

Meaning of a Textbook: Religious Education, National Islam, and the Politics of Reform in the United Arab Emirates

Zeynep Ozgen & Sharif Ibrahim El Shishtawy Hassan

New York University Abu Dhabi & Northwestern University

The organization and content of Islamic education have been an object of Western scrutiny based on claims linking religious education to radicalism. Many Arab Gulf states have responded to such allegations with significant overhauls of their religious curricula. This article focuses on the politics of education reform in the United Arab Emirates. A detailed coding and analysis of 1500 pages of Islamic education textbooks reveal that religious education is a deeply politicized field. However, it promotes loyalty rather than radicalism. The reformed curriculum is used as a pedagogic tool by the state to advance national interpretations of Islam in support of domestic and international policy objectives, such as strengthening national identity against sub-national loyalties, securing political legitimacy, pacifying opposition, rebranding the state's international image, and spurring economic development. This article advances the existing scholarship by bringing in the international dimension of domestic education reform and the precise mechanisms that we call emulation and generalization through which Islamic knowledge becomes functionalized for the state's nationalist goals.

Keywords: Islamic education, curriculum reform, textbook analysis, United Arab Emirates, national Islam

What kinds of ideas, beyond religious ones, are communicated through Islamic textbooks?

Since the September 11 attacks in 2001, a stream of influential Western observers have shaped public debate by alleging that Islamic textbooks relay extremist views leading to radicalization within Muslim societies (Doumato and Starrett, 2007, pp. 1–4; Hefner, 2007, pp. 1–2). Such claims sparked intense public interest in how Middle Eastern children are religiously socialized in schools and generated Western political pressure demanding change in the purpose and organization of Islamic education. Many Arab Gulf states responded with significant overhauls of their religious curricula.

Curricular reforms in the Middle East, as elsewhere, are a deeply contested field. They pit different social visions of education's moral mission against one another (Adely and Starrett, 2011: 349), including secular versus religious as well as alternative religious visions.

Additionally, curricular reforms demonstrate that education can become a site for both domestic and international conflicts. For instance, the Western “tendency to view Islamic education as a key explanatory variable for the ‘clash of civilizations’” (Adely, 2009: 481) has turned education reform in the region into an object of foreign interest.

Despite prevalent claims, recent studies of textbooks have not discovered an organic link between Islamic education and radicalism (Anderson, 2001; Mehran, 2003; Limbert, 2005; Doumato and Starrett, 2007). Instead, scholars have found that many Arab states use religious textbooks to advance national interpretations of Islam to support myriad policy objectives. These interpretations combine elements of the classical corpus with local histories, nationalist imageries, and elites’ social interests, despite claiming to convey universal truths. Therefore, along with teaching the fundamentals of Islamic ritual and ethics, textbooks are replete with formal discourses on modern politics and citizenship.

This paper extends these insights by analyzing Islamic curricular reforms as a site and target of political struggles. We study reforms in the important yet understudied case of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) through a close analysis of high school Islamic education textbooks. How does Islamic education contribute to state goals beyond religious instruction? What is the meaning of a textbook when it is both religious and political?

We find that religious education is a deeply politicized field. However, it aims not so much to make people radical as more loyal. The reformed curriculum is used as a pedagogic tool by the state to construct power and identity, and advance its domestic and international interests. First, the textbooks strengthen national identity and legitimacy over local, territorial loyalties by naturalizing patrimonial dominance and obedience to the ruler. Second, the textbooks promote a form of “moderate” Islam and its signifier “tolerance” to pacify organized opposition, manage demographic problems of super-diversity, and rebrand the state’s international image by undermining stereotypical views of the Gulf as a breeding

ground for radicals.¹ Third, the textbooks support expanding the domestic labor force as part of the state's technocratic drive toward national development and capitalist modernization.

The textbooks utilize two pedagogic methods that we call *emulation* and *generalization* to pursue these goals. Emulation encourages students to model their lives on scripture, especially the life of the Prophet Muhammad. Generalization takes past narratives and applies them to contemporary situations to justify prescribed practices. Through these methods, the textbooks reinterpret Islamic teachings in creative ways and promote the state's policy goals by presenting them as integral to Islam's commandments and prohibitions. This results in the objectification and functionalization of knowledge (Eickelman, 1992; Starrett, 1998). For example, they suggest that obedience to a ruler is dictated by God; being tolerant is a hallmark of Shari'a; cultivating national economy is a form of worship; and the ideal Muslim is naturally hard-working and productive.

These findings contribute to the sociology and anthropology of education by bringing in the international dimension of education reform. They reveal that textbook reform is not only influenced by domestic economic or political concerns but also by the geopolitical interests of states. In addition, our analysis specifies the precise mechanisms of emulation and generalization through which religious knowledge is objectified and functionalized.

Power and Pedagogy

Curricular reform is a pedagogic field that bears the imprint of past struggles and contemporary relations of domination. Educational curricula create and disseminate "orthodoxy," or locally situated texts that empower particular notions of the world and establish the canonicity of certain knowledge, while marginalizing others (Asad, 1986: 15). In addition to legitimating authorized classifications of knowledge and authority, curricula bestow a sense of non-arbitrariness to arbitrarily produced knowledge, thereby perpetuating

the domination of the powerful (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). Moreover, curricula are essential vehicles for constructing subjectivities by imposing certain kinds of “cultural capital” on individuals who, over time, come to identify with authorized discourses (Willis, 1977; Bourdieu, 1986; Foley, 1990).

As elsewhere, curricular reforms in the Middle East serve as arenas through which competing visions of society and modernity are fought out. A central component of such reforms includes the goal and organization of religious education. Scholars have shown that following colonial domination, nascent Muslim states harnessed religious education to reform “traditional” societies and expedite nationalist modernization (Brown, 2001: 129-32). They repackaged Islamic knowledge in textbooks to legitimize new discourses on national identification, political integration, and economic development. In the process, they faced resistance from sub-state actors who tried to reverse secularizing trends and restore traditional Islamic knowledge, thereby challenging states’ monopoly over religious education to shape private and public morals (Hefner, 2007: 32-3). The perception that education in the Middle East, as elsewhere, has both conservative and transformative powers increased the moral stakes of curricular reform. Therefore it remains as a critical arena to examine struggles over power and identity (Starrett, 1998; Pak, 2004; Kaplan, 2006; Adely and Starrett, 2011).

