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Religion on the Move: Mapping Global Cultural Production and Consumption

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Just as computers and cell phones have transformed the way we do business, so they are transforming the way the "word" travels. The Christmas season of 2004 was the first time that Italian Catholics could receive free video transmissions of Pope John Paul's Midnight Mass and his Christmas day message on their cell phones. In fact, the Holy See stays close to its faithful by texting "The Papal Thought of the Day" to subscribers. The service, available in Italy, Ireland, Malta, Britain, and the United States, costs 30 cents a message. Christians are not the only ones engaged in high-tech proselytizing. The British-based Islamic Prayer Alert Service, which sends out 70,000 messages a month, reminds its subscribers of prayer times and regularly sends them inspirational quotes from the Qur'an. The service costs more—25 pence a message or about $1,700 a year—but 65 percent of the revenue is donated to charity (Curnow 2005).

Technology is just one engine propelling religions on the move. Migrants, pilgrims, social movement members, and scholars all carry religion. Religious objects, narratives, and spirits circulate actively and frequently within and between the layers of religious social fields. Yet we still talk of national religions—of American Protestantism or French Islam—or of self-contained, discrete congregations, organizations, or social movements. We assume that religious practices and organizations obediently respect national boundaries. We take stasis and boundedness as the default categories for organizing religious life while, in fact, many religious ideas and practices are often and unabashedly in motion.

In keeping with the overarching objectives of this volume—to de-Christianize, de-Americanize, and de-congregationalize the study of religion—this chapter argues for the need to study religious movement and connection and proposes a way to analyze what happens when circulating religious elements encounter what is already in place. It is a conceptual roadmap, not an empirical analysis.

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Rather than assuming that religious life stays primarily within contained spaces (be they religious traditions, congregations, or nations), I start from the assumption of circulation and linkages. I see religion not as a packageable, stable set of beliefs and practices rooted in a particular bounded time and space, but as a contingent clustering of diverse elements that come together within to-be-determined spaces riddled by power and interests. The resulting assemblages, made up of actors, objects, technology, and ideas, travel at different rates and rhythms, across the different levels and scopes of the social fields in which they are embedded. How can we explain what happens at these "sites of encounter" where what is circulating and what is in place come together? What social and political work gets done, and whose interests are served when religion is conceptualized as a cohesive, bounded system as opposed to an unruly, clumsy collection that is constantly on the move?

I am not proposing that religious objects and practices travel unencumbered. God may need no passport, but religious beliefs and believers regularly encounter obstacles and roadblocks along their way. Rather, I argue that continuing to study religion within discrete containers and taking for granted the boundaries and levels of the appropriate spatial units of analysis blinds us to important ways in which contemporary religious life is actually lived and the power hierarchies that shape it. Our research would be more productive if we began by looking empirically at the borders and layers of the spaces that concern us. How they are connected (or not) to other actors and objects in the social field is an open question. It might be that there are few ties or little movement. But assuming stasis and boundedness a priori risks overlooking important dynamics and producing an analysis that is incomplete.

I am, by no means, the first to take up these questions. Many studies assert that aspects of religious life are "on the move" and that some kind of encounter—be it hybridization, syncretization, convergence, or transculturization—takes place (Ortiz 1940; Starkloff 2002). Others suggest ways of thinking about the spaces, networks, or flows that drive religious movement (Ebaugh and Chafetz 2002; Yang and Ebaugh 2001; Mooney 2009; Hagan 2008, Hüwelmeier and Krause 2009). In general, this work stops short of explaining what happens at these sites of encounter where what is moving bumps up against what is already there. We need a way to unpack and explain that contingent clustering, which holds the local, the national, the global, and all the layers of social experience in between in conversation with each other. We need a way of identifying systematic patterns of convergence, if they exist, and of explaining how power and history create them. We need to understand why some things move easily while others fail to launch or get blocked along the way.

This chapter begins by laying out a transnational optic that helps elucidate aspects of these social relations and processes. I then outline how I understand "religion" and the carriers, geographies, and pathways that influence

religious assemblage construction. I use examples from my own work and the work of other colleagues to make my case. I conclude with a discussion of how religious and ethnic movement compare and reflect on how these different diversity markers are conceived and managed supports existing power hierarchies.

