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Muslims in Catalan Textbooks¹

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Abstract • Textbooks are basic elements that shape the school curriculum. Despite the democratization and decentralization of the Spanish educational system, a certain ideological inertia and bias with respect to their contents and focus persists. The study presented here is based on an empirical analysis of the contents of 264 books used at the primary (6-11), secondary (12-14 years) and baccalaureate (15-16) levels. The results point to the existence of an “unstated” curriculum, where only brief mention of Islam, Arabs and Muslims, and their presence in Spain predominate. These are usually accompanied by images – for cognitive support – that serve to maintain an exotic, anti-modern, anti-Western and, in other words, an “Orientalist” image of this group.

Keywords • religion, education, religious diversity, Islam, school materials, hidden curriculum

Introduction

Catalonia, not unlike several European societies and to a greater and lesser degree the rest of the Autonomous Communities of Spain, is host to a significant number of students from immigrant origins in its educational systems. In our view, three dimensions to this phenomenon are especially relevant:

1. *An increase in immigrant students*: statistics since the 1990s indicate an increase in the number of students who are children of recent immigrants.² To this, we add educational decentralization that has involved the greater consideration of local languages proper to a number of Autonomous Communities, ethnic gypsy minorities, and religious diversity.³ These confront the linguistic, religious, and ideological uniformism that was in force for decades under the Spanish state, especially during the Franco dictatorship.
2. *Concentration in public schools*: for the year 2009-2010, 84 percent of students of immigrant origin were found in the public school system, the rest in the private system, which has tended towards ghettoization.

This situation raises debates over whether or not to enforce

quotas in scholastic institutions, as well as preoccupations about the phenomenon of “white flying.”⁴

3. *Lower scholastic output*: in the recent PISA report of 2009, Catalonia improved its scores as much in mathematic performance as in the sciences, and notably in reading comprehension (498 points, as opposed to 477 in 2006), putting it at the average level of the OCDE (Organization for Cooperation and Economic Development). Nevertheless, in this most recent evaluation, the distance between the native-born and immigrant populations was 82 points, practically double the average of the OCDE. It is worth specifying that these differences in scholastic output between native-born students and those of immigrant origin are specifically adjusted to the educational and socioeconomic characteristics of their respective countries of origin.⁵

In Spain, diverse studies confirm what in preceding decades international studies⁶ have already revealed, that perceptions, attitudes, and interactions between teachers and students of ethnic minority backgrounds are mediated by an evaluative hierarchy according to the latter’s conformity to the image of a model student.⁷ That is to say that it is neither the foreign student *per se*, nor the “outside stranger” or “immigrant” who subjectively (and objectively) threatens the professional identity of the teacher. Rather it is minority students, especially of gypsy and Maghrebi backgrounds, who either for their low academic performance, their conflictive conduct, and even their “different” appearances (in terms of clothing, hygiene and body odor, for example) challenge or alter the school order. The question is whether this social construction of ethnic difference on the part of teachers basically responds to criteria of social exclusion (poverty, lack of linguistic knowledge or of juridical-administrative reality, or overcrowding in the household) or to more cultural variables (family or religious values, or ethnically exclusive identities). Or, a more probable explanation, whether they result from a range of structural and symbolic factors. Some Spanish authors⁸ highlight the risk of using culture as a determining variable for explaining social problems. At the same time, it is no less certain that in the face of instrumentalist conceptions, academic discourses, and most importantly more recent social developments, these highlight a resurgence of ethnicity as a vector of social change.⁹

