

"YOU KNOW, ABRAHAM WAS REALLY THE FIRST IMMIGRANT:"

RELIGION AND TRANSNATIONAL MIGRATION

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The purpose of this article is to summarize what we know about the role that religion plays in transnational migration and to outline a strategy for further research in this area. While a number of migration scholars now acknowledge the salience of migrants' economic and political transnational activities, they have largely overlooked the ways in which religious identities and practices also enable migrants to sustain memberships in multiple locations. My goals in this article are threefold. First, I provide a brief overview of related bodies of work on global, diasporic, and immigrant religion and differentiate them from studies of migrants' transnational religious practices. Second, I summarize what we have learned about transnational religious life from prior research. And third, I propose an approach to future research on these questions.¹

GLOBAL, DIASPORIC, IMMIGRANT, AND TRANSNATIONAL RELIGION – WHAT IS THE CONNECTION?

The study of world or global religions has a long history. Much of this work grew out of the West's attempt to make sense of non-Christian or eastern religions. With the exception of research on the Catholic Church, most of these studies focus on specific religious traditions in a single setting rather than on the cross-border connections that like communities share. Recent work on global religions brings to light the ways in which religion creates international

connections that engender universal identities. Religion, and in particular, religious movements operating in broad geographic contexts, engage in increasingly homogenized forms of worship and organization that give rise to global communities which locals can then join. In this way, members face an array of options for belonging that reach far beyond their communities and cultures and that challenge local religious forms (Van Dijk 1997).

A second body of work concerns religion's role in heightened globalization. These researchers debate whether religion functions as a discrete, homogenizing force in its own right or if it is an arena within which individuals assert particularistic, localized identities in the face of globalization. World-Polity theorists, such as John Meyer and his colleagues (1997) describe globally-diffused models of cultural, political, and economic organization which limit the construction of difference. In contrast, Robertson (1991) argues that globalization allows for greater religious diversity because individuals construct localized religious identities in relation to the world as a whole. Finally, Beyer (2001), seeking to integrate these approaches, emphasizes the mutual interdependence between the systemic (economics, politics, and the mass media) and the non-systemic (science, education, and religion). Non-systemic processes also contribute to worldwide communication linkages by furnishing an independent logic for doing business, research, teaching, and enacting rituals. These mutually interdependent systems reinforce one another.

Studies of diasporic religion or religion in the diaspora grew out of heightened scholarly interest in diasporas as a whole. These studies respond to the widespread recognition that social, economic, and political life increasingly transcend national borders and cultures and that individuals sustain multiple identities and loyalties and create culture using elements from various settings (Cohen 1999). Notions of diaspora and diasporic religion have played a more central role in European scholarship than they have in the United States.² The distinct

intellectual traditions these conversations build upon partially explains this difference. The Birmingham School, for example, explores identity construction and the role of consciousness and subcultures in encouraging collective solidarity at the margins of society. Postcolonial studies, with its emphasis on the continuing legacy of empire, also strongly influenced diaspora studies which builds upon scholarly interest in how discursive practices and identities have been constructed and imagined during the colonial, national, and post-colonial periods (Vásquez 2001b).

In contrast, studies of transnational migration are largely an American product that are, in part, intended to counterbalance race and ethnic and immigration scholarship's focus on immigrant incorporation. These researchers seek to challenge conventional wisdom about immigrant political and economic integration by showing that individuals stay connected to their host communities even as they put down roots in the United States. Transnational migration research has only recently begun to take religion into account. At the same time, Rudolph and Piscatori's Transnational Religion and Fading States (1997), one of the few books which uses a vocabulary of transnational religion has little to do with immigration. Instead, "transnational" is used to capture the ways in which global or world religions create a transnational civil society that challenges nation states and security interests as they have been traditionally understood. Another set of articles documents the macro-level connections between global religious actors that cross national boundaries.

Each of these bodies of work informs the set of questions I am concerned with here. But the almost interchangeable use of the terms "global," "diasporic," and "transnational," in many of these studies clearly elucidates some aspects of migrant religious life across borders while stubbornly obscuring others. Part of the confusion arises out of different levels, scope, and sites of these analyses that are often not well specified. Let me propose one way out of

this conundrum by defining a set of questions about religion's role in transnational migration and by differentiating these concerns from other bodies of work on cross-border religious phenomenon.