We make two contributions to the sociology and anthropology of education. Existing scholarship on curricular reform in the region often focuses on domestic policies and less on external influences. Scholars typically refer to international contexts to compare different curricula (i.e., Christian moral education in the U.S. versus Islamic education in the Middle East) or to create a benchmark for debunking Western misconceptions (Doumato and Starrett, 2007). We aim to expand this scholarship by looking at the external impact on domestic education reform. International factors influence education reforms by diffusing educational models that result in isomorphic changes in nation-states (Meyer *et al.*, 1997); in some cases,

they also fundamentally shape the curriculum's content in line with states' foreign interests. For instance, Western pressures to liberalize religious curriculum in the post-9/11 context determined the content of change—as much as the motivation for change—in Gulf countries. While the moral discourse on tolerance has been globally celebrated, such discourse has also been strategically usurped to serve states' interests (Fahy, 2018) by signaling to the West a particular commitment to peace rather than terror.

Scholars also outline two interrelated processes that incorporate Islamic knowledge into schooling. The first is objectification, in which general religious knowledge is re-articulated as a circumscribed academic subject, similar to “Islamic Studies” that can be presented in textbooks, debated in classrooms, and diffused through curricula (Eickelman, 1992). The second is functionalization, in which objectified Islamic knowledge is removed from its theological context, reinterpreted in utilitarian ways, and connected to the political and economic projects of the state (Starrett, 1998). In our research, we advance this scholarship by delineating the empirical mechanisms that we call *emulation* and *generalization* through which these two macro processes unfold. First, we situate these processes in the general historical context of the UAE, and then we follow with an analysis of high school Islamic education textbooks.

State-Formation and Nation-Building in the UAE

The UAE formed shortly after British colonialism in the region ended in the late 1960s. In 1971, the six Trucial States of Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Fujairah, and Umm al-Quwain united, with Ras al-Khaimah joining shortly thereafter (Hurewitz, 1972). Unlike other postcolonial nation-states, the leaders of the Trucial States neither struggled for independence (e.g. in an anti-colonial war) nor contemplated the UAE as a political project

against occupiers. Instead, they were motivated by the departure of the British, upon whose protection they had long relied (Peck, 2001: 145).

Nation-building in the UAE first focused on the transition from many tribes to a unified federation and then shifted to constructing a nation of Emiratis. The challenge has been to forge a common identity and affirm state legitimacy despite enduring tribal affiliations. Similar to Western nation-building cases, the Emirati state has worked to construct the nation through deliberate policies of inclusion and exclusion, utilizing state-articulated national myths, cultural heritage, and shared values (Anderson, 1983; Gellner, 1983; Brubaker, 1992). However, the nation-building project in the UAE has differed from Western cases in several ways.

First, unlike in the West, where linguistic and cultural incorporation of disparate peasant communities spanned centuries, rulers in the Middle East have undertaken “top-down strategies to achieve social homogeneity in a shorter time span” (Aslan, 2015: 1). Throughout the region, subnational ethnic, sectarian, tribal identities, and supra-national pan-Arab and pan-Islamic ideologies have historically challenged the authority of many Arab states. Cultivating national identity quickly, therefore, has been central to affirming the state’s legitimacy (Ibish, 2017: 10).

Second, the UAE is a latecomer. As studies on state-sponsored national identity formation document, most states had completed this process by the time the UAE began constructing its citizenry (Brubaker, 1996; Keating and McGary, 2001; Hobsbawm and Ranger, 2012). Additionally, its demographic character and citizenship regime (discussed below) turned national identity construction into an existential security problem and a process that is still “in progress,” similar to other Gulf countries like Qatar and Kuwait.

Third, the UAE’s capital accumulation model as a “rentier state” shaped the path of nation-building processes in fundamental ways. Rentier states derive rents from natural (or

other) resources, which reduces the need for taxation but also reduces citizens' demands for political participation (Beblawi, 1987: 53). Since state formation was shaped by "rent distribution rather than capitalist growth, resource extraction, war or national struggle" (Hertog, 2016: 349), traditional wage-earning and profit-making classes, and concomitant national identity formations, did not emerge in the UAE nor Gulf states more generally. On the contrary, the distributional state kept merchant and tribal identities in place (while reducing the political power of their elites) and created additional social hierarchies through rapid bureaucratic expansion. While the Emirati population remained heterogeneous, the influx of oil wealth glossed over extant tribal and regional differences and contributed to the UAE's formation with an overbearing state and a fragmented society.

Fourth, UAE citizens make up ten percent of the country's total population (World Population Review, 2020). The oil boom propelled the UAE to modernize rapidly as a financial center but also exposed a critical vulnerability: the lack of a skilled local population able to sustain the institutions of a modern economy (Al Sayegh, 2004: 112). The labor shortage was alleviated by importing large numbers of foreign workers. However, expatriates, comprising roughly 90 percent of all residents, made nationals a "minority" in their own country. As the social distance between citizens and non-citizens grew, some conservative segments of society began articulating heightened anxieties of cultural threat (Hertog, 2016: 348). This domestic unease coincided with the government's efforts to promote a stronger sense of national identity through various initiatives, such as declaring 2008 as the Year of National Identity and 2018 as the Year of Zayed. Also, as Calvert Jones (2017) explains, the domestic labor shortage moved the state to pursue ambitious social engineering projects, through educational reform, public spectacles, and official propaganda. The "making of citizens, 2.0" (2017, pp. 1–7) focused not only on building an Emirati national identity but

also fashioning entrepreneurial, self-reliant, and achievement-oriented Emirati citizens capable of helping UAE diversify its economy and competing in a global market.

The fifth unique aspect of the nation-building process in the UAE is the tension between the state's promotion of an exclusionary regime of citizenship and articulation of an inclusionary policy of tolerance. The UAE's citizenship regime offers two narrow pathways to membership: tracing one's lineage to pre-1940 or through marriage. This model legally excludes the majority of economic migrants from citizenship and symbolically elevates nationals' through entitlements to employment, public services, and generous welfare benefits. Despite strict limitations on citizenship, however, the UAE presents itself as a model country welcoming of others and respectful of difference, emphasizing tolerance as a cornerstone of Emirati culture. For example, it launched new institutions such as the National Identity Program *Watani* (My Homeland), a Ministry of State for Tolerance, and a Ministry of State for Happiness. These efforts aim to construct a national identity more inclusive of all residents. The reason is that while citizens' identity is established, the country's overarching national identity is still an open-ended question in the presence of a large foreign population.

