Teaching About Religion in a Post-Soviet State:

An Examination of Textbooks in Kazakhstan’s Upper Secondary School system

Henrik Ohlsson

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1. Introduction

The history of Islamic societies can be read as a constant negotiation between political and religious authority, where the political needs legitimization by the religious, and thus has to grant a degree of independence, necessary for upholding religious authority, without allowing the latter to pose a threat to political stability. With the political developments of the last century – particularly the emergence of the nation-state as the predominant political model – along with the emergence of radical revivalist currents in Islam, governments in many Islamic countries have begun to feel a need for a tighter state control of religion. After the fall of the Soviet Union, Central Asia has been involved in a process of formation and consolidation of nation states. This process entails the development of a new set of shared values. This, together with the abolishment of the Soviet atheist ideology, has given religion a prominent, yet ambiguous role in present day Central Asia. Naturally, education is of vital importance in the creation and dissemination of shared values. For this reason, I believe that a closer look at teaching materials, meant to foster the growing generation of citizens, may give valuable insights into the ideas that inspire a young nation – not least with regard to such issues as religion and secularity.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the role and meaning of religion in the official thinking of a predominantly Muslim post-Soviet country. I will go about this by means of a content analysis of four textbooks in the subjects “History of Kazakhstan” and “Social Studies”, used in upper secondary school education in Kazakhstan.

2. Theoretical Discussion
2.1. Defining Secularity

First, we need to direct our attention towards some difficulties regarding the definition of secularity. To begin with, let us make a distinction between the word-forms secular, secularity, secularization and secularism. The first two, secular and secularity, are usually understood simply in opposition to the words religious and religion/religiosity. In this way, they are defined together with their opposites, and cannot be understood separately. Secularization, by the same logic, has often been thought of as a process of gradual decrease in religiosity. Secularism, finally, is usually understood as an ideology or mode of thinking, which strives to understand reality and society – and to shape at least the latter – in accordance with rational principles (which are contrasted with religious dogma). This rather simplistic view is now being seriously challenged. Contemporary theorists tend towards viewing secularity as a quality in its own right, that is, as something, rather than just the lack of something.¹ Negatively defined, secularity appears as a neutral fact, which does not become the object of serious inquiry.

In this study, I will direct my attention primarily towards secularist ideology (secularism). My description of the secularity of contemporary Kazakhstan, and of the particular version of secularism found in the source material, will, of course, depend on the relation of this societal condition and ideology to the concept of religion. Importantly, however, I will view secularity and secularism, not as neutral facts, but as phenomena with specific ideological qualities, transforming, rather than abolishing, religion.

The anthropologist Saba Mahmood has written on the subject of secular normativeness, i.e. the way secularism favours certain religious expressions above others, and actively strives to reshape religion. Rather than just neutrally seeking to separate religion from state, Mahmood suggests that secularism seeks to reform and reshape religion to make it fit into a normative idea of what and how religion ought to be:

I want to suggest that the political solution offered by the doctrine of secularism resides not so much in the separation of state and religion or in the granting of religious freedoms, but in the kind of subjectivity that a secular culture authorizes, the practices it redeems as truly (versus superficially) spiritual, and the particular relationship to history that it prescribes. […] Critics who want to make secularism’s claim to tolerance more robust must deal with this normative impetus internal to secularism, an impetus that reorganizes subjectivities in accord with a modality of political rule that is itself retrospectively called “a religiously neutral political ethic.”²

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¹Calhoun, Juergensmeyer, VanAntwerpen 2011, p. 5

²Mahmood 2006, p. 328
The modernistic understanding of secularity as simply a lack of something – while avoiding a deeper study of secularity itself – created a need for a definition of religion, and was in this way itself part of the process of separation of religion from other spheres of life. In his book, *Det postsekulära tillståndet*, the theologian Ola Sigurdson has criticized the construction of religion as a general concept. Any definition of religion as a general concept is, according to Sigurdson, bound to have political or ideological implications. In other words, defining religion is to say not just what religion is, but also what it ought to be. The classical sociological theories of religion and secularization presumed the possibility of both a theoretical and a practical division of concepts such as religion, science and politics, and described secularization historically as an ongoing delimitation and separation of those spheres. With this usually followed the presumption that religion was gradually fading, giving way to reason and science, or, at least, that it would become a purely private matter without any political or social impact. In this way, the act of defining religion is, in itself, an essential part of the delimitation and separation of the spheres, and thus, part of the process of secularization.

Charles Taylor distinguishes three different senses of the word secularity: 1. that religion (references to God or an ultimate reality) no longer has a central role in the public/political sphere; 2. that religiosity decreases among the population; and 3. that religious belief is no longer unchallenged (as in pre-secular societies) but rather understood as one option among others – which does not necessarily mean that religious adherence and activities are at a low level. In a society which is secular in the third sense, belief in God may still be the default option in some social environments, while unbelief is the default option in others. What's important is not which type of social environment that dominates, but the fact that it is virtually impossible for an individual living in any particular environment to be unaware of the existence of other options. However, Taylor also describes a historical process where unbelief as a default option has come to win more ground:

Our modern civilization is made up of a host of societies, sub-societies and milieux, all rather different from each other. But the presumption of unbelief has become dominant in more and more of these milieux, and has achieved hegemony in certain crucial ones, in the academic and intellectual life, for instance; whence it can more easily extend itself to others.

### 2.2. Secular or Post-Secular

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3Sigurdson 2009, p. 14-17, 25-28

4Taylor 2007, p. 2-3

5Taylor 2007, p. 12-13
Recently, some scholars have begun to use the term *post-secular* in their description of the current state of affairs in many parts of the world. The term is meant to indicate a situation where religion is no longer thought of as merely a remnant of a dark past, destined to fade away as scientific thinking wins more ground and the general well-being in society increases. In recent decades, there has been talk of a “return of religion” – as if it was gone and suddenly appeared again. Sigurdson makes a more balanced approach to the problem, suggesting that it is not so much the actual role or legal status of religion, nor the number of adherents, that has changed, but rather the social and intellectual attitudes towards it. There is a general awareness of its presence in society and an acceptance of the probability of its continued presence in the foreseeable future. Thus, the term post-secular, in Sigurdson’s understanding, marks a change in the general discourse concerning religion, a shift from secularity to something else.\(^6\)

Let us return for a moment to Taylor and his description of secular society as a multitude of sub-societies and milieux, where it is virtually impossible to be unaware of the existence of other milieux in which the default approach to life and reality is quite different from that in one's own milieu, but where unbelief has become dominant in an increasing number of milieux – especially in academic and intellectual circles.\(^7\) The change in attitude that Sigurdson points to could then, in Taylor's terms, be described as a halted or reversed trend, where the presumption of unbelief is no longer necessarily hegemonic in academic and intellectual circles, and where the number of milieux where this presumption dominates are no longer increasing – or perhaps even decreasing.

To conclude this discussion of secularity and post-secularity, I will make some definitions, which will constitute the basis of my conceptual framework for this study. It is unavoidable that all my conceptual definitions here will have one major flaw; they will all make reference to religion, which will have to remain undefined. Since the purpose of this study is find out how the concept of religion is understood in the context of the material under study, the definition can only be made a posteriori.

For my discourse analysis, I will use a conceptual framework based on secularity and post-secularity as two separate paradigms. The *secular paradigm*, in my definition, is characterized by the idea that separation of religion from other social, cultural and political spheres is generally and/or officially, both possible and desirable. Religion is considered ultimately a private matter, without any legitimate claim to impact on social, cultural or political matters. In the *post-secular paradigm*, religion is recognized as an integral part of social, cultural and political life, and thus entitled to have a real impact on societal development. Unbelief is no longer necessarily the default attitude in academic and intellectual circles. Importantly, however, religion exists in an environment which has been reshaped by secularization, making it one of several options for an individual's approach to life and reality. In this way, the

\(^6\) Sigurdson 2009, p.

\(^7\)Taylor 2007, p. 12-13
background, towards which an individual shapes his or her attitude, is similar to that of the secular paradigm.

2.3. Secularization as a Historical Process
Bearing in mind the problems discussed above – particularly that of presuming a progressive decrease in religiosity – we may have use for a quick look at some ways of describing and understanding the historical process of secularization and the different results it has produced. This will be useful as a background to the further categorical division of secularism, which I will get to shortly.

One of the prominent scholars in the field of secularity studies, David Martin, has outlined a general theory of secularization as a process with its roots in the European Enlightenment, but which has developed quite differently in different countries, depending on the religious situation at the outset. In Catholic countries, where the church has historically maintained something of a religious monopoly, the forces of secularization tend to find themselves in a direct confrontation with the church and to develop a strong anti-religious sentiment resulting in a hard two-sided confrontation. In Protestant countries, a higher degree of pluralism of religion has often developed in parallel with the forces of secularization. The different denominations in a Protestant society may be associated with different social classes and form alliances with different political forces. In this way, religion is not as clearly associated with the older power structures and the confrontation does not become as hard. The Russian historical experience (which, as I will later develop, is shared to a greater or lesser extent by all territories, which were historically under Russian rule) has, in Martin’s understanding, many similarities to that of most Catholic countries, i.e., a religious monopoly is confronted violently by revolutionary forces with a strong anti-religious sentiment.  

2.4. Categorization of Contemporary Forms of Secularity
The different ways in which the process of secularization has proceeded in different societies have produced a variety of forms in which secularity may appear, as well as different versions of secularism in the policies of governments. Ahmet T. Kuru has suggested the categories passive and assertive secularism in his discussion of Turkish state ideology in an international perspective. The two categories are described as follows:

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8Martin 1978, p. 17-23
Passive secularism implies state neutrality toward various religions and allows the public visibility of religion. Assertive secularism, on the other hand, means that the state favours a secular worldview in the public sphere and aims to confine religion to the private sphere.\textsuperscript{9}

The prime example of passive secularism in his article is the United States, while Turkey (before the current AKP government) exemplifies the assertive type. Another example of assertive secularism is the French \textit{laïcité}. The historical origins of this ideological and legal construct fits right into Martin's model where a religious monopoly is confronted by an anti-religious secularizing force. Olivier Roy has characterized French \textit{laïcité} as assimilationist, as opposed to the multiculturalism that prevails in most Protestant countries.\textsuperscript{10} This means that religion, race and ethnicity are expected to be left at home, in the private sphere. In the public sphere, the visibility of religion is minimized. The recent ban on headscarves and other religious symbols in public schools is an example of this ambition. The version of secularism which, since the 1920s, has been part of the state ideology in Turkey (where the ban on headscarves in universities was recently abolished under the somewhat less secular AKP government) is similar to the French \textit{laïcité} in that it asserts the confinement of religion to the private sphere. An important difference from the French model, however, is the state control of religion in Turkey, where a state department regulates religious education, and imams are state employees. In fact, in most Muslim countries today there is a high degree of state control of religious education. In post-Soviet Central Asia, this is most definitely the case.

As we have seen, secularity and secularism appear in a variety of forms, shaped by different historical developments as well as political and religious circumstances.

Thus far, we have divided different historical forms of secularity into the categories \textit{passive} and \textit{assertive}. At this point, it is necessary to underline that state neutrality (which, as we have seen above, has been put into serious question lately) towards different religious currents and organizations is usually a cherished ideal in any state, which considers itself secular, regardless of whether the state ideology is best categorized as passive or assertive in its attitude towards religion. The difference lies more in the public visibility of religion and in the connectedness or disconnectedness of religion to public/national identity.

\textsuperscript{9}Kuru 2006, p.137

\textsuperscript{10}Roy 2007
2.5. Islam and Secularity

The concept of secularity, as well as the bulk of the theoretical treatment of the subject, is built on historical developments in predominantly Christian societies. To simply assume that the same theories and models are automatically applicable to a society with a Muslim majority may be misleading. One of the problems is that Christianity usually takes the shape of tangible organizations, either as a central body comprising, (or with the ambition to comprise), society as a whole, or as denominations with a clearly specified membership. Islam has, during most of its history, lacked a central canonizing body and the different currents of thought, which have emerged in Islam, have rarely taken the shape of tangible organizations or denominations. Of course, the Sufi orders could be seen as tangible organizations or denominations. However, this is true only as long as the analysis is limited to those individuals involved in an active master–pupil relationship. The much looser affiliation of an entire local society to a certain Sufi order, which has been a common scenario not least in Central Asia, does not really fit into the same pattern. In most Islamic societies religious authority has traditionally been localized, centred on charismatic individuals such as scholars of Islamic law, mullahs or Sufi masters (while the political authority has of course sought religious legitimacy and tried to control or influence religion within their territories).

In the contemporary debate the opinion is sometimes voiced that Islam is in essence all-encompassing and thus incompatible with the idea of a partition between state and religion. In Christianity, on the other hand, it is stated already in the Gospel of Matthew: “Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s; and unto God the things that are God’s” (Matt. 22:21). In this passage some have found a theologically based predestination in Christianity leading naturally to a secular form of society. The connection between theology and politics, however, is just not that simple. Olivier Roy, who discusses this problem in his book *Secularism Confronts Islam*, considers this move from the theological level to the political a methodological error and states that:

> When the church finally accepted the secular republic, this was not because a commission of theologians had spent years rereading the Gospels but because the Vatican drew the political lessons from the inescapable advent of the republic and adapted to it (commissions serve only to provide philosophical arguments to justify decisions already made for political reasons).11

Theological justification for a division between state and religion can of course also be found in Islam. The law scholar Abdullahi Ahmed An-Naim, for example, has pointed to the uniqueness of the complete

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11Roy 2007, p. 39
conflation of political and religious authority in the Prophet Muhammad. Since the death of the Prophet, An-Naim argues, the same situation cannot be replicated – especially since Muslims recognize him as the last Prophet and generally rule out the possibility of later ones. Looking at Islamic history, we find a wide array of different arrangements of division or conflation of political, judicial, military and religious authority. According to An-Naim, Islamic societies from the first Caliph onwards, have always had some degree and form of division between religion and state (which is not to say that they were secular in the modern sense of the word). This is necessarily so because political and religious authority is derived in very different ways; the political, coercive authority on a public arena, and the religious, moral authority in closer, interpersonal relationships. An-Naim develops this argument in the following way:

The need to enforce general public policy, as distinguished from voluntary compliance by individual persons, requires that rulers be granted authority (whether by selection, election or other means) on the basis of their actual or presumed political skills and their ability to perform state functions and exercise coercive powers. The qualities of effective political leadership must therefore be determined on a large and public scale, in a decisive and settled manner, to minimize the risks of civil strife and violent conflict. […]

In contrast, religious leaders achieve recognition among believers because of their piety and their knowledge, which can be determined only by the private judgement of individual persons, who need to get to know potential religious leaders through daily interactions.

This does not mean that the two forms of authority are independent from one another, but rather that they are locked in a mutual, sometimes paradoxical interdependence. An-Naim again:

From a religious perspective, it is a contradiction for a leader to actively assert piety – it is impious to claim piety. Since this would undermine the basis of religious authority, those aspiring to religious leadership would need to assert autonomy from rulers. Conversely, rulers needed to concede the autonomy of the scholars precisely in order to gain Islamic legitimacy from those scholars' endorsement of the state. In other words, rulers needed to balance their control of religious leaders by conceding their autonomy from the state, which is the source of the ability of religious leaders to legitimate the authority of the rulers.

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12 An-Naim 2009, p. 53

13 An-Naim 2009, p. 51

14 An-Naim 2009, p. 52
In this way, Islamic history can be understood in terms of a constant negotiation between political and religious authority. In the last few centuries, much of the Islamic world has been subject to European colonialism. Obviously, this has had a great impact on the balance between political and religious authority in these countries, not least on the way religious oppositional movements have formed.

Post-Soviet Central Asia shares some experiences with other colonized Muslim countries, but, having been part of the Soviet Union for seven decades, the region also has some peculiarities that separates it from the rest of the Islamic world. The pre-Soviet situation in Central Asia had some traits in common with the typical protestant society as described by David Martin. First of all, as has been the most common situation (with some notable exceptions) in Muslim societies across the world, there was no official religious monopoly – although there certainly were influential religious bodies. The bulk of the population consisted of Sunni Muslims, but there were also substantial minorities of Jews, Christians and Ismaili Shia Muslims. Secondly, the forces of reform – most prominently the jadids – expressed their vision in religious terms, as did, of course, the conservative ulama who opposed them. Thus, as in the typical Protestant society according to Martin’s development scheme, religion as such was not a matter of dispute. Nevertheless, a certain degree of secularization did take place as the jadids for example introduced more worldly subjects into the system of education.

After the Russian revolution of 1917, however, the victorious side – the strongly anti-religious Bolsheviks – exported, or superimposed, their version of secularism on Central Asia, creating an in many ways unique situation in the history of secularization. Soviet secularism was most definitely of the assertive category, even more so than the French or Turkish. The so-called scientific atheism, which was part of Soviet state ideology, was not satisfied with just confining religion to the private sphere or putting it under state control. The ultimate aim was the complete eradication of religion from the minds of people, as religion created, in Marxist-Leninist terminology, a “false consciousness” which constituted an obstacle to socialist progress. Perhaps this should not even be defined as secularism, since the aim is not the separation of state and religion, but the eradication of the latter. Naturally even the Soviet state had to make compromises with reality and even though some serious attempts were made at eradicating religion, especially in the first two decades after the revolution, it ultimately had to succumb to forming centralized organs to control it.

2.6. Religion and Education
In any society, struggling with its religion-society-state relationships, the intersection between religion and education is bound to become an area of controversy and complication for decision makers. In the American discussion on this matter, which is naturally to a significant extent centred around constitutional issues, scholars have used the terms separationist and accommodationist to classify two major camps, where the separatist camp advocates a strict separation between church and state, and the
accommodationist maintains that some elements of religion within state structures can be permissible. The difference between actual partakers in the legislative process is, of course, usually relative and not absolute. The two terms might better be used as ends of a spectrum, where, for example legislators and legislation can be placed somewhere in between, leaning more towards one or the other end.

Next, we must distinguish between 1. teaching of religion, i.e. instruction in the teachings of a specific religion. This can be provided by representatives of a religion either within a (public or private) general school system – depending on the legal situation in the country – or within the religious structure itself, and 2. teaching about religion, i.e. teaching from an outside perspective (e.g. historical or social science perspective) either as a subject in itself (as in the Swedish upper secondary education) or as part of other subjects, such as history or social studies. The Italian law scholar Silvio Ferrari has sketched a model with three basic patterns for how countries in Europe handle the issues of religion and education: 1. Countries where no teaching of religion is offered. Teaching about religion may be included in other school subjects, 2. countries which provide non-denominational teaching about different religions – usually as a separate subject within the state-organized educational system, and 3. countries where denominational teaching of religion is allowed and included in the general school curriculum. In this model, Kazakhstan would fall quite clearly into the first category, taking into account the legal situation as well as the school curriculum (even though attempts have been made to introduce religious knowledge as a subject).

In countries of the first and second pattern in Ferrari's model, the school system usually has the ambition of providing neutral and objective teaching about different religions. This is, of course, not an easy task, in part because of the possible cultural and/or religious bias of teachers, authors of teaching material and policy makers shaping the curriculum contents. In this study, I will not go into these issues in depth. However, there is one general difficulty in providing neutral and objective information about religion, which can be useful to bring light on for my analysis of the textbooks. In a recent critique of the American Academy of Religion's guidelines for teaching about religion in public schools, Daniel F. Lim has drawn attention to how, in the purportedly neutral and objective guidelines, intended to give students a basic religious literacy and acquaintance with the major world religions, religious scepticism, i.e. the view that there is no knowledge in the domain of religion, is clearly favoured over religious realism, i.e. the view that there is knowledge within religious traditions, in their general approach to the subject. Religious scepticism may seem like a natural approach from an academic perspective, but, as Lim points out, it misrepresents the fundamental claims of the religions and contradicts the way many adherents understand their own religion.