My interest here is on one quite narrow aspect of global religious life that is produced by and contributes to transnational migration. Transnational migrants are individuals who live aspects of their social, economic, and political lives in at least two settings. They establish themselves in their host countries while they continue to earn money, vote, and pray in their countries of origin. In certain settings, the impact of these activities is felt primarily by those who actually move while in others, their strength and scope is so powerful and widespread that aspects of nonmigrants' lives become enacted transnationally as well. Some migrants participate in transnational activities on a regular basis while others do so only occasionally, in response to a crisis or special event. Some migrants engage in a wide range of economic, social, and political transnational practices while others confine their activities to a single arena of transnational activism. They have business interests in their sending communities but belong to religious organizations and participate in political activities that firmly locate them in the countries where they now reside (Levitt 2001a). The target of these activities also varies. Some migrants participate in practices directed at local, bounded communities in their home and host countries while the transnational practices others that others engage in reinforce their membership in the broader sending country as a whole. For example, ties between Dominican migrants in Boston to their sending community of Miraflores gave rise to a transnational village whose members included nonmigrants who remained behind and those who settled in and around a particular neighborhood in Boston. Many of the economic, social, and political transnational activities that these individuals engaged in were directed toward these local-level sites (Levitt 2001b). In contrast, other migrants engage in transnational practices which

attest to their continued membership in the broader sending nation. When Irish migrants from the Inishowen Peninsula who have settled in Boston attend the Catholic church and receive services from the Irish Pastoral Center, these activities do more to reinforce their ties to a broader Ireland than to the specific local parishes they left behind.

One way that migrants stay connected to their sending communities is through transnational religious practices. These practices exhibit the same variations in form, intensity, target, and scope that I have described above. They are also reinforced by and give rise to religious organizations that, in turn, assume transnational properties of their own. For example, some migrants sustain long-term, long-distance memberships in the sending-country religious organizations that they belonged to. They still make significant financial contributions to these groups, raise funds to support their activities, receive visits from religious leaders and seek spiritual guidance from them, participate in services during return visits, and are the subject of nonmigrants' prayers in their absence. Other migrants participate in religious pilgrimages, worship certain saints or deities, or engage in informal, popular religious practices that affirm their continued attachments to a particular sending-country group or place.

The transnational religious practices of individuals are often underscored by the organizational contexts within which they take place. For example, migrants may belong to host-country religious institutions that have a formal relationship with a home-country "sister congregation." They may belong to a group that functions as a franchise or chapter of a sending-country group that is regularly supervised and funded by home-country leaders. Or the denomination that they belong to may automatically integrate them into a worldwide religious institution which welcomes them regardless of their location.

To understand the role of religion in transnational migration, then, we must build from the ground up. We need to start by examining the ways in which ordinary individuals live their

everyday religious lives across borders, explore the impact of these activities on their continued sending and receiving-country membership, and analyze the relationship between cross-border religious membership and other kinds of transnational belonging. We need to understand what difference it makes for sending and receiving-country communities when migrants assert their continued belonging within religious rather than ethnic or political arenas.

We must also be concerned with the local-level sending- and receiving-country religious organizational responses to migration and examine what changes these trigger, if any, at the regional, national, and international organizational levels. The multi-layered power hierarchies within which these activities are embedded must be taken into account. For example, localized connections emerging between members and leaders of Brazilian Baptist churches in Governador Valadares in Brazil and in Framingham, Massachusetts would be analyzed within the context of the broader national and international denominational connections within which they emerge. This context-specific approach is particularly important in studies of religious traditions not characterized by a unitary set of beliefs which vary considerably across settings because there is no central authority or unitary form of practice. Finally, work on transnational religious practices must go beyond the concrete observable dimensions of religious life and also examine religion's subjective dimensions including its role in identity construction, meaning making, value formation, and in creating alternative allegiances and places of belonging.

Studying the relationship between transnational migration and religion is one piece of broader work on global or diasporic religions. It is both about how migrants use informal and formal religion to assert membership in two places and about how religious organizations enable that process. When migrants sustain enduring connections to the religious institutions they leave behind, they are broadening, deepening, and customizing global religious connections that are already in place. What is of interest here is how ordinary people actually

do this through their everyday religious practice or the role that transnational migrants play in how religious globalization actually gets done. Some work on diasporic and immigrant religion also speaks to these questions but with only partial success. While this work generally tells us a lot about the transformation of religious life in the immigrant context, it has less to say about the ways in which migration continues to transform sending-country life. Research on transnational religious practices keeps its eye on how life evolves in both the sending and receiving country as a result of migration. It is necessarily about ongoing change in at least two contexts and about the mutually transformative relationship between the two.