The unique characteristics of the Emirati case create many challenges to the cultivation of national identity and state legitimacy. In tackling them, the state has mobilized numerous instruments—ranging from conventional institutions such as formal schools, religious institutions, mass media, civic associations—to the mentioned government initiatives. One of the critical instruments of nation-building has been the control of religious discourse. This is because the UAE, much like other Muslim states, has instrumentalized Islam in crucial ways: to legitimize monarchical rule; construct a collective identity; and refute alternative sociopolitical models offered by religious opposition in the context of the “Islamic awakening” that swept across the region beginning in the early 1970s.

The State's Relation to the Religious Sphere

The Emirati state has justified its right to rule by both defending and co-opting Islam. The UAE constitution declares Islam as the official state religion and Islamic Shari'a as the principal source of legislation (United Arab Emirates Government, 1996). Emirati rulers also justify their right to rule by proving their own religious credentials. They act as guardians of the faith through patronizing Islamic charities and events, constructing grandiose mosques and Qur'anic Parks, or financing religious schools (Freer, 2018: 162; Gillett, 2019). The state has also devised various measures to co-opt religious discourse and institutions, first by wresting sacred authority from traditional competitors (tribal healers, Sufi masters, Islamic scholars) and channeling it toward a state-approved interpretation of the Divine (Eickelman and Piscatori, 2004: 57-9). Next, it has leveraged the General Authority for Islamic Affairs and Endowments (heretofore *Awqaf*) to reinforce the centralization of religious life, including instruction, broadcasting, and charity (Davidson, 2013: 74).

The state's efforts to control the religious field increased dramatically following the September 11 attacks, especially since two of the hijackers were Emirati nationals and a third was a UAE resident (Al Otaiba, 2016). Partly in response to increased U.S. pressure and partly to avert domestic Islamist opposition, the state tightened its control over both the official and unofficial segments of the religious sphere (Al Sayegh, 2004: 118-9). This included:

- periodic assessments of *Awqaf* employees to monitor potential ties with “prohibited political groups,” and a requirement to sign the “charter of tolerance” and adhere to anti-discrimination law. No. 2 passed in 2015 (General Authority of Islamic Affairs and Endowments, 2018).

- increased scrutiny of unofficial religious actors by requiring permits to organize Quran memorization circles, collect donations, or distribute pamphlets at mosques, and by censoring unofficial religious publications (*ibid*).
- the establishment of international anti-terrorism organizations such as the Hedaya Foundation and Sawab Center between 2013-2015 (Emirates News Agency, 2013; Salama, 2015).
- the establishment of alternative institutions such as the Muslim Council of Elders to correct misconceptions about Islam and a Federal Fatwa Council to “counter hardline *fatwas* [religious legal rulings] spread by unauthorized sources” (Salama, 2015; Dajani, 2017).

These measures delegitimized competing “conservative” models while reinforcing the state’s role as the interpreter of correct Islamic knowledge for society. The state has sought to control the religious field organizationally by reforming its institutions physically. But it has also reined in alternative religious discourses intellectually. Sweeping reforms within public schools and universities were central to this effort.

Following the September 11 attacks, the Emirati state implemented three major curriculum overhauls—in 2002, 2011, and 2016—designed to purge content deemed intolerant (Al Sayegh, 2004). Critical to this effort was a comprehensive reevaluation of the religious education curriculum and rewriting of religious textbooks for grades one through twelve. Western pressure was not the sole motivation for education reform. This process had already begun before 2001 to address systemic failures such as low student achievement, insufficient instruction quality, and high absenteeism (Abu Dhabi Education Council, 2009, pp. 2, 9). Reforms picked up the pace with the added motivation to remake the international image of the UAE as not the land of radicals but moderate Islam and capitalist modernization.

In line with the rest of the Gulf, the UAE's system has been characterized by "educational dualism" (Findlow, 2008, p. 345), where modernist and internationally-oriented goals (economic competition, technological advancement, gender equality) are carefully balanced against local and Islamic codes of conduct (344). As late as 2010, the first two of the eight objectives of primary education were presented as "strengthening the Muslim faith, teaching children a number of religious duties, ... reinforcing Arab and Islamic feeling," while the last two objectives were "developing children's observation and innovation skills and developing creativeness" (International Bureau of Education, 2011, p. 1).

Education reforms after 2001 remained faithful to this dualism but changed the content of the religious curriculum (i.e., inserting the "tolerance" discourse) and aligned it with the updated "standard-based" approach (i.e., emphasizing critical thinking over rote memorization). In addition, despite increasing its emphasis on STEM, the curriculum did not curtail religious education significantly. While in 2003, students received five hours of Islamic education per week, in 2010, they received four hours (International Bureau of Education, 2011, pp. 14–15). Moreover, the curriculum introduced dual-instruction in Arabic and English (Ridge, Kippels and Farah, 2017, p. 5) to address conservative concerns about foreign-language education and loss of Arab identity. Finally, Islamic education continues to be mandatory in all public and private schools from grades one through twelve. All of this suggests that religious education, even though offered less than secular education, is an essential and enduring feature of a student's overall learning career. It also demonstrates the state's continued commitment to religious education despite pressing concerns about student underachievement and unpreparedness to enter higher education, thus slowing the UAE's economic program of diversification. Hence, the presence and content of Islamic education matters, and matters greatly in delivering the state's political messages.

The educational reform plan is consistent with the requirements of secular education, but also continues a process that began in the mid-1990s to curtail the influence of Islamist groups. Previously, Islamists belonged to a “reform association” called *al-Islah* established in the 1970s as an offshoot of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. In its early years, *al-Islah*’s declared intention to preserve Islam and serve the poor received support from local Emirati authorities who were interested in increasing their legitimacy by patronizing *da’wa* (invitation to Islam) organizations. Furthermore, their professional backgrounds provided much-needed human capital to build institutions of the nascent state, eventually propelling them to critical positions in the judicial and educational fields. Within the Ministry of Education, *al-Islah* affiliates sat on curriculum committees and authored textbooks through which they introduced essential elements of their ideology, a totalizing Islamic vision (Davidson, 2013: 194). Additionally, they shaped youth culture informally through social activities, study circles (*halaqas*), and university student councils. Their ideas also found traction within broader Emirati society (Krause, 2008: 99).

