and Atatürkism, and Democracy and Human Rights textbooks for secondary level (For details, see Appendix 2).

1. Democracy, institutions, rights and responsibilities

Findings are grouped under the following categories that have been derived from the analysis of textbook content through the framing questions: definition and distinctive characteristics of democracy, institutions and practices, citizens' rights, duties, and obligations, and rights and freedoms.

The Concept of Democracy

The concept of democracy mostly appears in Life Knowledge and *Human Rights, Citizenship, and Democracy* textbooks at the primary school level³, in Social Studies textbooks at the middle school level, and in Democracy and Human Rights textbooks in secondary education. These textbooks largely deal with the concept of democracy at a theoretical level and lack examples of how democracy is currently practised. Democracy is largely defined through the mode of government, elections, and rights, whereas freedoms are given little coverage. Problems facing democracy in practice and steps to improve democracy also receive little coverage. The Democracy and Human Rights textbook, on the other hand, could be considered an exception in this regard. Although this book suffers most of the above-mentioned weaknesses, in comparison with the other textbooks that have been analysed, the book attempts to include a broader discussion of the concept of democracy by using more varied references to it. However, considering that the main concern of the book is teaching democracy and human rights, as the name suggests, the definition and treatment of the concept of democracy are still poor. Moreover, the book lacks a comprehensive definition or discussion of democracy. The book deals with the notion of democracy only in chapter⁴ abstracts and “factual information” sections (a section that is literally called “information note” and includes definitions of concepts and factual information related to them). The book avoids providing an exact definition of democracy and discussing the concept with reference to this definition. Only the definitions of Abraham

3 Primary education in Turkey consists of primary school (Grades 1-4) and middle school (Grades 5-8) levels, while secondary education consists of Grades 9-12.

4 Most textbooks use the term “theme” to refer to “chapter”. Hence, the two terms will be used interchangeably in this report although the term “theme” will be usually preferred to refer to the chapters of Turkish textbooks and “chapter” will be preferred for History textbooks.

Lincoln and Jürgen Habermas are quoted. Abraham Lincoln is quoted to define democracy as “Government of the people, by the people, for the people” (p. 14), while Jürgen Habermas is quoted as saying, “Democracy is a process of collective will-formation” (p. 19). These two definitions are quoted in different sections, without being made to enter into a dialogue. One of the main problems in this discussion is the lack of engagement with the various ways democracy was defined, dealt with, and experienced at different points throughout history. Although the book includes some information on ancient Greek city-states, medieval England, and some 18th-century states such as the United States, France, and Ottoman Empire, this account is more like a set of chronological information.

Although not clearly defined, the concept of democracy is discussed in an embedded way through various contexts. Contrary to what might be expected from the name of the book, the *Human Rights, Citizenship, and Democracy* textbook does not include a definition of democracy, and the word democracy and its derivatives are included only in the following three sentences: “In democratic societies when people are exposed to injustice, they settle their problems through reconciliation” (p. 34); “People in a democratic society should adopt the culture of living together” (p. 69); “Being an active citizen is highly valued in societies that have internalized the culture of democracy” (p.96). The word “democratic” is defined in the glossary of the book as “in accordance with democracy” (p.106). As can be seen in the following paragraphs, the Grade 8 and 12 History of Revolutions and Atatürkism textbooks also include a very limited definition of the concept of democracy:

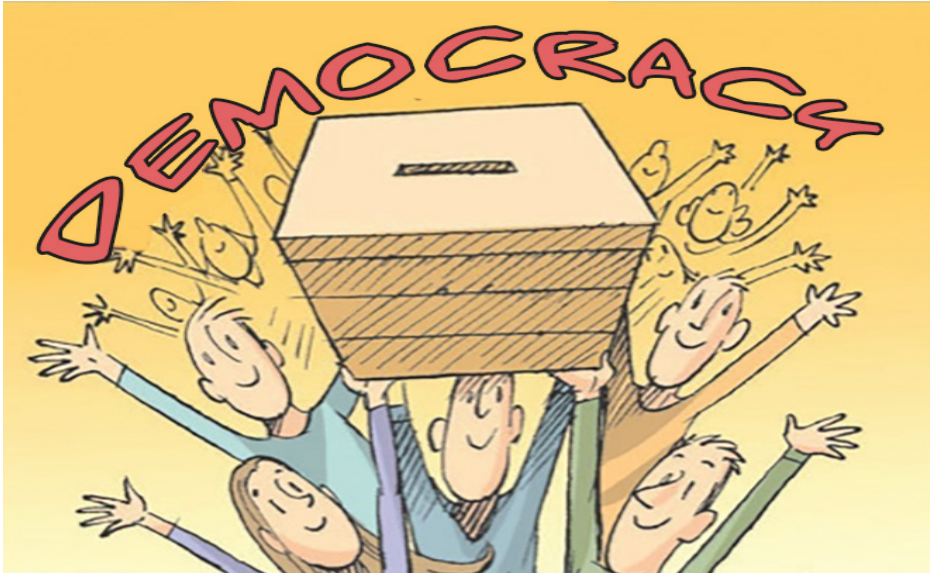
A republican system of government is based on a nation's will and democratic way of life. It means that sovereignty, which means the authority to speak and decide, belongs to the nation itself rather than a privileged group. As Atatürk said, “a republican regime means a system of democratic state rule.” Rulers in this system are elected by the people for a particular period of time. While serving their duties, the elected act in accordance with the needs and expectations of the people (Grade 8 History of Revolutions and Atatürkism, 2018, p. 108).

Democracy is a political system whereby people are able to freely exercise their choices. The most ideal system where democracy can be actualized is a republican regime because in this system the right to speak belongs to the nation. This is called national sovereignty. The right to execute the national will belongs to the parliament (Grade 12 History of Revolutions and Atatürkism, 2018, p. 101).

To summarise, discussion of the concept of democracy in Turkey's textbooks is largely limited to idealized definitions and examples.

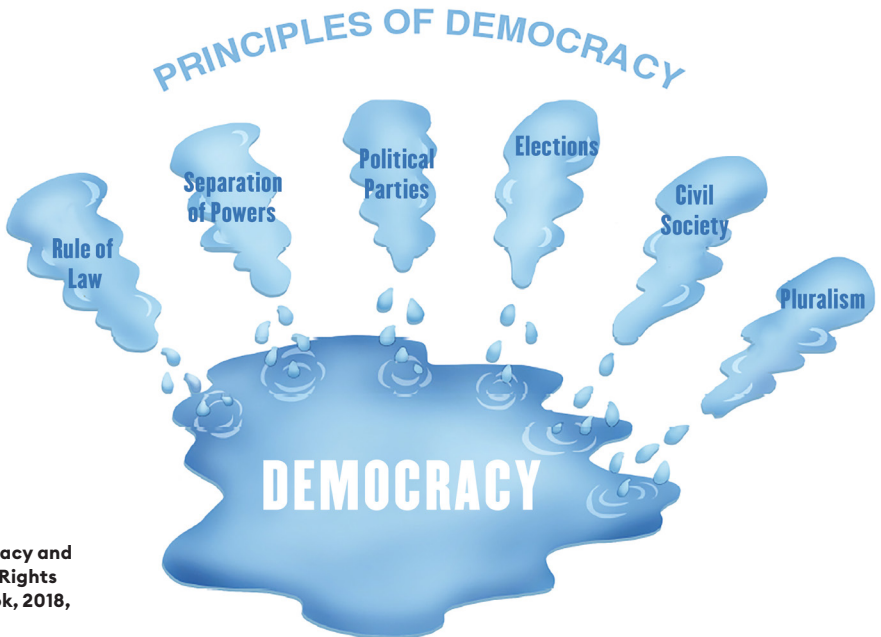
Elections and political parties are among the most emphasized distinctive characteristics of democracy. The textbooks emphasize the importance of the right to vote and voting in elections and present elections for the class or school representative or the board of school clubs as examples of participation in government. Contrary to the expectation of a more comprehensive treatment of the concept, democracy is illustrated in the Democracy and Human Rights textbook through the visual of a ballot box, while dimensions of democracy beyond elections are disregarded (p.11):

Democracy and Human Rights textbook for secondary education, 2018, p. 11.



Although elections receive the most attention as defining features of democracy in the textbooks, information on democratic election processes is almost non-existent. For example, in the Democracy and Human Rights textbook, the section entitled “The Functioning of the Democratic System in Our Country” includes no information on democratic election processes, contrary to what the title promises. Moreover, there is no attempt to explain the distinction between a referendum and general elections or the different processes they entail despite the mention of the April 2017 constitutional change referendum and the June 2018 general elections in the section covering the presidential government system.

Sections that discuss the principles of democracy are also characterised by their inadequate treatment of the concept. The Democracy and Human Rights textbook and the Grade 7 Social Sciences textbook include slightly different information on the issue. Moreover, in the Democracy and Human Rights textbook, the fundamental principles of democracy visualised in the following illustration differ from those listed in the text that follows the illustration:



Democracy and Human Rights textbook, 2018, p. 14.

While only six principles are visualised, as seen in the picture above, the text that accompanies the illustration includes “based on human rights” and “laicism.” While there is the possibility that such a difference could stem from an editorial mistake, it is worthy of consideration that the difference entails only these two terms associated with two highly contested realms of Turkish politics and culture. Despite this interesting shortcoming, the textual section takes a strong position on the two terms. While explaining what being “based on human rights” means the book states that “In countries with democratic regimes all sorts of decisions must be made in accordance with the principles of human rights” (p. 197). Also, while discussing the principle of secularism/laicism, it is stated that “Democracy is a regime that can be practised only under such [laicism] conditions.” On the other hand, the Grade 7 Social Studies textbook lists participation, freedom, pluralism, national⁵ sovereignty, and equality as fundamental principles of democracy (p. 197), which differ from those listed in the Democracy and Human Rights textbook.