Over the last thirty years, a number of national and international studies have underlined the fact that the curriculum is never neutral, be it explicit or official, sub-institutional or hidden. To a greater or lesser extent, the curriculum reflects the interests of hegemonic groups and collectives, and as a consequence tends to transmit ideologies that legitimate social inequalities, from “classism” to outright racism and chauvinism. In the sense that the school curriculum implies a form of cultural selection, it is difficult to improve on what Basil Bernstein¹⁰ observed more than

forty years ago, that the forms by which society selects, classifies, distributes, transmits and evaluates educational knowledge deemed public also reflect forms of power and principles of social control. However, if the curriculum is seen to define knowledge that is socially pertinent, as well as the culture considered legitimate, this cultural selection involves the official curriculum (programs, textbooks, calendars, schedules of educational facilities) just as much as those more hidden aspects of curricula (norms, values, and beliefs) which, while not formally codified, have been internalized by students, teachers, and non-academic personnel through routines and social relationships that structure practices in the classroom and in the rest of the educational institution (playgrounds, lunchrooms). As M. Apple might say,¹¹ that which one learns in school is that which is intended to be taught, as well as on occasion, that which goes against what is meant to be taught. We will focus here on analyzing one of the dimensions of this curriculum: textbooks both from the official perspective and from the view of the hidden (or rather “unstated”) curriculum.

In Spain, a certain interest has been shown in analyzing textbooks. While few studies of this kind exist, they generally focus on transmitted contents, images that support these and the language used. Analyses of the contents of textbooks in Spain explore to what extent perceptions of the minority other (black, Jewish, or Christian) are biased by prejudices and show signs of authorial stereotypes.¹² Often, such processes of cultural and ideological selection made in textbooks produce five operations of reality distortion: a) suppressions; b) additions; c) deformations; d) attention detours; and e) allusions to complexity.

Focusing on the analysis of Islam in scholastic textbooks, David Parra¹³ affirms that in spite of advice from some Africanist authors during the Franco regime (Cordero Torres, Gil Benumeya, Martín de la Escalera, García Figueras), scholastic manuals make no mention of the existence of a prevalent discourse on Hispanic-Arab fraternity. Relations between Spain and Islam were only presented in antagonistic and confrontational terms. It was also common to speak of the Andalusian historical stage as one of rupture with preceding traditions, one that could only be overcome through the Reconquest. In the best cases, Andalusian contributions to national history were taken to be part of the Spanish legacy, without any links being established to either the civilization or culture of North Africa. Francoism, it would seem, favored a change in the vision of the “other” through schooling that was strictly controlled by censorship, though this was scarcely achieved. Furthermore, the rejection of Islam continued to reproduce itself in classrooms presided over by a military authority that was the self-declared “eternal brother of the Arabs.” During Francoism, and even during the democratic transition, school texts reflected an ambivalent attitude towards the Muslim world,¹⁴ as well as an ambiguous estimation of worth.¹⁵

For Rafael Valls,¹⁶ social science texts give students an explicitly Europeanist and even ethnocentric optic by positing the existence of a singular common culture. Later, Gemma Martín¹⁷ characterized the relationship between Europe and Islam found in textbooks between 1983 and 1993 as antagonistic and confrontational. Islam is not considered in itself, but rather always through relationships with the West, emphasizing aggressive elements and cultural delegitimization, through which everything is attributed to religious elements. Biases, errors, and prejudices contained within these lead the author to argue that there is a shameless indoctrination of the student body, cumulatively generating a very negative attitude towards all those who come from Muslim majority regions. In this way, J. M. Navarro¹⁸ affirms that 95 percent of the editorial contents of school texts are: confusing (it would seem intentionally) in terms of ideas and concepts about Islam; they reproduce clichés and stereotypes; they manipulate historical facts and, on occasion, omit them; they are uncritically Eurocentric; and they devalue cultural diversity (explicitly and implicitly). In fact, they confirm that a good number of scholarly manuals disqualify Islam as a religious phenomenon through the expression of prejudices that project a negative image of it, admittedly with subtleties, but which frequently identify the term “Islam” with entirely extra-religious meanings. On this point, Rafael Valls¹⁹ has focused more recently on historical school textbooks for obligatory and secondary education baccalaureate level, observing that, though presented during both the medieval and contemporary epochs, Islam is given too little and too superficial treatment.