Transnational migrants live in multi-layered global worlds. So while research on religion and transnational migration focuses on individuals and the local, regional, and national organizations they are involved in their home and host countries and the relations between them. It must also take into account the multi-leveled social field in which these activities take place. I want to call attention to two in particular. Of singular importance is the role of states, which strongly influence migrants' capacity to participate, and the actual character of their transnational religious practices, by regulating movement and religious expression. The religious institutions created by Turkish migrants in Germany, for example, are actively supported by the Turkish Ministry of Religion in coordination with the German government. In his comparison of Moroccan and Turkish migrants in Germany, Lestaegeho(2002) found that Turkish migrants and their children were much more likely to engage in transnational practices than their Moroccan counterparts including homeownership in Turkey or returning to Turkey to find a marriage partner. He partially attributes this difference to the Turkish government's ongoing involvement in the religious lives of its emigrants. A second example of state influence becomes evident when we think about migrants from countries with little separation between church and state and contrast them with those who come from countries with greater religious

pluralism. In countries such as Ireland or Pakistan, migrants are often hard-pressed to say what is Pakistani or Muslim or Irish or Catholic about themselves and religion and nationality reinforce one another. Such individuals are more likely to be transnational activists because their motivation for doing so grows out of two sources that strengthen each other.

Finally, global culture and institutions clearly influence migrants' transnational religious practices. The available models of religious institutions and church-state arrangements or the tradition of pilgrimages or establishing holy sites that are replicated across the globe shapes the activities of local-level actors. The fact that Pentecostal churches in Brazil and South Africa pray like one another and are run like one another allows migrants to participate wherever they are. That holy sites are a common feature of the global landscape allows the newcomer to find such a place and undergo such a journey wherever they are. But how global culture and institutions are transmitted is not well understood. Research on transnational practices can shed light on these dynamics because migrants carry global culture and institutions on their backs. At the same time that global culture and institutions shape the transnational migration experience, migrants chip away at and recreate global culture by making it local and then starting the process anew. Transnational migrants bring particular incarnations of global culture with them, create new forms by combining what they bring with what they encounter, and ensure that the process of global cultural creation continues by reintroducing the hybrid social remittances that emerge back to their sending communities.

Having said this, relatively little work has been done that directly examines the role of transnational migration and religion. In the following section, I selectively review research on three aspects of transnational religious life: its organizational dimensions, the relationship between transnational religious space and other forms of belonging, and the relationship between transnational religion and politics.

VARIATIONS IN TRANSNATIONAL RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION

Many transnational religious practices take place in individualized, informal settings. They combine formal religious elements with popular, folk practices. But an important part of transnational religious life occurs within organizational contexts. When migrants turn to religious arenas to assert multiple memberships, religious institutions change in response. When religious organizations are structured, led, and financed transnationally, they facilitate greater transnational activism. Researchers have suggested several approaches to categorizing transnational religious groups.

Ebaugh and Chafetz (2002) propose using network analysis to understand religious connections across boundaries. They argue for studies that would examine variations in density of network nodes and ties, the direction of material and social flows, and the intensity of these flows. Their research examined the relationship between network ties between individuals, local-level corporate bodies, and international religious bodies and found that ties frequently crossed between various types of nodes. For example, at one end of their spectrum, ties between a Mexican Catholic church in Houston and its sending community of Monterrey were totally interpersonal though they were firmly embedded in a vast international organization. At the other extreme, Vietnamese Catholics and Buddhists formed connections based solely on institutional rather than interpersonal connections. These authors conclude that socioeconomic status, legality, distance from the homeland, the geographic dispersion of the immigrant community, and English language fluency influence network types.

Yang (2001) also uses a network approach to analyze transnational Chinese Christian communities. He finds three-layered transpacific networks formed by contacts between individuals, single churches, and parachurch, international organizations connecting migrants in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Mainland China to counterparts who are located primarily in the U.S.

and Canada. Political and economic instability in Asia propel individuals and institutions to create transnational ties. These networks also arise because the absence of a strong denominational infrastructure in China encourages loose associations between local congregations to emerge that may then mature into networks.

My own work reveals at least three types of transnational religious organizational patterns³ The first, exemplified by the Catholic Church, is an extended transnational religious organization. From the mid 1800s to the present, the Catholic church has sent out religious orders, mounted missionary campaigns, operated schools, built pilgrimage shrines, and organized international encounters that gave rise to a vast, interconnected network of transnational activities (Casanova 1994). When transnational migrants circulate in and out of parishes or religious movement groups in the U.S., Ireland, the Dominican Republic, or Brazil, they extend and tailor a global religious system that is already legitimate, powerful, and well organized. Religious membership enables migrants' simultaneous belonging in their sending and receiving communities. It also integrates them into strong, well-endowed institutional networks that are potential sites for informal political activism.