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15Eckes 2010, p. 6-8
16Ferrari 2013, p. 100-101
17Lim 2014, p. 220-29
Method

3.1. Limitations

As noted above, the object of this study is a content analysis of the chosen textbooks, or rather of chosen parts of those textbooks. The parts subjected to detailed analysis have been derived in the following manner: The textbooks are divided into chapters and subsections. First, I have chosen the most relevant subsections, those which discuss religion in an analytical framework and thus give more than just passing references to religion. However, from those subsections, I have derived all sentences containing certain religion-related key words (to be listed shortly). In this way, some sentences which, standing on their own, can be seen as just passing references will also be “caught in the net”. In order to be true to the objective selection criteria, and to simply provide a balanced selection of discourse samples, I will give account for those sentences as well. But my focus will be on statements which can be considered as value-related or analytical. As I want to examine how religion as a general concept is understood and discussed in the material, the first set of key words naturally consists of the word religion (religiya) along with all its possible derivatives. In order to get a better perspective on how the role of religion in the specific historical and contemporary context of Kazakhstan, I have also chosen to include Islam (musulmanstvo/islam)\textsuperscript{18} Muslim (musulmanin) and Koran (Koran) along with all their possible derivatives, Islam being the dominant religion in the country. All sentences containing one or more of the key words have been included in the derived parts. In some cases it has been necessary for the sake of clarity to include one or more sentences above or below a key word sentence, which themselves do not contain any of the key words. In this way, I have derived some long parts, where sentences without the key words function as binding material between sentences with them. This method of selection is intended to support a qualitative content analysis. For this reason, the first step in the selection process is based on “soft” criteria, which are more difficult to define. But in the next step objective criteria are used, so as to avoid complete arbitrariness. The choice of Islam as the only specific religion included in the key words means that discussions and descriptions of other religions will be included in my excerpts only insofar as the sentences contain one or more of the key words (or appear in close connection to such a sentence) whereas Islam, being a key word in itself, will render more extensive excerpts.

3.2. Methodology

My method can be labelled as a version of qualitative content analysis, applied, as Chad Nelson and Robert H. Woods Jr have put it, “[…] to measure a specific phenomenon according to some standard in

\textsuperscript{18}The most common Russian word for Islam is musulmanstvo, but in these textbooks the word islam, taken more directly from the Arabic, is also used frequently and apparently synonymously.
order to classify the phenomenon, make a judgement about it, or determine how close it comes to a particular standard or expectation”.\(^\text{19}\) For this I have developed a conceptual framework, based on some of the theoretical concepts discussed above. However, I’m analysing the textual samples in relation not only to theoretical concepts, but also to the context in which they are found. While there are some quantitative aspects of my findings (e.g. I find that the positive references to religion in the material vastly outnumber the negative ones), the main direction of the study is that of a qualitative content analysis, in that my focus lies on understanding meanings which can be interpreted from the text.

So how is this method going to provide any answers to my overarching question concerning the role and meaning of religion in a predominantly Muslim post-Soviet country? My thinking goes somewhat along the lines of what Norman Fairclough has defined as critical discourse analysis, in that I aim to shed some light on ideological features in the text, which may not at first sight be taken as ideological, and to put these features in relation to a wider social and historical context in order to understand their meaning and possibly something about their origin or purpose.\(^\text{20}\) I’m working with a multi-layered contextual framework, starting from the immediate textual environment from which the excerpts are taken, where each of the chosen subsections is summarized and discussed, and the whole contents of the textbooks are given a more general overview. The outer contextual layers are provided in the form of background chapters on the historical, social and political circumstances of Kazakhstan and Central Asia. I’m analysing discourse in the textbooks partially as a micro discourse reflecting and reproducing elements of a macro discourse which I will call “official ideology”. By ”official ideology” I mean a complex of ideas concerning society, culture and human interaction, propagated by a state or by persons and organizations controlled by or loyal to it. This may include official publications, statements by government officials, mass-media,\(^\text{21}\) and it most certainly includes the contents of an officially decided school curriculum. In Fairclough’s words: “[…] the question of how discourse cumulatively contributes to the reproduction of macro structures is at the heart of the explanatory endeavor [of critical discourse analysis]”.\(^\text{22}\)

However, I certainly don’t consider the “micro discourse” I’m analyzing to be a perfect microcosm in the sense that it would be a perfect reflection of the macrocosm on a smaller scale. I do believe that some features of the macro-discourse (in this case what I call official ideology) are reflected in the micro-discourse, which makes it at least theoretically possible to learn something about the macro-level by studying the micro-level. But the micro-discourse can also be seen as part of a whole, with its own unique properties that contribute to the whole. This perspective could also enable us to learn something about the whole, somewhat like how a paleontologist, by analyzing a single bone or a fragment of a bone, can make

\(^{19}\) Nelson/Woods 2011, p. 110-111
\(^{20}\) Fairclough 1995, p. 28, 36
\(^{21}\) Even in countries with a high degree of media freedom, I would argue that at least parts of the mainstream media discourse contribute to the reproduction of an official ideology.
\(^{22}\) Fairclough 1995, p. 43
an educated guess as to the appearance of the entire animal. In this case, however, we do know something about the whole to start with. In fact, to know the context well and to have a sound theoretical framework is a necessary precondition for drawing any valid conclusions based on the kind of abductive reasoning employed here, which, in the words of Jeppe Sinding Jensen, works by “[… ] making inferences and best guesses on the basis of what is known, what we may predict and what fits our models and theories best”.23

So, if we can understand the specific discourse of these school textbooks better with the help of our knowledge of the larger whole of which they are part, can we then let the more detailed knowledge of the specific discourse reflect back onto the whole and deepen our understanding of that? I believe so, at least to some extent. For one thing we know for certain that the larger whole contains whatever we find in one of its parts. That much is true by definition. But I would like to go a little bit further and say that, analyzed within a proper theoretical and contextual framework, our findings in a particular instance allows us to make reasonable assumptions as to the nature and workings of the larger whole of which the instance is part.

3.3. Conceptual Framework

I will make use of three key concepts in this study. The first is official ideology (as defined above in section 3.2.). The other two are secularism and post-secularism (as defined above in section 2.2.), which I will use as points of orientation in order to determine which way the discourse under study, which I regard as an element of official ideology, is leaning. To clarify and develop these concepts as analytical tools, I present them in a paradigmatic scheme as follows, together with a number of characteristic themes to search for in the discourse:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>The secular paradigm</th>
<th>In the post-secular paradigm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The secular paradigm</strong></td>
<td>is characterized by the idea that separation of religion from other social, cultural and political spheres is generally and/or officially, both possible and desirable. Religion is considered ultimately a private matter, without any legitimate claim to impact on social or political matters.</td>
<td>In the post-secular paradigm, religion is recognized as an integral part of social, cultural and political life, and thus entitled to have a real impact on societal development. Unbelief is no longer necessarily the default attitude in academic and intellectual circles. Importantly, however, religion exists in an environment which has been reshaped by secularization, making it one of several options for an individual's approach to life and reality. In this way, the background, towards which an individual shapes his or her attitude, is similar to that of the secular paradigm.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

23 Sinding Jensen 2011, p. 48
Past stage: In the historical dimension, religion is most likely considered a past stage, a pre-scientific means of understanding the world, which is in the process of losing its relevance to modern people.

Complex historical role: Religion is assigned a complex role in historical developments, both affecting and being affected by history in many different ways.

Negative relation to societal development: The degree of religiosity is put in a negative relation to a society's level of development.

Positive relation to societal development: What's important is not the degree of religiosity, but rather its character. Religion and religiosity, at least in some forms, are considered a positive contribution to ongoing societal development.

Religious scepticism, in the sense elaborated above, is the preferred approach in official statements and publications.

Religious realism is, while not necessarily preferred, at least a possible approach in official statements and publications.

The themes presented here will be used as “thematic macrostructures” by which the findings can be generalized and organized. This method has been criticized from a cognitive psychological point of view. However, I’m only suggesting these themes as tools for organizing the findings (not as a complete theory), findings which will then be analysed not only within a conceptual framework, but also within a contextual one. Based on the theory discussed above of secularism and post-secularism as different paradigms, I have organized the themes dualistically, as opposite ends of a spectrum.

In the same dualistic fashion, I will discuss the situation in contemporary Kazakhstan, as well as the findings in the textual samples, using a set of ideological property markers:

\[
\text{Assertiveness} \leftrightarrow \text{Passiveness} \\
\text{Separationism} \leftrightarrow \text{Accommodationism}
\]

As we have seen above (in sections 2.4. and 2.6.), assertiveness and passiveness have been used to classify the properties of different types of secular state ideologies, and separationism and accommodationism to classify opposing ideological trends in educational policy.

3.4. Language Treatment

As Fairclough has Argued, one cannot properly analyse content without simultaneously analysing form. Thus, I will pay some attention to the texture and style of the texts, but not go as far as to making a full systematic linguistic or intertextual analysis. Either way, the fact that my primary sources are in Russian creates some difficulties. I agree with Fairclough that discourse analysis should ideally be made directly

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24 Hjelm 2011, p. 137
25 Hjelm 2011, 2. 139-140
26 Fairclough 1995, p. 188
However, in order to make the analysis more accessible, I have chosen to translate the excerpts from my primary sources, which I subject to detailed analysis. I have strived to stay as close as possible to the original text as possible, but, since a translation is always to some extent an interpretation, I have also included the original quotes in transliteration. For transliteration I have used a simplified version of the BGN/PCGN romanization system, where the soft sign and the hard sign are omitted, which should be sufficient to make the quotes understandable to a reader of Russian.

Now, before we begin the examination of the textbooks, we need to make a survey of the historical and societal situation, and of the education system in Kazakhstan, as a general background and wider context.

**4. Religion in Central Asia**

4.1. From the Arab to the Russian Conquest

The Arab Muslim conquest of Central Asia began already in the mid seventh century, shortly after the takeover of the crumbling Sasanid kingdom in Iran. It would take the better part of a century for Islam to be firmly established among the region’s city dwellers and settled agrarian population. It was at first primarily the settled Iranian population that was converted. The Turkic nomadic tribes kept to their own ethnic religions with strong shamanistic features for much longer. It wasn’t until the formation of the great Sufi orders in the 12th century that a mass conversion of the Turks began.

In 819 the area was conquered by a native dynasty of Iranian stock, the Samanids, who became the first non Arab Muslim dynasty of the area. The Samanid rule, which would last until it was conquered by the Turkic Qarakhanids in 999, provided the setting for a flourishing Islamic culture in which a regional Muslim identity could develop. The takeover by the Turkic Qarakhanids meant a shift in the power balance in Central Asia between the Turkic and the Iranian peoples. However, the settled population remained largely Iranian, and Arabic and Persian continued to be the languages of religious and intellectual discourse.

The majority of the Turkic nomads remained untouched, or at least not deeply affected by the message of Islam. It seems that Sufism, with its more inclusive attitude towards local religious practices, was more adaptable to the tribal conditions. Some of the practices now part of Central Asian Sufi traditions can clearly be traced back to pre-Islamic times. However, due to the change that takes place in popular understanding of history and heritage with the adoption of a new religion, defining a certain practice as Islamic or pre-Islamic may not be a viable effort. The adaptation of Islam to local conditions was facilitated in Central Asia by the predominance of the Hanafite School of law, which is

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27 Fairclough 1995, p. 190-191
28 Soucek 2000, 85
considered to be the most flexible of the Sunni schools. The traditional customary law *adat* would coexist with the Islamic *sharia* for many centuries, even under Russian colonial rule up until the establishment of the Soviet Union.\(^{29}\)

The issue of innovations and local adaptations is an important point in the conflicts that sometimes arise between Sufism and radical Islamic ideologies which have entered Central Asia after the collapse of, and to some extent during the reign of, the Soviet Union.

The Mongol conquest of Central Asia, and a large portion of the rest of Eurasia, in the thirteenth century, was at first a devastating blow to Islamic civilization. Cities and libraries were destroyed and the political system in the Muslim areas, where a system of Muslim rulers, mullahs and an Islamic judiciary system had been firmly established, was deeply disrupted. It wasn’t that the Mongols had anything against Islam, or any other religion for that matter. They had their own ethnic religion and were usually quite tolerant – or indifferent – to the religious views of their subject populations. In some instances, however, Islamic law and practice would be in conflict with the Mongol’s own code of conduct, *yasa*. This, together with the general restructuring of the political system caused a setback for the Sunni mullahs as the focal point of popular religion.

This created a situation where the Sufi fraternities, which were not that dependant on the Islamic judiciary system, but rather on the personal charisma of the *pirs*, could gain ground and form the web that held Islamic culture together. About a century later, when the local Mongol khans in Muslim areas began to convert to Islam, the Sufi fraternities where at the forefront of an Islamic renaissance in Central Asia. From the 10\(^{th}\) to the 13\(^{th}\) century, Sufi fraternities (*tariqat*) began to take shape on a massive scale throughout the Islamic world, not least in Central Asia.\(^{34}\) The Sufi *tariqat* is centred around a religious authority, a *pir* who takes on pupils, usually called *murid*. The relationship between the *pir* and the *murid* is often one of strict obedience, sometimes even to the point where the *murid* gives up his own will for that of the *pir*. This can be understood in the context of the general asceticism that characterizes most Sufi denominations. By giving up his own will the *murid* renounces his worldly life and submits to the will of God (through the mediation of the *pir*). Of course, when the *tariqat* is established as a societal institution in a large area, influencing more or less the whole population of the area or of a certain ethnic group, not everyone lives in such a close relationship with the *pir*. But the *pir* is still often an important authority in both profane and religious matters, mediating in conflicts and sought for religious advice. Upon death the *pir* passes his authority to the next generation.\(^{35}\)

\(^{29}\)Naumkin 2005, 7

\(^{34}\) Lapidus 2002, p. 138

\(^{35}\) Lapidus 2002, p. 137-141
The Sufi orders were essential in spreading Islam in Central Asia, especially among the Turkic nomadic tribes on the northern plains. And it is here that we find some of the most important roots of the Kazakh national identity, in a confederation of tribes that formed on those plains after the disintegration of the Golden Horde around the turn of the 15th century. These tribes kept their nomadic lifestyle, unlike the Uzbeks, who settled in the cities and agricultural lands of southern Central Asia under the Shaybanid dynasty.\textsuperscript{36}

From the time of the Shaybanids, the region slowly became more isolated due to a number of factors. One was the Safavid dynasty, which rose in Iran at roughly the same time and converted their population to Shiism (while the Shaybanid Uzbeks stayed Sunni). Another factor was changing trade routes, after the Europeans found waterways to China. This led to an era of cultural stagnation in Central Asia, and to the break-up of the region into smaller political units. By the time of the Russian conquest, Southern Central Asia consisted of three principal city states, The Khanates of Khiva and Khokand and the Emirate of Bukhara. The northern plains were still ruled by shifting tribal constellations.\textsuperscript{37}

4.2. Islam during the Russian Conquest and Colonization of Central Asia

In the 19th century, the so called “great game” took place between Russia and Great Britain, whose empires were about to meet in Asia. At the same time Russia went through something of an identity crisis, as the pan-Slavic ideas, so popular in the 1830s and -40s, which emphasized Russia’s role as a European power, began to lose ground to new ideas, more oriented towards Asia. The representatives of this new current were called \textit{vostochniki}, “orientals”. The ideology is usually referred to as Eurasianism. They were united by a feeling of suspicion towards Western Europe and an effort to redefine and reinvent Russia as a Eurasian empire. Some went as far as to make Eurasia a third continent, in between Europe and Asia. On this new continent the Russians were destined to be the leading culture.\textsuperscript{38} Even though they had dropped the emphasis on the linguistic ties the other Slavic peoples, the Russians were still identified as Christians and Aryans, and with this came the ideas of a civilizing mission similar to that of the other European colonial powers. Svat Soucek has described the Russian conquest of Central Asia as a two phase process. The first phase (1730-1848) was a prolonged gradual takeover of the northern Kazak steppes. The second (1864-1884) was a much swifter conquest of the major cities of Southern Central Asia together with the southern parts of Kazakhstan.\textsuperscript{39}

\textsuperscript{36} Lapidus 2002, p. 339
\textsuperscript{37} Lapidus 2002, 345-351
\textsuperscript{38} Laruelle 2008, 29-32
\textsuperscript{39} Soucek 2000, 195-9
4.3. Colonial administration

The Asian part of the Russian empire was divided into two main areas, Siberia and Central Asia. Those were in turn divided into general-governorships and oblasts. Russian Central Asia consisted of the general-governorships Turkestan, in which were included the oblasts Syr-Darinskaya, Samarkanskaya, Ferganskaya, Zakaskiyskaya and Semirechenskaya; the general-governorship Stepnoe, in which were included the oblasts Akmolinskaya and Semipalatinskaya; and finally the two independent oblasts Uralskaya and Turgayskaya.40

Russia sought to consolidate its suzerainty through migrating Russian farmers and workers. Between the two population censuses made in 1897 and 1911 the Russian part of the Central Asian population almost tripled in number from almost 700 thousand to more than 1,8 million, while the Muslim part of the population grew from 6,9 to 8,2 million. But at the same time the latter's percentage of the population decreased from roughly 90 % to 80 %.41

Some effort was put on encouraging the nomadic tribes to take up agriculture, but for the most part the social fabric of the area was left untouched. Instead parallel structures were built for the increasing population of Russian migrants, structures which gradually came to include parts of the native population.

The educational system in Central Asia at this time consisted of maktabs for the ages 6-14, led by imams, and madrasas with dormitories for older students, where the education was usually led by ishans.42 Almost all education was religious, with very little worldly subjects. The Russian administration did not interfere with this system, but instead built “Russian-Native schools”, which began to attract some pupils from the native population.43

The judicial system was handled in a similar way. The Central Asian judicial system consisted of local courts, many of them based on some interpretation of Islamic law, sharia. But there were also, especially in the steppe areas, a system of local courts called zang amongst the Kazakh and the Kyrgyz, but more commonly referred to with the Arabic term adat, based on traditional customary law. During the colonial period efforts were made by missionary imams to bring about a shift to sharia based law in the steppe

40 Tsvetkov 1914, 44

41 Liubimov 1914, 234-36, 241-2

42 Ishans are leaders of sufi orders (also called pir, khoja or sheik). The title was originally attained by way of rising to a high level in a sufi order, but it can also be passed on from father to son.

43 Poddubny 1914, 169-71
Such efforts, conducted by Tatar missionaries, had been supported by Russia back in the time of Katherine the great, long before the Russians conquered the whole of the Kazakh steppe. This was motivated by an ambition to “civilize” the Kazakhs by turning them away from their old shamanic traditions, while at the same time reducing the influence on the steppes of Bukhara emirate and its respected imams.

Both sharia and adat courts were left largely untouched by the Russian colonial administration, and remained even a few years into the Soviet era. The Russians did, however, create a parallel judicial system, handling crimes committed within the Russian settlements and crimes committed by natives against Russians.

4.4. Central Asian Islam in the 19th century

The Russian view of Central Asian Islam – and of Central Asian culture in general – was of course shaped by their idea of a civilizing mission. In a volume published by the Russian department of agriculture in 1914 the different ethnic groups are classified according to their level of civilization and cultural accomplishment, all measured by European standards. The nomadic Kyrgyz and Kazakh tribes are, as can be expected, considered less civilized than the settled Tajiks and Sarts in the cities and rural areas in the south. Interestingly, the less dogmatic nature of the Islam practiced by the steppe nomads was also seen as a sign of their lower level of civilization. According to one Russian scholar of the era the Kyrgyz simply did not have the mental capabilities to understand religious dogma. This idea of Central Asian Islam, and especially that of the steppe nomads, as somewhat imperfect and mixed with non-Islamic elements has lingered in the scientific community, but has in latter decades been criticized. Later research tends to distance itself from an essentialist understanding of Islam, and instead points out that religious practice everywhere by necessity is a complex of different cultural phenomena, and that older customs and traditions may take on a new meaning in a new religious context.