In addition to the limited treatment of the concept of democracy, as seen in the above examples, some of the textbooks deal with the concept of democracy in the context of the distant past rather than current practices and experiences. This tendency is most evident in the Grade 7 Social Studies and Grade 10 History textbooks and the Democracy and Human Rights textbook. For instance, it is emphasized in the Grade 7 Social Studies textbook that the practice of convening the Council (*Kurultay*) in the early Turkish states of Central Asia attests to the existence of democracy in the state tradition of the Turks, and “respect for humans and valuing them” are stated as distinctive characteristics of democracy (p. 199). Building on these ideas, the book describes pious foundations (hereafter *vakif*) and hospitals of the Turkish-Islamic states as institutions that served democracy, providing examples from the Ottoman period. Similarly, the Grade 10 History textbook builds a link between democracy and the *vakif* system. Another example of contextualisation with reference to the past can be given from the Democracy and Human Rights textbook, which includes a picture⁶ featuring characters who do not seem to belong to the present times:

5 Rather than “popular sovereignty”, the textbook uses the word “national sovereignty”.

6 The English title of the picture is original, not the translation of the authors.



Democracy and Human Rights textbook, 2018, p. 88.

In conclusion, the textbooks mentioned above deal with democracy in an anachronistic manner. Moreover, despite the emphasis of middle school Social Studies textbooks on democracy's superiority to other systems of government, these textbooks contradict this message by including many stories where kings, monarchs, and sultans are the main characters.

Due to the occasional overemphasis of the concepts of "unity and cohesion", notions of diversity, pluralism, and difference that the textbooks associate with democracy tend to undergo a contextual shift or breakdown in meaning. It is understandable that the notions of unity and diversity are operationalised simultaneously because, as Osler and Starkey (2006) indicate, in an era of globalisation and resultant migration, one of the basic concerns of civic education is to promote a certain set of values to which all citizens are committed, on the one hand, and the willingness to appreciate and acknowledge diversity and differences, on the other. However, over-emphasis on unity and cohesion at the expense of other concepts makes it impossible to operationalise unity and diversity together. An example of this can be given from the chapter "A Pluralistic Approach to Diversity", in the Democracy and Human Rights textbook, in which the concept of

diversity is discussed under the title “Societal Diversity is Wealth” (p. 93) and elaborated through the use of the expression “unity in diversity.” In this conceptualisation, the concept of diversity is further distanced from the essence of democracy due to the emphasis that patriotism, hospitality, and tolerance, which are stated as unifying principles, should be adopted by all citizens. Moreover, in the same chapter, while discussing the concept of society, the book emphasizes the state of being “national” (*milli*) through reference to a common language, religion, and history (p. 96), whereas it could alternatively emphasize and promote pluralism as an inherent value of democratic societies. Moreover, the discussion becomes completely decoupled from the context of democracy and human rights when the book mentions a certain set of developments as “undesirable”, that is, “not participating in national and religious feasts”, “the decline of past patterns of neighbourhood relationships”, “[traditional] ‘values’ not being adopted by the new generation”, and “recent degeneration” (*yozlaşma*) (p. 96).

Institutions and Practices

Some of the books, such as the Grade 3 Life Knowledge, Human Rights, Citizenship, and Democracy, and Grade 5 Social Studies textbooks, cover the subjects of the state, local government, and missions of official institutions. However, the books lack information on how state rulers are elected or laws and regulations are made. Laws and regulations are described in the Human Rights, Citizenship, and Democracy textbook as unchangeable and unobjectionable as in the following: “There exist laws, regulations, and rules to regulate social life. We should comply with them; there is no need to discuss them and come to a consensus. For example, students cannot decide on school hours through consensus. They must comply with the rules governing this issue” (p. 65).

In a similar vein, these textbooks include limited information on how individuals participate in political processes. Concepts of civic participation and active citizenship are largely illustrated through the contexts of requesting a park or wheelchair ramps from the municipality via written petitions and claiming consumer rights in the face of consumption-related problems; however, no attempt is made to exemplify situations that involve individuals participating or demanding inclusion in political processes such as the formation of laws, regulations, and similar decision-making

processes. For example, there is no coverage of how individuals might demand to be involved in political processes through their rights to make peaceful protests, go on a strike or oppose government policies. As Brindle and Arnot (1999) state, a reductionist model of the civic sphere and a political inclusion mechanism cleansed of social conflict and historical change is manufactured.

The chief aims and responsibilities of the state are listed in the Human Rights, Citizenship and Democracy textbook as “ensuring the freedom of people living in the country and the integrity and indivisibility of the state”, “safeguarding the fundamental rights and freedoms of people”, “securing the well-being and serenity of society”, and “providing the necessary conditions for the development of material and spiritual existence of people” (p. 101). The book further explains that depending on the type of violation, people can apply to various authorities such as the ombudsman, school councils, or human rights councils in local districts in cases where their rights or freedoms are violated by public institutions or organisations (pp. 34-35). Disobeying traffic rules or neglecting to collect household waste in one’s neighbourhood are given as concrete examples of violations of rights by public institutions (p. 34), and attention is drawn to violations of children’s rights such as in the case of child labour (p. 30). However, neither this book nor the Social Studies textbooks discuss or provide examples of situations that involve controversy or conflict stemming from the violation of one’s rights, political rights in particular. Although civil society organisations could be given as examples of mechanisms that could be applied to in such cases, they are only described as institutions that support the state, as exemplified in the following narrative from the Grade 5 Social Studies textbook: “Our state is responsible for meeting the basic needs of society; but we are living in a very large country and our population keeps increasing. For this reason, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) support our state” (2017, p. 150).

The Democracy and Human Rights textbook, on the other hand, makes promising efforts in this regard. The importance of democratic, active citizenship is emphasized many times, and the message is reinforced through relevant reading texts. For example, reading texts included at the end of the chapter “Democratic Systems and Living Democracy” (p.28) adopt a citizen-centric perspective and promote active citizenship. However, the section entitled “The Functioning of the Democratic System in Our Country,”

which just precedes the reading texts, deals with Turkey's democracy from a narrow perspective. Such a perspective, albeit contradicting its comprehensive handling of democracy at the theoretical level, is consistent with the overall tendency the book displays in its discussion of issues related to Turkey, which is characterized by the presence of borders, absences, and reinforced preferences. The circumscribed discussion in this section could be attributed to the uncertainties and lack of adequate knowledge on the recently introduced presidential government system.

Citizenship, Citizenship Duties and Obligations

In these textbooks, a good and decent citizen is defined primarily with respect to their⁷ duties and obligations towards the family and the homeland, with emphasis placed on the duties of the citizen to work hard and protect their national values. Examples of such a definition can be found extensively in the textbooks at each level and in various subjects:

A good citizen means being a good person. A good person is one who first loves their family and then their environment and country. Every society needs people who are aware of their duties, obey the rules, fix the problems, and set a good example for others. A society's progress depends upon an increase in the number of good citizens. We should work hard to be good citizens. We should obey the rules and laws. We should protect our national and cultural values. We should respect our seniors and human rights. We should protect nature and like animals. Most important of all, we should work altogether for the development of our country (Grade 2 Turkish, 2018, p. 126).

*We should work hard,
We should work hard,
For our nation, for our homeland,
We should work hard.*

⁷ Turkish is a genderless language, hence this report uses the term "they" and "their" to refer to the third person singular pronouns unless the gender of the person is evident from the context.

*One should not be lazy,
Not a single day should go by without work,
For our nation, for our homeland,
We should work hard.*

*We should be aware that any job is hard,
But we should overcome hardships,
For our nation, for our homeland,
We should work hard.*
(Grade 2 Life Knowledge, 2018, p. 150)

As students, we have obligations towards our family and our country, which we should fulfil. We should improve ourselves by studying, working, and exploring. Our aim should be to further advance our country. In order to protect our homeland, we should perform our duties as best as we can. We should not forget Atatürk's assertion that "The one who performs their duties the best is the one who loves their country the best" (Grade 3 Life Knowledge, 2018, p. 128).

So, then, what should be our aim, as young people? Firstly, we should have morals, cherish national values and science, and safeguard the republic. It does not suffice to say, "I would die for the motherland." We should also say, "I am willing to work to keep this flag and this motherland alive for eternity, without wasting a moment." We –women, men, children– should not forget our martyrs, who shed their blood for the homeland. Learning from our history, we should work towards the future and keep our republic alive for eternity (Grade 4 Social Sciences, 2018, p. 169).

Values such as religion, language, and traditions render the land on which people live more valuable for them and help them act based on the "consciousness of a nation." A patriot who possesses national consciousness never betrays their country. A person who loves their hometown participates in activities intended for its development and improvement and avoids all kinds of attitudes and behaviours (Grade 7, Religious Culture and Morals, 2018, p.91).

The Grade 8 History of Revolutions and Atatürkism textbook defines homeland as “a sacred geography on which we live freely and for the sake of which we risk dying when necessary” (p. 133); while the Grade 8 Turkish language textbook includes a task in which students are expected to prepare a presentation on the topic “homeland” by drawing on the lines of a poem that says, “What makes a flag a flag is the blood that’s on it/ What makes a piece of land a homeland are those willing to die for it” (p. 60), and by using visuals. In most Turkish language textbooks, death during military service is exalted as martyrdom and regarded as a natural sacrifice for love of the homeland. This is presented as an intrinsic element of national culture. While men are the dominant actors in the narratives on martyrdom, women tend to be praised as mothers who courageously send their sons to battle, and they are at times given credit for their sacrificial deeds on the battlefield. An example of the former can be seen in a poem in the chapter “National Struggle and Atatürk” of the Grade 4 Turkish textbook. The poem, which can be seen below, is about the Dardanelles War, which almost all the Turkish textbooks treat as one of the most important historical events to learn about:

*I saw them in Gallipoli
 Their names were carved on marble
 Private Suleyman:
 Aged 17
 Hometown Adapazari
 Left behind all his years to be lived
 And defended the soils of the homeland
 (...)
 Sergeant Uzeyir:
 Aged 19
 Hometown Inebolu.
 “Long live the homeland!” he would say
 No remorse in his eyes
 (...)
 Commander Suleyman:
 Aged 32
 Hometown Agri*

*He pointed his hand towards Conkbayiri
 He described, smiling
 The place he fell as a martyr
 He was making jokes
 And General Mustafa Kemal was with them
 (Grade 4 Turkish, 2018, p. 49).*

A similar approach to the concepts of the enemy, the homeland, and martyrdom pervades the narratives on the Turkish War of Independence:

By the 28th of March, the French had arrived at the gates of Antep. The number of Şahin Bey's men had dropped to thirty. Looking at his loyal comrades-in-arms with affection, Şahin Bey seemed as if he was asking, "Are you prepared to die with me for our homeland?" Şahin Bey and his men fought tenaciously. When he ran out of bullets, he left his compatriots. He stood up before hundreds of enemy soldiers and shouted, "I won't let you invade!" Like a monument to bravery, he stood in the middle of the bridge. He shouted out his last words to the influx of enemies in front of him: "Enemies! Come with your bayonet! God will save the homeland!" The French martyred Şahin Bey there. Today, Antep is still shedding tears for their brave child. May he rest in peace! (Grade 6 Turkish, 2018, p. 53).