In sum, we begin with the idea that school curricula imply a cultural selection that manifests itself as much in codified aspects (for example in textbooks) as in that which is not codified (perceptions and interactions between teachers and students). The logic of this curricular cultural selection is mediated by the structure of power and, more concretely, by vectors of social inequality such as class, gender, and ethnicity. The ethnicization and racialization of social stratification (job qualifications, occupation, income) constitutes a growing phenomenon in European societies. In the school environment, with the ethnic hierarchization of classrooms, the lowest steps on the ladder of scholastic inequality correspond as much to outside immigrants (principally students of Maghrebi origins) as to native-born minorities (students of ethnic gypsy background). In Spain, there is an evident risk of Islamophobia in public opinion, derived in part from criteria of structural exclusion and in part from cultural prejudices. The school does not escape such processes.

The main objective of this study is to complement empirical literature regarding the presence of Islam, Arabs, and Muslims in textbooks, seen through the lens of a community with strong cultural identity (Catalonia) and from the perspective of the concept “unstated” curriculum which

draws on the sociology of education. As Puelles²⁰ demonstrates, textbooks such as those analyzed here are approved in a decentralized fashion, which means that each autonomous administration approves those to be used in educational facilities of its territory. Educational facilities, following the LOCE²¹ and the LOE,²² choose those which they will use. In this respect, the highest state inspectors have the capacity to verify that textbooks and other didactic materials correspond to basic teaching standards. The books studied here belong to those that the General Authority of Catalonia has approved; they have been verified by the state and may be selected by primary (6-14 years) educators or mandatory secondary (14-16) educators in Catalonia.

The Representation of Islam in School Textbooks and Manuals

In spite of the boom in new information and communication technologies, textbooks continue to constitute a fundamental element in drawing up the school curriculum. Although the ideological bias in school texts is especially obvious in undemocratic political regimes, such as Franco's dictatorship,²³ it is clear that the cultural selection of school contents occurs in all states and, to a greater or lesser extent, in all subject areas. Given that ideological control and even indoctrination tend to be more effective when cultural selection is discrete, it is not a pointless task to reveal what is actually said and ultimately omitted in mandatory books with which students enter into contact.²⁴

The empirical study presented here is based on the analysis of 246 documents in use during the course of 2008-09,²⁵ 84.1 percent of which are manuals and textbooks, 10.2 percent exercise books, 4.2 percent accompanying documents and 1.1 percent teachers' handbooks. The subjects concentrated on were those considered *a priori* to possibly contain references to Islam and its various forms. Thus, we concentrated on social sciences but also on languages (Catalan, Castilian, literature, foreign languages), philosophy, music, art and religion. The levels of study are broken down below, indicating which subjects the selected books belong to.

The results obtained show the prevalence of references in post-obligatory handbooks and textbooks compared to other educational levels, followed by the middle and higher cycles of primary school and the first cycle of compulsory secondary education. The differences between these last two cases do not seem particularly relevant, but in primary school the references appear much less frequently in exercise books. This is consistent with the age of pupils and teaching methods. Regarding subject areas, there is a prevalence of references in the corresponding history course at the post-obligatory level (15 percent of the total). Here, the differences between sub-samples are also statistically significant. Although

Table 1. Educational Level of Textbooks and Manuals Analyzed.

	TOTAL	Absolute frequencies
PRIMARY SCHOOL first cycle (6-8 years)	10.6	28
Catalan language and literature	3.4	9
Spanish language and literature	2.3	6
Social & environmental studies: social and cultural	2.7	7
Art education: visual and art	1.1	3
Religion (voluntary)	1.1	3
PRIMARY SCHOOL middle and higher cycles (8 – 12)	32.6	86
Catalan language and literature	5.3	14
Spanish language and literature	7.6	20
Core language content and structure	0.4	1
Foreign languages	1.5	4
Social & environmental studies: social and cultural	8	21
Art education: music	3	8
Art education: visual and art	3	8
Religion (voluntary)	3.8	10
COMPULSORY SECONDARY EDUCATION (12-16 years) first cycle (core credits)	24.6	65
Catalan language and literature	3.8	10
Spanish language and literature	3	8
Foreign languages	2.3	6
Social sciences	8	21
Visual and art studies	2.7	7
Music	2.7	7
Religion/advanced study activities	2.3	6
CSE second cycle	6.4	17
Catalan language and literature	1.5	4
Spanish language and literature	2.3	6
Foreign languages	1.1	3
Visual and art studies	0.4	1
Music	1.1	3
Post-obligatory secondary (subjects with 30 credits)	25.8	68
Catalan language and literature	0.8	2
Spanish language and literature	3	8
Foreign languages	1.5	4
Philosophy	3.8	10
History	12.5	33
Religion (voluntary)	3.8	10