44Ibid., 160

45Allworth 1994, 4

46Poddubnyi 1914, 173

47Azjatskaya Rossiya: Liudi i poriadki za Uralom, St. Petersburg 1914

48Poddubny 1914, p. 160-63

49See for example the works of Devin A. DeWeese and Adeeb Khalid.
The Central Asian territories conquered by Russia in the second half of the 19th century were ethnically very diverse. As regards religion, however, Sunni Islam was absolutely dominating. As always when a proselytizing religion is established in a new area, it has, in the course of history, intermingled with local traditions, forming a unique web of customs and traditions. In Central Asia Sufism in different forms has come to play a central role in the popular religious life. It seems, though, that, in the course of time, the lines of initiation from *pir* to *murid* have, to an important extent, come to be replaced or superseded by bloodlines. The religious prestige – but perhaps not always the knowledge – was thus passed on from father to son through generations until the titles *pir*, *ishan* etc. came to be associated with certain families, while the traditional organisational structures have been blurred. The Turkish scholar Shirin Akiner states that Central Asian Sufism, in the Russian colonial period, “[…] had for the most part been reduced to the level of Ishanism (a syncretic, popular form of mysticism, centred on local, often hereditary, spiritual leaders).”\(^{50}\)

### 4.5. Reform and resistance

Naturally, the Russian colonial rule stirred up some resentment and resistance. The most important upheaval in the pre-Soviet period took place in 1898 in the Ferghana valley. It was led by the Naqshbandi Sufi leader Dukchi Ishan. A member of the old Muslim intellectual class, he summoned his peers in an effort to reinvigorate Islamic culture. The military venture, aimed at the re-establishment of the Khokand khanate, was quickly put down by the Russian army. However, the resistance was not all conservative. According to the Uzbek scholar Alexander Dzhumayev the most important socio-cultural effect of the Russian conquest was a widening of the world view of the Central Asians and an impulse urging the Central Asian intelligentsia to begin a search for their own identity.\(^{51}\) New currents of thought began to flourish, especially toward the end of Tsarist Russia, inspired partially by Russian reform movements and partially by pan-Turkic and pan-Islamic ideas which at this time were widespread in the crumbling Ottoman Empire. This led to a general nationalistic awakening with reform movements such as the “Young Bukharans”, modelled on the “Young Turks” in Turkey. Part of this was also a religious revival. During the Russian colonial period and up until the revolution the number of Central Asian pilgrims to Mecca grew steadily.\(^{52}\) This revival, however, did not mean an upsurge of the traditional Islamic customs

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\(^{50}\) Akiner 2003, 241

\(^{51}\) Dzhumayev 2008, 170

\(^{52}\) Ibid., 171
of the region. The increased contacts of Central Asian intellectuals with the rest of the Islamic world inspired a search for a “pure” Islam – one that, it was assumed, would be more compatible with the modern times and thus serve to strengthen the Muslim nation in its struggle against the colonial powers. These reformists were called *jadidi*, from an Arabic word meaning “new”, as opposed to the conservatives called *qadimi*. Ismail Bey Gasprinsky (1851-1914), one of the most influential *jadid* intellectuals, initiated an educational reform that, by the time of the Russian October revolution, had resulted in about 5000 *jadid* schools in Muslim areas under Russian jurisdiction.\(^{53}\)

**4.6. Islam in the Soviet Era**

In the first few years of the Soviet era the new authorities treated the issue of Islam with some caution. According to the official theory, religion was a passing problem, one that would simply disappear with the eradication of feudal and capitalist class structures and exploitation. Following Marxist materialism the first priority was to uplift the Central Asian populations to the same historical level as the Russians by means of industrialization and thus the creation of a modern proletariat.

The Basmachi rebellion of the early 1920s made it clear to the Soviet authorities that the issue of Islam had to be dealt with carefully. For a time local courts exercising both customary law (*adat*) and Islamic law (*sharia*) were allowed to exist. This can be seen as a concession to the Basmachi rebellion. The Soviet authorities did not want to aggravate the Muslim masses further and drive them to side with the rebellion. However, the number of local traditional courts as well as their jurisdiction was gradually diminished until they finally lost all legal validity in 1924.\(^{54}\)

The Muslim intellectuals of Central Asia and the Caucasus, especially those involved in the modernizing efforts of jadidism, were often attracted by communist ideas, although they adopted them with some modifications. Inspired by the ideas of pan-Turkism these intellectuals held forth the national issue, claiming this would not be solved simply by the liberation of the proletariat. It was argued by for example Sultan Galiev, the foremost intellectual champion of this new form of communism, that the economic differences between nations, and not just between classes, needed to be taken into account. There was a concern that the liberated proletariats of the imperialist nations would continue the exploitation of the colonies. Therefore the struggle of the colonized peoples for national independence needed to be

\(^{53}\)Bennigsen/Lemercier-Quelquejay 1967, 38-39

\(^{54}\)Bennigsen/Lemercier-Quelquejay 1967, 145-7
considered part of the socialist class struggle. Furthermore, it was felt among these Muslim communists that the differences between Eastern and Western culture were too great to allow the implementation of communism to proceed in the same way in the Islamic lands as in Russia. The ideas needed to be modified and adapted to the social and economic particularities of the region.

For most of the 1920s this national communism was reluctantly accepted by the Soviet authorities. In 1921 the policy of korenizatsiya, “rooting” was adopted. This policy meant that communism was to be rooted in the different cultural environments of the newly formed Soviet Union by for example regulating that a certain percentage of the administrative posts in the regional soviets be held by representatives of the native population.

This relative tolerance did not last very long. In 1928, when Stalin took a firm grip of the party, the attitude toward the minorities of the Soviet Union changed. On the sixth congress of the Komintern the korenizatsiya policy was abolished. In the purges that ensued and culminated in the late 1930s the Muslim intellectual class of Central Asia was almost entirely wiped out.

With World War II the attitude changed once again. Realizing that religion could be useful in boosting the morals of soldiers the Soviet authorities began to take measures towards the creation of state controlled religious institutions. In 1942 a conference was held in Ufa that gathered Muslims from all over the Soviet Union and called for Muslims to fight fascism.

Spiritual directorates were established to oversee the religious activities of the Islamic peoples of the Soviet Union. In 1943 the Spiritual Directorate of Central Asia and Kazakhstan was founded and placed in Tashkent. An official Soviet Islam began to take shape. Mullahs working to uphold this official Islam in the relatively few approved mosques were appointed and registered by the religious authorities.

At the same time, unregistered mullahs continued to work in secret, especially in the countryside, preaching more traditional forms of Islam, though many of these had very little religious education and thus can be assumed to have made quite individual interpretations of it.

In the last few decades of Soviet rule, new radical and politicized forms of Islam began to form clandestine cells in Central Asia, many of them inspired by purist currents from the Middle East, India and Pakistan.

According to some scholars Islam in Soviet Central Asia could be divided into three basic levels: 1. the official Islam supported and controlled by the authorities, 2. the unofficial, traditional Islam represented by the unregistered mullahs and whatever remained of the Sufi orders, and 3. the radical political Islam.

\[55\] Bennigsen/Wimbush 1979, 41-7

\[56\] Bennigsen/Lemercier-Quelquejay 1967, 152
inspired by foreign ideologies. After independence a shift in the relations between these levels can be detected. In the Soviet period, official Islam was in some ways closer to the radical level, inasmuch as it promoted interpretations that would often contradict the local Islamic traditions, and sometimes based its opinions on the Hanbali school of law (whereas the Hanafi school is the traditionally predominant in Central Asia). This may have been a policy designed to divide and disrupt the local Islamic culture. After independence, however, in its efforts to form a new national ideology, the government institutions responsible for religious issues draw strongly on local Islamic traditions and emphasize more clearly the predominance of the Hanafi school. This may lead to a situation where traditional Islam loses its credibility, precisely because of its close connection to officialdom, which, in turn, could increase the popular support for foreign inspired radical currents. This shift in the relations between official, unofficial and radical Islam is, I believe, a key to understanding the current religious situation in Central Asia. Here, we may remember the discussion from chapter 3, and the quotes from Abdullahi Ahmed An-Naim, concerning the sensitive balance between political and religious authority.

5. Religion in Contemporary Kazakhstan

5.1. Religion, Identity and Politics in Central Asia

It is clear that the developments in the independence period have forced all the former Soviet republics in Central Asia to revisit their religious policies from time to time. However, the different countries have dealt with the emergence of Islamic extremism and the influx of ideas from the Middle East and Pakistan in somewhat different ways. In Tajikistan a civil war broke out in the 1990s, in which the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IRPT) played an important part. In the peace treaty that ended the war a power sharing agreement was included which gave some influence in the parliament to the IRPT. Thus, Tajikistan now permits political parties based on religion, as opposed to all the other former Soviet Central Asian countries.

After independence, the former Soviet republics of Central Asia had to reinvent themselves as nation states. A process of nationalization had indeed already begun in the Soviet era. In order to avoid a situation were the issue of nationality would stand in the way of socialist development, a strategy was formed by the Bolshevik Party under the dictum: “national in form, socialist in content”. The national consciousness of the different peoples under the Soviet Union was boosted, but in a controlled way so as to avoid the emergence of aggressive forms of nationalism. According to the scholar Adeeb Khalid this

57 Roy 2002 52-4
policy was so effective that by the end of the Soviet era the reality was closer to a reversed version of the official dictum: “socialist in form, national in content”.  

Thus, the groundwork for the formation of nation states was made already long before independence, but with independence, the nationalizing process naturally reached a new level. New constitutions were adopted, the languages of the titular populations were elevated to the status of official or state languages, and the religious issue suddenly took on a whole new importance. The latter appears to have come as something of a surprise to the governments of Central Asia, all of whom had just recently been part of the highly secular (or atheist) Soviet political structure. Left with a political map drawn in the 1920s under Stalin, in an area that had been multi-ethnic for many centuries, the formation of nation states was not without its complications. With the collapse of the Soviet Union and Soviet ideology the need for new national ideologies to fill the gap was felt by all of the Central Asian regimes. The search for common denominators has for the most part gone along the lines of either ethnic or religious factors. The former Kyrgyz president, Askar Akayev, strived to create a more civic based concept of citizenry expressed in the phrase “Kyrgyzstan is Our Common Home”. However, due to pressure from parts of the country’s political and intellectual elite, Akayev too eventually had to start putting more emphasis on the ethnic Kyrgyz identity. Naturally, a legal concept of citizenship that transcends ethnic and religious boundaries does exist in all of the Central Asian countries, but none of the regimes has tried as hard as Akayev did in the 1990s to put this concept at the centre of a national ideology.

However, strong identity factors as they may be, neither ethnicity nor religion is without its complications in the complex cultural web that is Central Asia. Although the titular population dominates in numbers in each country, there are large minorities, a significant portion of which is constituted by the titular populations of the neighbouring countries.

Before the Russian conquest, the concepts of ethnicity, nation and state were not as closely knit together as in Europe. In time, Russian and later Soviet suzerainty would foster the development of a somewhat more European sense of these concepts. Particularly in Soviet times the seeds were sown that would develop into the ethno-nationalist thinking that prevails in the area today. Even as Soviet authorities sought to pre-empt aggressive forms of nationalism, which would pose a potential threat to the coherence of the Union, the officially recognized scholarly views incorporated recognition of ethnicity and nationality as objective facts – facts that would be unwise and possibly dangerous to ignore.

58Khalid 2007, p. 94-5

59Marat 2008, 31-40
As for religion, Sunni Islam is by far the most widespread faith. But this dominance does not make it uncontroversial as a basis of national ideology. In some of the Central Asian countries attempts have been made to promote other religious constructs, associated with ethnic belonging and earlier historical periods. In Kyrgyzstan, for example, sectors of the elite have promoted Tengrism as the genuine religion of the Kyrgyz. The concept of Tengrism is based on the cult of the heavenly god Tengri practised in Central Asia, not only by the Kyrgyz, but by Turkic and Mongolic peoples alike.

In Tajikistan president Emomali Rakhmon has attempted to counterbalance the influence of Islam by reconstructing Zoroastrianism – at least on a symbolic level – and stressing the Aryan origin of the Tajik people. This has been an intricate balance in a country which, together with Uzbekistan, is considered among the most pious in the region.

An important concern for all of the Central Asian governments has been the possible threats from unofficial and foreign inspired forms of Islam. In the early 1990s scores of foreign Islamic proselytizers flocked to Central Asia in an attempt to seize the opportunity to bring these countries back into the community of Muslim nations, and the Muslim brethren, who had long suffered under an atheist regime, back on the true path. The largest portions of proselytizers came from Turkey and Saudi Arabia.

The Turkish missions included Sufis with the aim of rekindling the Sufi tariqats of Naqshbandiyya and Yasawiyya in the land of their origin, as well as so called nurçular, a movement also inspired by Sufi ideas, but which presents them in a modernized package, without the traditional pir - murid relationship. Structurally it is a network of private enterprises ranging from media to trading. They have opened schools and commercial enterprises all over former Soviet Central Asia (but were forced to close down in Uzbekistan in 2000).

The Saudi Arabian missionaries propagated their strict interpretation of Islam, usually referred to as Wahhabi or Salafi, which would often clash both with local Islamic traditions and with governmental policies. The Saudi mission included members of the ethnically Uzbek community in Saudi Arabia, which originated from two waves of migration from Central Asia in the 1930s and 1970s.

Other foreign Islamic currents that have gained followers in Central Asia are the originally Middle Eastern Hizb ut-Tahrir al Islami (HTI), which appears to have grown considerably in the early 2000:s, especially among ethnic Uzbeks in the Ferghana valley, and the Pakistani movement Tablighi Jamaat

60Marat 2008, p. 34, 42-3, 46-7

61In fact, in some Turkic languages the word Tengri is still in use more or less as a synonym to the Arabic Allah and the Persian Khodā (in Tajik: Khudo).

62Balci 2003, 153
63Balci 2005, 239-250
(TJ), which appears to attract more ethnic Kyrgyz.⁶⁵ While the HTI has a clearly developed political programme, entailing the formation of a Caliphate where Islam is the foundation of the law, TJ seems to stay out of political issues and instead focus on every day piety and worship.

Unfortunately, the fear of radical Islamist currents have often led to excessively repressive measures which many observers warn might lead to increased radicalism and violence.⁶⁶ The labels “Wahhabism” or “Salafism” have often been used in order to discredit movements which in reality have little or nothing to do with these Saudi Arabian strands of thought. Salafism has been used more in recent discourse (and there are groups that refer to themselves as Salafi), while Wahhabism has been used as a derogatory term meant to imply a presence of Saudi inspired radical ideas, contrary to the local traditional Islam (as it is understood by the states).⁶⁷ However, the term Salafi should also be used with caution in discussions about Islam in Central Asia.

5.2. Religious Policy in Kazakhstan

To many observers, Kazakhstan comes across as the most successful of the former Soviet Central Asian states. The economic situation in the country is far superior to that of its neighbors, even after the 2008 global crisis, which hit Kazakhstan quite hard. The level of perceived corruption in the country’s public administration, while still high, is markedly lower than in the other Central Asian states, according to Transparency International.⁶⁸

The American journalist and political analyst Claude Salhani was clearly impressed by Kazakhstan’s achievements – particularly with regards to religious issues – after a six month assignment in Astana in 2010, as can be seen in his book Islam Without a Veil: Kazakhstan’s Path of Moderation.⁶⁹ Salhani is not an expert on this region, nor is he a scholar of religion. But his observations, as a journalist and political analyst who has covered the Middle East extensively for more than 30 years, can still contribute with some valuable perspectives. He is actually pleasantly surprised to find here “[…] a very different form of Islam from the one we know in the Arab world”.⁷⁰ He probably doesn’t mean to suggest that there is only one form of Islam in the Arab world. What he does mean to suggest, however, judging from the rest of his book, is that Kazakhstan is exceptional among predominantly Muslim countries in the way it handles religious issues. He paints a picture of a thoroughly secular culture, stating that “Kazakhstan is Muslim much as France is Catholic”.⁷¹ He also makes comparisons with Turkey and between President Nursultan Nazarbayev and Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, characterizing Kazakhstan as “[…] the very image of ’post-

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⁶⁷ Roy 2000.
⁶⁹ Salhani 2011
⁷⁰ Salhani 2011, p. 10
⁷¹ Salhani 2011, p. 10 he repeats this statement in slightly different wording in a later chapter (p. 57).
Ottoman Turkey' of Central Asia, and then some”. The comparison with Turkey under Atatürk is interesting, bringing to mind a system of strict regulations of religion and banishment of religion from the public sphere. And it is in many respects a legitimate comparison – not least when we take into consideration certain aspects which are somewhat downplayed in Salhani’s book, namely the strict government control of religion and the formation of centralized state bodies charged with the task of overseeing and administrating religion and religious education. (I’m referring to the Department of Religious Affairs, “Diyanet”, and the General Directorate for Foundations, which were established by the constitution in accordance with Kemalist secularization policies.) In Kazakhstan the Soviet administrative body for the control of Islam in Central Asia (SADUM) was replaced after independence with a similar structure on the national level, the “Spiritual Administration of Kazakhstan’s Muslims” (Duchovnoe upravlenie musulman Kazakhstana) (DUMK) under the leadership of a head mufti and therefore also referred to as the Muftiate.

Salhani himself advocates a strict separation between religion and politics, and a confinement of religion to the private sphere – and this is apparently what he finds in Kazakhstan. This is of course to a large extent due to the policies of modern Kazakhstan, but Salhani also finds possible root causes of the Kazakhs’ “more open approach to Islam” in their history as a nomadic culture. It is a common theme in discussions on Islam in Central Asia that the Kazakhs (as well as the linguistically and culturally closely related Kyrgyz) have somehow adopted a “light” version of Islam, still intermingled with a lot of their older pre-Islamic customs. The renowned historian of Islam, Ira M. Lapidus has distinguished between different types of Islamic societies that developed in Central Asia as a (long term) result of the advent of Islam in the region:

The advent of Islam in this region led to the formation of three types of Islamic society. Among the Kazakhs, Islam became part of popular identity and belief, but not the basis of social organization. Among other tribal peoples and in some oasis communities such as Kashgar, Sufi masters or Sufi lineages mediated, organized and sometimes governed. In large scale urbanized societies such as Transoxania, state-organized Islamic societies of the Middle Eastern type were developed.

I have already touched upon these differences in social organization in the historical chapter by

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72 Salhani 2011, p. 78-79, 151-156
73 An-Naim 2009, p. 203-204
74 Duchovnoe upravlenie musulman Sredney Azii i Kazakhstana
75 Link: http://www.muftyat.kz/ru
76 Salhani 2011, p. 62, 156
77 Salhani 60-61
78 Lapidus 2002, p. 338
mentioning the different legal systems where sharia courts dominated in the settled areas while customary law (zang/adat) was more commonly practiced in the steppes among the Kazakh and Kyrgyz. However, as I have also discussed in the historical chapter, it is theoretically problematic to distinguish between “genuine” Islamic practices and “remnants” of older religious practices. I would argue that it is simply not the place of an outside observer to judge whether a culture is “more” or “less” Islamic compared to others. Missionary religions are always to some extent mixed with local traditions when they are established in a new area. Still, some of the roots of the modern secular culture of Kazakhstan may be found in the historical particularities of how religion related to social organization among the nomadic Kazakhs. However, the Soviet legacy of strict secularism and anti-religious policies is a more immediate background to the current situation, and this legacy is shared by the other Central Asian states as well, all of which are secular states today, even though there are some differences between the countries (but probably more so between urban and rural areas) in the ways Islam is practiced and understood in popular culture.

Moreover, the political authorities are well aware of the fact that Islam is far from the only religion practiced in Kazakhstan. The percentage of ethnic Russians (mostly belonging at least by tradition to the Russian Orthodox Church) is significantly higher in Kazakhstan compared to the other Central Asian countries, although it has decreased ever since the fall of the Soviet Union. According to the 2009 population census, 23.3 % were ethnic Russians and 63.6 % Kazakhs. Looking at the statistics shortly after independence (Kazakhs 39.7 %, Russians 33 %, Germans and Ukrainians 4 % each etc.) gives an indication of the rapid changes the country has gone through since then. Of the smaller ethnic groups, some of the more important are Uyghurs and Uzbeks, who, like the Kazakhs are traditionally Muslims. The picture becomes more complicated due to in part quite successful missionary activities by for example Evangelical Christian groups, recruiting new members not least among ethnic Kazakhs. According to Pew Research Center's Religion and Public Life Forum, Kazakhstan has 70.4 % Muslims and 24.7 % Christians (2010). In any case, I believe it safe to say that Sunni Islam is the dominant religion in Kazakhstan, only not as dominant as in the other Central Asian republics.

In awareness of the multi-ethnic composition of the country’s population, Kazakh authorities have adopted a policy which the political ethnographer Edward Schatz has characterized as in part a continuation of Soviet internationalist policies, but also as a new form of Eurasianism (alluding to an

79 Poddubny 1914, p. 160
81 Schatz 2000, p. 489
82 Pew Research Center's Religion and Public Life Forum: http://www.globalreligiousfutures.org/countries/kazakhstan#/?affiliations_religion_id=0&affiliations_year=2010&region_name=All%20Countries
ideological current originating in Russia in the 19th century), which entails measures for the strengthening of cultural identities of ethnic minorities, such as the creation of national cultural centres. The Kazakh government also stresses the need for interfaith dialogue and since 2003 it has hosted recurring international conferences with representatives of “world and traditional religions”.

Issues of combating “religious extremism” or terrorism have appeared to be somewhat less in focus in Kazakhstan, compared to some of the neighbouring countries – at least until 2011 when a series of violent attacks and clashes with police occurred in the country’s western and southern provinces (which coincided with the adoption of the new stricter law on religion in the same year).