Moreover, in the text below, from the chapter "National Culture", love of the homeland and its flag as a defining characteristic of Turkish society as well as the willingness to die during military service are emphasized and presented as the ideal attitudes expected from Turkish citizens:

The homeland and its flag are cherished in our traditions. Our flag flies from the windows and balconies of houses during all national feasts. Our youth are sent off to military service wrapped in flags, with celebrations enlivened by drums and flutes (zurna). Mothers send their children off saying, "one should be willing to sacrifice their life for the homeland." Our mothers are brave enough to put

henna⁸ on their sons whom they send to fight for the homeland. The coffins of people martyred for the homeland are wrapped in a flag. A flag is never, ever put on the floor or stepped on. (...) What keeps a country alive and develops it is love of the homeland. The best examples of this can be seen in our country (Grade 4 Turkish, 2018, p. 196).

Similarly, martyrdom is promoted in the Grade 5 Turkish textbook, where the chapter “National Culture” is presented through male heroes fighting willingly:

His son wanted him to stay on deck, saying to his father, “You may get shot! With your decades of yearning for the homeland!” At that moment, Kara Memiş stood like a rejuvenated tiger. He could barely stand. He wanted a sword and a shield. And pointing to the flag flying at the back of the ship, “Put that on me if I die as a martyr! Isn’t our homeland where the red flag undulates?” he said (Grade 5 Turkish, 2017, p. 144).

A broadened definition of “dying and shedding blood” for the homeland (Altınay, 2009), “heroism”, “martyrdom”, and “veteran status” can be observed in the narratives of the 15 July 2016 coup attempt. “Dying for the homeland” no longer entails only fighting against external enemies, but also against the “traitors” within Turkey. The books tend to mythicize 15 July in a way that implies it is Turkey’s second War of Independence. According to Tokdoğan (2018), the myth of 15 July presents a fertile ground for creating a new national identity. To give some examples, in the Grade 6 Turkish textbook, the Turkish War of Independence and 15 July are depicted in one single illustration (p.43), and it is stated in the Grade 2 Turkish textbook that 15 July is the second War of Independence as follows: “People of our country heroically resisted those who sought to capture the government on 15 July 2016. Hand in hand, they formed trenches against the tanks. In this way, our country was saved from a second invasion after the War of Independence” (2018, p.68).

⁸ Traditionally henna is put on hands on special days such as wedding celebrations or on the livestock that is to be sacrificed during the feast of sacrifice.

The Grade 5 Turkish and Grade 6 Religious Culture and Morals textbooks display a similar approach, drawing an analogy between Turkey's War of Independence and the 15th of July and extolling virtues such as martyrdom and veteran status:

We gained our freedom with the struggle initiated by Mustafa Kemal and his friends in Samsun on 19 May 1919. Less than a century later, on the night of 15 July 2016, we were exposed to a treacherous attack on our country, where we lived in peace. Having witnessed in the War of Independence the heroic deeds of Hasan Tahsin, a journalist who shot the first bullet at the forces occupying Izmir, and those of Sütçü İmam from Maraş, these fertile lands saw on the night of 15 July heroes such as Ömer Halisdemir, who shot the first bullet at the coup forces. (...) Some lost their young lives in a corner of the city; some left behind a tearful and proud spouse, a father, and a child ... And some drank the elixir of martyrdom with their siblings. As the poet says, "That night, so many of us died so that they could survive" (Grade 5 Turkish, 2017, p. 55).

Martyrs and veterans sacrificed their lives without any hesitation in order to protect our values such as the homeland, ezan, and the flag. These lands have seen countless heroic deeds, particularly during the War of Independence. Heroism demonstrated on the 15th of July is among the most recent example of these. For this reason, we should always commemorate our martyrs and veterans with gratitude and never forget our indebtedness to them (Grade 6 Religious Culture and Morals, 2018, p. 130).

Flag-intensive, or "banal nationalist" (Billig, 2003) visuals that accompany stories of 15 July and texts of martyrdom, veteran status, heroism, commemorations, and monuments aim to mythicize the day and transmit it to new generations as a landmark historical event. This myth, as can be seen in the following text, defines, in the words of Üstel (2004), as "decent citizens" those who risk their lives in the fight against treacherous others who attack the homeland:

The brave people of Turkey thwarted the coup attempt on the night of 15 July by fearlessly lying down in front of tanks and stopping bullets with their chests. They wrote an epic of democracy by demonstrating that they will not hesitate to die for the ideal of one nation, one flag, one homeland, and one state. That night 248 citizens were martyred by the gunfire of the coup forces while 2,196 citizens were wounded and became veterans (Grade 4 Social Sciences, 2018, p. 170).

Writing about the content of textbooks from the 1970s, Keyman and Kancı (2011) state that “Sacrificing lives to protect the homeland, the nation and its symbols was not only a duty, but in fact a defining feature of being a Turk” (p.327). When the examples above are evaluated in the light of existing literature, emphasis on the militarization of citizenship (Çayır, 2014) and willingness to sacrifice oneself for the homeland as important values point to a continuity in the Turkish education system.

Rights and Freedoms

It is important that while discussing rights and freedoms textbooks are referring to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Convention on the Rights of the Child, so that they can emphasize the universality of these concepts. However, recent research shows that some of the secondary education textbooks renewed in accordance with the 2017 curriculum offer little hope in terms of the way human rights and citizenship issues are covered. While the concept of human rights was treated as a universal concept in the textbooks of previous years, it is treated as a singular and relative concept in the new textbooks (Aratemur-Çimen and Bayhan, 2018). The textbooks that this research examines tend to discuss rights and freedoms in relation to obligations, and their discussion is limited to theoretical explanations, lacking examples of how rights and freedoms can be enjoyed in actual life. For this reason, the application of framing questions to the textbooks yielded little that can be generalized as a pattern and the discussion of findings presented in this section is largely a discussion of absences.

The textbooks dealing with the issue of rights and freedoms underscore with reference to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that people have certain rights by birth, including the right to citizenship. However,

they lack a discussion of by whom and to what extent these rights can be enjoyed or of problems that are likely to be encountered during this process. Only in the Democracy and Human Rights textbook can a different pattern be observed in this regard. The book presents a relatively more comprehensive approach to the concept of human rights in the chapter “Human Rights and Freedoms” and covers basic texts such as the “Universal Declaration of Human Rights”(pp. 34-36), “Convention on the Rights of the Child” (p. 37, 41) and “Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women” (p. 41). In addition, the book deals with rights more comprehensively in its coverage of the historical development of rights, mentioning classical, social and economic, and civil and political rights (p.41).

Although it is natural to expect the *Human Rights, Citizenship, and Democracy* textbook to discuss the issue of rights and freedoms extensively, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is mentioned by the book briefly in one sentence (p.15) while no example of the right to freedom of religion and conscience is provided at all. Moreover, rights and freedoms are not discussed with adequate examples; instead, duties and obligations are emphasized. Of the eight fundamental rights mentioned in the book, freedom of religion and conscience is one of the three rights that are not reinforced through question-answer tasks. The chapter entitled “Rights, Freedoms, and Responsibilities” (p. 26) starts with a negative example of freedom and includes an example and a question intended to imply that freedom does not mean the right to do whatever one wishes at any time. After the explanation that a human being is a responsible entity in contrast to animals, responsibility is defined as “a person’s bearing the consequences of their decisions” (p. 26) and an equivocal message that a person must take into account and bear the consequences while expressing their opinions is given:

We have the right to express our opinions while decisions are being made about the issues that relate to us. We can express our ideas and decisions freely. However, we have to take into consideration the consequences while expressing our ideas, acting in a certain way, and making our choices because every decision we make will have implications for our life. It is our responsibility to act by taking these into consideration and bearing their consequences (p. 27).

The message above, which seems to relate freedom of expression to responsibilities, is unclear. In addition, although a textbook is expected to convey its messages as unequivocally as possible, the message here is highly ambiguous since the adjective clause “that relate to us” is open to various interpretations. That civic textbooks place more emphasis on duties and obligations than on rights is a finding obtained in a comprehensive study carried out by İnce. In her comparative research focusing on civic textbooks taught from the establishment of the Republic (1923) to 2010, İnce (2012) states for the period 1980-2010 that textbooks published after the 2008-2009⁹ academic year underline duties more than rights as compared to the textbooks of the preceding years.

The Human Rights, Citizenship, and Democracy textbook has a unit entitled “Rights, Freedoms and Duties”, which reminds the reader of their duties and obligations as humans to natural and cultural heritage, the environment, animals, and people, providing concrete examples of these and including a task that asks students to give concrete examples (pp. 27-29). Moreover, attention is drawn to child labour as a violation of children’s rights, which happens in the Grade 4 and 5 Social Sciences textbooks as well. The unit also includes a text and a set of questions that follow it, both of which are intended to raise awareness of the rights violations migrant children are exposed to and build empathy for these children.

The textbooks place much less emphasis on certain concepts related to rights and freedoms. For instance, although freedom of religion and conscience is covered more extensively in the civic education textbooks of Grade 4 and the secondary level, only a few other textbooks mention it, and only when they provide a definition of laicism:

Laicism is not only the separation of religious and worldly affairs; it is also ensuring all citizens’ freedom of religion, conscience, and worship (Grade 7 Social Sciences, 2018, p. 207).