to a lesser degree, and with no statistical significance, there are a significant number of representations in the other social science courses at the remaining education levels (“Social and Environmental Studies” in primary school and “Social Sciences” in compulsory secondary education), which make up almost 10 percent of the total for each of the levels. In the remaining subjects, (languages, philosophy, religion, art) the percentages of references are low, fluctuating between less than 1 percent and below 5 percent of the total. In short, the vast majority (almost 65 percent) of references only appear in course textbooks, predominating in the social sciences: “History” at post-obligatory, “Social Sciences” in CSE and “Social and Environmental Studies” in primary school, which add up to more than a third of the total.

Even more important is the fact that almost half (46.2 percent) of the texts analyzed contained not a single reference to Islam. Those with only one reference (42.4 percent) are most common. Only 9.5 percent contain more than one excerpt and those that dedicate a whole chapter (1.5 percent) or even the whole text (0.4 percent) are very much in the minority. In other words, as expected, the unstated curriculum predominates, which suggests the suppression of textual references to the minority group as an ideological-cultural selection strategy.²⁶ Furthermore, it is worth remembering that this pronounced omission of the “other” is consistent with the results of previous research.²⁷

On the other hand, as table 2 shows, there seems to be an inverse relationship between education level and an unstated curriculum. That is to say, not only are references scarce, but they only appear in the texts for older pupils taking post-obligatory studies. In line with the above, the highest frequency is in the social sciences (54 percent), followed by

Table 2. References to Islam by Educational Level.

	LEVEL					
	TOTAL	Kindergarten	Primary school	CSE	CSE second cycle	Post-obligatory secondary
No reference	46.2	67.9+	67.4+	40	50	11.8-
A chapter dedicated to these topics	1.5	7.1	1.2	1.5	-	-
Several excerpts	9.5	3.6	3.5-	6.2	16.7	23.5+
Single paragraph or brief reference	42.4	17.9-	27.9-	52.3	33.3	64.7+
School handbook	0.4	3.6	-	-	-	-

(Inverse relationship between educational level and hidden curriculum)

language subjects (32 percent). Far behind these are references in texts on music and art (11 percent) and religion (8 percent). In our opinion, the latter subject, which is currently optional, confirms the prevalence of the strategy of an unstated curriculum, namely the omission and deeply ingrained habit of ignoring minority groups in curricular contents.

Table 3 shows that, according to the system of categories suggested by Metropolis-04, both the type of material and the conceptual setting for references vary in terms of the education level. Specifically:

- Topic I (“Presentation of Islam and/or Arab and Muslim cultures in their cultural and religious aspects”) is prevalent (more than 80 percent) in the lower levels of the education system.
- Topic II (“Presentation of the Muslim World: history, geography, economy, etc.”) is prevalent at the post-obligatory level. As in the previous case, the differences within the group are significant.
- Topic III (“Presentation of Arabs and Muslims in Catalonia and/or Spain”) is very much in the minority at all levels, with percentages that fluctuate between 0.7 percent in the state schools, taking the texts analyzed as a whole, and a maximum of 5.4 percent in kindergarten and primary school books regarding the representation of Arabs and/or Muslims in Catalonia.

Although, as we have already indicated, the representations appear mainly in textbooks, in the case of Topic II (“The International Muslim World: history, geography and economics”), its presence in handbooks presents statistically significant differences.