Salhani understands Kazakhstan’s policy of interfaith dialogue as a strategy for combating the threat of terrorism, rather than just combating terrorism – a strategy which was apparently largely successful for a long time. However, he exaggerates when he refers to much of the rest of Central Asia as “[…] a hotbed of Islamist militants [which] could explode at any minute […].” Salhani wrote his book just before the violent events in 2011, but he displays some of the concern of the recent influx of what he refers to as Salafi currents. Salhani has a very vague definition of Salafism and of what he sometimes refers to in more general terms as “extremism”, “radicalism”, “fundamentalism” etc., and – which to my mind is the most problematic aspect of his book from a theoretical point of view – he does not distinguish between traditional conservative forms of Islam and the radical revivalist currents which have often clashed with traditionalists, not least in Central Asia. As discussed earlier, one should be careful with this terminology, as it has often been misused by authorities in the region. However, Salhani is not alone in voicing concern over Salafi teachings being propagated in Kazakhstan. The Russian Islamologist Valeriya Pokhorova also warned the Kazakh government about Saudi missionaries spreading Salafi ideas by gathering small crowds outside mosques in several cities in southern Kazakhstan, after a field trip she made there in 2011.

Even as radical currents and the potential threat of terrorist activities are debated, the official discourse in Kazakhstan tends to separate these issues from the religious issues – at least in public statements. In an interview that Salhani made with President Nazarbayev, the president makes the following remarks:

I would like to stress that terrorism has no nationality or religious affiliation. This is an evil turned against humanity. I don’t know any religion that encourages such activities. Terrorism is beyond

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83 Schatz 2000, p. 490-492
85 Sholk 2011
86 Salhani 2011, p. 141-145
87 Salhani 2011, p. 126
88 Salhani 2011, p. 106, 157-164
religion, it is contrary to it.”

Shortly after he develops the issue somewhat:

First of all, let me emphasize that I do not agree with the expression “Islamist threat” [which was used by Salhani in the question]. What we have here is the substitution of concepts. If a man dies for the idea, this does not mean that the idea is the truth. Even more so, a terrorist should not be considered as truly faithful. Islam and terrorism are not identical, but opposite concepts. Islam as such does not pose a threat. The danger comes from people who have distorted the understanding of faith.

For true Muslims, moral imperative is the moderation of all respects of human life. Thus radicalism is not peculiar to Islam.

When asked about the religious situation and the role of religion in Kazakhstan today, the president gives an answer that is worth quoting at length here:

You know, there is a saying: “The meaning of faith is not to settle in heaven, but to settle heaven in yourself.” So today, in the twenty-first century, the main task of the state in the sphere of interfaith relations is that the citizens understand the textbook truth: all religions preach the ideals of peace, harmony, and unity.

The Communist, totalitarian political system of the Soviet era that was imposed upon Kazakhstan did not accept religion. The Soviet state was atheistic. With the collapse of Union [sic], Kazakhstan experienced an economic depression and a shaky political system. People did not know what future awaited them. In this situation they just needed spiritual support, they needed faith.

One of the first acts of the sovereign Kazakhstan was the law “On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations”, adopted in 1992 [ which was superseded In 2011 by a new law with tougher restrictions, to be discussed shortly.]. Through successive stages of reform, we have created our own model of interethnic and interreligious harmony. Religious diversity is a sign of true religious tolerance of our people.

Since independence the number of religious communities increased sevenfold, and today they comprise almost 4,500. There are more than 3,300 mosques, churches, synagogues, and prayer houses in the country.

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90 Salhani 2011, p. 183
91 Salhani 2011, p. 185
I also would like to note that in Kazakhstan, religious education extends to the secondary level [...]. Permanent courses in the major mosques and Sunday schools at churches are functioning.

Given that Kazakhstan, according to the constitution, is a secular state, the role of religion in society is large enough. It fulfills its true purpose: It helps people to live in harmony with their neighbors.

As I said earlier, in our country the Congresses of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions are regularly held. Due to this, Kazakhstan became the center of interfaith dialogue and international integration. This important and responsible mission is a strategic vector of our state policy.92

The president displays here a generally positive view on religion. He even seems to ascribe some sort of societal role to it by declaring its “true purpose” as “help[ing] people to live in harmony with their neighbors”. What is more clear, though, is that he sees religion as a right, which is now better provided for than it used to be under Soviet rule. He also clearly affirms Kazakhstan’s status as a secular state. In this secular state, religion is not a problem as long as it keeps to its proper role and function. He doesn’t want to see religion as problematic, but instead separates such ideas that might lead to violence and societal disruptions from the concept of religion. However, official rhetoric is one thing and the actual treatment of religion in law and legal practice is another. In Kazakhstan’s legislation, religion is treated as a right of the citizens, to be sure, but also as a potential problem that needs to be strictly regulated and closely monitored.

5.3. Legal Regulations of Religion

Already in the opening paragraph of the constitution, Kazakhstan is proclaimed a “[...]democratic, secular, constitutional state, the highest values of which are man, his life, rights and freedoms” (§ 1:1). Discrimination on the basis of religion (as well as race, language and many other factors) is prohibited (§ 14). Moreover, the secular nature of the political sphere is firmly established in § 5, where – as in most of the Central Asian republics – political parties founded on a religious basis are prohibited (§ 5:4).

In 2011 a “Law on Religious Activities and Associations”96 (henceforth “Law on Religion”) was adopted, providing tough restrictions on religious freedoms in the country. The law continues in accordance the secular principles constitution, and confirms for example the prohibition of political

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92 Salhani 2011, p. 187-188
96 “Law on Religious Activities and Associations” (Zakon Respubliki Kazakhstan ot 11 oktyabrya, 2011 г. No 483-IV “O religioznoy deyatelnosti i religioznykh obyedineniyakh”)
parties on religious grounds (§ 3:10). Furthermore, religious organizations are required to comply with a complicated system of registration in order to be legalized and allowed to conduct activities (§ 15). The production and proliferation of religious texts are also subjected to strong restrictions (§ 9).

Not only the letter of the law, but also its practice, appears to have become stricter in relation to religion and religious activities since 2011 (although violations of religious freedoms and restrictions of religious activities are by no means a new phenomenon in the country).\(^97\) The 2011 law also strengthened the hold of the Muslim Board of Kazakhstan – in part a remnant of the Soviet religious control structure – over the Muslim communities in the country. After the adoption of the law, no Muslim communities were allowed to register without being affiliated to the DUMK.\(^98\)

In conclusion, the overall assessment must be that Kazakhstan, on the legislative level, displays a strongly assertive form of secularism, using one of the concepts from my theoretical and methodological discussion.

6. General Education in the Soviet Union

6.1. Structure

The basic structure of the Soviet general education system was established in the late 1920:s and early 1930:s. Throughout most of the Soviet era, general education lasted altogether 10 years, divided at first into elementary school (first 4 years) lower/incomplete secondary (years 5-7) and upper/complete secondary (years 8 to 10). After the Khrushchev reforms in 1958, compulsory school became 8 years. At first, this resulted in an 11 year study course for complete secondary education. Already in 1964, however, the 10 year study course was restored, still with 8 years of compulsory school, but with upper/complete secondary school lasting only two years (9 and 10).\(^99\) An 11 year study course was still a possibility in the republics where Russian was the second language, in order to give extra time for education in the national language.\(^100\) However, this seems to have been realized mostly in the Baltic republics.

Although general education included all 10 years, only the first 8 years, leading a certificate of incomplete secondary education, were compulsory. Graduation from the 10 year school was necessary for entry to higher education, which was the goal for a relatively large portion of the students. Another option was to enter an institute of vocational education (uchilishche or tekhnikum). This was possible either already after graduation from lower secondary school (grade 8), in which case the programme would

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\(^99\)Price 1977, p. 84-85

\(^100\)Tomiak 1972, p. 59
usually last 3-4 years and include a two year general education programme, equivalent to years 9 and 10 in 10 year general education institutions, as well as vocational education and practical training, or after graduation from upper secondary school (grade 10), in which case the programme would last only 1-2 years. After graduating from a vocational programme of this type, the student had the options of seeking employment as a skilled worker or to continue education at a higher (professional or academic) education institution.

In 1990 the 11 year school was introduced throughout the Soviet Union. After independence, the post-Soviet countries have gradually developed their education systems in their own directions, although they still retain many common features.

The core curriculum was decided by a central organ, Narkompros, and was common to all Soviet republics with some exceptions. One obvious exception was language education, which usually included the titular languages of non-Russian republics. However, the Russian language was always a compulsory subject in all of the Union. The history subject was divided into “History of the USSR”, “World History” and the history of the specific republic (e. g. “History of Kazakhstan”). The latter, however, was rarely studied above the lower secondary level (classes 7 and 8). In the graduation from complete secondary education only the first two subjects were included. After the fall of the Soviet Union, the history of the specific republic – now an independent state – has quite naturally been moved up to the higher level, where it has replaced the “History of the USSR”. This is the pattern in all of the former Soviet republics. The core curriculum also had a strong emphasis on the natural science subjects, and it had the express goal of instilling in the pupils a materialist Marxist-Leninist general outlook and communist morality.

6.2. Religion in General Education

The teaching of any kind of religious belief in the public education system was prohibited, as codified in law in 1929.\textsuperscript{101} Atheism was not taught as a separate subject in general education, but it permeated the teaching in other subjects. There was also active anti-religious propaganda within the school system, proliferated in the form of leaflets and periodicals by the League of Militant Atheists (Soyuz voinstvouyushchikh bezbozhnikov), which was formed in 1925 and disbanded during World War Two, when the official policy towards religion became milder in an effort to strengthen public morale.\textsuperscript{102} The atheist propaganda did not stop completely with the disbanding of the League of Militant Atheists, however. The League was soon replaced by a more academic association, All-Union Society for the Dissemination of Scientific and Political Knowledge (Vsesoyuznoe obshchestvo po rasprostraneniyu politicheskikh i nauchnykh znaniy). The general school system as well as most of the higher education in

\textsuperscript{101}Tomiak 1972, p. 16, 59-60

\textsuperscript{102}Price 1977, p. 263-264
the Soviet Union kept its Marxist-Leninist ideology until the end of the Soviet Union. However, religious instruction and education was allowed within limitations, provided by officially recognized religious organizations, at least from the 1940:s, when religious organizations became regulated under the control of state bodies. In 1971, the Tashkent Islamic Institute was opened – the first institution in the Soviet Union to provide high level Islamic education. However, no religious educational institutions existed on the territory of Kazakhstan during the Soviet era, with the occasional exception of Sunday schools within Orthodox parishes, which were allowed during certain periods.¹⁰³

7. General Education in Kazakhstan

7.1. Structure

The “Law on Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan”¹⁰⁴ (henceforth “Law on Education”) regulates the general principles of Kazakhstan's system of education, its structure and supervision. The basic structure of the Soviet education system is still visible in the primary and secondary education of Kazakhstan today. However, some notable changes have been made and others are under way. The current basic structure of general education is divided into three levels, primary (nachalnoe), basic secondary (osnovnoe srednoe) and general secondary (obshchoe srednoe), with a duration of 4, 5 and 2 years respectively.¹⁰⁵ Primary and basic secondary education follow a general curriculum common to all (although some “pre-profile” training can be included on the basic secondary level). On the general (upper) secondary level, year 10 and 11 of general education, students choose a profile. Schools may design their profile programmes within certain limits. Model study plans for each subject on all levels of education are developed by the Ministry of Education.¹⁰⁶ There are two general theoretical profile directions, one social/humanitarian direction and one natural sciences/mathematical direction, within which the schools form their programmes. Apart from the general theoretical profiles, many different professional programmes also exist, which include a general educational part along with specialized technical or professional preparation.

7.2. Religion in General Education

¹⁰³Podoprigora 2013, p. 193
¹⁰⁴“Law on Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan” (Ob образовании: Закон Республики Казахстан от 27 июня 2007 года № 319-III)
¹⁰⁵“Law on Education” § 16
¹⁰⁶“Rules for the Preparation of General Government Educational Standards” (Правила разработки государственных общобразовательных стандартов образования), government resolution 290, 6 March 2012”
The Law on Education provides, in its opening chapter (§ 3:4), that the “secular, humanist and developmental character of education [...]” is among the basic principles of educational policy. In the same article (3:10) the formation and activities of political parties and religious organizations within educational institutions is prohibited. Moreover, religious propaganda (along with racial, ethnic, etc) is prohibited (§ 28:3), and teachers are expressly forbidden to use their teaching for political or religious propaganda purposes (§ 51:6). The Law on Religion confirms this strict division between education and religion, although with the exemption of instruction within religious organizations (§ 3:4).

Thus, the general education system in present day Kazakhstan is still thoroughly secular. There is certainly no teaching of religion. And the teaching about religion is also limited. Religion is not included in the general curriculum as a subject in its own right, although attempts were made in 2009 to include “Basis of Religious Knowledge”, meant as a subject teaching about religion on a secular basis.\textsuperscript{107}

Religious education is allowed today in Kazakhstan, organized within legally registered religious organizations. But I will not examine this education in any detail here. My focus lies on the general education system, which, within the conceptual framework used here, can only be described as leaning heavily towards the separationist side.

8. Examination of the Textbooks

8.1. Overview of the Chosen Material

As source material for this analysis, I have chosen four textbooks used in grades 10 and 11 in the subjects of history of Kazakhstan (istoriya Kazakhstana) and social studies (obshchestvoznanie). Religion or religious studies is, as mentioned, not part of the normal school curriculum in its own right, which leaves us with the more comprehensive human science subjects as the best territory to search for an elaborate discourse on religion. The books chosen are all sanctioned as teaching material by the Ministry of Education, and published by Mektep, a publishing house which has produced teaching material on government commission since 1947.\textsuperscript{108} Furthermore, they are meant for the social-humanist direction (obshchestvenno-gumanitarnoe napravlenie), where we can reasonably expect the most in-depth treatment of religion and related subject matters.

\textsuperscript{107}Podoprigora 2013, p. 196

\textsuperscript{108}Mektep Publishing House: http://www.mektep.kz/
The following textbooks are used:


As we can see, most of these textbooks are written originally in Kazakh and translated into Russian, with the exception of S-10, where no indication of translation can be found, and which must therefore be assumed to be written originally in Russian. (And the 11th class social science book has three of the authors indicated as translators as well). In any case, these are textbooks used in Russian speaking classes (which are attended not only by ethnic Russians). Russian is used alongside Kazakh in all kinds of official publications, as prescribed by the Constitution (§ 7:2). Thus, they can justifiably be considered original sources even in their Russian rendering.

As mentioned above, the history subject is divided into two parts, “History of Kazakhstan” and “World History” (*Vsemirnaya istoriya*). Textbooks of approximately equal length (198 and 295 pages) exist in World History for the same social-humanist profile direction. However, I have chosen not to include those textbooks in my study because their structure makes it impossible to apply the same method to them. For obvious reasons they paint their picture with a larger brush compared to the books of History of Kazakhstan. The chapters are divided according to historical periods and the subsections are mostly about one whole country at a time. There are no whole subsections dedicated to subjects relevant to my study.

### 8.2. Structure and Content of the Textbooks

A more precise translation of *obshchestvoznanie* would be “societal knowledge”, but I choose here what seems to me the most common term in an English speaking context for the closest equivalent of *obshchestvoznanie* as a teaching subject.
I’m going to start with an overview of the structure and content of the textbooks, in order to provide a context for the parts I have identified as central for my analysis. The latter will in turn be given a more thorough treatment.

**H-10**

The chronological scope of H-10 reaches from the Paleolithic Era until the time of the Russian Empire. It consists of 8 chapters, each with a number of subsections.

The first 3 chapters treat the Stone Age, the Bronze Age and the Iron Age.

Chapter 4 has the headline “Ethno-genesis of the Kazakh People”, and discusses the roots of the Kazakh ethnic identity within the wider context of ancient Turkic peoples and other ethnic groups in ancient northern Central Asia.

Chapter 5 describes the historical nomadic lifestyle of the Kazakh people (and of other culturally related peoples) sketching the origins, social structure and relations of nomadic society to other civilizations.

Chapter 6 puts the focus on the origins and historical forms of statehood on the territory of present day Kazakhstan, and describes in detail the Khaganate’s societal structure. A few references to religion in general and to Islam in particular begin to appear in the section concerning the early and high middle ages.

Chapter 7 is where we find the most interesting material for my purpose in this volume. The headline of the chapter is “Spiritual Culture of the Nomads. Great Minds of the Kazakh Steppes.” It treats what the authors consider defining traits of nomadic culture and mind-set, goes on to give a brief account of the ideas of some medieval thinkers, describes the oral literature, the music and the art of the Kazakh people and finally arrives at a subsection on religion and faith. I shall describe this section in detail further on.

Chapter 8, finally, gives an account of the Russian colonial period, describing the particularities of Russian colonialism, the relations of the Kazakh statehood to surrounding powers, the administration of the Kazakh territories as colonial subjects, and the introduction of capitalist economy in the course of the 19th century.

**H-11**

The 11th class history book takes on where the preceding volume left off – in 19th century Russian colonialism. The focus of the first and longest chapter of this book lies on the long road to independence for the Kazakh people, through Russian colonialism, civil war and the Soviet Union, finishing with a subsection on resistance movements from the 1920:s through the 1980:s.

The second chapter treats the political situation in Russia and Kazakhstan in the early (pre-Soviet) 20th century, and the political parties of Kazakhstan.
The third chapter describes the radical changes in the economy due to collectivisation and industrialization during the 20th century.

The fourth chapter deals with different aspects of life in the 1920s and 1930s, such as the years of terror under Stalin, but also the development of the education system and a description of science, art and culture in the same period.

The fifth chapter deals with the different ethnic groups of Kazakhstan from the policies towards the local population of the tsarist rule, via Soviet policies and planned migrations, to the present day multi-ethnic composition of the country.

The sixth chapter describes the parties and youth organizations of Kazakhstan, from the formation and development of the communist party of the Kazakh SSR to the emerging pluralism of the glasnost period.

The seventh chapter is titled “Ethnography of the Kazakh People” and describes traditional handicrafts, clothing and other cultural expressions.

The eighth chapter discusses the Kazakh diaspora in the CIS countries and beyond, and the obstacles for their return.

The ninth chapter describes independent Kazakhstan and its development from 1991 onwards. It deals with the rapid changes in the political system, economy and culture after the fall of the Soviet Union. Its last sub-section, on science, education and culture in independent Kazakhstan, will be subject to my detailed attention.

S-10
To begin with, we may note the strong philosophical inclination of both S-10 and S-11. Practically all chapters in both volumes have an explicitly philosophical perspective. S-10 consists of six chapters, the first four of which can be said to provide the basic tenets to the formation of a philosophical worldview.

The first chapter is titled “Philosophy as Scientific Methodology”, and treats some basic philosophical problems and knowledge theory, but opens with a section on the very notion of a worldview. This first sub-section will be one of the focus sections, as it addresses the issue of religion in relation to other forms of worldview, and thus, in a way, its place in society.

The second chapter deepens the discussion of knowledge theory.

The third, fourth and fifth focus on logic, ethics and aesthetics respectively, and here, in the fourth, I find another sub-section that falls naturally into my focus area: sub-section 22, on the “moral values taught within different religions”.

Finally the sixth chapter diverts somewhat from the general philosophical path by devoting its attention to social psychology, thereby perhaps drawing nearer to the societal issues we normally associate with the subject of social studies.
The 11th grade social studies textbook is more closely concerned with societal issues, albeit still with a strong philosophical inclination. It starts out by sketching the basic structure of philosophical anthropology, moving on through different aspects of humanity, society, social structure and so on, and finally arriving in a description of life and culture in present day Kazakhstan.

The first chapter goes through some basic tenets of philosophical anthropology; its concepts and most important questions and its role in relation to other scientific disciplines, studying man from different perspectives.

The second chapter moves on to a philosophical understanding of society, its constitution and social structure, the individual’s place in society and so on. One of its sub-sections has the title “Forms of Societal Consciousness and the Criteria of their Delimitation”. Here, once again, religion is assigned a particular place in culture and society, in relation to political consciousness, sense of justice, ethics, art, science and philosophy. This section will consequently be subject to a detailed analysis.

The third chapter focuses on the concept of civilization. A definition of the concept is followed by a description of the existing civilizational blocks, poised between the two main poles, East and West, echoing the much debated “Clash of Civilizations” theme. The authors argue for the necessity of a dialogue between the civilizations, and arrive, in the chapter’s last sub-section, at an identification of Kazakhstan’s placement and role at the crossroads of civilizations.

The fourth chapter treats the issues of social stratification, urbanisation and ruralisation, as well some questions regarding demographic developments and changes.

The fifth chapter treats economic issues, from the material needs of man and the organization of production to provide for them, via the establishment of the market economy in Kazakhstan, to describing the financial system and some macroeconomic aspects of Kazakhstan’s trade relations.

The sixth chapter is about politics. Again, it starts from the base criteria and moves on to the specifics of the recent developments and current situation in Kazakhstan. In turn, the chapter treats the conceptual division of state and politics, the concept of civil society and the concept of democracy.