As Islamists broadened their activities from sponsoring charities to influencing politics in the early 1990s, the state became increasingly wary. It launched a series of crackdowns, removing Islamists from influential positions in the Ministry of Education, firing or deporting some Brotherhood-affiliated teachers, and restricting their institutional capacity to carry out social or political activities. Following the September 11 attacks, such measures intensified, leading to the arrest and imprisonment of some prominent members (Freer, 2018: 129-39). Although organized Islamist opposition in the UAE has never espoused violence, the state’s antipathy toward the Brotherhood placed them in an umbrella category with fringe groups such as al-Qaeda and ISIS. Hence, unlike some other Gulf countries, the UAE has made no distinction between movements that aim to reform societies in an Islamic direction by persuasion and jihadi groups that seek to overthrow regimes by violence (Ibish, 2017: 16).

In the last decade, the state has fashioned “moderate Islam” as an official ideology, presenting it as a middle path (*wasatiyyah*) between extreme forms of practice to sideline Islamist opposition. The primary signifier of this model is the “tolerance” discourse, which is now embedded in everything from Friday sermons and official *fatwas* to national news media and cultural festivals to official speeches and ministerial reports. However, encounters with the tolerance discourse in public spaces are often fleeting, lack the authority to shape subjectivities, and are broadcast to a disproportionate number of non-national residents.

Therefore, the education system has been central to disseminating the tolerance discourse in a deep and targeted way to Emiratis. To this end, the state continued the 2002 education reform with subsequent reforms in 2011 and 2016. These reforms developed a religious counter-narrative and socialization experience for children who had previously been exposed to the totalizing spiritual vision of *al-Islah* in the old curriculum.

Emirati officials have been open about the goals of education reforms. UAE Minister of Education Hussain al Hammadi justified the 2016 curriculum changes by suggesting “the Islamic education curricula [sic] was the main means used by the extremist groups [in the UAE] to manipulate the youths’ minds and drag them to implement their heinous agendas” (General Authority of Islamic Affairs and Endowments, 2018). Hammadi additionally stated that tolerance is a moral panacea against the state’s erstwhile competitors: “eradicating the culture of extremism and hatred can only be achieved through good curricula, [and] spreading the culture of tolerance in our educational environment” (*ibid*).

Overall, the education reform is part of a broader project with domestic and international dimensions such as strengthening national identity, securing political legitimacy, pacifying religious opposition, and rebranding the state’s international image. We analyze these dimensions in the next sections.

Data and Method

The revised Islamic Education curriculum consists of textbooks for each grade that use a unit-based approach. Every book begins with an identical introduction, after which units address topics in Islamic studies. The textbooks adhere to traditional methods and issues of Islamic education such as recitation and memorization of the Quran and *Hadith* (exemplary sayings of the Prophet), the lives of the prophets, biographies of notable Muslim figures, rules of ritual worship, and proper Islamic dress and behavior. They incorporate non-religious topics such as national identity, citizenship duties, sustainable economy, deviant ideas, and environmental protection.

The data comprises six official Islamic education textbooks from the 2017-2018 academic year assigned to tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades (two books for each grade). These textbooks are the most up-to-date religious education materials encapsulating the reformed curriculum. We coded and analyzed 1,500 pages of textual data using the qualitative data analysis software MAXQDA. We gained access to scanned copies of the six textbooks through a public online forum created by Islamic Education teachers in the UAE.

Our coding focused mainly on the units that broach (implicitly or explicitly) politicized topics rather than traditional Islamic education methods and issues. This effort yielded twenty-two codes on the most frequent patterns. We subsequently organized twenty of these codes into three main code sets that corresponded to the three major themes we observed throughout textbooks. These include political legitimacy, moderation and tolerance, and economic progress, as analyzed below.

Data Analysis

In this section, we unpack the multi-layered meanings of Islamic Education textbooks. While the books teach basic Islamic theology, they additionally advocate for non-religious

goals of the state's policy agenda. To accomplish the latter goals, the textbooks connect them to religious commandments and then utilize the pedagogic methods of emulation and generalization to motivate students to adopt desirable attitudes in their daily lives. The organization of the textbooks demonstrates three overarching patterns. The state harnesses Islam to 1) cultivate national identity and increase its political legitimacy; 2) advance a particular interpretation of Islam and undermine those of political opponents; and 3) support economic development.

National Identity and Political Legitimacy

A significant number of units within the textbooks center on the theme of nation-building and state authority. While books are often deployed in the service of modernizing nationalism, this practice has a particular urgency in the UAE due to its demographic composition and timing of establishment. We analyze the process of nation-building in three stages as it unfolds within textbooks: construction of national identity, representation of the UAE as a champion of Islam, and cultivation of loyalty to the ruler.

The Emirati national identity forged through the textbooks is a composite one that is rooted in a primordial Arabo-Islamic past and a modern progressive future. In nurturing the first component, the textbooks walk a tightrope. They attempt to merge fluid ethnic, tribal, and territorial identities into a coherent national community. Islam plays a vital role in this process since religious affiliation is the common denominator across these boundaries. Accordingly, the textbooks promulgate a national narrative of "heritage" originating from Islamic civilization and its bearer Arabic. They claim that "Allah's preservation of the Holy Qur'an is consequently a protection of Arabic" (11a: 64),² which is "one of the richest and most abundant languages all over the world" (11a: 63) and that Arabic "preserved the heritage

of the [Emirati] nation with all its cultural constituents, such as arts, sciences, literature, values” (11a: 65).

Here Arabic language is instrumentally deployed as an anchoring point for an ahistorical Emirati identity. Also, the common cultural heritage derived from broader Islamic civilization makes no mention of sectarian, tribal, or territorial identities. The textbooks forge social cohesion by glossing over sub-national affiliations and creating a national narrative. They draw on the emulation method to further reinforce this point.

The 12th-grade book states that after the *hijra* (migration), the Prophet Muhammad and the emigrants longed for Mecca (their hometown) but also developed an affection for Medina and its people. Muhammad often repeated to his Companions: “O’ Allah, make us love Al-Madinah as we love Mecca or even more than that” (12a: 218). Students are encouraged to model their lives on the Prophet’s, who transcended his particular locality and developed an attachment to broader geography than his original tribe. This message is stated explicitly at the end: “[for the Prophet] the concept of homeland has extended and superseded the domain of locality [i.e., Mecca] ... a Muslim’s belongingness to his homeland is a commitment to all the lands of his country ... This we see as a tangible reality in the United Arab Emirates” (12a: 218).