In sum, in light of the frequency of the unstated curriculum, the references tend to focus on cultural aspects in the case of primary school, and on historical topics in textbooks in post-obligatory studies, while the presence of Arabs and Muslims in Catalanian and Spanish societies is totally ignored. We interpret this information in terms of the survival of an Orientalist idea²⁸ according to which (despite its supposed cultural, artistic, and architectural value) Islam is radically exotic, a representation of the “other” and incompatible with Western values. While this dichotomous view between East and West was already false more than three decades ago, globalization currently makes it even more difficult to argue that Western and Eastern cultures are separate, autonomous or independent entities.²⁹ These depictions of Islam, as well as of Arabs and Muslims, are predominantly biased towards icons, drawing on photographs, maps, drawings and vignettes, which constitute almost half (43.7 percent) of the samples analyzed. As table 4 indicates, these are particularly common at the kindergarten and primary school levels, as well as in the most recent editions (in both cases around two thirds).

Table 3. Conceptual References by Educational Level and Type of Material

	TOTAL	LEVEL			TYPE OF MATERIAL			
		Kindergarten & primary school	CSE	Post- obligato ry	Handboo k	Exercise book	Teacher's guide	Others
About Islam, its spread, the relationships between civilization and Muslim cultures (architecture, art, culture, etc.)	55.6	81.1+	56.4	40.0-	51.2-	66.7	-	100
About the Muslim world from international point of view: historical events; economic, demographic and political situations	40.1	10.8-	41	56.7+	45.6+	-	-	-
About Muslims who live in Catalonia (immigration)	3.5	5.4	2.6	3.3	2.4	33.3	-	-
About Muslims who live in Spain	0.7	2.7	-	-	0.8	-	-	-

Table 4. Format of References by Educational Level and Type of Material

	TOTAL	LEVEL			TYPE OF MATERIAL			
		Kindergarten & primary school	CSE	Post- obligatory	Handbook	Exercise book	Teacher's guide	Others
A sentence	11.3	8.1	15.4	8.3	12	-	-	10
A few lines	32.4	37.8	43.6	21.7-	32	33.3	-	30
From 1 to 5 pages	47.2	43.2	30.8-	61.7+	45.6	66.7	-	60
From 6 to 10 pages	0.7	-	-	1.7	0.8	-	-	-
A chapter	0.7	-	2.6	-	0.8	-	-	-
A whole handbook	0.7	2.7	-	-	0.8	-	-	-
Photograph/drawing/vignette	43.7	64.9+	46.2	31.7-	40.0-	100	-	50
Map	4.9	-	7.7	6.7	5.6	-	-	-

We will now focus on the specific analysis of the “presentation of Islam and Arab and/or Muslim cultures,” the “presentation of Islam and the international perspective: history, economics, demographics and politics,” and the “presentation of Arabs and/or Muslims in Catalan and Spanish societies,” which will enable us to expand on the overall data presented. In the “Presentation of Islam and Arab and/or Muslim cultures,” which represented just over half (55 percent) of the excerpts analyzed, most references are to “Muslim cultures” (84.9 percent), whereas the references to the “relationships between civilizations and the expansion of Islam” are in the minority (15.1 percent). Both subtopics appear in the higher levels of the education system (CSE and post-obligatory levels), but they take on the form of a developed study in less than a third of the total (31.3 percent). By contrast, 50 percent of the excerpts analyzed are merely photographs (table 5).

Only sixteen excerpts refer to the religious dimensions of Islam, as well as to the relationships between civilizations. Even here, despite the relatively small number of quotations, the perspective is far from objective: 45.5 percent represent a “balanced treatment,” 54.5 percent a “partial and incomplete perspective,” and only 6.5 percent a “personal perspective” (from which we understand that the reader is, or may be, a practicing Muslim). With a total of ninety extracts, the predominant references within this block relate to cultural contributions, with a predominance of short mentions accompanied by photographs (76.7 percent, rising to 93 percent in kindergarten and primary school books). Once again, we interpret this hegemony of the icon with an exotic and superficial (“phenotypical”) idea of Islam and Arab and/or Muslim cultures.³⁰ Thus, as table 6 indicates, faced with the importance of the contributions of abstract culture (scientific development, philosophy, language), the majority of the references (86.7 percent of all cases) relate to cultural material, that is, to architecture, folklore, everyday life, clothing, and food. Only in the