Conceptualizing Religion

Rule makers created the category "religion" at a particular epistemological moment to dominate and control the powerless, formally institutionalizing what had, in many cases, been disparate, messy, contested sets of practices and thereby allowing the colonizer or Christian majority to better control the "Other" (Chidester 1996; Asad 1993 Masuzawa 2005). The British, for instance, created the label "Hinduism" out of a varied, informal set of beliefs and practices so that "Hindus" were easier to manage and control. Doing so cemented false dichotomies such as tradition and modernity, the public and private, and religion versus politics that privileged certain ways of being and belonging while marginalizing others (Vásquez 2005). The analytical categories scholars used missed many of the informal, folk, and material aspects of religion: embodied practices, emplaced institutions, and sacralized artifacts. They imposed an order and cohesiveness on a wide range of beliefs and practices that, in fact, only came together in unique ways at specific moments (Euben 2006).

A much needed corrective comes from recent scholarship that calls attention to how particular religious configurations converge at particular times and places, explores why certain discourses, practices, and institutions are called "religious," and asks how they interact with the "nonreligious" (Bender and Klassen 2010). This research asks what interests are served by understanding religion in this way and what kinds of institutional and legal responses to public religion and religious pluralism have developed in response.

Assemblage theory provides a way of thinking about these heterogeneous and emergent constellations by stressing relationships over structures, change over stability, and variable scope over delimited space (Deleuze and Guattari 1987; Legg 2010; Marcus and Saka 2006). Unlike the metaphorical "tree" and the elements that move through its branches and roots extending upward and downward from a grounded center, the central organizing metaphor is the rhizome. The rhizome has no fixed bounds or conceptual limits and is based on the idea of multi-directionality and diversity. Any point of a rhizome can be connected to any other, and must be (Deleuze and Guattari 1987). Furthermore, when parts of rhizomes break off, they can survive on their own, meandering and re-forming or uniting with others, but always along lines that trace back.

While the "de-territorialization" of assemblages is a central focus, assemblages also settle, have periods of stability, and re-territorialize (Legg 2010).

I find it generative to think of the contingent encounter between religious actors, practices, and objects as assemblages that come together in loose or tightly coupled ways. The image of the meteor that casts off and accrues elements as it travels through space captures its circulatory quality. We can think of anything from individual religiosity to the constitution of global religious organizations as produced by this conditional clustering. The basic core of the assemblage may be well defined and agreed upon or barely held together. How tightly organized it is and what attaches and detaches from it as it travels is context specific and ever changing.

A Transnational Optic

Religion is just one aspect of contemporary social life that operates across borders. Social movements mobilize constituencies around the globe. Economies are organized around transcontinental investment, manufacturing, and consumption chains. And tandoori chicken has become one of London's foods of choice.

This is not new. One need only think of colonialism and imperialism, missionary campaigns, anti-slavery and workers' movements, or jazz to realize that human social formations and processes have always been trans-border and trans-boundary to varying degrees. But because the social sciences came of age at roughly the same time as the current nation-state system, many of the analytical categories we use assume that the nation is the automatic and logical organizing container of contemporary experience.

Methodological nationalism is the tendency to accept the nation-state and its boundaries as a given (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2004). However, while nation-states are still extremely important, social life does not obey national boundaries. To capture these dynamics, we have to trade in a national optic for a transnational one or use both simultaneously. Social life takes place within the context of social fields that are multi-sited and multi-layered, encompassing structured interactions of differing forms, depth, and breadth (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004). National social fields remain within national boundaries, while transnational social fields connect actors, through direct and indirect relations, across borders. Neither domain automatically takes precedence; rather, determining the relative importance of national versus transnational social fields is an empirical question. Religious assemblages potentially come together within and are made up of elements circulating within these transnational spaces.

Seeing how these constellations take shape and identifying the sites and sources from which they are created requires a transnational optic. Such studies

would identify the parameters of the appropriate social fields and the connections between the actors and institutions within and beyond them. They would treat individuals and groups not as closed containers rooted in local sites but would see them instead as potential sites of clustering and convergence which, once constituted, circulate and recirculate, uploading and downloading as they travel. The resulting configurations are not purely local, national, or global but nested within multiple scales of governance, each with its own logic and repertoires of institutional and discursive resources.