These intensified connections are evident in the Brazilian and Irish communities that I study and in the work of other scholars of immigrant religion.⁴ They grow out of relations between individual members and clergy in the home and host country and because migrants and nonmigrants participate in parallel activities and use the same worship materials within a discursive climate pervaded by an ideology of universal Catholicism. Several priests in Governador Valadares said they received frequent requests to say prayers or dedicate masses to their emigrant parishioners. Brazilian immigrant Apostolate churches in Massachusetts read from the same handout of weekly prayers and hymns used in Brazil (printed in Brasilia, the national capital) and organized mission campaigns which paralleled those in Brazil. When the

National Conference of Brazilian Bishops launched a year-long campaign against homelessness, Brazilian immigrant churches initiated a campaign for better housing and stronger neighborhoods. Religious leaders chose these activities because they resonated with those undertaken in Brazil while more directly addressing the problems facing the community in Boston. Brazilian and U.S. Church leaders have also explored ways to coordinate staffing and training with one another. In 1999, members of the Brazilian Bishop's Conference discussed plans to expand its Pastoral for Immigrants to serve Brazilians throughout the world.

In the case of Dominicans from Miraflores who migrated to Massachusetts, the parish-to-parish connections which developed mutually transformed religious life in Boston and in the Dominican Republic. New immigrants became incorporated into multi-ethnic congregations using a generic "Latino" worship style which included many familiar elements while excluding those that were uniquely Dominican. They communicated these changes in their religious practices and beliefs to those remaining at home. Subsequent migrants arrived already pre-socialized into many elements of U.S. Latino Catholicism. They continued to infuse fresh "Dominicanness" into the church, though it was a "Dominicanness" that was increasingly pan-Latino in tone. Continuous, cyclical transfers ensued which consolidated these pan-ethnic practices while weakening their uniquely Dominican elements. In this way, transnational ties reinforced religious pluralism at the same time that they abbreviated its scope (Levitt 2001b).

McAlistar's (2002) work also highlights the role of Catholic and voodoo practices in enabling transnational lifestyles and in creating a unique space for the Haitian community in the U.S. Many of the Haitian migrants in New York that she studied live transnational lives. They work to support households in Haiti, send their children to school in Haiti, or return to Haiti for extended periods to rest or recuperate. Religious pilgrimages, processions, and rituals are one way that migrants express their continuing attachment to their home country. The Feast of our

Lady of Miracles, which migrants celebrate concurrently with celebrations held in Haiti manifests migrants' continued devotion to their homeland and serves to distinguish them from African Americans in the U.S.

Although organizations redefine their potential members as those living both inside and outside their borders, migrants do not automatically become transnational actors. Menjivar (1999) found that Catholic church membership was far less supportive of transnational activism than membership in Evangelical churches. Because the Catholic Church in Washington, D.C. was so concerned with creating a pan-ethnic identity among its new immigrant constituents, it emphasized common projects and discouraged the development of ties to specific localities. Religious leaders also discouraged using the church to mount homeland-oriented activities, fearing these would politicize and divide the Salvadoran community.

Several affinity groups associated with the Catholic Church, such as the Charismatic, Neocatecumenal, and Cursillo movements, also expand the radius of Catholic activities across borders. These groups articulate a life view that has been disseminated globally at international conferences, fellowships, prayer links, and by the media. Research on these groups provides mixed evidence about the extent to which they encourage transnational belonging.

Charismatic groups in Boston and the Dominican Republic worked in partnership with one another. Migrants visiting Miraflores were warmly welcomed at meetings as were nonmigrant visitors in Boston. This access to "a membership card that works everywhere" encouraged participants' sense of transnational membership and constantly reminded nonmigrants that they too belonged to a social and religious cross-border community (Levitt 2001b).

Peterson and Vásquez's (2001) work on the Charismatic Catholic Renewal Movement (CCR) in El Salvador and among Central American migrants in Washington revealed different

effects. Many of the leaders of the immigrant community in Washington were active in the Charismatic movement in El Salvador. They brought the socialization they received in their homeland with them and when they returned to visit El Salvador they participated in CCR activities. Some members became transnational activists in response to the personal transformations they experienced by joining the CCR. The new set of values they adopted encouraged them to send remittances to their families and to support community development projects. But these changes produced few organized transnational activities. Peterson and Vásquez found no connections between religious groups in El Salvador and Washington and no transnational missions. Collective religious involvement, they conclude, does not orient members to organize simultaneously to two settings.