In addition, the textbooks draw on the method of generalization to present the Qur’an—and by extension Islam—as the essence of national identity. They cite a famous *hadith*, “I was sent to perfect good morals,” to argue that the Prophet successfully created a superior culture among Muslims. As a result, “Muslim and Arab merchants spread Islam in all countries thanks to their high culture” (11a: 67). Students are expected to connect this past narrative to contemporary Emirati state. In an assignment, they are asked to discuss efforts by the UAE leadership to protect this “noble culture” (11a: 68) whose lineage reaches back to the

work of the Prophet because “it is the crux of Emirati identity,” an identity with “deep-rooted Islamic Arabic origins” (ibid).

The second component of Emirati national identity, the shared future, is also frequently highlighted. This is most clear in the government’s “Vision 2021,” which sets criteria for national development in education, healthcare, and the economy. This vision is featured as an infographic at every textbook’s opening (United Arab Emirates Government, 2018). Vision 2010 delineates a set of material goals to be embraced by a community “united in responsibility” and “united in destiny,” and designed to make the UAE “one of the best countries in the world.” This message invites readers to identify themselves with the forward-looking aspect of national identity cultivated through shared emotions of enthusiasm, passion, and solidarity. These emotions reinforce membership in an imagined collective future in which all have an essential stake, their collective well-being.

Other conventional themes used to forge national identity include homeland, martyrdom, and citizenship duties. Important for our analysis is how these themes are carefully tethered to Islam. Students are taught that “loving one’s country is a natural inclination in man” and that the Prophet Muhammad himself yearned for his homeland, thereby demonstrating “that one’s love for one’s homeland does not conflict with religion” (12a: 212). Elsewhere, defending the nation is presented as “a holy duty for every citizen” (12a: 213), and serving in the national military “is a Shari’a duty and a national requirement” (12a: 216).

We can see in all of these examples the pedagogic method of emulation in practice. Students are encouraged to fulfill citizenship roles by aligning their practices with those of the Prophet and deriving their obligations from the Holy book. Islam confers impartiality on the state’s otherwise arbitrary prescription: enlisting oneself in service to political power. This impartiality implies that individuals should love their homeland, serve in the military, and

even die for their country not because the state expects them to but because Islam commands it.

However, manufacturing individual will in service of the state is a complex process. It involves determining principles of commonsense reality and winning consent for the established order. Schools are one of the key sites through which this consent is secured because they play a vital role, as Durkheim suggests, in “education of the will” as much as “education of the intelligence” (Durkheim, 1977: 266). Granting consent to the established order ultimately hinges on individuals perceiving the ruling regime as legitimate.

Like many states in the region, the UAE government instrumentalizes Islam to legitimize its right to exercise both material and symbolic power over society. Islamic textbooks provide a platform for the ruling family members to project images of themselves as deeply pious and exceedingly altruistic individuals, characteristics they share with other notable Muslims, such as the companions of the Prophet Muhammad.

The royal family’s religious devotion is exemplified by their emulation of the Prophet’s tradition to spread Islam. Sheikh Zayed, the founder of the UAE, is described as “a Muslim leader with deep-rooted faith” whose “humanity emanated from the principles of Islam” (12b: 274). His service to Islam is highlighted through efforts such as “launching Qur’an memorization projects in mosques” (12b: 274) and “charitable deeds” (10a: 83). Sheikha Fatima bint Mubarak, one of the wives of Sheikh Zayed, is acclaimed for her efforts to care for the sick, disabled, and old (12a: 159-61); just like Umm Salamah, one of the most influential wives of the Prophet Muhammad (11a: 177). In one activity, books draw out this link explicitly by asking students to give examples demonstrating that “the biography of the Messenger was the example emulated by Sheikh Zayed” (12b: 273).

The textbooks then draw on the method of generalization to encourage students to connect historical examples of the Prophet bringing Islam to diverse people to recent

experiences, i.e., the government's service to Islam and Muslims. Similar to the Prophet's act, which contributed to the creation of *ummah* [Muslim community], the government improved the status of Muslims (11a: 63, 12a: 27) through charitable deeds and humanitarian support across Africa, the Middle East, and Asia thereby reinforcing the UAE's status as protector of the global Muslim community (12a: 161, 12b: 275). In all of these instances, the textbooks' goal is to legitimize the rulers and secure the consent of the ruled by proving that leaders are in the service of religion, cultivate Islam at home, and safeguard Muslims across the globe; therefore, they are qualified to lead.

The textbooks promote consent by establishing the religious credentials of the rulers and fostering a sense of loyalty to them. To accomplish this, they mobilize various Surahs from the Qur'an and examples from the Prophet's life. The textbooks cultivate loyalty either by teaching it directly in a dedicated unit, as in a 10th-grade book titled "Obedience to the Ruler," or by inserting it within different units ranging from Jihad to social etiquette to Shari'a legislation, as in 11th- and 12th-grade books.

A standard narrative across these units emphasizes students' obligation to follow the ruler and avoid rebellion against him because this is a divine commandment. The books trace the origins of this order to the 59th verse of Surah An-Nisa': "O you who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger; and those charged with authority among you." Books further clarify the verse: "Allah, Glorified and Sublime be He, has commanded us to obey the ruler. This ... achieves unity among the ranks of people as well as unity of goals" (10b: 168-9). This example illustrates the broad character of the pedagogic narrative that frames the meaning of a Quranic text in terms of policy agendas. Such articulations aim to align children's dispositions with the goals of a modern state, which is to unify the community behind a leader for the survival of the polity.

Educational material reinforces loyalty further by legitimizing the type of political domination leaders seek to establish. Similar to other monarchical systems in the region, state authority in the UAE rests on “patrimonialism.” The model is characterized by personal allegiance to a ruler who derives authority from his traditional status embedded within extended kinship, familial, or patronage relations (Weber, 1978: 1006-22). The textbooks offer many instances in which this patrimonial rule is constructed:

Allah, Glory be to Him, has commanded obedience to the ruler even when he orders his subjects to do something of no apparent benefit to them, because ... his *ability* to envision the future *qualifies* him to make correct decisions, whose *goodwill* eventually spread across the whole country. In carrying out the orders of the ruler, the subjects usually obey Allah and His Messenger and will be rewarded on this and in the Afterlife (10b: 169, emphasis ours).