A transnational optic helps identify the actors, ideas, and technologies that are the *carriers* of religion. It calls our attention to the real and imagined, past and present *geographies* through which religion travels and the pathways and networks that guide the elements circulating within them. Finally, it produces a clearer picture of how and why religious assemblages are created at these *sites of encounter.*

Toward Religion in Motion

Carriers of Religion

Most aspects of religious life are potentially mobile. Bodies, spirits, deities, and souls move. Modes of religious organization and social movements travel. Ideas, practices, and symbols also circulate. These goods have multiple carriers: objects and ideas piggyback onto or permeate seemingly nonreligious objects and ideas. This is the stuff from which assemblages are made. Religion also strongly influences individuals' migratory journeys, including how they travel, what it means to be pious and respectable once they arrive, and how values and practices are transmitted and change along the way (Hagan 2008). Finally, religion speaks clearly to the unrooted, often unstable quality of contemporary life. Its narratives of individual redemption and universal transcendence provide tools for understanding transitions between youth and age, poverty and wealth, or tradition and change. It's not a surprise, then, that religion and movement are so deeply implicated.

People are one important source of religion in motion. But individuals move for different amounts of time across varying distances, producing different levels of contact with the people with whom they interact and the places where they travel. Not everyone moves with the intention of permanent settlement, nor are they allowed to. Migrants, as well as pilgrims, tourists, professionals, students, religious leaders, and scholars, also carry faith.

Religions themselves propel movement. In some communities, movement is required of members in good standing: for Mormons, some evangelical

Christians, or the members of Tablighi Jamaat, part of being religious is spreading the word. Movement is part of the group's collective history and how it understands its calling today. Modes of organizing religious life also travel. Highly structured religious communities, such as the Catholic Church, follow their members by simply transplanting their transnational corporate structure from one context to another (Levitt 2007).

Traveling objects and rituals also carry faith and their symbolic value and meaning often change dramatically along the way (Durand and Massey 1995; Oleszkiewicz-Peralba 2007). Migrating deities and spirits can themselves be socially mobile. Sinha (2005), for example, found that lower class devotees worshipped the Hindu God Muneeswaran in India, while aspiring middle class migrants worshipped him in Singapore (see also Lambek 1993; Meyer and Moors 2006; Hüwelmeier and Krause 2009).

Religious status, piety, and authority are also negotiated across time and space. Richman (2005) found that Haitian migrants used faith to extricate themselves from one sacred space and reinsert themselves into another. Although many of her respondents were Catholic, they also believed in *lwas* or "saints" who could afflict and protect members of their descent groups. But as people grew unwilling to spend large sums of money on the *lwas'* care, they converted to Protestantism to liberate themselves from these ritual obligations.

Geographies of Circulation

To understand how and why these different religious carriers move and cluster as they do, we need to take into account the geographies within which they circulate—the intersecting planes and networks that constitute transnational social fields and their boundaries. Things travel through what Lefebvre (1991) called "textures" of space, contours of representational regimes, and signifying practices by which spaces are made places and filled with meaning. Different regimes of governance operate within these scales. Appadurai (1996) might call these religio- or sacroscapes. In Castells's (2004) "network society," sets of interconnected nodes with no clear center or periphery constitute the social boundaries within which circulation takes place.

Some terrains are clearly more stable than others. The social fields connecting Mexico and the United States, Britain and South Asia, or Germany and Turkey have relatively long and consistent histories. In contrast, less developed, uncertain social fields, such as those plagued by civil unrest or climactic disaster, are more difficult to navigate. Not only can communication be hampered, but also what travels may be more likely to stray or encounter obstacles along the way. In some parts of the world, religious elements circulate in the context of failed states and markets, while in others they encounter strong states

and booming economies where governments actively regulate public religious expression and land use.

The geographies that religious actors and objects traverse are not virgin territories. Spaces become places because of their history, politics, and culture. They are deeply rutted. Just as each new eruption of lava slowly settles into the cracks and crevices of the volcano, so new cultural infusions have to accommodate themselves to the existing terrains. New overlays land on pockmarked geographies, enabling some things to travel easily while inhibiting others.

For instance, contemporary Hinduism travels primarily within a British postcolonial space. Its carriers, who move between Europe, the United States, the Caribbean, South Asia, and Africa, enact their religious lives against a common meta-cultural frame that is still influenced in subtle and not-so-subtle ways by British colonial assumptions about law, governance, and social cohesion. A common ethos and set of social dynamics characterize life in South Asia, Trinidad, and East Africa although they bump up against very different local backdrops. Circulating religious elements and actors land in terrains that are similar but different, familiar yet strange.