The seventh chapter has the headline “Spiritual and Cultural Developments of Society”. The sub-sections progress systematically through the concept of culture, the forms and functions of culture(s), man in culture. We eventually arrive at sub-sections 60-61 (under one headline) titled “Religion, Science, Morals, Art as Forms of Cultural Activity”. Finally, the last two sub-sections discuss the condition of culture under the current circumstances – the so-called “globalization”. This whole chapter is of course a chapter of particular importance to my purpose, but my main focus will be on sub-section 60-61.

8.3. Treatment of the Selected Parts
The section starts out by describing the religious situation among the nomadic Turkic tribes in the early middle ages. Their religion is defined as a form of paganism called "Tengrism" (tengrianstvo) with a strong influence from Shamanism. The presence of proselytising religions, Zoroastrianism, Christianity, and Buddhism, is also mentioned. Zoroastrianism is even characterised as the “…principal religion of the peoples of Central Asia, Iran and Azerbaijan”. It is noted that some Kazakh traditions are remnants from Zoroastrian practices. At the same time, however, Tengrism is put forward as a religion, in the same sense, it seems, as Zoroastrianism, Islam or other proselytising religious systems. It is even characterised as a form of monotheism – the first of its kind in Asia (samaya pervaya v Azii religiya, osnovannaya na yedinobozhii). According to the authors, Tengrism in this way echoes in later religions, such as Islam. This characterisation of Tengrism seems to express a classical evolutionist view of religion, and it is followed by an exposé of evolutionist concepts; Totemism, Fetishism, Animism and Magic are defined briefly in the spirit of 19th and early 20th century anthropology, and some remnants of such cults and practices in modern day Central Asia are mentioned.

Although Zoroastrianism is appointed “the principal religion of Central Asia, Iran and Azerbaijan”, Buddhism is shortly afterwards reintroduced in the discussion as “the first world religion to be popularized among the Turks”, and events during the Turkic Khaganate, when Buddhism became almost a state religion, and some of its important texts were translated, are summarized. After this section on Buddhism, an account is given of how Christianity – first and foremost of the Nestorian orientation – spread from west to east along the Silk Road. The historical review goes on to mention Manicheism, and to briefly list its main features, before entering into a more thorough treatment of the Islamisation of Central Asia, a process which extended over many centuries. The success of Islam is credited to its flexibility, and to the ability of its missionaries to adjust and intertwine Islamic teachings and practices with local customs. By appealing to “eternal human values” (neizmennye obschechelovecheskie tsennosti) thinkers and teachers such as Al-Farabi, Ahmed Yasavi and others could bring the masses to Islam. The adoption of Islam, in turn, brought the Central Asians into closer contact with the rest of the Islamic world, and with new scientific and social ideas.

The rest of the subsection deals with traditional Kazakh astronomy (as a foundation for scientific advance) the names of the months and traditions regarding the counting of the years.

This subsection clearly has a lot to say about the historical formation of the Kazakh national (ethnic) identity. What interests me in this context is primarily the role appointed by the authors to religion in this historical process. I find that religion is consistently described in positive terms and as a force for

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110From the sky god (or the sky itself) Tengri, who was worshipped widely in the Central Eurasian plains at the time.
development (quite contrary to what one would expect in a classical secularist context). Furthermore, religion appears to be linked primarily (though not entirely) to the moral dimension of life.

The following parts have been derived from this section:

H-10, § 33 Ex 1.

Translation

“The first religions on the territory of Kazakhstan. The system of religious thinking of the ethnic groups, populating the vast territory of Kazakhstan, is characterized by complexity and contradictoriness, due to the great variety of faiths and ritual cults. In the early medieval period, the Turkic speaking inhabitants of the region were heathens. They professed the ancient religion of their ancestors: worshipped Tengri – the sky (Tengrianism). Alongside with this, Shamanism had a great influence. On the other hand, religious currents such as Zoroastrianism, Christianity and Buddhism also became widespread.

Zoroastrianism” is considered one of the oldest religions proliferated in the land of Kazakhstan. The foundations of the Zoroastrian religion were established by the priest Zarathustra (Zoroaster). Zoroastrianism was the fundamental religion of the peoples of Central Asia, Iran and Azerbaijan. For a long time, it was considered the official religion of the Iranians and Afghans, who started to adopt Islam only in the late medieval period.\(^{111}\)

Transliteration


*Odnoy iz samykh drevnykh religii, poluchivshikh rasprostranenie na kazakhstanskoy zemle, schitaetsya zoroastrizm. Osnovy religii zoroastrizma*

\(^{111}\) H-10 p. 186
zalozhil zhrets Zaratushtra (Zoroaster). Zoroastriz yavlyalsya osnovnoy religiей narodov Sredney Azii, Irana i Azerbaydzhana. Dolgoe vremya on schitalsya ofitsialnoy religiей irantsev i afgantsev, nachavshikh ispovedovat musulmanstvo uzhe v period pozdnego srednevekovya.)

Comment
I consider this a factual historical narrative without any obvious value-related or analytical connotations, and will thus leave it without further comments (although the statement that the Iranians and Afghans began to adopt Islam only in the late medieval period might be questioned from a strictly factual point of view).

H-10, § 33, Ex 2.

Translation
“On the territory of Kazakhstan, monuments of the ancient Aryan religious culture have been discovered – petroglyphic images, symbolizing man's ancient ideas of the world.”

Transliteration
(On territorii Kazakhstana obnaruzheny pamyatniki drevneariyskoy religioznoy kultury – naskalnye izobrazeniya, simvoliziruyushchie drevnie predstavleniya cheloveka o mire.)

Comment
Here we get a sense of the authors' view of religion as an ancient (pre-scientific) means of understanding the world. It is still not clear what actual value is assigned to this way of understanding the world. It may hint at a view of religion as a passed historical stage, though this is not clearly stated, and, in any case, might concern only ancient forms of religion and not religion in general.

H-10, § 33, Ex 3.

Translation
“In the Turkic epoch emerged the religion Tengrism. According to the believers' conviction, Tengri enclosed in himself the cosmic power, whose laws rule all

Transliteration
(Tenizizim. Sotvetstvuyushchee pervoznitsialnoe drevneariyskoy kultury – petroglyphic images, simvoliziruyushchie drevnie predstavleniya cheloveka o mire.)

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the living and the non-living things on earth and in heaven. This power controls all that exists, protecting the righteous and punishing the wicked. In this respect, the belief in Tengri correlates with the most recent religion to have been founded on worship for one Supreme above all, namely Islam. And after the adoption of Islam, the Turks and also the Kazakhs continued to pronounce the word ‘Tengri’ together, and often homonymously, with the sacred concept “Allah”. Tengrism is the most ancient religion in Asia based on monotheism."\[^{113}\]

**Transliteration**

(V tyrskuyu epochu poyavlyaetsya religiya tengrianstvo. Po ubezhdeniym veruyushchikh, v Tengri zaklyuchena kosmicheskaya sila, zakonom kotoroy podchinyaetsya vse zhivoe i nezhivoe na zemle i na nebe. Ona upravlyaet vsem sushchim, pokrovitelstvuya pravednikam i karaya greshnikov. V etom otnoshenii vera v Tengri pereklikaetsya s bolee poz dney religiey – islamom, osnovannym na poklonenii odnomu Vsevyshnemu. I posle prinyatiya musulmanstva tyurki, a takzhe kazakhi vmeste so svyashchennym ponyatiem “Allah” prodolzhali proiznosit i slovo “Tengri”, chasto otozhdestvlyaya ikh drug s drugom. Tengrianstvo – samaya pervaya v Azii religiya, osnovannaya na yedinobozhii.)

**Comment**

Following the previous excerpt, we now sense a view of religion as a developing phenomenon, something that has the ability to adapt to historical circumstances. This makes it at least possible to talk about religion in a positive sense, as a participant and contributor in historical developments. However, no clear value-statement can be discerned here.

**H-10, § 33, Ex 4.**

**Translation**

“The mediators of the religion Tengrism on the great steppes were the shamans. At the same time they were the proliferators and propagators of Shamanism. Shamanism (Shamanhood) is an early form of religion, based on the idea that the conductor of the cult – the Shaman – is in communion with the spirits

\[^{113}\text{H-10, p. 187}\]
during trance (the ritual, conducted in ecstasy, is accompanied by singing and beating of the drum).”

**Transliteration**

(Provodnikami religii tengrianstvo v Velikoy stepi yavlyalis shamani. Oni zhe byli rasprostranitelyami i propovednikami shamanizma. Shamanizm (shamanstvo) – rannaya forma religii, osnovannaya na predstavlenii o sverkhyestestvennom obshchenii sluzhitelya kulta shaman – s dukhami vo vremya kamlianiya (ritual, privodyashchiy v ekstaz; soprovodzdaetsya peniem i udarami v buben.).

**Comment**

I consider this a factual historical narrative without any obvious value-related or analytical connotations, and will thus leave it without further comments.

H-10, § 33, Ex 5.

**Translation**

“Totemism is a complex of beliefs and practices, connected to the idea of relatedness between groups of people (family groups) and so called totems – most often species of animals. Every family group bore the name of their totem and worshipped it. Thus, the wolf was regarded as the totem of the ancient Turks and Kazakhs, and many Kyrgyz family groups and tribes regard the dear as their forefather. Totemism found its sharpest expression in ancient myths and legends.

*Fetishism* (of the French word *fetiche* - “idol, talisman”) is a cult of inanimate objects, i.e. fetishes, endowed, according to the believers, with supernatural powers and the ability to influence the lives of people in mysterious ways. Fetishism was spread among all the primordial peoples. It appears in the belief in the protective powers of special jewellery – amulets, charms, talismans etc. Many Kazakh practices are connected with fetishism.

*Animism* (of the Latin word *anima* - “spirit, soul”) is the belief in ghosts and spirits, influencing the lives of people and animals, as well as the objects and phenomena of the surrounding world. The main reason for the emergence of animism was a scarce stack of knowledge and man's inability to withstand the

114H-10, p. 187
catastrophic forces of nature, which seemed to him strange and mysterious. 

Magic (of the Greek mageia - “sorcery, witchcraft”) is one of the primordial forms of religion and ritual practice, linked to belief in the supernatural ability of man (sorcerer, mage, shaman, wizard) to affect people and natural phenomena by means of secret powers and mysterious spells.”

**Transliteration**

(totemizm – kompleks verovanii i obryadov, svyazanny s predstavleniyami o rodstve mezhdu gruppami lyudey (rodami) i tak nazyvaemymi totemami – chashche vsego vidami zhivotnykh. Kazhdyi rod nosil imya svoego totema i poklonyayushemu emu. Tak, totemom drevnykh tyurkov i kazakhov schitatsya volk, a mnogie kurgizskie rody i plemena schitayut svoim praroditelem olenya.

Totemizm nachel svoe yarkoe otrazhenie v drevnykh mifakh i legendakh.

Fetishizm (ot frants. slova fetiche - “idol, talisman”) - kult neodushevnennykh predmetov, t.e. fetishey, nadelennykh, po predstavleniyam veruyushchikh, sverkhjestvennymi silami, sposobnymi tayntvennym obrazom vliyat na zhizn cheloveka. Fetishizm byl rasprostranen u vsekh pervobytnykh narodov. On proyavlyaetsya v vere v zaoshchitnuyu silu spetsialnykh ukrasheniy – amulety, oberegi, talismany i dr. S fetishizmom svyazany i mnogie kazakhskie obychat.

Animizm (ot lat. Slovo anima - “dukh, dusha”) - verovanie v dushe i dukhov, budto by vliyayushchikh na zhizn lyudey, zhivotnykh, na predmety i yavleniya okruzhayushchego mira. Osnovnyy prichinoy vozniknoveniya animizma byl neznachitelnii zapas znaniy, nesposobnost cheloveka protivostoyat stikhynnym silam prirody, kotorye predstavlyals emu chuzhdymi i tainstvennymi.

Magiya (ot grech. mageia - “koldovstvo, volshebstvo”) - odna iz form pervobytnoy religii i ritualnye obryady, svyazanny s veroy v sverkhjestvennuyu sposobnost cheloveka (kolduna, maga, shamana, charodeya) vozdeystvovat na lyudey i yavleniya prirody posredstvom taynykh sil i tainstvennykh zaklinaniy.)

**Comment**

This long excerpt is interesting in that it reveals a clear trace of evolutionist theories of religion, in accordance with scientific currents developed in the late
19\textsuperscript{th} and early 20\textsuperscript{th} centuries. We also find an expression – most clearly in the part on animism – of religious scepticism, as well as the view of religion (at least in some forms) as a pre-scientific means of acquiring (inaccurate) knowledge of the world.

**H-10, § 33, Ex 6.**

**Translation**

“Of all the world religions, Buddhism was the first to gain popularity in the Turkic aristocratic circles. The son of the kagan Bumyn – Mukan – adopted Buddhism and ordered the translation into Turkic of sacred Buddhist texts, disclosing and propagating the essence off Buddha's teachings. The following Turkic leader – Taspar kagan – made efforts to introduce Buddhism as state religion. In Buddhism, the leaders of the Turkic Kaganate saw a universal religion which, in their view, could facilitate the creation of a spiritual/ideological and cultural/ethnographic community in an ethnically very diverse state.”

**Transliteration**


**Comment**

Religion (in this case Buddhism) is here assigned the possible historical role of bringing a culture or nation together. From this excerpt, however, it is not clear whether this is only a view held by the leaders of the Turkic Empire, or one which is shared by the textbook authors.

\[^{116}\text{H-10, p. 188}\]
**H-10, § 33, Ex 7.**

**Translation**

“The Great Silk Road was not only an international caravan route for trade and economic interaction between different peoples, but also a trail by which religions and religious ideas were spread.”\(^{117}\)

**Transliteration**

(Velikiy Shelkoviy put byl ne tolko mezhdunarodnoy karavannoy trassoy dlya torgovo-ekonomicheskogo vzaimodeystviya razlichnych narodov, no i marshrutom, po kotoromu shlo rasprostranenie religiy i religioznykh idey.)

**Comment**

I consider this a factual historical narrative without any obvious value-related or analytical connotations, and will thus leave it without further comments.

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**H-10, § 33, Ex 8.**

**Translation**

“The propagators and proliferators of Nestorianism in Asia were Syrian Christians. They propagated their religious convictions among the population of Eastern Turkestan and even Mongolia. In the 7th and 8th centuries, Nestorianism became widespread in the cities of southern Kazakhstan and Semireche\(^{118}\)

**Transliteration**


**Comment**

I consider this a factual historical narrative without any obvious value-related or analytical connotations, and will thus leave it without further comments.

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\(^{117}\)H-10, p. 188

\(^{118}\)“Semireche” or in Kazakh: “Yettisuu” literally means “[land of] seven rivers”. It roughly corresponds to present day south-eastern Kazakhstan and northern Kyrgyzstan.
**H-10, § 33, Ex 9.**

**Translation**

“In the 9th century began the Islamization of parts of the Turkic speaking peoples of Central Asia and Eastern Turkestan. Islam begins to gradually push back Christianity, which is evident from the rebuilding of churches into mosques. However, in the time of the Mongol invasion (13th century) the Christian religion regained influence.\(^{119}\)

**Transliteration**

\(V\) IX v. nachalas islamzatsiya chasti tyurkoyazychnogo naseleniya Sredney Azii I Vostochnogo Turkestana. Islam nachinaet postepenno tesnit khristianstvo, o chem svidetelstvuyut fakty pereoborudovaniya tserkvey v mecheti. No v epokhu mongolskogo nashestviya (XIII v.) vliyanie khristianskoy religii vnov usililos.)

**Comment**

I consider this a factual historical narrative without any obvious value-related or analytical connotations, and will thus leave it without further comments.

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**H-10, § 33, Ex 10.**

**Translation**

“The influence of the Christian religion was spread among the population of Kazakhstan up until the 14th century, sometimes gaining strength, sometimes weakening. Christian parishes existed in the southern, south-eastern and eastern regions. This is supported by numerous archaeological findings tied to Nestorianism in the cities of southern Kazakhstan and Semireche. Among them are various Christian attributes: crosses, icons, and also images of the main Christian symbols – the cross and the dove. Handwritings of early Christian religious texts, written in Syrian, have also been discovered.

Another religion which gained proliferation in the Turkic sphere was Manichaeism, founded in Iran by the Mesopotamian artist and writer Mani. This is a teaching of the universal struggle between light and darkness, of the road to salvation in the other world and of man's spiritual awakening through certain religious rituals and prayers. Manichaeism borrowed almost all its principles from Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Christianity and various

\(^{119}\)H-10, p. 189
philosophical teachings, and also from some mystical religious currents (for example from Shamanism).”

Transliteration

(Vliyanie khristianskoy religii rasprostranilos sredi naseleniya Kazakhstana do XIV v., to usilivayas, to oslabevaya. V yuzhnykh, yugo-vostochnykh i vostochnykh regionakh sushchestvovali khristianskie obshchiny. Eto podtverzhdayut i mnogochislennye arkheologicheskie nakhodki, svyazannye s nestorianstvom, v semirechenskikh i yuzhnokazakhstanskikh gorodakh. Sredi nikh razlichnye atributy khristianstva: kresty, ikony, a takzhe izobrazheniya glavnykh khristianskikh simvolov – kresta i golubya. Obnaruzheny i zapisi rannekhristianskikh religioznykh tekstov, sdelannye na sisriyskom yazyke.

Drugoy religiey, poluchivshey rasprostranenie v tyurkskoy srede, bylo manikheystvo, osnovannoe v Irane mesopotamskim khudozhnikom i pisatelem po imeni Mani. Eto uchenie o mirovoy borbe Sveta i Tmy, o puti spaseniya v inom mire, o dukhovnom probuzhdenii cheloveka cherez opredelennye religioznye ritualy i molitvy. Pochti vse svoi printsi manikheystvo zaimstvovalo iz zoroastrizma, buddizma, khristianstva i nekotorykh filosofskikh ucheniy, a takzhe iz mistichesko-religioznykh napravleniy (naprimer iz shamanizma.).)

Comment

I consider this a factual historical narrative without any obvious value-related or analytical connotations, and will thus leave it without further comments.

H-10, § 33, Ex 11.

Translation

“Islam. Written sources, recalling the events between the late 8th century and the early 9th century, bear witness to the Islamization of the population of southern Kazakhstan and Semireche, which began at this time. In the 10th century Islam became the official religion in the Qarakhanid state. A defining characteristic of the Islamic religion was its flexibility. Propagating the religious canon, the commandments of the Koran and sharia, the Muslim proselytes cleverly intertwined them with popular traditions.
The two major denominations of Islam – *Sunnism* and *Shiism* – differ mainly in the ways they interpret a number of Islamic dogma. Kazaks profess to Sunnism.

The establishment of Islam on the main part of the territory of Kazakhstan enabled a spiritual and ideological cohesion of the Kazakh people. Having reached wide proliferation and become the dominant religion, at first in the southern cities and then in Semireche, Islam gradually permeated also into the population of nomads and semi-nomadic cattle herders. The Islamization of the population of the central, eastern, northern and western regions, constituted mainly of nomads and semi-nomadic cattle herders, was protracted until the 12th century.

In the proliferation of Islam, an immensely important role was played by the ideas and works of such outstanding scholars and thinkers as al-Farabi, al-Zhaukhari, Iskhan al-Farabi, al-Kimani, Akhmed Yasavi, Bakyrgani, Yusuf Balasaguni, Makhmud Kashgari and others.

In many ways thanks to Islam, a rapprochement took place between the cultures of the Turkic speaking peoples and the achievements and values of the general Islamic spiritual and cultural treasury of the East. The unchanging basic human values (kindness, honesty, purity of mind and action, patience etc.) made it possible for the ideologues of Islam to bring the masses to their religion.  

Transliteration *(Islam. Pismennye istochniki, povestvuyushchie o sobytiyakh kontsa VIII – nachala IX v., svidetelstvuyut o nachavsheysya v eto vremya islamizatsiya naseleniya Yuzhnogo Kazakhstana i Semirechya. V X v. islam stal ofitsialnoy gosudarstvennoy religiey v gosudarstve Karakhanidov. Otlichitelnyy osobennostyu islamskoy religii yavlyalas ee gibkost. Propagandituya religioznye kanony, zapovedi Korana I shariata, musulmanskie propovedniki umelo svazyvali ikh s narodnymu traditsiyami.)*

*Dva osnovnykh napravleniya v islame – sunnizm i shiizm – otlichayutsya glavnym obrazom razlichnym tolkovaniem ryada musulmanskikh dogmatov. Kazakhi ispoveduyut sunnizm.*

121H-10, p. 189-90
Ytverzhdenie islama na bol'shey chast'i territorii Kazakhstana sposobstvovalo dukhovno-ideynomu splocheniyu kazakhskogo naroda. Poluchiv shirokoe rasprostranenie i stav gospodstvuushchey religiey snachala v yuzhnykh gorodakh, zatem v Semirechye, musulmanstvo postepennno proniklo i v sredu kochevnikov i poluosedlykh skotovodov. Islamizatsiya naseleniya tsentralnykh, vostochnych, severnykh i zapadnykh regionov, predstavlennego v osnovnom kochevnikami i polukochevymi skotovodami, dlias do XII v.