This excerpt delineates the hierarchical relationship between ruler and ruled. Leaders are accorded a higher status for their distinct and paternal qualities, including their love for people and ability to know what is best for them. They deserve full submission even if their decisions appear arbitrary or against one’s interests. In addition, the excerpt demonstrates the effort to confer neutrality to the particular interests of the state by enveloping them in a universalist religious discourse. Implying a parity between the rewards of obeying the ruler and obeying God, which extend beyond this life, serves such a purpose.

Patrimonialism is often associated with pre-modern political systems but indeed persists in the contemporary period (Charrad and Adams, 2011: 8). An essential feature of modern patrimonialism is its ability to disrupt traditional forms of hierarchy while preserving their essence. In the modern era, the local allegiance to a tribal chief, feudal lord, or religious scholar is superseded by the national leader. However, the *patriarchal* quality of that relationship remains intact. The textbooks support the state’s goal of shifting loyalties from the local to the national level by emphasizing adherence to the nation’s leadership.

Deploying the emulation method, students are taught that obeying the ruler is an expression of “civilized, refined conduct in society” (10b: 166). To learn such etiquette, they

are instructed to model the Prophet's Companions, who were committed to "politeness with their Messenger" and "never to leave his council except on permission given by him" (12b: 243). In another case, Jihad or "fighting in the cause of Allah" (10b: 260) is presented as the sole decision of the ruler and that his "subjects are obliged to... executing whatever he orders and committing themselves to it [Jihad]" (10b: 262).

Additionally, the textbooks use the method of generalization by excavating theological sources for contemporary goals of governance. For instance, one assignment requires students to study the Battle of Confederates to assess the problems of disobeying the ruler. In 627 A.D., a group of Arab tribes attacked Muslims in Medina as revenge for being driven out of Medina. Most Muslims battled alongside the Prophet, but others (that the unit calls "hypocrites") withdrew their support, reasoning that the Prophet's promise to save them was false and subsequently spreading skepticism in society against him (11a: 79). Students are then asked to assess their level of understanding of the statement "I avoid the attributes of the hypocrites" (11a: 86). Later, they are tasked with composing an essay to the ruler titled "A message of loyalty and gratitude to the President of the State" (10b: 181) and explaining what happens in a scenario when "a person is affiliated with a group banned by the ruler" (12a: 214).

These exercises aim to cultivate loyalty by removing allegiances to the sub-national units, including prohibited ones, and channeling them to the established order embodied in the ruler's persona. Overall, the textbooks take an active part in shaping the dispositions of children. This involves encouraging virtuous behavior and aligning with the state's political values by framing them as universal and divinely ordained. In doing so, the textbooks anchor national identity, political legitimacy, and consent in religious obligation.

"Moderate Islam" as the National Model

Moderation, tolerance, and their derivatives are the most prominent terms invoked in the textbooks. Together, they appear 200 times or roughly every seven pages. In the coding scheme, “moderation/tolerance” is the most frequently assigned code, constituting 226 of 1,467 entries (the second most frequent code is assigned 138 times). We can explain these terms’ significant presence in the context of the state’s broader use of the tolerance discourse to negate varieties of Islamist opposition, manage an increasingly diverse domestic population, and project an image of religious coexistence to international audiences.

The image promoted by the state as the national model of Islam, “moderate Islam,” invokes a middle path (*wasatiyyah*) between religious practice as either too lax or too strict. The curriculum supports the state’s endeavor by acting as an authoritative site to inculcate this national model in children. Islamic textbooks reinterpret the “essence” of Qur’anic terms, verses, edificatory stories, and Shari’a rulings as grounded in universal tolerance. They also embed this discourse in a wide range of non-religious topics, including environmental sustainability, women’s empowerment, scientific rationality, and national culture.

All textbooks begin with a vision statement, explaining that students should live their lives “in light of the principles of Shari’a, whose hallmark is moderation, tolerance, positivity.” Subsequently, they excavate Surahs to recast the Holy Book in light of the official model. However, textbooks acknowledge that the Qur’an does not include the term “tolerance” (10b: 212). Instead, individuals should interpret Allah’s mercifulness (11b: 191) and the Prophet’s kindness (10b: 216-17) as indicators of Islam’s commitment to the principle.

The link between Islam and tolerance is drawn through more obvious examples, such as the Prophet’s dealing with prisoners at the Battle of Badr. After the battle, some Companions advised killing the prisoners, while others suggested taking *fidya* (a donation paid as a penalty). The Prophet chose to demand *fidya* in the form of teaching literacy to ten

Muslim children. Deploying the method of emulation, textbooks instruct students to follow the Prophet's "forgiving" and "merciful" attitude as forms of tolerance in their daily relations, by "accepting excuses and apologies for mistakes" (11b: 164-5), "forgiving insults," and "observing full rights or others irrespective of color or religion" (10b: 220).

These lessons cultivate the typical principles of moral education (respect, forgiveness); but they also delineate the state's view on alternative interpretations of Islam:

In our time, some people believe that they draw near to Allah by adopting extreme measures in matters pertinent to religious rulings. They believe that they alone are right ... Thus, they invest forbidden issues with legitimacy such as bloodshed, dissent and rebelling against the ruler. They forbid permissible things such as food, drinks, clothing and pursuing acquisition of knowledge (for women)" (12a: 40-41).

The critique presented in this excerpt, and widely observable throughout the textbooks, never specifies which "people" practice these measures. Nevertheless, they target two political oppositions: militants from al-Qaeda and ISIS, and state-oriented actors such as *al-Islah* and the Muslim Brotherhood. The example of "investing in bloodshed" implies the former's practice while "dissent and rebelling against the ruler" gestures to the latter.

The textbooks' efforts to brand alternative religious interpretations as dangerous is even sharper in a related passage:

The question of intolerance and extremism is a very serious question indeed; it transforms man into an enemy of his homeland, society and relatives ... Muslims have experienced in the hands of extremists the most heinous of crimes—terrorism, murders, violation of honor, looting, diffusion of ignorance, chaos and destruction (12a: 41).

The use of extremism in this excerpt (and many others) does not distinguish between movements committed to gradual Islamic reform and jihadis committed to violence. This usage helps legitimize the state's categorization of all Islamist models as "extremist" while reserving the term "moderate" for its own. The binary moderate versus extremist provides a higher moral ground and enables the state to present competitors as enemies of the country, deserving punishment. Under the guise of condemning violence, more broadly, a variety of

similar articulations serve to socialize children into the state's political campaign against its opponents.