So how and why does Hinduism takes shape in London, Kenya, and Fiji given that it lands in places that are distinct yet connected at the same time? How is the religious assemblage constituted in each place given that its core basic elements encounter very different national and global repertoires? How does Islam take shape when it moves from South Asia to the Middle East as opposed to England or the United States?

Arriving at a satisfactory answer requires taking all of the ideological and governance structures at work within transnational social fields into account. The broadest, most overarching are global norms (or what neo-institutionalists or world polity theorists call "global culture"), which include models for the organization and regulation of religious life, a notion of rights based on personhood rather than citizenship, and ideologies about religious freedom and pluralism (Lechner and Boli 2005). Global culture is a resource, because it is a repository actors draw upon, but it is also a constraint because it limits the range of options they can choose from and pressures people to conform to them.

National context and history also matter (Bramadat and Koenig 2009). Countries have unique philosophies of integration and narratives about who they are and who can belong (Favell 2001). Their different religious, ethnic, and racial diversity management regimes reflect deeply ingrained assumptions about how much "they" can become part of "us." The United States tells itself it is a country of immigrants founded on principles of religious pluralism that has always been successful at making newcomers into Americans. Sweden tells itself it is a secular society where everyone is equal. America expects its newcomers to believe in some version of Judeo-Christianity. In Sweden,

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talking about, let alone publicly expressing, religious identity is far less common because labeling difference is seen as marginalizing rather than empowering the newcomer.

National incentive structures reward the embrace of certain kinds of identities and the constitution of certain groups (Bloomraed 2006). In the United States, minorities are expected to embrace the terms of abiding, unchanging cultural and racial essences. Accepting ethnic or religious labels or formally establishing a legal nonprofit religious community can enhance access to resources and state protection and support. That is why the Garifuna become adept at the language of "ethnic" culture (Johnson 2007) and Indian Americans embrace Hinduism as a way of taking "their place at the multicultural table" (Kurien 2007).

Physical geographies exist alongside, and sometimes supersede, imagined and remembered sacred landscapes that have topological properties of their own. Some believers think of themselves as living, first and foremost, in the kingdom of God or the Muslim *Ummah*. They are religious global citizens who abide by a different set of rights and responsibilities in territories populated by co-religionists (Levitt 2007). The salient landmarks are shrines and pilgrimage destinations rather than national museums and monuments.

Others feel part of a historical landscape, a religious chain of memory connecting them to the past, present, and future (Hervieu-Léger 2000). When Cuban Americans bring their newborns to be baptized into the Cuban nation at the national patron saint shrine they erected in Miami, they are locating them in this imagined landscape formed by the past, present, and future. They induct these infants into a Cuba that existed in Havana, exists in Miami in the present, and they hope to reclaim in Cuba in the future (Tweed 2006).

AQ: Year for Levitt in references is 2009; Please check 2007.

Sites of Encounter

Religious assemblages circulate through diverse geographies encountering people, ideas, and practices along the way. What explains how and why what lands and what is already in place come together as they do? How do we explain the constant accretion and shedding that happens as religious assemblages travel—the things that spin off and attach to the tail of the meteor.

One broad set of factors influencing these sites of encounter is the *social status of the carriers and the receivers*, be they individuals or organizations. Some research suggests that "marginal men," who take risks because they are less constrained by social norms, are more likely to adopt radical innovations (Rogers 2003; Strang and Stroule 1998; Wejnert, 2002). Others find that powerful, respected individuals are better able to pressure their peers to change their behavior. When individuals are financially or emotionally dependent on someone, they are more likely to do what that person says. Similarly, organizations

that perceive themselves as similar should look and act similarly (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Dobbin, Simmons, and Garrett 2007). When a congregation or denomination sees itself as sufficiently like another, it is more likely to mimic the behavior of its peer.

Adoption and convergence at one site or level of a social field can spill over into other levels. McAdam and his colleagues (2001, 331) talk of *scale shift* or episodes of contention that migrate from the local to the translocal and to the national. The messages and activities of religious leaders and teachers also scale up and out. The same rules and rituals that protect believers from evil in a homeland will also protect them across the world. So the woman who won't eat certain foods or who does not interact with men wards off impurity in India and the West, protecting herself from the heathen neighbor in Ahmedabad and the materialistic, alcohol-drinking colleague in America. The devotee who used to do *bhakti pheri* or proselytizing in poor villages in Gujarat but who now spreads the word in Boston and Atlanta is also scaling out. Allowing women to be leaders at the local mosque scales up when they also become leaders in regional and national governance.