Vo mnogom blagodarya islamu proizoshlo sblizhenie kultury tyurkoyazychnyh narodov s dostizheniyami i tsennostyami obshchemusulmanskoj dokhovno-kulturnoy sokrovishchntsy Vostoka. Neizmennye obshchechelovecheskie tsennosti (dobrota, chestnost, chistota pomyslov i deyaniy, terpenie i.t.d.) dali vozmozhnost ideologam musulmanstva priobshchit k svoey religii shirokije narodnye massy.

Comment

In this part about Islam, we find several apparent positive assessments of its role in history, enabling a spiritual and ideological cohesion of the Kazakh people and bringing them closer to the rest of the Islamic world with its scientific and social progress. Finally, the “unchanging human values” present in Islam are praised. (It might seem here as though the authors express a bias for Islam in relation to other religions. This is of course possible. However, it should be said that other religions are also mentioned in positive terms, in parts which haven’t been included in my excerpts due to the above mentioned criteria and key words.)

H-10, § 33, Ex. 12.

Translation

“The proliferation of religious ideas, literacy, traditions enriched the population of the steppe and formed a basis for the emergence of brilliant personalities in science, literature and music.”

122 H-10, p. 193
This short statement is the very last sentence in the final conclusions of this section, closing a discussion of religion and faith on a positive note. Religion in general is here seen as a catalyst for development by spreading literacy and by an exchange of ideas developing the minds of people.

In this subsection, we are acquainted with the authors’ view of the complicated inter-ethnic situation left behind by the dissolving Soviet Union. It was necessary for the government of independent Kazakhstan to deal with these issues in two dimensions: The constitutive nation (gosudarstvoobrazuyushchaya natsiya) needed to have the status of their language and culture raised, and, at the same time, the rights of other ethnic groups needed to be secured. The years after independence are divided into two main periods in this respect. The first period, from 1991-1995, was focused on strengthening the national self-awareness of the Kazakhs. In this period, the constitution was written and adopted, including paragraphs affirming the status of the Kazakh nation as the agent forming the future of the state.

The second period is counted from 1991 onwards (at least until 2006, which is the year before this textbook was issued) when the new constitution was adopted, which is no longer based on the division between titular and non-titular nations, but rather on a general concept of citizenship. The goal now was to build a common identity, based, not on ethnicity, but on the idea of being a “Kazakhstanian”. The language law from 1997 is mentioned as an example of this, appointing Kazakh state language, but at the same time making Russian the language of inter-ethnic communication, and giving all citizens the right to speak, study and raise their children in their own language.

This overview of the formation of Kazakhstan as an independent nation state is followed by an account of the post-Soviet developments in the spheres of science, education and culture.
Science and research suffered a blow in the first years of independence, since the whole structure of scientific institutions was oriented towards, and supported by, a centre which was no longer in the same country. Since then, however, resolute action by the president and government has put the country’s scientific development back on track.

A functioning system of education is, of course, a necessary precondition for maintaining and developing science and research. The authors characterize Kazakhstan’s system of education as “[…] secular […] of European type, based on a vertical principle of management and funded from both state and non-state sources”. As was the case with science and education, the sphere of culture also found itself in a precarious situation in the early years of independence. The authors describe the Soviet idea of culture (along with education) as a non-productive sector of the economy, which was subsidized in order to deliver what the state wanted. In the early 1990:s there was no new cultural policy to replace the old one. The state directed its attention towards production, which all contributed to a deterioration of culture, and, together with the economic crisis, lead to a growing incline towards material values (rather than spiritual ones). In this cultural vacuum, a growing influence of western pop-culture coincided with an active proliferation of religiosity. (Foreign religious influences are not mentioned here, but can perhaps be taken as implied.) In time, however, the government of Kazakhstan developed a new cultural policy, focused on strengthening the cultural and national self-awareness and laying the basis for ethno-cultural and confessional pluralism.

Religion as a general concept is mentioned in just a few instances in this subsection. Those instances, however, are interesting because of the clear indications they give, as to the role and function ascribed to religion by the authors. The subsection gives an overall picture of present day Kazakhstan as a modern pluralistic state, where the state is making efforts to strengthen national self-awareness, but at the same time needs to maintain a delicate balance between different ethnic and religious groups as well as between different cultural and religious influences.

The following parts have been derived from this section:

**H-11, § 46, Ex. 1.**

**Translation**

“The second period in the national policy of Kazakhstan began in 1995 with the adoption of a new Constitution. In this Legal Foundation there is no longer any division between titular and non-titular nations. From this point on, Kazakhstan builds itself, not of a national basis, but on the basis of citizenship.

National policy, based on this constitution, sets as its goal the building of a community of citizens under the epithet Kazakhstani Nation. And
even though it contains ethnic cultures, languages and religions, they are all united in the common realization: 'I am a Kazakhstani'."\textsuperscript{123}

**Transliteration**

(Vtoroy period v natsiolnalnoy politeke Kazakhstana nachalsya v 1995 g. v svyazi s prinятием novoy Konstitutsii. V etom Osnovnom Zakone уже нет деления на титульные и нетитульные нации. Теперь Kazakhstan начинает строиться не национальной основе, а на основе гражданства. Национальная политика, основанная на этой Конституции, ставит своей целью построение гражданского сообщества под названием казахстанская нация. И хотя у него будет различная этническая культура, язык, религия, но их объединяет общее сознание - "Я казахстанец".)

**Comment**

Here is a clear statement of a secular and universal idea of citizenship, independent of ethnicity, language and religion. We may note that religion is mentioned along with two other important – and often interconnected – identity factors without any apparent hierarchy between them, in relation to the leading universal principle which unites the citizens of the state. This can be understood as an expression of classical secularism, although there is nothing in it that directly contradicts the post-secular paradigm as I have defined it.

**H-11, § 46, Ex. 2.**

**Translation**

"The entry of Kazakhstan into the world arena led to the substitution of the ideology-driven culture, which had lost its meaning, with Western pop-culture and an active proliferation of religiosity. To cope with these critical tendencies, and for the improvement of cultural management, the following measures were developed in the republic:

Revival of the cultural and national self-consciousness of the peoples of Kazakhstan;

Formation of cultural pluralism in the ethno-cultural and confessional cross-sections;

\textsuperscript{123}H-11, p. 275
Development of effective management models."\(^{124}\)

**Transliteration**  
(Vkhozdzenie Kazakhstana v mirovoe prostranstvo privelo k zameshcheniyu poteryavshey svoe znachenie ideologizirovannoy kultury massovoy pop-kultury Zapada i aktivnym rasprostraneniem religioznosti. V respublike dlya preodoleniya krizisnykh tendentsiy i v tselyakh sovershenstvovaniya upravleniya kulturnoy sferoy stali razrabatyvatsya sleduyushchie napravleniya:  

*Vozrozhdenie kulturno-natsionalnogo samoznaniya narodov Kazakhstana;*  
*Formirovanie kulturnogo plyuralizma v etnokulturnom i konfessionalnykh razrezakh;*  
*Razrabotka effektivnykh modeley menedzhmenta.)*

**Comment**  
The pluralistic idea is developed further in this excerpt. Traditional cultural and religious values are emphasized as important in the identity formation of the new nation, replacing the old Soviet ideology. Interestingly, they are also seen as a bulwark against foreign influences – western “pop-culture” as well as the “proliferation of religiosity”. Although there is no explicit mention here of foreign religious influences, the context of Kazakhstan's recent history makes it likely that “proliferation of religiosity” alludes, fully or partially, to foreign religious proselytism – and that such proselytism is seen as a negative or at least potentially dangerous influence, which needs to be countered by means of strengthening traditional religious and cultural identities.

**S-10, Chapter 1. ”Philosophy as Scientific Method” (Filosofiya kak metodologiya nauk) § 1. “Philosophy and Worldview” (Filosofiya i mirovozzrenie)**  

In this subsection, the concept of worldview is elaborated upon on different levels. Worldview is defined as “the totality of opinions and convictions, which determines a person’s attitude towards the world, and which regulates his behaviour […]”. It is said to “constitute the core of individual as well as societal consciousness”.

Next, the concept is divided into different types and levels, chiefly mythology, religion and philosophy. Mythology and pre-historic (pervobytnaya) religion are characterized as “pre-philosophical”

\(^{124}\)H-11, p. 279
Religion is defined as a worldview, based on the belief in supernatural forces and on the recognition of the supernatural as a leading force in the world creation and in human life. However, religion is also divided into two stages, together forming a bridge between mythology and philosophy. In the spirit of one of the classical evolutionist schools of anthropology, the origins of religious and mythological thinking is said to be found in man’s bewilderment before the wonders and terrors of nature. The later, more developed forms of religion have more of an ideological and conceptual basis. Such religion is thus closer to philosophy. Philosophy, then, I said to originate out of a crisis in the mythological and religious consciousness, where the social order and the world order began to be put into question. This happened at more or less the same time, between the 7th and 6th centuries BC.

Thus, an evolutionary hierarchy of different forms of worldview is constructed. Furthermore, worldview is divided into two basic levels; the practical, including common sense and everyday reasoning, and the theoretical, dominated by philosophy and science. Philosophy is appointed as the core of the construction of worldview, being the most general theoretical mode of understanding the world, society and man's place in them.

In this subsection, religion is placed in a mental and historical hierarchy as a stage between mythology and philosophy. Religion is, in turn, divided into two stages, where the first is closer to mythology and the other closer to philosophy. It is perhaps meant to be implied, that the three basic types of worldview may very well coexist within the same historical instance and even the same human individual. However, there is no explicit statement in this subsection, which would lend support to such an interpretation (except perhaps for the simple factual statement that the three world religions, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam are still today widely proliferated).

The following parts have been derived from this section:

**S-10, §1, Ex. 1.**

**Translation**

“The history of human development knows several types of worldview: mythological, religious, philosophical.

**General Concepts of Worldview and its Basic Types**

- Worldview – a total view of the world and man’s place in it
- Three basic forms of worldview, detectable in human history
  - Mythology
  - Religion
  - Philosophy
To the pre-philosophical forms of worldview we refer mythology and prehistoric religion.

The mythological worldview was born out of early man's inability to explain natural phenomena and particularly natural forces (deluges, storms, hurricanes, earthquakes). At the same time, the myths were the first attempts to grasp and explain natural and societal phenomena of the ancient world.

Religious worldview in its first, undeveloped forms practically merges with mythology. In its later, more developed forms it rests upon a well defined ideal and conceptual basis.

Religion is a form of worldview, the basis of which consists of belief in the existence of supernatural powers and attribution of a paramount role to a supernatural origin in the creation of the world and the life of man.”

Transliteration

(Istoriya razvitiya chelovechestva znaet neskolko tipov mirovozzreniya: mifologicheskoe, religioznoe, filosofskoe.

Obshchee ponyatie mirovozzreniya i ego osnovnye vidy

Mirovozzrenie – tselostnyi vzglyad na mir i mesto cheloveka v nem

Tri osnovnye formy mirovozzreniya, vydelyaemye v istorii chelovechestvo

Mifologiya

Religiya

Filosofiya

K dofilosfskim formam mirovozzreniya otnositsya mifologiya i pervobytnaya religiya.

Mifologicheskoе mirovozzrenie bylo porozhdeno neumением drevnego cheloveka obyasnit prirodnie stikhii (navodneniya, buri, uragany, zemletryaseniya). V to zhe vremya mify byli pervoy popytkoy obobshchit i obyasnit raznicnuye yavleniya prirody i obshchestva drevnogo mira.

Religioznoe mirovozzrenie v rannykh, nerazvitykh formakh prakticheski
slivaetsya s mifologiy. V pozdnykh, bolee razvytkh formakh ono opiraetsya na opredelennuyu ideynuyu i понятynuyu osnovu.

Religiya – eto forma mirovozzreniya, osnovu kotorogo sostavlyaet vera v sushchestvovanie sverkhestestvennykh sil i priznanie glavenstvuyushchey roli sverkhestestvennykh mirovogo nachala v mirozdanii i zhizni lyudey.)

Comment

In the schematic depiction we find mythology, religion and philosophy, not in an explicitly hierarchical relationship, but rather a chronological one. The left to right alignment can be read as a time-line – especially since the text following the depiction describes the three concepts as stages in a historical development. In this way they are put in an evolutionary context, with philosophy as the highest stage in the development. Importantly, however, religion does not seem to be considered as a passed stage altogether. The concept of religion is here apparently wide enough to include earlier more mythological forms as well as later more philosophical ones which rest upon “a well defined ideal and conceptual basis”. Religion is protracted over different stages in the historical development and apparently able to adjust to new societal conditions and new intellectual requirements.

The final sentence of this excerpt is worth repeating, as it seems to aspire to making a conceptual definition of religion: “Religion is a form of worldview, the basis of which consists of belief in the existence of supernatural powers and attribution of a paramount role to a supernatural origin in the creation of the world and the life of man.” This definition is perhaps not meant to be comprehensive, since it leaves out the aspect of practice. It is included in a section focusing on worldview, and should probably be seen in that context. Nevertheless, incomplete as it may be, this definition, with its emphasis on the ideological foundations of religion, is worth taking note of.

S-10, §1, Ex. 2.

Translation

“The first sprouts of philosophy germinate in a soil of doubt in the justice and truth of the everyday traditional patriarchal conditions. Generally speaking, philosophy arises in a period of crisis in the mytho-religious consciousness, whose assumptions and methods no longer suffice to explain natural and
societal realities.”

**Transliteration**

(Pervye rostki filosofii zarozhdayutsya na pochve somneniya v spravedlivosti i istinnosti obydenykh, traditsionno-patriarchalnykh polozenii. V tselom filosofiya voznikaet v period krizisa mifologo-religioznogo soznaniya, ustanovki i metody kotorogo uze ne yavlyayutsya dostatochnymi dlya obyasneniya prirodnoy i sotsialnoy deystvitelnosti.)

**Comment**

The evolutionary theme is continued, here with a stronger hint of a Marxist influence in wordings such as: “[...] doubt in the justice of everyday traditional patriarchal conditions” and “[...] crisis in the mytho-religious consciousness [...]”. Apart from being a major influence in human sciences on a global scale, Marxism has a particular history in the Soviet Union, which should not be forgotten in the post-Soviet context.

**S-10, Chapter 4. ”Ethics” (Etika) § 22. “Moral Values Taught within Different Religions” (Moralnye tsennosti, propoveduemye v razlichnyh religiakh)**

The subsection starts out by characterizing morality as a form of societal consciousness, and religion as an important vehicle of morality, effective by means of its ability to bring people together, to install a sense of belonging and to let the adherents share the same emotions.

These general remarks are followed by a survey of religions with a brief description of their main moral characteristics. The religions treated here are, in order, Buddhism, Confucianism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

There's nothing out of the ordinary in the description of the different religions. Their distinguishing features, as well as their similarities, are presented, and a comparison is made – most of all between Islam and Christianity. For my purposes, I believe something of value may be extracted from the general part on the role of religion in relation to morality as a form societal consciousness and from the description of Islam in this context, Islam being the religion of most Kazakhs, thus playing an important part in the nation's self understanding.

The following parts have been derived from this section:

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\[126\]S-10, p. 7
S-10, §22, Ex. 1.

Translation  “Regardless of the important differences from other forms of societal consciousness, morality is all the same closely intertwined with them, in particular with religion.”127

Transliteration (Nesmotrya na znachitelnye razlichiya s drugimi formami obshchestvennogo soznaniya, moral v to zhe vremya nakhoditsya v tesnoy vzaimosvyazi s nimi, v chastnosti s religiy.)

Comment  The concept of “societal consciousness” and its different forms is a recurring theme both social science textbooks (S-10 and S-11). In this short statement a clear connection is made between religion and morals, a connection which we will see further developed in the next excerpt.

S-10, §22, Ex. 2.

Translation  “A particularly important role of religion is in the formation of man's moral qualities. Religious feelings and faith unite people and influence their socialization. This can be observed during prayer, in which people are overtaken by one and the same feeling. In this way, religious rituals help people feel like parts of a greater community. All of the world religions known to us preach peace, understanding, mutual respect and tolerance in society. Thus, we may safely assert, that religion has played an essential part in the formation of moral norms and rules of human conduct.”128

Transliteration (Oсобенно велика роль религии в формировании нравственных качеств человека. Религиозные чувства и верования объединяют людей и влияют на их социализацию. Это можно наблюдать в молитве, в которой люди погружаются в одинаковое чувство. Таким образом, религиозные обряды помогают людям чувствовать себя частью большей общины. Все мировые религии, известные нам, проповедуют мир, согласие, взаимовыручку и взаимопонимание в обществе. Поэтому можно с полным правом утверждать, что религия играла важную роль в формировании нравственных норм и правил поведения человека).

127 S-10, p. 117
128 S-10, p. 117
The connection between religion and morals is elaborated on a more specific level, where religion is credited with the role of imparting in people a moral conduct, thus contributing to the socialization process and to the perseverance of society. Here, not only the ideological aspects of religion, but also its practices, are mentioned in relation to this vital societal function.

This excerpt gives a positive evaluation of the role of religion in man's socialization. We also find a statement about the ideological foundations of religion, which, in the form of a descriptive sentence, conveys a strong normative content: “All of the world religions known to us preach peace, understanding, mutual respect and tolerance in society”. This statement also brings to minds the words by President Nazarbayev in Salhani’s interview (quoted in chapter 5.2) “[...] all religions preach the ideals of peace, harmony, and unity”.

S-10, §22, Ex. 3.

“Buddhism is one of the world religions, recognizing the spirit as eternal. It asserts that the meaning of human life is not to relish in the joys of life (hedonism) nor in a complete renunciation of earthly goods, ‘mortification of the flesh’ (asceticism) but in moral refinement, which was achieved through an exit from life and immersion in Nirvana.”

Transliteration
(Buddizm – odna iz mirovykh religiy, priznayushchaya dukh vechnym. Ona utverzhaet, chto sut chelovecheskoy zhizni ne v naslazhdnenii radostyami zhizni (gedonizm), ne v okonchatelnom otkaze ot zemnykh blag, “umershchvlenii ploti” (asketizm), a v nravstvennom usovershenstvovanii, kotoroe dostigalos putem ukhoda ot zhizni, pogrusheniem v nirvanu.)

Comment
The factuality of this statement about Buddhism “...recognizing the spirit as eternal” may be questionable. However, I will not pay much attention to the accuracy of factual statements in these textbooks. Here, it is sufficient for me to
note that the authors name Buddhism as one of the world religions, between which the authors seem to find essential commonalities.\textsuperscript{130}

\textbf{S-10, §22, Ex. 4.}

\textbf{Translation} “According to the teachings of \textbf{Confucius}, which are more of a social/ethical system than a religion, the most important thing is ritual conduct. A basic concept in the teachings of Confucius is 'zhen', which implies charity, kind-heartedness and humanity. The second central concept of Confucianism is 'li', i.e. ritual (customs, etiquette, ceremonial) embodying the principle of reciprocity.”\textsuperscript{131}


\textbf{Comment} This excerpt is interesting mostly in relation to the authors' definition of religion. We may contrast this with the defining statement of religion, which we have seen in S-10, §1, Ex. 1.

\textbf{S-10, §22, Ex. 5.}

\textbf{Translation} “\textbf{Moral values of Judaism.} According to the dogma of this religion, the Jews are God's chosen people. Jews live according to the ten commandments (Decalogue) of Moses. The first three of these require reverence for the god Yahve. The fourth commandment obligates all Jews during Sabbath to put aside all chores and to engage only in the worship of God.

\textsuperscript{130} Looking at the whole textbook, the epithet “world religion” is reserved for Buddhism, Christianity and Islam, and not, as is common in other works, extended also to Judaism and Hinduism. Although it is not explicitly stated, this might be due to the strong ethnic aspect of the latter two religions.

\textsuperscript{131} S-10, p. 118
The next commandment obligates to reverence for one's father and mother, while number 6-10 present the norms that regulate interpersonal relations. They forbid killing, adultery, theft of someone else's property and bearing false witness. These commandments have later found expression also in Christianity as well as Islam.”