Laicism in civic life is closely linked to freedom of religion, conscience, and worship, which is a fundamental component of democracy. It enables people to be free in their faith and exercise

⁹ Starting from the 2008-2009 academic year, civic education was incorporated into grade six and seven social studies textbooks; therefore, İnce compares in her research the social studies textbooks taught in the period 2008-2010 with civic education textbooks taught before 2008.

its requirements. Atatürk emphasized this aspect of laicism saying, “Laicism is not only the separation of religious and worldly affairs. It also means freedom of conscience, worship, and religion for all people” (Grade 8 History of Revolutions and Atatürkism, 2018, p. 110).

Despite its above-mentioned strengths concerning the way it deals with rights and freedoms, various related problems still prevail in the Democracy and Human Rights. For example, while the book includes in its appendix section all clauses of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, only a few clauses are discussed in the main texts of the book. There is no mention of Turkey’s reservations to articles 17, 29, and 30 in the discussion of the “Convention on the Rights of the Child”, to which Turkey is a signatory. These articles, which include provisions on minority groups’ language rights, are also disregarded in the appendix section that includes a simplified or children’s version of the convention. Moreover, the messages expressed in some of the articles are rephrased in a way to omit particular content. For example, while Article 30 of the convention states that “In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of indigenous origin exist, a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practise his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language”¹⁰, this sentence has been narrowed down in the book as follows: “Children of minority groups shall not be subject to discrimination of any kind either; the state shall protect the rights of children belonging to minority groups, too.” (p. 137). Although the issues of language rights and mother tongue are among the basic human rights issues, there is no mention of them in any of the textbooks this study has looked into, including the Democracy and Human Rights textbook.

In its discussion of laicism, the Grade 12 History of Revolutions and Atatürkism textbook focuses on freedom of religion as an aspect of laicism whereas freedom from religion/religious oppression is not mentioned at all, although it is essential for securing social peace within diversity. Kemal Atatürk’s saying that no one can be forced into any religion or sect is quoted in a box, but the section of the book entitled laicism and dedicated to the discussion of laicism does not mention such an important freedom. While

¹⁰ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>

value systems outside religion are ignored, freedom of choosing one's religion is mentioned as a principle of laicism, and it is stated that "Laicism is not an alternative to religion. Laicism and democracy are components that help create a freer religious sphere" (p. 104). Following these statements, an effort is made to come up with a particular conceptualisation of laicism, which ends up, as can be seen below, with an ambiguous conceptualisation due to abstract descriptions and a lack of examples:

Laicism is a principle that will contribute to the consolidation of democracy, when Turkish state tradition and values of Turkish culture are exploited as best as possible. Laicism prescribes that problems related to freedom of faith and democracy are resolved through scientific methods. (...) The understanding of laicism promoted by Atatürkism is a value that needs to be defined in light of historical experiences of Turkish society rather than through the impositions dictated by the West (Grade 12 History of Revolutions and Atatürkism, 2018, p. 104).

A relatively positive example the book includes in terms of rights and freedoms is that it discusses in detail, under the section "Rights Given to Turkish Women" (p.124), the rights Turkish women gained after the establishment of the Turkish Republic, emphasizing that they consequently became equal with men. The book does not mention gender equality as a universal value, avoids any positive or negative conceptualisation of gender equality, and uses a language that presents women as passive onlookers during the process of gaining equal rights. That being said, the book stands out with its inclusion of certain principles on the equality of women and men since this concept is either almost non-existent in most other textbooks or receives little coverage in some such as the Grade 7 Social Sciences textbook. While this book's relatively positive attitude can be attributed to the traces of early republican discourse on national identity, a definitive argument about how gender equality is treated in the Grade 12 History of Revolutions and Atatürkism textbook can only be made after a comparative inquiry involving periodisation. To sum up, in the section dedicated to laicism, the emphasis is limited to freedom of religion and the section ends with an equivocal conceptualisation of national laicism whereby it is not regarded as a universal value at all.

What is also striking about this treatment of rights and freedoms is that the Grade 6 Turkish textbook traces the roots of human rights to the period of Prophet Mohammed. Through an anachronistic approach, the concept of human rights as known today, which does not belong to that era, is conceptualized as intrinsic to Islam. Students are asked to prepare a speech on the theme “equality and human rights” by drawing on the following quote from the Farewell Sermon of the Prophet Mohammed: “Oh people! Your God is the same. Your father is the same. All of you descend from Adam, and Adam was made of Earth. An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over a black nor a black over a white” (Grade 6 Turkish, 2018, p. 115).

2. National Identity and International Relations

This section focuses on themes common to the conceptualisation of national identity, which emerged from the answers to the framing questions. Common themes have been grouped as follows: the definition of national identity in textbooks, national symbols considered particularly worthy of respect, historical events and national stories believed to be important for all citizens to know about, and groups that are portrayed as past or current threats.

(Re)Construction of National Identity

A common tendency in almost all the textbooks’ definitions of the nation is that Turkish culture is celebrated from an essentialist perspective that places a particular emphasis on national culture and values and assumes that certain particular cultural characteristics apply to the entire society:

A nation consists of a group of people unified around a language, history, and culture. People making up a nation make tools and build structures for various reasons. They make an effort to express their feelings and ideas through speech, writing, music, or painting. They share their happiness and sadness and therefore share the same destiny. As a result of such shared experiences over a long period of time, they create a special set of material and spiritual values that is called national culture. In this way, each nation is distinguished from others by its language, customs and traditions, national attire, feasts, beliefs, moral values, and sense of art. Its roots extending deep into history, the Turkish nation has a rich culture. Among the components of our national culture are offering coffee to guests, kissing the hands of elders on religious feasts, visiting the sick, organising circumcision and wedding ceremonies. Also, all of us have in our houses objects and works of art that reflect our national culture (Grade 4 Social Sciences, 2018, p. 38).

A group of people who come together around a shared religion, language, history, and culture and dwell on a particular piece of land is called a nation. The homeland, the flag, and the national anthem are among the most important values that ensure unity in a society. These are the values that make a nation a nation and unify individuals around the same ideals. If these values disappear, society loses its identity. A society can live in peace and happiness only if it upholds these values (Grade 6 Religious Culture and Morals, 2018, p. 126).

Such a definition of “culture” built around the similarity of lifestyles and feelings “makes a totalising claim on citizens’ lives” (Keyman & Kancı, 2011, p.328). As evident in the passages above, the construction of “We” (Çayır, 2014) is Turkish by ethnicity and Muslim by religion. Such an ethnocultural (Bora, 2003) construction of national identity takes little interest in and empathy for the other, who remains outside of the “national” (Gök, 2003).

Although it is stated that all citizens are equal before the law and that in accordance with the principle of laicism the state shall not treat citizens differently based on their religion (Grade 8 History of Revolutions and Atatürkism) or sect (Grade 7 Social Sciences), the textbooks tend to

include only the rituals of Sunnite Islam while covering national feasts in the theme “National Culture”:

The defining characteristic of the Ramadan Feast and the Feast of Sacrifice is that relatives and friends visit each other and come together. Those who live in cities sometimes take the opportunity to visit their elders and relatives who live in villages. Young people kiss the hands of their elders and receive their blessings. It is a custom to give money or gifts to children who kiss hands. Visitors are served candies on the Feast of Ramadan. For this reason, it is also called the “Feast of Candies.” During the Feast of Sacrifice, visitors are served not only candies but also the meat of the animal that has been sacrificed (Grade 8, Turkish, p. 154).

The only positive example that can be given concerning this issue is that the Grade 7 Social Sciences textbook includes celebration messages of the Presidential office for both the Ramadan Feast and Christmas and asks students to comment on these in relation to the understanding of a secular state (p. 207).

The analysis of these textbooks reveals that the conceptualisation of national culture and the relation of citizens to it involves a simultaneous construction of gender identities, where various problems inhere in terms of the implications for gender equality. Women are underrepresented in the textbooks in comparison to men, and the conceptualisation of national culture is family-centred, with women being largely represented as mothers. The Grade 7 Social Sciences textbook suggests that a woman comes into being with her existence in a family and she would not be as esteemed outside the family: “In Turkish culture, family is the building block of society. Women had a highly esteemed status in Ottoman society, too, as a consequence of the value attached to family” (2018, p. 85).

Similarly, the discussion of customs and traditions, which are emphasized as central components of Turkish national culture and values, is characterized by a gender-discriminatory approach:



Grade 3 Turkish, 2018, p. 125

My dear daughter, it is a Turkish cultural tradition for young girls to prepare dowries and keep them in coffers like this. In the past, people did not have the means to buy all they needed for their houses. For this reason, mothers would say, “one must start to prepare a dowry as soon as a girl is born” and start marriage preparations for their daughter in advance. Wherever they saw a piece of silk, jewellery, needlework, lacework, or clothes, mothers would buy it or make it themselves and put it into the dowry coffer for their daughters. The coffer would gradually fill up in time and so the young girl would prepare herself for the day of marriage (Grade 4 Social Sciences, 2018, p. 39).

On the other hand, male protagonists dominate the narratives in the themes “National Culture,” “Virtues,” and “Health and Sports” in Turkish language textbooks. In these chapters, which strongly emphasize traditional sports such as cirit and wrestling, visuals and texts depicting these sports feature only men. The picture below is included in the Grade 3 Turkish textbook to illustrate the traditional sport *cirit*:

Similarly, stories of virtuousness are also dominated by male characters, who seem to no longer live in today's world, constructing being virtuous as a capability peculiar to men. The following visual is only one, inter alia, of the examples of this tendency found in the texts and visuals of Turkish textbooks. The visual accompanies a text entitled "Giving Means Getting More", the story of a madrasa teacher and his student in the Grade 6 Turkish textbook:



Grade 6 Turkish, 2018, p. 109

None of the textbooks, with the exception of the Democracy and Human Rights textbook, deal with the subjects of gender equality and gender discrimination. This can be shown as one of the relative strengths of the Democracy and Human Rights textbook. In the chapter named “A Pluralistic Approach to Diversity,” the section entitled “I Have Responsibilities for Ensuring Gender Equality” deals only with this issue (pp.97-100). Moreover, while discussing democratic citizenship, the following cartoon is given and two questions about the cartoon are addressed in order to emphasize that a democratic citizen should value gender equality:



Democracy and Human Rights textbook, 2018, p. 20.