A second broad set of influences affecting what happens at religious sites of encounter is the *difference between the objects or rituals in motion and those that are already in place*. By this I mean not only how easy it is to package, communicate, and transmit what is circulating but also how distinct it is from existing practice.

Some rituals and objects are clearly more portable than others and some messages more transposable. Fasting, praying, singing, making offerings, playing music, and dancing can happen anywhere with certain adjustments. Some packages are also more appealing than others, like the Islamic educational materials children quickly embraced because they resemble Disney characters (Mandeville 2001). Werbner (2005) sees charisma as portable. While the plots of the stories about the Sufi saint she studies were tailored to local circumstances, the narratives were paradigmatic. They were "marked by a recurrent 'global' plot and a localized here and now narrative" (Werbner 2005, 286). Because their underlying logic is the same, they were portable and powerful in Morocco, Iraq, Pakistan, or Indonesia; the semiotic logic of the patterns and structures make them easy to carry and transmit. Likewise, Johnson (2007) described the Garifuna who carried beach sand from Honduran villages to use in ritual events in New York City. While migrants' ties to Honduras weakened, their connections to other places, ancestors, and powers grew. By using objects in the same ways as they had in the past, migrants signaled a direct link to memory, but by also using them more symbolically in new contexts, they distinguished between memory and the present, allowing a generic "ancestor" to travel, rather than someone specific.

Portability and adoption also depend, in part, on boundaries or the difference between what is already in place and what is new or different. Boundaries

can be high because adoption requires a major change and there are therefore significant barriers to entry. Or they can be low when what comes to ground has a lot in common with what is already there. Boundaries can be thick, creating tight, dense data packets that travel easily and efficiently, or they can be thin, creating leaky packages that have more difficulty moving because they are given to spillage. Written traditions travel in packages that are literally bounded, while stories transmitted orally are more likely to change when they are translated and told over and over again. Some boundaries are only permeable for a short time or to a small amount of input (think about the sperm that must fertilize the egg quickly or lose its strength; once the sperm crosses the cell wall, the membrane becomes impermeable again). Similarly, ideas and behaviors loose steam and fall out of fashion. What Herbert Simon (1984) called bounded rationality, or the ability to take in only so much information at once, is also at play. Individual and organizational adopters can only process and respond to so much input. Finally, boundaries tend to be selectively permeable, only permitting things with particular shapes and textures to cross them. Ideas and practices that are too "round" to fit within metaphorically square-shaped gates simply cannot pass.

The *frequency and strength of contact* between circulating elements and elements in place also influence the nature of the encounter. One aspect of this is how ideas and objects get introduced into the field. Think of the allergy sufferer who rubs cortisone cream onto her skin as opposed to the person who uses an inhaler. The drug's impact is enhanced when it is introduced directly into the bloodstream. The student who belongs to a religious community during her four years abroad has a different kind of encounter than her second-generation peer, from a similar background, who was actively raised in a religious household. The tourist brushes up against the surface of religious life, while the pilgrim, although also a short-term visitor, engages with it more reflectively. Hearing something once from a visiting pastor or teacher does not have the same impact as listening to the same preacher week after week. Likewise, convincing one or two congregation members that churches should be governed democratically will have a different effect than if the entire congregation votes to change its governance structure. If a change catalyst emanates from several sources, such as the local, regional, and national denominational offices, it may also be more likely to take hold.

The *characteristics of the pathways or channels* that religious elements traverse, whether they are real or mediated, also affect sites of encounter. Faith moves through religious organizational structures of different strengths and scope. Most Sunni Muslim mosques are stand-alone; they do not form part of large organizational hierarchies. Other religious organizations involve some kind of center(s)/periphery(ies), whereby the "mother institution" or headquarters exerts some control over its members. How tightly structured these

networks are and how much the "center" directs its outposts strongly influence the circulation of religious goods.