This socialization is carefully reinforced through various student exercises using the method of generalization. For example, one textbook provides an exegesis of the Surah al-Ahzab to discuss the instability “seditionists” created during the Prophet's reign by undermining his credentials and the social order in Medina (11b: 212-20). Students are later asked to assess their “degree of realization” of particular political articulations by checking off either average, good, or distinguished, such as: “I refrain from criticizing systems and laws” and “I work on disseminating awareness on the importance of obedience and the unity of opinion to the progress of society” (12a: 51). These activities invite students to generalize from the Prophet's experience with seditionists to the ruler's experience with his political opponents. Students are expected to conclude that stability hinges on conformity with the dominant opinion and abiding by the ruler.

The state's utilization of the tolerance discourse also serves to manage an increasingly diverse domestic population. The demographic realities of super-diversity in the UAE create two challenges for the state—and by extension the textbooks—to resolve: 1) justifying the presence of foreign migrants who reduce nationals to a minority in their own country, and 2) maintaining Emirati national identity in the face of many migrants' non-Islamic lifestyles.

One of the most interesting discussions on super-diversity is found in a unit titled “Methodology of Thinking in Islam” in a 10th-grade book. The unit suggests that using one's mental capacity is highly regarded in Islam, similar to worship. It then makes a connection to other people who possess intellectual faculties: “Islam calls us to appreciate the knowledge, expertise and the conclusions of such people ... and build on their efforts” (10a: 70, 72). While appreciating others' expertise sounds like a generic statement, Islam's

appraisal is strategically linked to the state's particular demographic concerns. The text continues:

- There are many positive effects of methodological thinking on society, including (...)
- 2) The progress of society in all fields of life to occupy its place among nations ...
 - 3) Promoting a culture of dialogue ...
 - 4) Accepting the other and respecting his opinion to sustain an atmosphere of cooperation and coexistence between nations (10a: 75).

Despite the country's massive wealth, lack of skilled citizenry prevents creating "the progress of society" or fulfilling the UAE's ambition to place itself "among the developed nations." Expats' knowledge and expertise is required to realize the state's developmental goals (i.e., moving beyond oil dependence, increasing competitiveness, technological modernization). Thus, "promoting a culture of dialogue" and "cooperation between nations" are integral components of the state's discourse to convince citizens to accept the large foreign population in their own country.

The textbooks deal with a second challenge, reproducing national identity in a super-diverse environment, by referencing Islam's approach to globalization. Twelfth-grade books define globalization as increased material and cultural exchange between different people, which is acceptable because "the caravans of Muslims used to trade outside the borders of Madinah" and the Prophet "dealt with non-Muslims and cooperated with them" (12b: 83).

While textbooks cite Shari'a as promoting coexistence, they also make sure to set the limits by warning students about the "negative aspects [of globalization] such as dissolving national and personal identity" (12b: 80). They instruct students to "fortify one's cultural identity" (12b: 95), as one twelfth-grade book suggests:

Showing tolerance to... people of different faith does not mean in any way neglecting the principles of religion (Usul al-Din أصول الدين), or the homeland, or one's honor ... It does not mean weakness and submissiveness [to others] ... (12b: 153).

In addition to ensuring religious-national identity, the excerpt aims to deflect concerns that tolerating expats means accepting the racial superiority of (in particular Western) residents,

which historically characterized relations in the region until the mid-20th century. Shari'a control, therefore, reinforces the idea that expats' existence in the homeland does not reduce the nation to a submissive position.

Finally, in addition to managing potential Islamist opposition and diversity at home, the tolerance discourse helps project a particular image to international audiences. In line with the state's foreign policy goals, the textbooks counter stereotypical portrayals of the Gulf as a land of religious zealotry with alternative depictions. For example, the UAE is portrayed as "a model on a global scale" for the peaceful coexistence of "nearly 206 nationalities ... [where] these racial groups co-exist in complete harmony and integration" (12a: 80).

The textbooks draw on numerous examples in Islamic history to compare the UAE with the multicultural society present during the birth of Islam. They then outline the state's efforts to manage its population by emulating strategies the Prophet used after emigrating to Madinah. Some of these include Muhammed's drafting of the Charter of Madinah to protect individual rights of Jews and quell tribal strife (12a: 79) and his legislation of a Brotherhood (*Mu'akhat*) between those who emigrated to Madinah (*Muhajirin*) and the ones who helped them (*Ansar*) (11a: 132; 12a: 80).

Next, textbooks deploy the method of generalization connecting these past stories to contemporary challenges, especially the state's efforts to build a cohesive society. Similar to the Prophet's acts, after which "racism and fanaticism disappeared" in Madinah (12a: 80), the government's passing of a law "to combat discrimination and criminalize ... discourses of hatred" (12a: 147) is meant to eradicate injustice and extremism in the UAE. To reinforce students' ability to appropriate the Islamic past to assess the present-day UAE, they are prompted to work in groups to recount "strategies of the Messenger" and then plan "a debate on the effects of communal peace in the United Arab Emirates" (12a: 80).

Going beyond the traditional objectives of Islamic education, as the preceding discussion reveals, the textbooks instrumentalize Islam to serve the state's domestic and foreign policy program. This program rests on perpetuating the official endorsement of tolerance and rebranding the UAE as a champion of peace. As Fahy (2018, pp. 313, 321) argues, this obsession with tolerance needs to be viewed within a "complex politics of representation." The state aims to correct misconceptions about the UAE and reaffirm ties with the West. However, the curriculum not only deploys Islam to further state interest in geopolitical and military cooperation with the West, but it also cultivates the state's economic vision, specifically its commitment to capitalism and globalization, which we analyze in the last section.

Economic Development and Islam

For the past decade, the Ministry of Education has sought to ensure Emirati youth are "driven by science, technology, and innovation" in line with the UAE Vision 2021, which aims to create a "knowledge-based, highly productive and competitive economy" (United Arab Emirates Ministry of Education, 2017). Motivated by this vision, the curriculum connects religious education with economic ends by reframing Islam's teachings as congruent with modern capitalist values such as thinking critically, maximizing productivity, and investing in development. We analyze this process in two recurrent discourses: compatibility of Islam and science and commitment of Islam to development.