Table 5. Format of the “presentation of Islam and Arab and/or Muslim cultures”

	TOTAL	LEVEL		
		Kindergarten & primary school	CSE	Post-obligatory
Photographs	50	50	40	66.7
Maps	6.3	-	20	-
Quick mention of some aspects	56.3	75	40	33.3
More highly developed study	31.3	12.5	40	66.7
Arabic calligraphy	6.3	12.5	-	-
Unknown/no answer	12.5	12.5	20	-

post-obligatory level, although still in the minority, do we find references to elements of Muslim civilization and its positive contributions to the development of modern civilization (table 6).

With regards to the “Presentation of Islam and international perspective: history, economics, demographics, politics,” for which sixty-three excerpts were found (44 percent of the total), practically all of these deal with specific events (the Crusades, decolonization, Middle Eastern conflicts or Palestine). Depending on which sub-topic is dealt with, the focus may be a partial and incomplete perspective (for example, the Crusades) or a less biased approach (in the case of colonialism). The most relevant information is, however, that there is a lack of proportion between contemporary sub-topics (the 1991 Iraq War, oil conflict, Palestine, and so forth) which may not be differentiated or which are said to only merit “a quick mention of some aspects,” and references to medieval history or the beginning of modernity which, although deserving more space, are the subject of a biased perspective.

Finally the “Presentation of the Arabs and/or Muslims in Catalan and Spanish society” appears to be in the minority (only 1 percent), and half of these present immigration as a problem, two present some positive aspects, and one places responsibility for the situation on the Spanish state. More interesting for us is the treatment of the topic, which is almost invariably reduced to a “quick mention of some aspects,” which is embellished with statistics, photographs, and even excerpts from interviews. As

Table 6. Cultural Contributions of References by Educational Level and Type of Material.

	TOTAL	LEVEL			TYPE OF MATERIAL		
		Kindergarten & primary school	CSE	Post- obligatory	Handbook	Exercise book	Others
Festivals	3.3	10.7	-	-	1.3	-	22.2
Lifestyles	25.6	28.6	30.6	17.4	25	25	33.3
Architecture	34.4	28.6	41.7	30.4	38.2	25	11.1
Arts (calligraphy)	24.4	7.1-	36.1+	30.4	25	50	-
Education system (indicated)	1.1	-	2.8	-	1.3	-	-
Dances, folklore, costumes	26.7	57.1+	22.2	--	21.1	25	77.8
Food	7.8	10.7	8.3	4.3	7.9	-	11.1
Handicrafts	4.4	3.6	-	13	3.9	25	-
No reference to cultural material	13.3	3.6	8.3	26.1	15.8	-	-

a counterpoint, there is only one comment and two excerpts about discrimination in workplace and housing, while another text speaks about “the lack of openness of Muslims in the host society.”

Islam in the Unstated Curriculum

Legal recognition of religious diversity in Spain has evolved, especially under democracy. From the first laws recognizing religious diversity in 1967, steps have been taken primarily through the Constitution and the Law of Religious Liberty of 1990, which recognizes non-Catholic religions, among these the Muslim religion. This recognition has also permeated the school system, which has opened the possibility (since 1992) for the existence of classes on the Muslim religion in educational facilities, established a curriculum for this subject, stipulated norms for the hire of teachers in this field and for the creation of private Muslim educational facilities. Nevertheless, the current tendency that dominates is the exclusion of this religion from the public sphere, even though in practice this does not translate into the disappearance of the teaching about Islam within schools.³¹