Ideas and practices traveling through hierarchical institutionalized structures like the Catholic Church traverse clear, protected channels. Powerful individuals sanction their journey and strictly regulate what moves in an effort to protect brand integrity. When objects move through weaker, more informal institutions, they are more vulnerable to interference and challenge. Alternative, unsanctioned practices are more likely to permeate their boundaries and pose obstacles. At the same time, it is sometimes easier to traverse less formally structured paths.

Finally, the nature of the circulatory encounter depends on *the presence of exogenous elements* that stimulate, enhance, or cancel out its effect. Certain ideas and practices travel together in a kind of partnership, producing an interaction effect. Sometimes their relationship is parasitic; what is introduced piggybacks onto a host that it decimates as it travels. The idea that a pious woman can work outside of her home is unlikely to be adopted if it circulates hand in hand with the idea that working women cannot be good mothers. Other flows cancel each other out, like the pastor who encourages his immigrant members to become politically active but also tells them they should participate, above all, in the kingdom of Christ (Levitt 2007). Finally, other ideas and practices depend on each other symbiotically for survival. Achieving a more equal gender balance at home is a precursor for women to become more active leaders in their temples and churches.

An Empirical Example

So far, I've described various carriers of religion in motion, the geographies and pathways through which they travel, and some of the factors affecting what happens when religion on the move encounters ideas and practices already in place. Now, I turn to an empirical example.

Consider the issue of female piety. Several competing sets of loosely coupled assemblages concerning gender and women's rights circulate widely. Each time they come to ground, they encounter regional and local social justice ideologies, gender norms, and organizational ecologies that strongly influence if and how they are appropriated and vernacularized. In some cases, their connection to the global is quite tenuous, while in others, international references and substance remain strong.

A neoliberal assemblage promoting privatization, structural adjustment, democracy, capitalism, human rights, the rule of law, transparency and accountability, and gender equity through institutions like the World Bank and the Ford Foundation is perhaps most familiar. A fundamentalist religious assemblage

based on gender complementarity, tradition, conservatism, and authority that gets spread through religious networks like the Tablighi Jamaat and evangelical Christian groups is a second example. A third "anti-globalization" assemblage coalesces around anti-consumerism and anti-materialism, environmentalism, fair trade, and living locally and simply. Each of these assemblages has its own narrative and set of technologies associated with women's roles and gender relations. Religious actors and movements appropriate and trade on these discourses. They are sources of the new and different or foils against which actors take the measure of their own piety and power.

Farhat Hashmi, the leader of the Al-Huda International Welfare Foundation (commonly known as Al-Huda), a nongovernmental organization founded in Pakistan in 1994 to help women become more observant Muslims through better education, constructs female piety transnationally. Global culture, and the women's rights package that forms part of it, clearly informs her work, as do local conditions and national gender regimes.

While Al-Huda now works with men, prisoners, the sick, and the poor, the majority of its members are still wealthy, urban, educated Pakistani housewives and young women. They attend one of the nearly 200 schools Dr. Hashmi created to increase religious literacy among women. Many students knew little about Islam prior to enrolling and lived what they now consider to be un-Islamic lives. They attend school for one or two years, receive a diploma, and then create similar courses, using similar materials, for other women in their neighborhoods, workplaces, and communities. This multiplier effect, the thinking goes, will slowly remake the Pakistani religious landscape.

Dr. Hashmi plays to all sides of the gender struggle by combining elements of the neoliberal and fundamentalist global values assemblages. She builds on local norms, respecting the limits they impose while also pushing beyond them. Her lectures appeal to women's desire for empowerment, but it is an empowerment that leaves certain basic rules intact. While in the past only poor, uneducated men attended Islamic schools, she believes that women can get an Islamic education, too, encouraging them to read the Qur'an and make it relevant to their lives. And while she does not expect Pakistani women to become en masse mosque goers any time soon, she provides them with ways to engage collectively and publicly through study and prayer.

Depending on one's point of view, Farhat Hashmi is savior or enemy. Her supporters claim that she brings women back to Islam by getting them to veil themselves and adapt more conservative practices, but that she also encourages them to personalize their relationship with their faith. She acknowledges her primarily middle-class constituents' socioeconomic gains while at the same time addressing the disappointments of middle-class secular life. She enables women to return to tradition without giving up all of their freedoms. According to Sarah Karim, a 45-year-old devoted Farhat Hashmi follower, "My

life changed when I learned about Dr. Hashmi. She helps women be part of Islam together, but in a way that respects our national culture and obeys the rules of our faith."