National Symbols to that must be Respected

Collective symbols that are perceived as worthy of respect by all of society play an important role as catalysts for the formation and maintenance of a national identity and collective memory. In this regard, the Turkish flag and national anthem (*İstiklal Marşı*) are commonly and frequently treated as sacred symbols in the textbooks we have examined:

Our flag and İstiklal Marşı are our national values. We should love and protect our national values. During flag ceremonies, we turn our faces to our flag, stand still, and sing our anthem with enthusiasm. We should respect our flag and İstiklal Marşı and work hard to protect them (Grade 2 Life Knowledge, 2018, p. 157).

The Grade 6 Religious Culture and Morals textbook includes a highly nationalistic section entitled “Love of the Homeland, Nation, and Flag” (pp. 126-130) in the chapter entitled “Our Basic Values.” The section addresses the question “Please explain what you understand from the saying ‘Love of the homeland comes from faith’” (p. 126). In order to emphasize the following message, it includes: “Certain spiritual elements are required for people to adopt a particular place as their homeland. These are religion, language, rituals, customs, and traditions. A nation can maintain its existence as long as it protects these values on its homeland” (Grade 6 Religious Culture and Morals, 2018, p. 126). Right after the question comes the well-known, albeit ultra-nationalistic, poem of Arif Nihat Asya (p. 127). The poem is entitled “The Flag” and is notorious for its militaristic language, as seen below, while expressing respect for the Turkish flag:

*O the white and scarlet adornment of the blue skies,
The bridal gown of my sister, the shroud of our martyrs,
Radiating luminous lights, undulating gracefully!
I read your epic and will write your legend.
I will dig a shallow grave for those
Who do not look at you the way I do.
I will ruin the nests of the birds
Who fly by without saluting you.
(....)
Just desire anywhere on earth!
I will hoist you
Wherever you wish! (p. 127)*

Despite the poem’s militaristic language, it is stated on the next page that a person who likes their homeland should avoid discrimination based on religion, language, or race. This idea is again conveyed in an ambiguous and contradictory message as follows: “A person who likes their homeland

and nation does not discriminate against people based on religion, language, colour, race, etc. [She/He] does not hesitate to make sacrifices for the homeland and the nation and fulfils their duties and obligations” (p. 128).

Texts and visuals featuring the national flag abound not only in the content on the Dardanelles War and the War of Independence, which are treated as two historical events in which the Turkish nation demonstrated heroic bravery, but also in the narratives on the 15 July coup attempt, which was added to textbooks published after the 2017 curriculum reform. This is common to all the textbooks that deal with 15 July. Some examples from different textbooks are given below:



Grade 2 Life Knowledge, 2018, p. 164.



Grade 6 Turkish, 2018, p. 59

Groups that are portrayed as past, present, and future threats

What is striking in the history textbooks is the hostile conceptualisation of non-Muslim minorities. Both the Grade 11 History textbook and the Grade 12 History of Revolutions and Atatürkism textbook describe non-Muslim minorities of the Ottoman Empire as people who collaborated with and were easily provoked by the invading forces during the War of Independence. Rights given to the non-Muslims of the Ottoman Empire are described as results of compromises unwillingly made upon the demands of foreign states meddling in the internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire. One of the many examples that illustrates this perspective is given below:

Moreover, following military defeats, the Ottoman State had to sign a number of agreements that gave foreign states the right to protect non-Muslims on Ottoman lands. This development turned the merchant non-Muslims that were Ottoman tebaa [subjects] into people who could be called comprador-wealthy people. This does not apply to all non-Muslims. However, among those merchants, most of the ones involved in port-trade built partnerships with foreign firms, opened representative offices, and even tried to further their commercial interests by using the advantages of their dual-citizenship (Grade 11 History, 2018, p. 38).

Similar to the secondary level textbooks, the Grade 8 History of Revolutions and Atatürkism textbook states that minorities revolted despite the rights given to them by the Ottoman Empire:

Ottoman statesmen sought ways of preventing further minority revolts. The Sultan's declaration of the Tanzimat Edict (1839) brought the minority rights that already existed under constitutional protection. In this way, Ottoman statesmen sought to increase the loyalty of the minorities to the state and prevent the state from disintegrating. However, despite these steps, the minorities -driven by aspiration for independence- continued to revolt. Hence, in part because of the pressure from the European states, the Islahat Edict was declared in 1856. With this edict, minorities gained equal rights with Muslims. However, minority revolts could not be prevented (2018, s. 19).

Secondary level history textbooks conceptualise non-Muslim schools as tools of Western states seeking to dismantle the Ottoman Empire or to meddle in the internal affairs of the empire, displaying no regard for concepts related to the right to education. Some examples can be seen below:

Benefiting from the capitulations granted by the Ottoman Empire, foreign states opened many schools on Ottoman lands. The Ottoman Empire did not have adequate authority to oversee these schools, which were administered through the consulates of the

related countries. Taking advantage of this, foreign schools were engaged more in missionary activities than education and incited the minorities in the country to revolt against the state (Grade 8 History of Revolutions and Atatürkism, 2018, p. 155).

After the conquest of Istanbul, the Ottoman Empire allowed non-Muslims to speak their own languages and receive education in their native languages. The minority schools did not create any problems when the state was strong, but as of the XIXth century, they began to be driven away from state supervision. Foreign states that sought to exploit the minority schools for their own interests provided them with material and emotional support. The foreign states aimed to benefit from the rights granted to minorities by establishing patronage over them. As the minorities were predisposed to this situation, minority schools became controlled by foreign states. Countries such as France, Italy, United States, and England, seeking to take advantage of this situation, started to open education and training institutions on Ottoman lands. These institutions had no legal basis and were not subject to supervision (Grade 11 History, 2018, p. 149).

Such an approach to the Ottoman minorities dominates the Grade 11 History textbook, which claims that the alleged problems date back centuries. Moreover, the book's narrative establishes a relationship of continuity between the minority schools issue and the 15 July coup attempt. In the first parts of Chapter 3, the term Eastern Question (*şark meselesi*) is introduced and defined as a contest between the European powers for "establishing power over the Ottoman State" and a "mission of expelling the Turks from Anatolia." The book also addresses the following question, asking the students to relate the discussion to the current political context: "What effects of the Eastern Question have continued until today?" (p. 94). It is claimed that the Eastern Question, the alleged "aim of which is to expel Turks from Anatolia and the Balkans" (p. 94) consists of two phases. The first phase spans the period 1071-1683, which starts with the Malazgirt War and ends with the failure of the Vienna siege (p.94), while the second phase encompasses the period in which the European powers sought to free the Christians in the Balkans from Ottoman sovereignty.

It is claimed that it is the second phase when the European states “incited non-Muslim communities living under Ottoman sovereignty to revolt, particularly the Serbians, Greeks, and Bulgarians” (p. 94) and exploited the issue of minority rights to interfere in the internal affairs of the Ottoman state. Then, information is provided on minority revolts, minority communities that gained their independence, Jerusalem as a contested holy land, and certain wars and treaties, with the term Eastern Question brought up again and situated in the context of these historical events (2018, pp. 95-105). After this, the “Armenian question”, which is claimed to be “a part of the Eastern Question” (pp. 106-109) is discussed.

The Armenian question is defined as an issue that arose as a result of the incitement by European and Allied powers, and the opening of “minority and foreign schools in the Ottoman” Empire is described as part of the plot to provoke the Armenians (p. 107). “Europe” is held responsible for the outbreak of Armenian uprisings, and after the presentation of some details on the uprisings, the issue of deportation of Armenians, and the Deportation Law are discussed (pp. 107-109). The deaths that occurred during the “forced migration” are related to the propaganda against Turkey “aiming to provoke the public opinion in the West, where people did not know about the Turks” (p. 109). The discussion ends with the question, “What are the current political repercussions of the Deportation Law?” (p. 109). Right after this question, a reading text entitled “The Eastern Question, Education, and the 15 July 2016 Coup Attempt” is included (p. 110). The text, whose visual features Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the president of Turkey and the Justice and Development Party, starts with the following sentence: “In the XIXth century, in line with the Eastern Question, Western powers started to exploit the ‘issue of education’ in order to accelerate the disintegration of the Ottoman State.” It attributes the opening of minority schools to political motives that aimed to deepen the sectarian divide among the Ottoman Christian communities and to educate the minority students to revolt against the state. The second paragraph of the text presents the activities of the “FETÖ/PDY¹¹ terrorist organization as aligned with the plans of external actors as “an example of how education can be abused and used to destroy the political unity of a state” (p. 110), and then discusses the 15 July coup attempt. It is stated that the Gülenist Terror Organisation, organising

11 FETO stands literally for “Fethullahist Terrorist Organization” (hereafter Gülenist Terror Organisation), inspired by the name of Fethullah Gülen, the cleric alleged to be behind the coup. The organization named after his name is referred to as Gülenist sect/movement/network in English.

through schools and educational institutions and placing its members in strategic state posts, attempted a coup, and that this attempt “shows how Western powers can exploit the internal affairs of a state, particularly educational institutions, for their own interests” (p. 110). In other words, the book situates the issue of the Eastern Question in the context of today’s popular politics and relates it to current political issues. Also, the questions addressed serve to facilitate this contextualization and way of building relations. Despite the claims that events that occurred in the 11th century have implications for today and that minority schools contributed to the dismantling of the Ottoman Empire and the questions asking students to discuss these historical events in relation to today’s political context, there is no mention of today’s minority schools in the context of the right to education.