**Comment** The moral values of Judaism are accounted for on a very basic level. The ten commandments are mentioned as a basis of morality, which Judaism has in common with Christianity and Islam.

**S-10, §22, Ex. 6.**

**Translation** “The basic moral concepts of Christianity are all-embracing love and perseverance. The holy Christian triplicity – faith, hope and love – shows in what high regard Christianity holds the moral questions. The words 'God's Kingdom within you' carry a deep meaning. As inseparable as black and white are in everyday life, so intermingled are also good and evil, beneficial and malefic. According to the postulates of the Christian religion, after the Apocalypse, i.e. the end of the world, the second coming of the Messiah (Christ) will take place.”

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132 S-10, p. 119
133 S-10, p. 119
Transliteration

(Osnovnye moralnye ponyatiya khristianstvo – eto vseobshchaya lyubov i terpenie. Svashchennaya khristianskaya troitsa – vera, nadezhda, lyubov – pokazyvaet, naskolko vosko stavit khristianstvo voprosy morali. Slova “Tsarstvie Bozhie vnutri vas” imeyut glubokiy smysl. Kak nerazluchny v povsednevnoy zhizni chernoie i beloe, tak i tesno pe repleteny dobro i zlo, khoroshoe i plokhoe. Soglasno osnovnomu polozheniyu khristianskoy religii, posle apokalipsa, t.e. kontsa sveta, nastupaet vtoroe prishestvie messii (Khrista.).)

Comment

The particularities of Christian morality are outlined, with a focus on the three Christian virtues. There's no need for comments, other than perhaps to point out the general positive review the authors make of Christianity (as of other religions).

S-10, §22, Ex. 7.

Translation

“Moral values of Islam. Islam, like Christianity, takes a stand against nationalism, racism and hostility towards people on the basis of their belonging to a certain nation or race.

A true Muslim is one who is honest and sincere before Allah and in relation to other people. Islam, like Christianity, preaches peace, mutual understanding and friendship between people and calls for tolerance and forgiveness. A distinctive characteristic of Islamic ethics is that it sees morality in close unity with other forms of societal consciousness (religious rituals, customs, traditions, jurisprudence) regulating social relations. The ethical norms in the Koran are not systematized, but it indicates what is 'haram', i.e. not permissible, and 'halal', i.e. necessary and obligatory. Norms are provided, regulating certain spheres of life (issues concerning family, marriage, inheritance etc.) and definitions are given for such ethical concepts as justice, virtue, shame and benevolence.

The Koran prohibits the consumption of narcotics and alcoholic beverages. Everybody knows what evil alcoholism and misuse of narcotics is to family life and to society. The Koran prohibits eating canine, pork or the meat of animals that have been slaughtered without the name of Allah being spoken. Islam pays
special attention to personal hygiene, from the ablution before the five daily prayers to the cleanliness of the home, and prescribes what is preferable to wear, and of which materials.

Islam condemns redundant luxury, extravagance, show-off, swank, and it does not approve of women wearing clothes of transparent materials, revealing their bodies in a way that may cause sinful thoughts to arise in the minds of others around them.

Islam prohibits images not only of God, but also of all of God's creations - people, animals etc. For this reason, buildings and homes in Muslim countries were decorated in various styles of ornaments and patterns, without images of people – and certainly not naked people. In issues concerning the relationship between men and women, love and the delights of the flesh, Islam does not endorse asceticism, renunciation of the joys in life. The fact that Islam, like Christianity, does not prohibit its religious and ceremonial leaders to get married and have families like everybody else, may serve as proof of this.

Overall, Islam does not present its adherents with difficult, hard to fulfil requirements, and is a the religion which is most adapt for practical living. Being a religion of peace, justice and purity, Islam preaches only humanitarian values.”

Transliteration

(Islam, kak i khristianstvo, vystupaet protiv natsionalizma i rasizma, vrazhdy k lyudyam na osnove prinadlezhnosti k toy ili inoy natsii ili rase.

Istinnyi musulmanin – tot, kto chesten i iskrenen pered Allakhom, pered lyudmi. Islam, kak I khristianstvo, propoveduet mir, soglasie i druzhu mezhdu lyudmi, prizyvaet byt terpimym, umet proshchat. Osobennostyu etiki islama yavlyaetsya to, chto on rassmatrivaet moral v tesnom edinstve s drugimi formami obshchestvennogo soznaniya (religioznymi ritualami, obyhayami, traditsiyami, pravom), reguliruyuschchimi sotsialnye otnosheniya. Normy nravstvennosti v Korane ne sistematizirovanny. No tam ukazano na to, chto yablyaetsya “kharamom”, t. e. chego nelzya delat, i chto yablyaetsya “khalalom”, t. e. chto nuzhno obyazatelno delat. Privodyatsya normy, reguliruyuschchie opredelennye sfery zhizni (voprosy semi, braka,

134S-10, p. 120-21
nasledovanyia i dr.), i dayutsya opredeleniya takikh nравственных понятий, как справедливость, добродетель, стыд, щедрость.

Коран запрещает потребление наркотиков, спиртных напитков. Каким злом для семьи и общества является пьянство, наказуемо. Коран запрещает падаль, свинину и мясо животных, зарезанных без упоминания имени Аллаха. Ислам обращает особое внимание на гигиену личности, начиная от совершения намаза перед пятнадцатым намазом и кончая чистотой в доме, предписывает, что предпочитительнее носить из каких материалов.

Ислам осуждает излишнюю роскошь, мотовство, показуху и чванливость, не одобряет, когда женщины носят одежду из прозрачного материала, обнажают тело, что может вызывать у окружающих греховные мысли по отношению к ним.

Ислам запрещает изображение не только Бога, но и вообще всех богов творения — людей, животных и т. д., поэтому в мусульманских странах здания, жилища украшались разнообразными орнаментами, рисунками не содержащими изображений людей, тем более в обнаженном виде. В вопросах отношений между мужчиной и женщиной, любви и плотских наслаждений ислам не одобряет аскетизм, отрешение от жизненных радостей. Доказательством этого может служить тот факт, что ислам не запрещает, как и христианство, женитьбу священников и иметь семью, как все люди.

В целом, ислам не предъявляет сложных и трудновыполнимых требований своим последователям, вывляется роль религии на пользу создания условий жизни, религия свидетельствует о более гуманных принципах.

Comment

It is interesting to note how the style changes and becomes more explicitly normative when Islam is in focus. This might be due to Islam’s position as majority religion and its central role as an identity factor in the nation building process. We find descriptive statements with a normative content, such as:

“Ислам, как и христианство, пропагандирует мир, взаимное понимание и дружбу между людьми и призывает к толерантности и прощения”, but also at least one statement with an explicitly normative style: “A true Muslim is one who is
honest and sincere before Allah and in relation to other people”.

Also noteworthy is how Islamic ethics are described as closely intertwined with other spheres of society – and this together with an overall positive view of Islam. We do not detect any resistance here to the thought of Islam as an important influence in society, or any desire for confinement of religion to the private sphere.

S-11, Chapter 2 "Philosophical Understanding of Society” (Filosofskie ponimanie obshchestva) § 16 "Forms of Societal Consciousness and the Criteria for their Delimitation” (Formy obshchestvennogo soznaniya i kriterii ikh razgraničeniya)

This section treats the concept of ”societal consciousness” and the different forms in which it presents itself. Societal consciousness is defined as ”society's awareness of its forms of vital activity, its societal being” (Obshchestvennoe soznanie – eto osoznanie obshchestvom svoikh form zhiznedeyatelnosti, svoego obshchestvennogo bytiya). Seven principal forms of societal consciousness are listed: political consciousness, legal consciousness, morality, religion, art, science and philosophy. These forms of societal consciousness are then delimited according to three main parameters: 1. the object of reflection, 2. the form of reflection and 3. the social fonction.

In this thought structure, religion is described firstly as having the ”sacred” as its main object, i.e. something beyond the boundaries of the natural world, such as God or the Absolute; secondly, religion is said to express the sacred in the form of dogma; and thirdly, while its social function is found to transform in a close relationship with historical developments, two specific (and, it seems, constant) functions are attributed to religion: 1. its close interconnectedness with another form of societal consciousness, morality, and 2. its compensatory function, i.e. its ability to install feelings of joy and gratitude for the communion with God in its adherents, and thus to ease the burdens of earthly life.

After discussing the delimitations of all the seven forms of societal consciousness according to the aforementioned three parameters, the section concludes by noting that in reality they are all always closely intermingled, although the status and role of each mode of consciousness varies greatly with time and historical developments.

The following parts have been derived from this section:

S-11, § 16, Ex. 1.
"Forms of societal consciousness are different means of spiritual apprehension of reality. They include political consciousness, legal consciousness, morality, religion, art, science and philosophy."\(^{135}\)

(Formy obshchestvennogo soznaniya – eto razlichnye sposoby dukhovnogo osvoeniya deystvitelnosti. K nim otnotitsya politicheskie soznanie, pravosoznanie, moral, religiya, isskustvo, nauka i filosofiya.)

Religion is aligned on an apparently equal footing with other forms of “societal consciousness”, this time without the chronological differentiation found in S-10, §1, Ex. 1.

S-11, § 16, Ex. 2.

"Religion has the 'sacred' as its object, i.e. a beginning, which is located beyond the boundaries of the 'natural' world and which has super-sensory properties (God, the Absolute). The super-sensory and supernatural is impossible to know; one can only believe in it."\(^{137}\)

(Religiya imeet svoim predmetom "svyashchennoe", t.e. Takoe nachalo, kotoroe nakhoditsya za chertoy "estestvennogo" mira, obладает sverkhchuvstvennymi svoistvami (Bog, Absolyut). Sverkhchuvstvennee i sverkhystemestvennoe znat nelzya, v nego mozhno tolko verit.)

Again, we are reminded of the definition in S-10, §1, Ex. 1., where belief in a supernatural origin is a defining characteristic of religion. The other part of this excerpt is a typical expression religious scepticism (as seen before in H-10, § 33, Ex 5.).

S-11, § 16, Ex. 3.

\(^{135}\)The Russian word “dukhovnyi” translates literally to "spiritual", which I have also used here. However, in this context it should probably be read in a wider sense, leaning towards "cultural".

\(^{136}\)S-11, p. 74

\(^{137}\)S-11, p. 74
Religion expresses the contents of the 'sacred' in the form of dogma.\textsuperscript{138}

(\textit{Religiya vyrazhaet soderzhanie "svyashchennogo v vide dogmatov".})

This short sentence touches upon the authors' definition of religion and gives a description of the essential activities of religion – again, as is most often recurring in these textbooks, from the ideological perspective.

\textit{S-11, § 16, Ex. 4.}

Religious consciousness is one of the oldest in society. Its role and function has changed along with shifts in societal attitudes and in the form of religion itself. With every serious historical shift in societal conditions, a shift occurred in people's religious views. Thus medieval Catholicism was an expression of the feudal variety of Christianity, and with the development of capitalism new varieties emerged: Protestantism, Lutheranism etc.

Religious consciousness is closely connected to moral consciousness, and many scholars hold that outside of religion there is no true morality.

One of the functions of religion is compensatory. Through their religious experiences, happiness from the communion with God in mosques and churches, feelings of thankfulness etc. seems to counterbalance the earthly life, where hardships, loss, sickness and grief are constantly present.

Art as a form of societal consciousness gives a person complementary life experience, serves as an imaginary addition to life, its extension and sometimes even its substitute. In this function it has a lot in common with religion, which, in real life, also plays a compensatory role. Unlike religion, however, art adds to life through artistic methods, with an earthly origin and an earthly meaning.\textsuperscript{139}

(\textit{Religioznoe soznanie – odno iz drevneyshikh v obshchestve. Ego rol i funktsii menyas v meste so smenoy obshchestvennykh otnosheniy i samikh form religii.})

\textsuperscript{138}S-11, p. 75

\textsuperscript{139}S-11, p. 77
S kazhdym seryeznym istoricheskim perevorotom v obschestvennykh poryadkakh proiskhodil perevorot i v religioznym predstavleniakh lyudey. Tak srednevekovyi katolizism byl vyrazheniem feodalnoy raznovidnosti khristianstva, a s razvitiem kapitalizma poyavilis inye ego raznovidnosti: protestantizm, lyuteranstvo i t.d.

Religioznoe soznanie tesno svyazano s moralnym soznaniem, i mnogie uchenye utverzhdayut, chto vne religii net istinnoy morali.

Odnoy iz funktsii religioznogo soznaiya yavlyaetsya kompensatsionnaya. Lyudi cherez svoi religioznye perezhivaniya, radost ot obschheniya s Bogom v mechetakh i tserkvakh, oshchushcheniya blagodati i t.d. kak by uravnoveshivayut svoyu zemnuyu zhizn', v kotoroy postoyannno prisutstvuyut trudnosti, lisheniya, bolezni, gore.

Isskustvo kak forma obschestvennogo soznaniya daet cheloveku dopolnitelnyi zhiznennyi opyt, sluzhit voobrazhenny m dopolneniem zhizni, ee prodolzheniem, a inogda i zamenoy. V etoy svoey funktsii ono imeet mnogo obshchego s religiey, kotoraya v realnoy zhizni takzhe igraet kompensatsionnuyu rol. No v otlichie ot religii, iskusstvo dopolnaet zhizn khudozhestvennymi obrazami, imeyushchimi zemnoe proiskhozhdenie, zemnoy smysl.

Comment

Here again, is a hint of a chronological perspective in the characterisation of religion as “one of the oldest [forms of consciousness] in society”. However, it is clearly not considered a passed stage in societal development, but rather as an element in human culture with the ability to adjust to new historical circumstances – or to constitute an expression of those circumstances, and thus keeping its relevance in the lives people and in society.

We also find here another function attributed to religion. Earlier (S-10, §22, Ex. 2.) we have seen the function of moral socialization attributed to religion. Here, its close connection to morality is repeated, but its “compensatory” ability, i.e. its ability to compensate for life's hardships by imparting religious feelings and a sense of communion with the divine, is added.

This compensatory function of religion is compared with that of art, which, according to the authors, serves to provide people with complementary life experience. Their distinction between religion and art is noteworthy: “Unlike
religion, however, art adds to life through artistic methods, with an earthly origin and an earthly meaning.” I’m not sure art historians would agree with this last part, but, for the purpose of this study, I just want draw attention to the clear – and apparently exclusive – connection between religion and something other-worldly.

**S-11, § 16, Ex. 5.**

**Translation**

"Thus, we have examined forms of societal consciousness. It should be kept in mind, that in the real life of society they are all interconnected; politics and religion, politics and judiciary, morality and judiciary, religion and morality, art and politics, science and politics etc.

Each historical epoch had its own structure of societal consciousness. Thus, in the middle ages religion took the role of principal societal consciousness, subordinating all others. Science as a form of societal consciousness had not yet emerged at that time. In capitalist society political and legal consciousness come to the forefront, followed by science.”

**Transliteration**

(Itak, my rassmotreli formy obshchestvennogo soznaniya. Sleduyet imet v vidu, chto v realnoy zhizni obshchestva vse oni vzaimosvyazany. Vzaimosvyazany: politika i religiya, politika i pravo, moral i pravo, religiya i moral, isskustvo i politika, nauka i politika i t.d.

V kazhdyyu istoricheskuyu epokhu byla svoya struktura obshchestvennogo soznaniya. Tak, v srednie veka religiya vystupala v roli glavnoy formy obshchestvennogo soznaniya, podchinyayushchey sebe vse drugie. Nauka kak forma obshchestvennogo soznaniya togda esche ne poyavilas. V kapitalisticheskom obshchestve na pervyi plan vykhodit politicheskoe i yuridicheskoe soznanie, a pozhe – nauka.)

**Comment**

In the concluding part of this section we find a clear recognition of the interconnectedness of different forms of “societal consciousness”, including religion. This is followed by a new angle on religion’s historical role. We have

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140S-11, p. 78-79
noted before that religion does not appear to be seen by the authors as a passed stage in history. In this excerpt, while religion is still credited with a continuous relevance, its role as the dominant form of societal consciousness does seem to be considered a passed stage.


This section approaches some of the phenomena we've seen treated in chapter 2, subsection 16. In chapter 2, the main theme is *society*, and, consequently religion, morality, science and art – together with political consciousness, legal consciousness and philosophy – as forms of “societal consciousness”. Here, in chapter 7, the main theme is *culture*. The last three forms of societal consciousness could arguably also be put under the umbrella of culture, and it is not entirely clear to me why they haven't in this case. However, the authors have apparently chosen an angle from which these four forms of cultural activity stand out as the principal ones. This is motivated by a philosophical approach to culture, which identifies four basic cultural values: truth, goodness, beauty and sacredness, which, in turn, correspond to the four phenomena presented as the basic forms of cultural activity. (The full quote is given below.) The wider theme of the chapter includes much more than these four forms of activity. After a discussion of the term from antiquity to modernity, the authors seem to land in a triple faceted approach to “culture”: 1. the empirical, descriptive approach, picturing culture as the totality of human achievements, 2. the activity-based approach, seeing culture as the specific human ability to transform nature, 3. the value-based (axiological) approach, focusing on cultivation as a quality of which a person or a society may have more or less.\(^\text{141}\)

This discussion, in turn, leads up to a characterization of culture as a dual phenomenon, in the sense that all cultural objects include in themselves both natural and social qualities\(^\text{142}\). Mostly, in this book, culture is treated as individual and collective efforts to adapt to, and utilize, the world. Religion, morality, science and art are discussed with focus on their functions in this context. Even as their status as “basic forms of cultural activity” is rendered them by their correspondence to the “basic cultural values”, their most important achievements, according to the authors, are not necessarily directly related to these values. For example, religion's main function is said to be a compensation for man's dependence on forces and circumstances beyond his control (apparently by filling its adherents with a sense of the sacred). This compensation is said to be illusory. However, in the process it also achieves real results, such as personal

\(^{141}\text{S-11, p. 226-28}\)

\(^{142}\text{S-11, p. 229}\)
consciousness, inner reflection and self-assessment. (See quote below.) Somewhat similarly, art seems to be credited with important contributions to an individual's personal development by means of its strong emotional impact – which is caused by its relation to beauty.

The following parts have been derived from this section:

**S-11, § 60-61, Ex. 1.**

**Translation**

“Earlier, in § 18\(^{143}\) we examined the basic forms of societal consciousness. Now we cut them out as forms of cultural activity. They appear as follows:

![Diagram of basic forms of cultural activity]

Analysing the cultural sphere, philosophers have identified fundamental values: truth, goodness, beauty and sacredness. These take shape, become realized and are upheld in life through people's cognitive activities, moral behaviour and religious faith.”\(^{144}\)

**Transliteration**

(Ranee v § 18 my rassmotreli osnovnye formy obshchestvennogo soznaniya. Teper raskroem ikh v kachestve form kulturnoy deyatelnosti. Oni vyglyadyat tak:

![Diagram of basic forms of cultural activity in Russian]

Filosofy, analiziruya kulturnuyu sfenu, vydelyali fundamentalnye tsennosti:

\(^{143}\)This must be a typo. It clearly seems to refer to § 16, which I have just treated. § 17-18 are grouped together and discuss issues concerning individuality and personality in relation to society.

\(^{144}\)S-11, p. 245
istina, dobro, krasota i sviyost. Oni voploshchaetsya v zhizn, realizuyutsya, podderzhivayutsya s pomoshchyu poznavatelnoy deyatelnosti lyudey, nравственного поведения, художественного творчества, религиозной веры.

Comment

Another schematic depiction is presented, and again religion is aligned on an equal level with other forms of cultural activity. Interestingly, religion and science are included in the same alignment here, which almost certainly does not mean that their truth claims are equated, but still apparently that they are given equal weight as cultural activities.

We should also take note of the four fundamental values identified here, of which religion – judging from this and other passages in the material, is directly linked with at least two: goodness and sacredness. (However, in this section, goodness seems to be most directly connected to morality, which is listed here as a cultural activity in its own right.)

S-11, § 60-61, Ex. 2.

Translation  “The religious sphere is controlled by ecclesial organizations: the church, monasteries and religious parishes.”

Transliteration (Religioznaya sfera kontroliruetsya tserkovnymi organizatsiyami: tserkovyu, monastiryu, religioznymi obshchinami.)

Comment  This understanding of the structure of the religious sphere seems clearly based on the historical experience in Christian parts of the world, and, as I have discussed in chapter 2, doesn't necessarily match reality in an Islamic context.

S-11, § 60-61, Ex. 3.