Critics claim Dr. Hashmi preaches an intolerant, conservative brand of Islam that verges dangerously close to groups like the Taliban. According to Tariq Ramadan, a 50-year-old opponent, "Farhat Hashmi has filled the streets of Karachi with *Ninja Turtles* (referring to the many women now wearing the *Niqab* which completely covers their faces). She is importing Islamic practices from the very conservative heart of the Middle East and it is sending our country back to the Dark Ages." As the ranks of her supporters grow, the country's secular and moderate religious spaces are shrinking, increasing the damage already wrought by larger geopolitical forces. To her detractors, Dr. Hashmi is moving Pakistan in the wrong direction.

The Al Huda example reveals how ideas and practices circulating throughout a particular transnational religious field come together and are vernacularized. Dr. Hashmi combines and adopts rhetorics from various women's rights assemblages in ways that defy straightforward characterization because they include reformist and progressive messages. Encouraging women to engage collectively with Islam is a radical move, but one she makes in ways that are culturally appropriate and responsive to the Pakistani context. She speaks of empowerment and rights at the same time that she speaks of tradition and gender complementarity—generally discourses placed in opposition to each other. Her message respects the hard-worn freedoms of Pakistani middle-class women, as well as their desire to return, on their own terms, to the religious fold.

Vernacularization or Not

Farhat Hashmi creates a unique religious assemblage through vernacularization. Circulating elements and those in place come into contact, but they have to be actively vernacularized or appropriated and transformed to be used in a particular place. Translation and vernacularization are different processes. While translators communicate to be understood, vernacularizers communicate to make something understandable and applicable to a specific context. There are at least three types of vernacularization: the act of building on the imaginative space, momentum, and power of particular global frames without using them directly; the act of translating global ideas so they are locally appropriate and applicable to new issues; and the act of taking core concepts, articulating them in locally appropriate ways, and modeling new ways to put them into practice (Levitt and Merry 2009). Dr. Hashmi does all three.

Some circulating elements within transnational social fields never get appropriated. They enter the social field, encounter what is already there,

but maintain their integrity within it. This is transmission without vernacularization; what circulates does not challenge the status quo. Such are the Charismatic Catholic groups that migrants establish in the parishes where they settle that are within the local church but not of it, therefore changing or being changed little by their surroundings. There are also cases in which what is already in place is more compelling than what is introduced. While members of the Bhaghat Samaj (a Hindu subcaste in Gujarat State in India) knew about discourses of global human rights and social justice, when they discussed the kinds of charitable projects they wanted to undertake, they described their choices in Gandhian terms (Levitt and Merry 2009) They argued that individuals had the right to food, shelter, and self-sufficiency. They did not reference the global language of development, modernity, and equality because the local social justice models already in place were too compelling.

A second scenario is that circulating elements are integrated into the social field with little lasting impact. Because they are too small or too different, not enough people appropriate them to have a significant effect. These are the members of radical sects or new religious movements who introduce their beliefs to the broader public but find few takers.

A third, more common scenario is that circulating culture is gradually vernacularized such that eventually the parent cannot be distinguished from the offspring. Vernacularization occurs continuously through an unending uploading and downloading, accretion and shedding. Assemblages of all sizes take shape and are appropriated by individuals and groups. If, at first, there was an identifiable core and periphery, the periphery soon becomes a source of beliefs and practices that strongly influence the rapidly disappearing center.

For example, the first Gujaratis to bring Hinduism and Islam to Johannesburg brought a version of their faith that has since been transformed by its constant recirculation between homeland, host land, and other places where the Indian diaspora settled. Brazilian evangelical pastors who migrated to the Boston area belong to religious communities first introduced to Brazil by missionaries in the late nineteenth century that they are now reimporting back to the United States (Levitt 2007). In each of these cases, history, structure, and ideology all influence how vernacularization takes shape.

AQ: Year for Levitt in references is 2009; Please check 2007.

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Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that scholarship on religion needs better tools with which to capture how people, ideas, and objects circulate through transnational social fields. Because of the impoverished nature of our conceptual vocabulary, many studies of religion assume a stasis and one-way movement that is inaccurate. The assemblages produced by religion on the move

do not arise from a single "world culture," nor do they circulate unidirectionally through a single, stable geography. Human and material elements come together in specific historical and political contexts. What results is a new mix, which shifts and recombines form and content before it travels once again. This chapter is an attempt to rewrite the dictionary and to chart ways to identify systematic configurations across time and space.