Moreover, the books include stories that contain anti-non-Muslim elements by narrating the repercussions of historical events in daily life interactions. For example, in a passage quoted from Falih Rıfkı Atay’s work named *Çankaya*, while narrating the anxieties of a person who cannot get any news about the developments related to the War of Independence, it is implied that the non-Muslims living in Istanbul were happy that the national struggle was being lost:

We spent all day in painful anxiety, so to speak. We were unable to eat or even think. (...) Our despair escalated as time passed. (...) While I was travelling to Büyükkada¹² in the evening, my mind was still preoccupied with the same thoughts; my heart still suffered that same pain. The deck of the ferry was crammed with people. Those who did not speak Turkish were so, so joyful. This joy would suffice to devastate us. We were fearful of asking what was happening (...). Weren’t the Greeks, too, exhausted with the war? We could come to an agreement of some sort. (...) We had such a sleepless, such a painful night, that death seemed like a restful sleep. In the morning we took the ferry back, hiding in its most invisible corner. I thought I would find all the Turks in the city mourning. (...) The Greek commander-in-chief Trikopis was captured with all his soldiers. (...) Interestingly, we [were so tired that] we had

12 Büyükkada is an island in the Marmara Sea and was largely inhabited by non-Muslim communities. Even today, it has a significant population of non-Muslim citizens.

lost all our energy for celebration when we learned that Izmir was taken back (...) We could not even rejoice in the idea of seeing the unhealable sorrow in the faces of those who were celebrating with champagne just the night before (Grade 12 History of Revolutions and Atatürkism, 2018, p. 93).

A similar discourse is expressed for the Greek minorities (hereafter Rums¹³) of Izmir: “With the support of a British warship, the Greek army invaded Izmir on 15 May 1919. The Rums of Izmir welcomed the invading Greek army with flowers and Greek flags in their hands” (Grade 12 History of Revolutions and Atatürkism, 2018, p. 57).

The minorities are described not only as collaborators who are happy with the nation’s defeat in the war but also as those who are riotous or disruptive: “In order to save the homeland and gain independence, the Turkish nation started to organize against the invasions that started following the Mondros Ceasefire Treaty as well as the disturbances of the minorities” (Grade 12 History of Revolutions and Atatürkism, 2018, p. 58). And it is stated that “Encouraged by these developments and seeking to fulfil their aspirations, the minorities intensified their disruptive behaviour against the Turks” (Grade 12 History of Revolutions and Atatürkism, 2018, p. 61).

What is also striking in the anti-non-Muslim narratives is their ethno-religious nationalistic character, which is constructed through Muslim versus non-Muslim duality. An example of this can be seen below:

The French garrisoned troops of Armenians in Antep and, using the Armenians in that region, started to attack Turks in order to suppress them. (...) Occupying Maraş, the French attempted to turn the region into a colony by cooperating with the Armenian minorities. This attempt triggered the people of Maraş to act against the occupation. When the Turkish flag in Maraş Castle was brought down and replaced by the French flag, Rıdvan Hoca, the imam of Ulu Mosque, excited the community by saying, “One cannot perform the Friday prayer in an enslaved country where its flag cannot freely wave in its fortresses.” The townspeople brought down the French flag and replaced it with the Turkish flag. The Turks did not tolerate the disturbing acts of the French and Armenians.

¹³ Hereafter, the Greek-speaking community of the Ottoman Empire will be referred to as Rum (singular) or Rums (plural) while those from Greece will be referred to as Greeks.

[Resistance] Events first broke out when a French soldier tore a woman's niqab, saying to her, "This place no longer belongs to the Turks. One cannot walk around in her niqab on French lands" (Grade 12 History of Revolutions and Atatürkism, 2018, p. 77).

The Grade 12 History of Revolutions and Atatürkism textbook adopts a negative standpoint concerning the political rights of non-Muslim minorities and criticizes their aspirations to obtain equal citizenship rights. It is stated that the first national assembly had a national (*milli*¹⁴) character since there were no minority representatives in the assembly (p. 71), and it is implied that privileges granted to "non-Muslim communities" could disrupt the "political sovereignty and social balance of the state" (p. 65, 67). Although this textbook does not explain what the word *milli* means, the Grade 10 History textbook explains the *millet* system. It is explained in detail that "the millet system of the Ottoman State is" rooted in Islamic law and refers to the political mode organising and governing the communities living in the country based on their religion or religious sect. It is emphasized that this system is in no way similar to the European understanding of "nation" because "the term millet in the Ottoman State refers to religious identity" (Grade 10, 2018, p. 188). Moreover, Rums are blamed for pursuing certain political aspirations (p. 63), and Greece's bringing the expulsion case of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, who was born in Bursa, to the International Court of Justice is seen as interfering in the internal affairs of Turkey (s. 143).

In her work on the construction of the other in Turkey's history textbooks, Nahmiyaz (2018) also points out the descriptions of *Rums* welcoming the invading Greek soldiers with flowers and Armenian minorities collaborating with the French invaders. From Nahmiyaz's study it can be understood that a conceptualisation of minorities similar to what we have discussed in this report existed in the textbooks of 1985 and 2004 and that the construction of Rum and Armenian minorities as the "Significant Others" (Nahmiyaz, 2018) that pose a threat to the nation's existence is a case of continuity in Turkey's textbooks.

14 Millet, the noun form of the adjective *milli*, is a loanword from Arabic and translates as "nation" in modern Turkish. During the Ottoman era, it did not refer to the modern concept of "nation" but to religious identity. According to the history textbooks analysed in this report, the "millet" (religious groups) system was the building block of society in which Muslims were the dominant millet and non-Muslims were subordinate to them. The Turkish counterpart of the word "millet", lacking religious connotation, is "ulus."

3. Social Cohesion and Social Diversity

This section discusses how the textbooks deal with the issues of differences, social diversity, and social cohesion, with a particular focus on the way disadvantaged, segregated or disenfranchised groups are conceptualized. While discussing differences, most primary school textbooks prioritise difference in terms of physical features, personality and emotional characteristics, interests and abilities, and then go on to state that people are also different and have the right to be different in terms of attributes such as race, language, religion, and gender. It can be said that the textbooks are supportive in this regard. However, the textbooks lack adequate concrete examples of how to live together within diversity, and differences are largely presented as attributes that need to be respected or understood. This way of framing limits the discussion of difference to a sterile conceptual framework:

We are all different from one another. We all have physical traits that differentiate us from others. Some of these are height, weight, eye or hair colour. Our height, weight, and abilities change as we grow up. Also, we acquire new abilities and learn to perform difficult tasks more easily (Grade 2 Life Knowledge, 2018, p. 14).

Every individual has different characteristics and abilities. We should perceive individual differences as natural and respect them. We should be understanding about all kinds of differences. In this way, everybody will be happier (Grade 2 Life Knowledge, 2018, p. 17).

Every human being is worthy of respect regardless of their race, language, religion, gender, viewpoints¹⁵ or country of origin. For this reason, differences should not be a reason for segregation and oppression. No one should be subjected to treatment in which they are blamed, excluded, ridiculed, or humiliated because of their differences. One should not forget that possessing differences is a universal right, and every person has the right to freely experience and express their differences (Grade 4 Social Sciences, 2018, p. 28).

¹⁵ In the original version of the text, literally, the word “thought” is used. It may refer to political thought in Turkish, but the phrase “political thought” would be more apt. Hence, the term “thought” or “view-point” in this context is ambiguous in Turkish as well.

The theme of “Rights and Freedoms”, in the Grade 8 Turkish language textbook, covers the topic of individual differences as a sub-theme by narrating the story of three children seeking to “attain the knowledge of the wisest man” (p. 220). The story, entitled “The Path of the Wise Man,” involves the gendered construction of characters: Magnolia is the most beautiful; Tor is the strongest, and Narcissus is the most unusual character. At the end of the story, where three children with different characteristics work in cooperation and manage to reach the “wise man,” there is an attempt to emphasize children’s having different physical and personal characteristics and rights and freedoms. However, as can be seen in the following excerpt, the relationship between the intended emphasis and its verbal manifestation is unclear:

Every child has these rights irrespective of their or their parents’ race, colour, gender, language, religion, political or other kinds of views, national or social origin, or any other status derived from ownership, birth, or other sources.

The wise man in the story opened the doors of knowledge to all three children. Similarly, the Declaration of the Rights of the Child makes no discrimination among children on account of their cultural background or viewpoints on life.

This story presents cultural diversity not as a source of segregation but as a source of wealth that benefits everyone (p. 221).

Physical disability is also described as a difference and discussed with an emphasis on the concepts of respect and assistance. Also, as seen below, students are given the message that one can overcome barriers despite a disability if one really wants something:

With their achievements, the players of our national football team have shown that physical disability is not a deficiency but only a difference. Despite adversities, they never gave up football, which is their greatest passion. Working resolutely and with perseverance, they earned a victory, which has made our nation proud and happy. What is more important is that they boosted the morale of people with disabilities and infused them with a sense of self-confidence. For this reason, we should all thank them. In addition, we should respect their differences and those of all people with disabilities (Grade 4 Social Sciences, 2018, p. 30).

Textbook visuals involving students helping someone generally depict the students helping people with disabilities. A good example, on the other hand, can be found in the Grade 4 Social Sciences textbook, which includes a piece of text suggesting that disability is created by people. However, the text ends by implying that problems arising at the intersection of poverty and disability, which are two crucial social issues, can also be resolved through charity campaigns initiated by individuals:

The other day I saw a disabled woman who was trying to move her wheelchair. Because the pavements were not designed for wheelchairs, the woman could barely drive her wheelchair. Trying hard, she managed to reach the cash dispenser. But another barrier awaited her there because she was not able to reach the buttons of the machine. Seeing her looking around in despair, I ran to her and offered help. She accepted with a smile and thanked me after we finished her task. She said that she wished to lead her life without having to need others but that was not possible for a person with disabilities because of environmental circumstances. This made me better understand the problems encountered by people with disabilities in daily life. Putting myself in their shoes, I decided to help them. With the help of my seniors, I contacted relevant institutions to request that the roads and streets be suitably designed to make the lives of disabled people easier. Moreover, I started a campaign at my school for those who cannot afford wheelchairs due to poverty. We will collect the lids of plastic bottles and get wheelchairs for them (Grade 4 Social Sciences, 2018, p. 27).