Throughout the textbooks, Islam is presented as a rational religion that heralds modern science. Accordingly, "reason and revelation are both sources of knowledge," and neither negates the other's findings (11a: 27). This is evidenced in the contributions of Muslim scholars to the advancement of different sciences (10a: 126); on the Prophet's own "keenness on science and knowledge" (12b: 290); and on his efforts to teach his Companions the

importance of “critical thinking” (11b: 259). Following in the Prophet’s footsteps, students are asked to compose an essay where they articulate how they will “work diligently in [their] scientific and knowledge-oriented studies to become a symbol to emulate” in their own country and the Muslim world more broadly (10b: 289). Additionally, the Qur’an is frequently referenced for mentioning natural phenomena later proved by modern science—such as galaxy expansion, fetal development, astronomical dawn. This means through science man can attain the “means of perceiving” the Divine (12b: 285).

In connecting Islam and science, the textbooks try to navigate a persistent dilemma: the state needs to educate its citizens in skills necessary to function in its expanding capitalist economy, which can mainly be achieved through secular education. However, due to legitimizing its rule through religion, leaders cannot appear to privilege worldly knowledge—and by extension secularism—over religion. Hence, even though the UAE national curriculum places greater importance on secular school subjects, the textbooks present all knowledge as Islamic, blessed by the Divine. After establishing this link, the books exhort students to devote themselves to their (mostly secular) studies, arguing that it is a means to grow nearer to God and earn His pleasure (10a: 141; 10b: 164; 12a: 165; 12b: 252).

In addition to promoting critical thinking and scientific inquiry, the textbooks also use Islamic sources to emphasize productivity and development as divinely ordained. Books recast work as a form of worship by suggesting that Muslims work to “please [their] Lord” (11b: 93) and that Muslims should naturally be inclined to serve as “productive element[s]” of their society (10a: 73) because continual development is “a duty by Shari’a” (10a: 87).

The textbooks use the method of emulation to shape students’ subjectivities in line with the demands of the modern economy. Students are taught that the Prophet “lived his life according to sound thinking and precise planning” in setting out for *da’wa* [invitation to Islam] (11a: 124). Modeling the Prophet’s behavior, students are asked to develop their

country and its resources by avoiding “negligence and laziness” (10a: 141), embracing rational thinking (10a: 35), and working hard at their chosen professions (11b: 93).

The textbooks then use the method of generalization to promulgate contemporary goals of economic governance. For instance, they give an assignment in which students are tasked to study Surah Yusuf to discover the strategic plan laid out by the Prophet Yusuf to ease a coming natural disaster for the Egyptians. In verses 43-9, the king of Egypt asks people around him, including the Prophet Joseph (Yusuf), to interpret his dream about Egypt suffering a seven-year drought. Yusuf then proposes a plan to improve crop harvesting to prevent a potential famine. The assignment encourages students to generalize from this kind of thinking and examine the Vision 2030 Plan of Abu Dhabi (11a: 135), which centers on “a reduced reliance on the oil sector as a source of economic activity and a greater focus on knowledge-based industries” (United Arab Emirates Government, 2020).

The two recurring themes across the textbooks—the compatibility of Islam and science and the commitment of Islam to development—work together to insert the elites’ economic visions into the notion of moral cultivation. More broadly, they strategically employ specific Quranic verses, Hadith, and instances from Islamic history to serve the state’s domestic and international policy designs.

Conclusion

The complex interplay between religion, education, and politics has long shaped social dynamics in the Middle East, particularly in the Arabian Gulf. The late arrival of nation-states following the end of colonial domination created increased urgency for nations’ unity and survival of the regimes. In this context, moral education has been an instrument of social control, deployed by states to create broadly shared public religions. However, we also discovered that religious education is about more than religion. While the textbooks are

concerned with teaching the basics of Islamic theology and practice, they also advance broader non-religious goals on the state's political, economic, and international policy interests. Despite claiming neutrality, we find that the pedagogic discourse embodied in the religious textbooks are deeply politicized. By analyzing the unique position of religious education as the context and target of national and international struggles, we find that religious education is leveraged to achieve a host of goals: strengthening national identity, legitimating monarchical rule, pacifying religious opposition, appealing to the international community, spurring economic development, among others.

There are several limits to textbook analysis and religious curriculum analysis more broadly. First, it is not clear whether students (and their parents) take official articulations of religion seriously. Are textbooks approached as "reliable" sources on Islamic creed and practice (thereby accomplishing the goal of disseminating state-sanctioned religion), or are they received as state propaganda and perhaps dismissed as a result (especially by oppositional groups)? The textbook analysis provides a window into understanding authorized versus unauthorized models of religion; but it reveals less about the subjective dimension of student experience (of receiving, accepting, rejecting). Subsequently, despite popular scholarly approaches that view textbooks as tools of social control, whether (or how much) they accomplish this purported goal is less well-known.

Second, school textbooks are elite-driven, top-down projects, and therefore limited in understanding both macro struggles over education in national politics and micro contestations in everyday life. In terms of the former, textbooks mainly reflect the dominant or authorized view on morality. Hence, they tell us little about alternative formulations (except remarks dismissing them, as analyzed above). Regarding the latter, textbooks are not the only spaces through which individuals acquire ideas on morality or religious authenticity (Adely and Starrett, 2011: 360). Instead, they pursue religious knowledge in numerous places

(through mosques, study circles, cassette sermons, or Islamic journals), which inevitably put the “authoritativeness” of textbooks at risk.

Islamic education reform and textbooks are undoubtedly valuable sites to understand both societal conflicts over education and the nature and construction of power in society. As the study of Islamic curriculum in the Middle East continues to draw the interest of sociologists and anthropologists, our analytical lens needs to be calibrated to understand the character of official Islamic education in shaping students’ political and social consciousness in the service of state policy agendas; as well as to understand the numerous ways organized oppositional groups and quotidian experiences challenge it.

Endnotes

¹ The term “super-diversity” refers to complex demographics not solely captured by ethnicity to explain immigrant characteristics. Additional variables such as multiple origins, transnational connections, labor market experiences, and legal stratification are included to explain the population dynamics. See (Vertovec, 2007).

² We reference the quotes first by identifying the grade (such as 10, 11, or 12), then using “a” or “b” to refer to the first or second-semester book, followed by the page number. For example, (11a: 64) refers to page 64 of the first of the two textbooks assigned for students in the 11th-grade.

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