One way to further this agenda is to compare the ways in which religion is conceptualized and travels to the circulation of other kinds of identities and allegiances. What is it about this particular geopolitical moment that explains why religion and ethnicity are understood and deployed as they are? What work gets done and whose interests are served by these genealogies and uses?

On the one hand, we might see religion as more easily bound, carried and tamed than ethnicity. A common set of beliefs is spelled out and codified in the Qur'an, the Bible, or the Gita, which are all collective reference books. Even if most people know little about what is actually in them, they can always look it up. Many received some kind of basic literacy training as children. These central religious texts make it easy for faith to travel: they are not only inherently packageable but also portable (e.g., the Jews carrying the Ark through the desert). Religions also have clear rituals and prohibitions on behavior. In fact, for many followers, part of being religious means engaging in frequent collective rituals and performances led by official experts in formal organizational spaces that reinforce the group.

In contrast, there are no clearinghouses specifying the official meaning or membership requirements of Italianness or Irishness. While there are national stories and founding myths and rich traditions of passing them on to children, they are not codified or authorized in quite the same way as their religious equivalents. Italy, as the incarnation of Italianness, does not fit neatly within two covers. Its rituals of belonging are often private and individualized. There is no central authority or collective structure within which they are enacted. There is no official way to convert outsiders.

The semiotic logic of religiosity also differs from ethnicity in ways that make it more conducive to movement. It is more open to multiplicity because most faiths include narratives about syncretism and movement. While there may be one authorized version of faith, the lived, everyday reality of religious life reflects constant combining and boundary crossing. In contrast, contemporary nation-states and their political and legal systems have been, until recently, based on the assumption of singular membership. Even today, critics of dual citizenship complain that belonging to two countries is like bigamy: it's not possible to be married to two countries at the same time. While in the United States hyphenated identities are common, many European countries actively reject the possibility of being Moroccan-French or a Pakistani Dane. Even in the American context, the underlying assumption is that the Italian and the

American side of the hyphenated equation are relatively self-contained, discrete partners.

But in reality, in this particular nation-state moment in which global governance structures, capital, and migration are on the rise and challenge national borders, not just aspects of religious life, but also ethnicity and by default nationality assume forms that are actually more similar than we think. We see a proliferation of global religious organizations and movements and, it could be argued, a rise in religious global citizenship. People live in one place but sometimes also claim rights and exercise responsibilities in a worldwide imagined community of faith. These religious communities challenge nation-state sovereignty when followers obey calls that seemingly contradict national interests.

Italics

More and more, though, ethnicity and nationality are also constituted across borders. Increasing numbers of nation-states not only grant long-term membership without residence but also actively encourage it because they depend on the economic and political power of their citizens living abroad. Mexicanness is produced not only in Mexico but also by the millions of Mexican Americans living in the United States, just as Indianness is a negotiated contest between nonresident Indians of varying power living all over the world. Ethnic and national organizational architectures organize and regulate the diaspora, which is alternatively viewed as a resource and a threat.

Therefore, in many ways religion and ethnicity are equally misunderstood. They are both analytic categories created and deployed to organize and contain difference, albeit in different ways in colonial, post-colonial, and global contexts. They are generally thought to be rooted in nations and containable when, in fact, in the everyday lives of ordinary individuals, they are in flux within and beyond nation-states. They are treated as analytically distinct when they are often constituted and deployed together. There is, then, in both cases, a major disjuncture between how aspects of ethnic and religious life are actually lived and how they are conceptualized, regulated, and rewarded legally and politically.

The words we use to talk about society and the methods we use to study it perpetuate the existing power hierarchy. They enable leaders and policymakers to continue to insist that religion and ethnicity are nationally constituted and manageable when, in fact, they often cross national boundaries. They are part and parcel of the illusion that at least some ethnic and religious bodies are still and controllable when, in fact, they move frequently and far way. These discourses reinforce national unity and the geopolitical status quo. They make it more difficult to see and talk about the fact that people embrace all kinds of competing loyalties and responsibilities, and that this does not automatically mean they are not loyal and responsible to the places where they live. The methods and conceptual tools outlined here fundamentally call into question the enduring strength of the container society and bring to the fore how the

categories and analytical strategies we use perpetuate our inability or unwillingness to let it go.

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