Translation  “And we begin our analysis with religion. Religion is connected to such a value as sacredness. The latter assumes the form of a multitude of gods in polytheistic religions, and the form of one single almighty god in monotheistic

145 S-11, p. 245
The Latin word “religio” originally meant, according to different interpretations, “piety, sanctity”, and also “assemble, worship” and “tie, connect”. Today the term implies specific behaviour, experience and understanding of the world, which are defined by the belief in a supernatural and hidden power. The sacred (i.e. the holy) and belief in it, is the highest religious value. In religion emerges a feeling of man's dependence on that which transcends his understanding, strengths and practical abilities, on the boundless, on nature (archaic religions exemplify veneration of personified forces of nature) on social conditions and finally on his own mortality. Religion compensates this dependence, not by annihilating it, but by means of faith, prayers and ceremonies, which enable a person to obtain God's protection and hope of salvation. A number of anthropologists who study a variety of primitive cultures maintain that, for the common individual, religion is necessary in order to overcome the overwhelming, paralysing anticipation of death, misfortune and destiny. The basic function function of religion is an illusory compensation for problems. But, in fulfilling this function, it achieves a great number of real and important results. Of particular importance, in the context of the theme under discussion, is that religion is precisely what facilitated the development of personal consciousness, inner reflection and self-assessment.

An enormous number of popular and artistic cultural traditions developed within the framework of religious practice. The model of divine perfection provided a vector for man's moral aspirations. The well known philosopher S. L. Frank (1877-1950) commented this situation as follows with the example of Christianity: 'The gospel did not proclaim the nothingness and weakness of man, but his eternal aristocratic dignity... This dignity of man...is determined by his relatedness with God.'

The figure of the God-Man Christ bridged the abyss that had opened between the perfect God and the sinful man. By uniting in himself both natures – the divine and the human – and by living his earthly life and dying on the cross for all mankind, Jesus made religion 'fit for humans', and its ethical requirements understandable and possible to fulfil. For this reason Jesus Christ, Buddha, Muhammed and their likes are considered 'cultural symbols of a higher order', regardless of whether we believe in their teachings or not. Any religion
operating through the lives of prophets, saints and martyrs forms lofty models of behaviour and creates its own 'ladder' on which everyone may climb, as long as one has enough strength. Aspiration towards sanctity, in this area of the human soul, fills the same function as in art the search for beauty and in science the search for true knowledge. In this way, religion turns out to be a core element of culture and to harbour a great ethical potential."\textsuperscript{146}

Transliteration

\textit{(I nachnem nash analiz s religii. Religiya svyazana s takoy tsennostyu, kak svyatost. Poslednyaya v politeisticheskikh religiakh voploshchaet obrazy mnogochislennikh bozhestv, v monoteisticheskikh – obraz edinigo vsesilnogo Boga.}


\textit{Ogromnoe chislo bytovykh i khudojestvennykh kulturnykh tradtsiy

\textsuperscript{146}S-11, p. 245-47
раzвивалosь в рамках религиозной практики. Образ божественного совершенства задавал вектор моральных устремлений человека. Известный философ С. Л. Франк (1877-1950) так комментировал эту ситуацию: “Благая весть воззвещала не невежество и слабость человека, а его вечное аристократическое достоинство... Это достоинство человека... определено его родством с Богом”.

Фигура Богочеловека Христа соединила край поласти, протекавшей между совершенным Богом и грешным человеком. Объединив в себе обе ипостаси — божественную и человеческую, прожив земную жизнь и умер на кресте за всех людей, Иисус сделал религию “сознательно человеческой”, а ее нравственное требование — понятными и выполнимыми. Поэтому Иисуса Христа, Будду Мухаммеда и им подобных считают “культурными символами высшего порядка независимо от того, верим ли мы в их учения. Любая религия, оперируя образами пророков, святых, мучеников, формирует высокие образцы поведения, создает свою “лестницу”, по которой каждый может подниматься, пока хватит сил. Стремление к святости выполняет в этой области человеческого духа ту же функцию, что в искусстве — поиск красоты, в науке — поиск истинного знания. Таким образом, религия оказывается стержневым элементом культуры и содержит большой нравственный потенциал.

Comment

This long excerpt provides continuation and development of several themes we have met before. As earlier in this section, religion is tied to the value of “sacredness”, which implies something beyond the natural realm, in the form of gods or a single god depending on the place and the historical circumstances.

We are also reacquainted with the theme of the compensatory function of religion, (which we saw in S-11, § 16, Ex. 4.). Here, it is clearly stated that this compensation is illusory – an even stronger expression of religious scepticism than before (S-11, § 16, Ex. 2. and H-10, § 33, Ex 5.).

However, illusory or not, religion is still clearly held in high regard as a positive and important element in human culture. One might say that the circle is closed in the discussion found in this excerpt, with a connection between sanctity as the object of religion and morality as its effect: “Aspiration towards sanctity, in this area of the human soul, fills the same function as in art the search for beauty and in science the search for true knowledge. In this way,
9. Conclusions

9.1. General Reflections
I'm treating the textbooks as one whole, and as part of an officially sanctioned teaching curriculum. As such, they may be viewed as representing – or constituting a part of – an official ideology. I have defined official ideology as a complex of ideas concerning society, culture and human interaction, propagated by a state or by persons and organizations controlled by or loyal to it. Such ideologies exist in all states, but they can be more or less rigid and more or less open for discussion. A school curriculum – especially one which is decided on a central state level – is of course shaped by the official ideology, regardless of the efforts that its creators may make in order to stimulate the development of free and critical thinking in the students. The passages about religion in these textbooks certainly do not include the totality of official ideas and attitudes towards religion, but they can, I believe, be seen as reflecting elements of an official ideology, as defined above. In my analysis, I will treat the excerpts primarily as such reflections, rather than reflections of the authors' personal opinions, and discuss them in a wider societal context with the help of my conceptual framework. As textbooks in an officially decided curriculum, it seems reasonable to treat them as products of their context to an even greater extent than a work by a single author published by a private publishing house. Even so, however, we cannot completely dismiss the possible influences of the individual authors' personal views. Apparent contradictions in the textbooks could...
possibly be credited to the fact that different parts were written by different authors. But then again, contradictions are often not hard to find within the thinking of one and the same individual.

Treating the textbooks together as one whole means that I do not pay much attention to the background of the authors, or distinguish much between the books. I will just make a brief reflection as to the difference in style and content between the two textbooks of history and those of social science.

The history books are written mostly in a narrative style, where historical events are retold and presented as simple facts. Some of these factual statements are so void of apparent value-related or analytical connotations that I have found them quite irrelevant in my analysis, even when they do contain references to religion. Of course one could argue that there is no such thing as a simple neutral fact – at least not within a human discourse – and, in any case, the selection and presentation of facts is certainly somehow affected by the author’s own opinions as well as by the wider discourse in which a work is written. However, in order to reduce the risk of becoming too speculative, I have chosen to focus on more explicitly evaluating or analytical statements.

The history books I have chosen do contain enough such statements to make them interesting in this study, only somewhat less than the social science books, which are written in a discursive style concerned with the construction of analytical categories. The social science books also give historical perspectives, with a style and content which make them more useful in this study than much of what is found in the history books.

As stated above, the purpose of this study is to investigate the role and meaning of religion in the official thinking of a predominantly Muslim post-Soviet country. To this end, I am conducting an analysis of how religion as a general concept is understood and constructed in the discourse found in upper secondary school teaching material, and how it is put in relation to culture and society. I will use the concepts and themes from chapter 3.3. to interpret the findings, within the historical and societal context described in chapters 4-7. But, going into the thematic discussion, we should keep in mind the passages in the textbooks that most of all look like comprehensive definitions of religion. In S-10, the following seemingly comprehensive definition is made: "Religion is a form of worldview, the basis of which consists of belief in the existence of supernatural powers and attribution of a paramount role to a supernatural origin in the creation of the world and the life of man" (S-10, §1, Ex. 1). Here is a definition completely void of material or social aspects, focusing completely on the ideological side. In S-11 we find a somewhat similar definition, where practice is mentioned, but where ideas of the supernatural are still at the centre of the definition: “Today the term [religion] implies specific behaviour, experience and understanding of the world, which are defined by the belief in a supernatural and hidden power.” (S-11, § 60-61, Ex. 3) (bold and italics in the original text). The history books, which, as I have pointed out, are less analytical in their structure and style, contain much less that can be read as
definitions of religion in general, although definitions are given of specific types of religion – Shamanism, Totemism, Animism, Fetishism and Magic (H-10, § 33, Ex 5.).

As we shall soon discuss in more detail, religion is assigned several different roles and functions in history and society in these textbooks. But its roots are consistently found in the ideological connection and preoccupation with the transcendent, supernatural or sacred.

9.2. Thematic Discussion

Let us now briefly recall the paradigms and paradigmatic themes I sketched as my conceptual framework in chapter 3.3. I have characterized the secular paradigm as an ideological situation where religion is expected to be privatized, separated from other parts of culture and society and of decreasing relevance in general, as opposed to the post-secular paradigm, in which the whole background situation is changed through the process of secularization, but where religion is seen as an integral part of society and culture, and not as a waning phenomenon. (I do not repeat the full definitions here.) Moreover, I added six characteristic themes, positioned as three pairs of opposing defining characteristics. In the following, I will try to sum up my findings in the textbooks in relation to each of these pairs.

Past stage or complex historical role: We find a few passages from which a view on religion as a past stage could possibly be inferred, e.g. in the first of the history books, where religion appears as a pre-scientific way of understanding the world, and is described and explained in evolutionary terms (H-10, § 33, Ex 2, H-10, § 33, Ex 5.), or in the social science books, where we see ”a crisis in the mytho-religious consciousness” giving rise to philosophy (S-10, §1, Ex. 2.), and where religion as ”the principal form of societal consciousness” is attributed to an earlier historical epoch (S-11, § 16, Ex. 5.). However, taking into account the numerous other passages where religion is clearly credited with a continued relevance, it seems that it is not religion as such that is considered a past stage, just certain forms of religion.

Several passages in the history books as well as the social science books picture religion as a developing phenomenon, able to adjust to historical circumstances. One prime example of the latter is found in S-10, §1, Ex. 1: “Religious worldview in its first, undeveloped forms practically merges with mythology. In its later, more developed forms it rests upon a well defined ideal and conceptual basis.”. Another such example is found in S-11, § 16, Ex. 4, where it is stated that “[religion's] role and function has changed along with shifts in societal attitudes and in the form of religion itself” and that “[w]ith every serious historical shift in societal conditions, a shift occurred in people's religious views”. A third example of this is the statements about Islam's ability to adjust to local conditions (H-10, § 33, Ex 11.).

Moreover, at least four different important functions are attributed to religion, creating a picture of its complex (and important) historical role; 1. contributing to the social cohesion of a nation (H-10, § 33, Ex 6, H-10, § 33, Ex 11.) or the strengthening of a community (S-10, §22, Ex. 2.) ; 2. facilitating
communication, literacy and exchange of ideas (H-10, § 33, Ex 11, H-10, § 33, Ex 12); 3. as a vehicle of morality and instrument of moral socialization (S-10, §22, Ex. 1, S-10, §22, Ex. 2, S-11, § 16, Ex. 4, S-11, § 60-61, Ex. 3) “facilitat[ing] the development of personal consciousness, inner reflection and self-assessment” (S-11, § 60-61, Ex. 3); 4. compensating for the hardships and misfortunes of life (S-11, § 16, Ex. 4, S-11, § 60-61, Ex. 3).

The overall picture that can be gathered from this material, with regards to religion in history, is that of a vital and highly adaptable element, an element which develops with the course of history, at the same time reflecting and influencing historical changes.

**Negative or positive relation to societal development:** To my mind, the most clearly negative statement about religion in relation to societal development in this material is found in the class 10 social science book, where it is contrasted with philosophy which “germinate[s] in a soil of doubt in the justice and truth of the everyday traditional patriarchal conditions” and “arises in a period of crisis in the mytho-religious consciousness” (S-10, §1, Ex. 2). However, the few negative statements (or statements which can be read as such) are overwhelmingly outweighed by the numerous positive statements about the role of religion in the historical as well as the societal context. I have already referred to some of these positive statements in from the perspective of their contribution to the picture of a complex historical role of religion. Here it should be sufficient to highlight a couple of the most strikingly positive evaluations of the contribution of religion in the historical as well as in the societal dimensions. In the 10th class history book one such statement appears in the conclusions to the section focusing on the religious history of Kazakhstan: “The proliferation of religious ideas, literacy, traditions enriched the population of the steppe and formed a basis for the emergence of brilliant personalities in science, literature and music” (H-10, § 33, Ex. 12). In the 10th class social science book we find the following positive evaluation of religion's contribution to the development of society: “All of the world religions known to us preach peace, understanding, mutual respect and tolerance in society. Thus, we may safely assert, that religion has played an essential part in the formation of moral norms and rules of human conduct” (S-10, §22, Ex. 2). In the same sub-section, Islam is described as closely intertwined with many different spheres of life and society, without any indication that a separation of the spheres would be desirable: “A distinctive characteristic of Islamic ethics is that it sees morality in close unity with other forms of societal consciousness (religious rituals, customs, traditions, jurisprudence) regulating social relations […] Norms are provided, regulating certain spheres of life (issues concerning family, marriage, inheritance etc.) and definitions are given for such ethical concepts as justice, virtue, shame and benevolence” (S-10, §22, Ex. 7).

**Religious scepticism or religious realism:** Of all the themes I set out to look for, a clearly stated religious realism, i.e. acceptance of the idea that religion might contain actual knowledge in the normal sense of the
word (see my discussion of Daniel F. Lim in chapter 2.6.) was probably the least likely to find in the general educational curriculum of a country which has lived through the secularization and anti-religious campaigns of the Soviet Union, and which still has strong provisions of secularity inscribed in their constitution and legal system – including the educational legislation. Unsurprisingly, then, the material contains very little that could be interpreted as leaning towards religious realism. We do find passages which confirm the validity of a religion’s moral and normative claims, such as the statement concerning Islam’s prohibition of narcotics and alcohol: “The Koran prohibits the consumption of narcotics and alcoholic beverages. Everybody knows what evil alcoholism and misuse of narcotics is to family life and to society” (S-10, §22, Ex. 7.). However, this is not the same as affirming religious claims as to the reality behind such normative claims, for example that such rules are provided by a transcendent God. We also find a few passages referring to the “sacred” as the object of religion (S-11, § 16, Ex. 2., S-11, § 60-61, Ex. 1., S-11, § 60-61, Ex. 3.). But there is no indication that this “sacred” is regarded as an objectively existing transcendent reality – on the contrary, in the passages where the “sacred” is referred to, it is usually accompanied by either an outright denial of its reality, as the statement that “[t]he basic function function of religion is an illusory compensation for problems” (S-11, § 60-61, Ex. 3.), or a perhaps more agnostic scepticism: “The super-sensory and supernatural is impossible to know; one can only believe in it” (S-11, § 16, Ex. 2.).

9.3. Final Reflections

I have mentioned normativeness (in the sense explained in the discussion of Saba Mahmouds work in chapter 2.1.) as one of the aspects I want to examine in the material – not in contrast to an opposite, as with the other parameters in my conceptual framework – but as a trait of all kinds of secular (and post-secular) ideologies. It is possible to study this from at least two different angles; one is to look for a normative style in the text, and another is to look at the contents, at which normative claims can be identified in the text.

In my presentation of the textual excerpts I have already indicated the observation that the style seems to become suddenly more normative when the text treats the moral values of Islam, with statements such as: “Islam, like Christianity, takes a stand against nationalism, racism and hostility towards people on the basis of their belonging to a certain nation or race” and: “A true Muslim is one who is honest and sincere before Allah and in relation to other people. Islam, like Christianity, preaches peace, mutual
understanding and friendship between people and calls for tolerance and forgiveness” (S-10, §22, Ex. 7). Perhaps this change in style is due to the fact that Islam, as the majority religion, is more intimately connected to the social reality of contemporary Kazakhstan.

Apart from the aforementioned passage regarding the moral values of Islam, there are a few more at least approaching a normative style, such as the statement that “[a]ll of the world religions known to us preach peace, understanding, mutual respect and tolerance in society” (S-10, §22, Ex. 2).

Looking at the contents, however, all statements with any kind of value-related connotations could be considered normative. Thus, we have found that religion, in this material, is constructed as a vital element in history and society, providing important contributions to the development of community, morality, even of man's intellectual abilities, and whose moral claims – but not its epistemological ones – can be true and valid. Looking at it these claims from the perspective just described, it means not only that this is claimed by the authors to be factually true about the nature of religion, but also that it can be read as a description of what religion ought to be. By describing (or perhaps proscribing) what religion ought to be, the discourse also implies what religion ought not to be. In this way such discourse can contribute to the formation of conceptions of certain forms of religion as abnormal and thus extreme, or as something completely other than religion.

We should of course be aware that a state ideology or an official discourse is never fixed and completely coherent. It should rather be seen as an ongoing process. And I would like to suggest that by identifying the incoherences one might get clues as to the nature and direction of such a process. As we have seen, most of the themes I have classified as post-secular can be found in abundance in the material, while most of the secular themes are somewhat harder to find. So what does this mean? It means that the treatment of religion as a general concept in the material under study can be said to lean more towards the post-secular paradigm, as I have defined and described it. In the larger context, this can be taken as an indication of the changes that have taken place in academic and intellectual circles since the fall of the Soviet Union, stimulated by a still vibrant nation building process. This is not a comparative study, but the Soviet era, with its general ideological stance on religious issues, that I have attempted to summarize in previous chapters, may serve as a backdrop against which the current discourse can be contrasted.

Moreover, it seems to me that a clear contrast exists between this discourse and, not only the Soviet past, but also the present legal and political situation. The very strict division between religion and other spheres of life on the legal level is not reflected in this discourse, which can be seen in the many examples of how religion is intermingled with other spheres, playing vital roles in societal developments. This is particularly clear in the description of Islamic morality and how it connects different spheres of life and society (S-10, §22, Ex. 7) as discussed above. From the legal perspective, religion is simply a right which can be exercised by citizens – within certain limits – and whose influence on other spheres of life should be kept at a minimum. In the textbooks, in contrast, we find none of this desire for strict separation.
between the spheres. Using some of the terms from my initial theoretical discussion, we may note that Kazakhstan's judicial system, with its strict regulations of religion, must certainly be characterized as
assertive. Consequently, the general education system, lacking any sort of religious instruction and by law obligated to keep religious influences out, is based on separationist principles. But the content about religion in textbooks used within this system reflects attitudes that seem to be more in consistence with accommodationist ideas.

We also don't find any clear indications of the growing concern regarding religious extremism, which we have observed in government policy. One possible reference to problematic religious currents is the passage in H-11 where the situation in Kazakhstan shortly after independence is described in the following way: “The entry of Kazakhstan into the world arena lead to the substitution of the ideology-driven culture, which had lost its meaning, with Western pop-culture and an active proliferation of religiosity” (H-11, § 46, Ex. 2). The text goes on to describe how these “critical tendencies” had to be countered by measures such as “raising the cultural and national awareness of the peoples of Kazakhstan” and “formation of cultural pluralism in the ethno-cultural and confessional cross-sections”. With this one (weak) exception, however, the textbooks contain no discussion of problematic tendencies which we often find in discussions on religion internationally, such as manipulative cults, incitement to hatred and violence etc.

We can see the discourse in the textbooks as constituting one small part of a much larger ideological construct filling its specific function in the larger whole, or as a micro-discourse reflecting parts of a macro-discourse. But, seeing how this discourse contradicts some other aspects of the official ideology, we may also take it as an indication of an ongoing shift in the official thinking concerning religion. The concerns and measures by the government against what is perceived as extremism, and the severe legal restrictions on religion are not reflected in the material under study. Instead, we find a thoroughly positive picture of religion and the values it holds and imparts on society. It is likely that the authors of the textbooks have consciously avoided certain sensitive subjects, as the books are intended for adolescents. But the result is not just a bleak picture, void of anything controversial, but an elaborate discussion where religion is described as a complex phenomenon, which – at least as long as it fits the description in the text – has a strong and legitimate role to play in history as well as in society today.

In the statements by President Nazarbayev (quoted in 5.2.) we can sense a hint of this positive role ascribed to religion, only not as clear and not with the complexity elaborated in the examined textbooks. In this way the analysis of the textbooks can shed new light on official statements such as these. What we can sense here is, I believe, an official thinking process on the move away from Soviet secularity, which still has not reached a reststop, let alone a final destination, in its search for a new role and meaning of religion.
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147 A more precise translation of *obshchestvoznanie* would be “societal knowledge”, but I choose here what seems to me the most common term in an English speaking context for the closest equivalent of *obshchestvoznanie* as a teaching subject.

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