Nonetheless, our analysis of scholastic material highlights the fact that almost half of the texts analysed do not contain a single thematic reference and that, in the remaining texts, only one single representation predominates in each document. We interpret this absence of references as an ideological strategy based on the suppression of information (unstated curriculum). This omission of content relating to Islam, Arab and Muslim cultures, relationships between civilizations, and to the presence in our societies of persons of the Muslim religion, is even more scandalous at lower levels of the educational system. In line with this trend, the infrequent references to Islam are concentrated in assigned texts whose obligatory content presuppose such themes. That is to say, in spite of being a minority, the extracts are drawn almost exclusively from books in the social sciences: “History” at the baccalaureate level, “Social Sciences” at the ESO level (Obligatory Secondary Education) and “Social & Environmental Studies” in primary schools. By contrast, among the materials whose contents are not explicitly linked to Islam or to the remainder of sub-themes analyzed here, references are very rare. Concrete examples of this are to be found in religion and philosophy texts.

The three thematic blocks studied are unequally distributed according to educational levels, as well as according to format and frequency. They include:

1. Representations of Islam, as well as Arab and Muslim cultures, with references to their religious and cultural dimensions, principally con-

centrated at the primary school level with an abundance of iconic representations such as photos, maps and drawings.

2. Extracts treating the Muslim world (historical, geographic, economic, political aspects) are principally found at the baccalaureate level, where they tend to focus on concrete historical events and are only briefly mentioned.

3. The theme of the presence of Arabs and Muslims in Catalanian and Spanish societies is almost non-existent. Even so, half of these refer to the immigration of Muslims as a problem.

Even though it would be useful to complete this initial content analysis with other studies of more qualitative orientation,³² our data indicate that representations of several sub-themes (the Crusades, for example) in the majority of analyzed texts is partial and incomplete. In our judgment, it is more significant to underscore the following aspects:

1. The “unstated curriculum,” that is, the strategy of content omissions.
2. The prevalence of brief mentions, usually accompanied by images such as cognitive supports (enlargement of the icon).
3. The excessive representation of material culture such as architecture, clothing, folklore, space and rare references to the present-day world and to the everyday (entailing the absence of Arabs and Muslims from Catalanian society).

We believe that, taken together, these different biases contribute to the reproduction of an exotic, anti-modern, and anti-Western image, that is an “Orientalist” view of Islam³³ and of Arab and Muslim cultures and their presence in our societies. Meanwhile, as we have indicated, in Catalonia (and in Spain) it is currently possible to impart the Muslim religion in educational facilities (as other religions), but this possibility has developed timidly since initiated in 1992. The insufficient process of secularization has neither favored the elimination of religious education in the school, nor implied the presence of minority religions, the elaboration of specific materials and the revision of existing ones. This translates into an infrequent presence of the Muslim religion in educational facilities that include Muslims, the need to continue improving educational materials with regard to religious diversity, and the elaboration of specific texts (in fact the first text dedicated to a program for the Islamic religion was published in the years 2007 and 2008 by a publisher linked to the Catholic Church). All this gives a sense of normalcy to the current legislative framework. In our opinion, without a resolution to the conflict between lay sectors and those who defend historical inertia, it is difficult to overcome this uncertain situation regarding the reduced presence of Islam in educational facilities. It seems to be necessary to depart from the current

norm, in one way or another, in order to achieve greater recognition of Islam in Catalonia's educational facilities.

- ¹ Article generated from the ARIE2005 Project, “La relació família d’origen immigrant i escola: l’Islam als centres educatius de Catalunya,” financed by the Generalitat de Catalunya (Catalan Regional Government).
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²⁴ J. Torres, *El currículum oculto* (Madrid: Morata, 1991).

²⁵ The analysis was carried out with a questionnaire drawn up by researchers from Quebec and can be found in B. Oueslati, M. McAndrew and D. Helly, *Le traitement de l'islam et des musulmans dans les manuels scolaires québécois de langue française*, Research Report, Montréal, Canada Research Chair in Education and Ethnic Relations, Université de Montréal, 2010).

²⁶ Torres, *El currículum oculto*.

²⁷ To be precise, T. Calvo Buezas, *Los racistas son los otros* (Madrid: Editorial Popular, 1989) only found three explicit references to gypsies after analyzing fifty-nine basic general teaching texts in detail.

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