In the theme entitled “Virtues”, the Grade 4 Turkish textbook also includes texts and activities that aim to raise awareness of disability; however, it lacks explicit messages that the way the physical world is arranged by humans is the chief factor making the lives of most people with disabilities more difficult. The theme on sports, in the same book, narrates the story of a child who can swim well despite his walking disability (pp. 225-226), emphasizing that people with disabilities can achieve a lot despite their disability. The theme “Virtues” includes the following activities to raise awareness of disability: “Investigate the activities carried out by official institutions and social aid organizations for people with disabilities.” (s. 80); “What kind of

problems do people with disabilities encounter in daily life? What solutions would you offer to solve these problems?” (p. 83), and “Explore the news on social responsibility activities for people with disabilities and share the news with your friends (p. 84).” However, these activities avoid incorporating critical approaches to disability.

Social cohesion is conceptualised as a national value that particularly holds relatives and friends together. The use of the term “*sılayirahim*,” which has hitherto rarely been seen in these textbooks, to define this value is striking. The term is defined as follows:

Sılayirahim means maintaining strong ties between relatives and friends and never cutting those ties. It is an important value of ours that we have recently started to forget. However, Sılayirahim is one of the defining characteristics of our nation and identity. Sılayirahim holds our society together” (Grade 6 Turkish, 2018, p. 122).

Social cohesion is also emphasized often in reference to religious feasts, with the generalised assumption that religious feasts are celebrated by all segments of society:

Our feasts occupy a unique place in our national-culture values. I like feasts very much. I get excited days before, with my cousins and my friends from the neighbourhood, about the feasts. As the feast draws closer, baklava is prepared in many houses. Demanding dishes such as stuffed vine leaves are made. Parents go feast-shopping with their children. Feasts provide us with the opportunity to show our love and respect to our relatives and people around us. Celebrating the feasts with people - be it by visiting them, calling them on the phone, or through social media - puts a smile on the faces of everyone (Grade 4 Social Sciences, 2018, p. 43).

An important issue linked to social cohesion concerns migration. Some of the textbooks include the issue of migration, possibly with the influence of the recent increase in the number of migrants who came to Turkey from various countries, Syria in particular. The issue of migration, mostly covered by Life Knowledge textbooks, is largely discussed in the context of

forced migration, focusing on the virtues of helping the migrants, treating them with respect, and being kind to them. Activities frequently make students think about what they can do to make the lives of migrants easier. The Grade 3 Life Knowledge textbook includes a story of how the language problem of a migrant child in Turkey is solved by playing games together with other children. Although the limited scope of the way primary school textbooks deal with the issues of migration and migrants is understandable considering the age of primary school students (6-9), it is an inadequacy that the middle-school Social Sciences textbooks fail to build on previous learning in order to engage with these issues in more sophisticated ways.

Finally, these textbooks present conducting charity campaigns as exemplary behaviours, which cannot be considered a problem per se. However, as the following examples demonstrate, rather than dealing with public responsibility from a rights-based approach, the textbooks tend to foreground philanthropy-based individualistic approaches or solutions:

We carry out various social events at schools. For example, we help people who are in need by organising campaigns in which we provide them with clothes, stationery, and toys. Helping each other and solidarity are among the most favourable qualities all people should have. People who live together find happiness and peace by helping each other” (Grade 3 Life Knowledge, 2018, p. 28).

Imagine that you are organising a charity campaign to establish a library for a school that does not have one. Design a poster for the campaign that you are organising as a school and display it on the bulletin board of your class (Grade 6 Turkish, 2018, p.112).

Failing to incorporate critical approaches into the discussions of disability and foregrounding philanthropy-based individualistic approaches instead run the risk of rendering social inequalities invisible and perpetuating the disadvantageous conditions that surround people with disabilities.

Conclusion

Civic education plays an important role in fostering democratic values, cherishing basic human rights and freedoms, and promoting democratic relationships between individuals, groups, communities, and institutions. Accordingly, curricula and textbooks can offer significant opportunities, particularly in countries with centralised education systems such as Turkey, for teaching democratic values, exemplifying the culture of democracy, and transferring these values to social relationships in sustainable ways. Another important point is that discussions of these concepts should not take place in a vacuum or remain limited to theoretical descriptions of the ideal.

In comparison to other textbooks that incorporate the concepts of democracy, rights, and freedoms into their themes, the civic education textbooks, which are the *Human Rights, Citizenship, and Democracy* textbook and the *Democracy and Human Rights* textbook, stand out with their more relevant and nuanced discussions of democratic citizenship and human rights; however, the general tendency of the textbooks is their discussion of these notions in idealised, technical, and sterile ways. Because of the emphasis on national culture and national values, as opposed to universal culture and values, an essentialised conceptualisation of national identity based on Turkishness and Sunni-Islam pervades the textbooks. While society is described as a homogeneous entity, the frequently emphasized ideal of national unity and cohesion remains closed to diversity, pluralism, and difference. Issues relevant in this regard, such as minority rights, gender equality¹⁶, gender identity, and sexual orientation are not mentioned at all, let alone discussed.

Although the notion of democracy is not clearly defined in these textbooks, some of them discuss it by contextualising it in the past as opposed

16 As mentioned before, only the textbook of the elective course Democracy and Human Rights includes a discussion, albeit limited, of gender equality.

to relating it to today's experiences and practices. Rights and freedoms are mostly discussed in relation to duties and obligations, while freedoms receive much less coverage. Also, content related to individuals' participation in political processes is very limited. Participation and active citizenship are largely exemplified through submitting petitions or consumer rights, while there is no coverage of the ways individuals participate or demand to be included in political processes.

These textbooks define a good and decent citizen primarily in relation to their duties and obligations towards the family and the homeland. The most frequently emphasized expectations of citizens are safeguarding national values, working hard, and being willing to die for the homeland when necessary. On the other hand, besides defining what constitutes a good citizen, these textbooks lack a discussion of citizenship as a concept. The Turkish flag and the national anthem stand out as symbols that all people are expected to respect, while the Çanakkale War, the War of Independence, and 15 July stand out as important historical events that must be known by all members of Turkish society. Sections that discuss historical events abound with Turkish flags.

The notion of gender equality is non-existent in these textbooks, with the exception of the Democracy and Human Rights textbook, and male-dominant, sexist narratives and visuals pervade the themes of "National Culture," "Virtues," and "Health and Sports." These themes, which are the common chapters of Turkish textbooks from Grades 4 to 6, primarily feature men as masculine characters, who do not seem to belong to the present, while women are largely portrayed as mothers.

History textbooks that we have looked into stand out for language that constructs non-Muslim minorities as others who cooperated with invading forces during the times of war and became tools for foreign countries that continuously exploited them in order to attain their objectives. One prominent theme in the depictions of past threats in these history textbooks is the non-Muslim minority schools, which are held responsible for the increasing unhappiness among the non-Muslim communities of the Ottoman Empire and resultant uprisings. Although these narratives are related to the past, the textbooks sometimes link the events of the past to the sociopolitical context of the present, but no attempt is made to defuse the

unfavourable discourses concerning the non-Muslim minorities or to acknowledge the fundamental rights of today's non-Muslim Turkish citizens, such as the right to receive education in their own schools.

These textbooks deal with the notion of difference primarily by focusing on physical features, personal characteristics, interests, and abilities. The books acknowledge that people are different and have the right to be different in terms of race, language, religion, gender, and such. However, narratives on difference lack nuanced descriptions or concrete examples as to how people could actualize a peaceful social co-existence within diverse societies. Differences are generally described as features that must be respected and understood. Similarly, physical disability is conceptualized as a difference, with particular emphasis placed on respect and help.

Finally, social cohesion is largely dealt with as a national value that helps to hold together relatives and friends. As opposed to conceptualising a society characterized by differences, a homogeneous notion of society, premised on the assumption that particular practices of Islam are exercised by all members of society, dominates the textbooks. The issue of migration, which has become a particularly important issue in the past few years, receives limited coverage in the discussions on living together.

References

- Altınay, A.** (2009). "Can veririm kan dökerim": Ders kitaplarında militarizm [*I would die, I would shed blood*": *Militarism in textbooks*], In G. Tüzün (Ed.), *Ders kitaplarında insan hakları tarama sonuçları II* [Findings of the project entitled *Human Rights in Textbooks II*] (pp. 143-165). İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı.
- Aratemur-Çimen, C. & Bayhan, S.** (2018). *Değişen ders kitaplarında sekülerizm ve toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliği araştırması raporu* [Research report on secularism and gender equality in Turkey's new textbooks]. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1snuCY-01L3KVb0janthXXDwfZ3Fs2gvk/view?fbclid=IwAR3DKyul-FcKviBSNCXMEbS8Nhsi9MLjTwMdJyQtaj3sjWZ5YZjKIMAWwPIE>
- Billig, M.** (2003) *Banal milliyetçilik* [*Banal Nationalism*] (C. Şişkolar, Trans.). İstanbul: Gelenek Publishers.
- Bora, T.** (2003). Ders kitaplarında milliyetçilik [Nationalism in textbooks]. In B. Çotuksöken, A. Erzan, & O. Silier (Eds.), *Ders kitaplarında insan hakları tarama sonuçları* [Findings of the project entitled *Human Rights in Textbooks*] (pp. 65-89). İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı.
- Brindle, P. & Arnot, M.** (1999). "England Expects Every Man to do his Duty": The gendering of the citizenship textbook 1940-1966. *Oxford Review of Education*, 25 (1-2), 103-123.
- Çayır, K.** (2014). "Biz" kimiz? Ders kitaplarında kimlik, yurttaşlık, haklar. *Ders Kitaplarında İnsan Hakları III Projesi tarama sonuçları* [Who are "we"? Identity, citizenship, and rights in textbooks. Findings of the project entitled *Human Rights in Textbooks III*]. İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı.
- Gök, F.** (2003). Vatandaşlık ve insan hakları eğitimi ders kitapları [Civic education textbooks]. In B. Çotuksöken, A. Erzan, & O. Silier (Eds.), *Ders Kitaplarında İnsan Hakları Tarama Sonuçları* [Findings of the project entitled *Human Rights in Textbooks*] (pp. 158-171). İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı.
- İnce, B.** (2014). Citizenship education in Turkey: inclusive or exclusive. *Oxford Review of Education*, 38(2), 115-131

- Keyman, F. & Kancı, T.** (2011). A tale of ambiguity: Citizenship, nationalism and democracy in Turkey. *Nations and Nationalism*, 17(2), 318-336.
- Nahmiyaz, M.** (2018). Turkey: Greeks and Armenians in History Textbooks (1930-2010). In E. Podeh & S. Alayan (Eds.), *Multiple Alterities: Views of others in textbooks of the Middle East* (pp. 333-353). Cham; Switzerland: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Osley, A. & Starkey, H.** (2006). Education for democratic citizenship: a review of research, policy and practice 1995–2005. *Research Papers in Education*, 21(4), 433-466
- Tokdoğan, N.** (2018). *Yeni Osmanlıcılık* [Neo-Ottomanism]. İstanbul: İletişim.
- Torney-Purta, J, Schwille, J. & Amadeo, J.** (1999). *Civic Education across Countries: Twenty-four National Case Studies from the IEA Civic Education Project* [Report]. Delft: Eburon Publishers.
- Üstel, F.** (2004). “*Makbul vatandaş*”ın peşinde [In search of the “decent citizen”]. İstanbul: İletişim.

Appendices

Appendix I: Framing Questions

Democracy, Institutions, Rights, and Responsibilities

- What does democracy mean in the national context?
- What is most emphasized as inherent to or distinctive of democracy?
- What are the most salient messages on democracy in relation to institutions and practices, rights of citizenship, and obligations or responsibilities?
 - a) Institutions and practices: How governing groups or leaders are selected and held accountable; how laws and regulations are established, interpreted and enforced; how individuals and groups participate
 - b) Rights of citizenship:
 - Civic and Political Rights: The right to formulate opinions on political issues and express them by voting or speaking publicly; the right to have access to different points of view in an uncensored press; the right to dissent from (and even peacefully protest against) government policies; the right to practice one's religion; the right to strike; (for foreigners) the right to become citizens.
 - The right to form or join political parties, unions, and other organizations.

- Social and economic rights, such as the right to a certain minimal standard of living or to employment, medical care, and education.

c) Obligations or responsibilities of citizenship: How are voting, military service, and more general expectations for adults to work, pay taxes and obey laws idealized?

2. National Identity and Relations between Nations

- How is national identity defined? To what degree are loyalty or a sense of belonging to the nation thought to be important?
- What, if any, symbols (such as the national flag) are thought particularly important for students to respect?
- What are the documents, role models, historical events, national stories, and ideals which are widely believed to be important for all citizens to know about, for example, constitutional principles; national liberators; decisive wars, revolutions or uprisings?
- Who are the heroes and role models thought to be worthy of national pride, and how are they presented to students?
- What points of view are young people encouraged to adopt regarding national leaders and major political events in the present and in history?
- Do these leaders have an almost sacred quality, or are they seen in certain ways as fallible?
- How much and what kinds of criticism of or scepticism about monarchs or national leaders are thought to be appropriate?
- Which countries or groups of countries do students learn about as past, present, or future threats, and what is the nature of these threats? Which countries are allies?

- What is emphasized about the role played by the country [whose textbooks are analysed] in global and regional spheres of influence?
- Are either supranational or subnational groups thought of as presenting a threat to national identity or loyalty?
- Are students encouraged to study and understand, or to ignore events of which many people in the nation are not proud?

3. Social Cohesion and Social Diversity

- What are young people expected to have learned about those belonging to groups which are seen as set apart or disenfranchised (as defined, for example, by ethnicity, race, immigrant status, mother tongue, social class, religion or gender)?
- How are the issues of race, ethnicity, religion, mother tongue, social class, gender, and immigrant status discussed?
- How is conflict between different groups or between these groups and the society more broadly dealt with in textbooks? Are attitudes and behaviours of respect and tolerance between these groups encouraged explicitly or implicitly, and how?
- What groups (if any) are viewed as subject to discrimination in contemporary society?
- How are instances of past oppression or discrimination dealt with?
- If differences exist between men and women or between minority and non-minority groups in actual levels of political participation or in the extent to which they serve in positions of political leadership, are these matters discussed as issues with young people or are these differences largely ignored?

Appendix 2: Textbooks that have been analysed

Book	Year of publication	Publisher	Authors
Grade 1 Turkish	2017	MEB Devlet Kitapları	Davut Civelek Derya Yılmaz Gündüz Fatma Karafilik
Grade 2 Turkish	2018	Koza Yayın	Abdullah Ataşçı
Grade 3 Turkish	2018	MEB Devlet Kitapları	Barış Ekin Karaduman Erman Özdemir Onur Yılmaz
Grade 4 Turkish	2018	MEB Devlet Kitapları	Hayriye Kaftan Ayan Ümit Arslan Sevim Kul Nihan Yılmaz
Grade 5 Turkish	2017	MEB Devlet Kitapları	Hülya Ağın Haykır Hüseyin Kaplan Ali Kıryar Rasim Tarakçı Ercan Üstün
Grade 6 Turkish	2018	MEB Devlet Kitapları	Sabri Ceylan Kadir Duru Gülten Erkek Murat Pastutmaz
Grade 7 Turkish	2018	MEB Devlet Kitapları	Ahmet Akgül Nurcihan Demirer Ebubekir Gürcan Duygu Karadaş İlkay Karahan Ali Uysal
Grade 8 Turkish	2018	MEB Devlet Kitapları	Dr. Gülşah Mete Mahmut Karaaslan Yeşim Kaya Şahin Ozan Derya Özdemir
Grade 1 Life Knowledge	2017	MEB Devlet Kitapları	Kamil Akgül Münteha Aydınbelge Seçkin Balcı Tuncer Tanyeri

Book	Year of publication	Publisher	Authors
Grade 2 Life Knowledge	2018	SDR İpekyolu Yayıncılık	Çiğdem Kuşkaya
Grade 3 Life Knowledge	2018	MEB Devlet Kitapları	Elif Çelikbaş Fatma Gürel Nazile Özcan
Grade 4 Social Sciences	2018	Tuna Matbaacılık	Sami Tüysüz
Grade 5 Social Sciences	2017	MEB Devlet Kitapları	Jülide Özkan Suna Öztürk Zuhul Özduval
Grade 7 Social Sciences	2018	MEB Devlet Kitapları	Gökhan Gültekin Murat Akpınar Mustafa Nohutcu Pınar Özerdoğan Seher Aygün
Grade 4 Human Rights, Citizenship, and Democracy	2018	MEB Devlet Kitapları	Nalan Altay Suna Ay Zeynep Özge Ertek Halil Polat Emine Selmanoğlu Hasan Yalçın
Grade 4 Religious Culture and Morals	2018	İlke Basım Yayım	Gülhanım Demirtaş
Grade 5 Religious Culture and Morals	2017	İlke Basım Yayım	Ayhan Baştürk Murat Özdemir
Grade 6 Religious Culture and Morals	2018	MEB Devlet Kitapları	Sümeyye Kırmızı Dilek Menküç Tuğba Kevser Uysal Hatice Büşra Paksoy
Grade 7 Religious Culture and Morals	2018	MEB Devlet Kitapları	Ayşe Macit Dilek Menküç Dilek Türk Soydaş Nezihi Mustafa Pesen Sümeyye Kırmızı

Book	Year of publication	Publisher	Authors
Grade 8 Religious Culture and Morals	2018	MEB Devlet Kitapları	Sabahattin Nayir Abdullah Açık Muhammet Beyazal Hatice Büşra Paksoy
Grade 8 History of Revolutions and Atatürkism	2018	MEB Devlet Kitapları	Sinan Baydar Ferhat Öztürk
Grade 9 History	2017	MEB Devlet Kitapları	Mehmet Ali Kapar Erol Yüksel Ferhat Bildik Kazım Şahin Leyla Şafak Murat Ardiç Özgür Bağcı Süleyman Yıldız
Grade 10 History	2018	MEB Devlet Kitapları	Erol Yüksel Mehmet Ali Kapar Ferhat Bildik Kazım Şahin Leyla Şafak Murat Ardiç Özgür Bağcı Süleyman Yıldız
Grade 11 History	2018	MEB Devlet Kitapları	Ali Laçin Bedrihan Önal Bülent Demir Erdal Erdem Mikail Kaplan Murat Arıca Salih Gündoğdu Veli Aydemir Yahya Karakaya Yusuf Çakmak
Grade 12 History of Revolutions and Atatürkism	2018	MEB Devlet Kitapları	Akif Çevik Gül Koç Koray Şerbetçi

Book	Year of publication	Publisher	Authors
Secondary Education Human Rights and Democracy (Elective)	2018	Ada Matbaacılık Yayıncılık	Günsu Tüzün

Dr. Canan ARATEMUR ÇİMEN
Dr. Sezen BAYHAN

DEMOCRATIC VALUES AND DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP

In The Turkish Education System: Textbooks

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, education for democratic citizenship attracted renewed attention, both nationally and internationally, because of the challenges raised by globalisation, migration, increasing inequalities and racism (Osler and Starkey, 2006), and the corollary concern for responding to such challenges that could pose a risk to the culture of living together within diversity. As a country home to a broad range of ethnicities and religious orientations as well as increasing numbers of migrants, similar concerns hold for Turkey; hence the need for a civic education capable of cultivating citizens critical of discrimination and violence of all sorts and willing to act in accordance with the principles of human rights and democratic values has become greater than ever. Education is one of the most important instruments for the cultivation of values associated with democratic citizenship. Promoting a worldview that embraces the values of freedom and equality and facilitating peaceful coexistence among people with a diverse set of ideas, lifestyles, and spiritual/religious orientations is only possible through the cultivation and internalisation of democratic values and the culture of democracy. Therefore, it is crucial to practice the principles of democracy at educational institutions and design educational materials that promote democratic citizenship and human rights. By focusing on how Turkey's textbooks discuss democratic citizenship and democratic values, this report aims to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the textbooks in this regard and serve as a resource for practices and studies that work towards strengthening the culture of democracy.



ISBN: 978-2-9602333-1-5