Protestant churches with affiliates in the U.S. and in Latin America typify a second type of negotiated transnational religious organization. These also extend and deepen organizational ties already in place but within the context of less-hierarchical, decentralized institutional structures. Instead, flexible relations, not governed by pre-established rules must constantly be worked out. I focus on Brazilian immigration to Boston as a case in point.

Protestantism has grown tremendously in Latin America, and particularly in Brazil, in the last four decades. In 1998, Governador Valadares had approximately 422 Protestant churches (Levitt 2002). These congregations range from Mainline Protestant denominations to start-up Pentecostal groups which pray in private homes and storefronts and large, elegant churches that seat hundreds. Even some of the most fledgling groups, however, had plaques outside their doors indicating they had chapters in Massachusetts.

Both personal and institutional ties constitute this negotiated transnational religious space. As in the Catholic Church, individual migrant and nonmigrant church members and religious leaders often kept up relations with one another. Institutional connections ranged from

narrowly-focused ties between local, start-up home and host-country congregations to newly-mediated arrangements between sending and receiving-country branches of the same denomination with long histories of missionary involvement in Brazil.

Like the Catholic Church, relations between Protestant individuals and churches also broaden and thicken what, in some cases, are already global institutions or create new global connections. In contrast to the Catholic case, however, these are negotiated with respect to authority, organization, and ritual. There is no leader or administrative hierarchy to set policy and dictate how things are done. When transnational migrants deepen these cross-border connections, issues like power sharing, financing, and administrative practice must be worked out. These negotiations give rise to a more diverse, diluted set of partnerships that are unstable and shift over time. These churches function like a network society – decentralized, flexible yet connected networks that provide customized services and goods (Castells 2001). Just as decentralized, adaptive modes of production are better suited to meet the challenges of global economic competition, so flexible production and dissemination of religious goods may be better suited to meet the needs of contemporary religious consumers.

Several studies support the notion that smaller, less bureaucratized, less hierarchical churches are better suited to serve transnationally-oriented members. Wellmeier (1998) argues that because Guatemalan Mayans belonged to independent storefront ministries that were ethnically homogeneous, it was easier for them to devote their energies toward improvements in their hometowns. Because the evangelical church that León (1998) studied formed part of network of over twenty-five churches in the U.S., Spain, and Mexico, members expressed a sense of belonging to a broad, powerful supranational movement that was able to sustain their interest and support. Menjivar's (1999) work also lends credence to this view. In contrast to their Salvadoran Catholic counterparts, Protestant churches were not restrained by extensive

and demanding worldwide networks. They did not have to create new, more inclusive identities to encourage loyal host-country membership. Instead, because leaders and members often came from the same regions of El Salvador and because they were all Christians, engaging in activities that focused on El Salvador produced little conflict. In fact, one church had sister churches in Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina and eastern El Salvador. They broadcast a two hour radio program in El Salvador at least three times a week, which included a call-in component so listeners could hear friends and relatives from back home. According to one member, "We are related to the church there in El Salvador spiritually and in practice. We are oriented to them and they are to us. It's like one church in two places." (Menjivar 1999:605).

The experiences of Gujarati Hindus from the Baroda district in India, suggests a third type of recreated transnational religious organization ⁵ Migrants had to start their own religious groups when they came to the United States because there were so few established organizations to receive them. They did so under the direction of home-country leaders or Indian religious leaders came to areas where large numbers of Indian immigrants lived and created U.S.-based organizations with migrant support. Most of these organizations function like franchises or chapters of their counterpart organizations in India. Franchises are run primarily by migrants who receive periodic support, resources and guidance from sending-country leadership while chapters receive regular support and supervision from sending-country leadership.

The Devotional Associates of Yogeshwar or the Swadhyay movement is an example of a movement that was recreated in the U.S. Swadhyay groups in India are organized informally. According to Didiji, the group's leader, leadership emerges consensually; those who are most knowledgeable or experienced become the *motobhais* or elder brothers of each group. In the United States, however, such groups need to look and act like formal congregations to be able

to raise funds, obtain permits, or rent halls (Warner and Wittner 1995). In response, Swadhyay in the United States is organized around nine geographic regions with their own coordinators. Although they are able to make decisions on their own, these leaders consult daily with their colleagues in Bombay.

Gibb (1998) described Harari Muslims in Ethiopia and Canada whose experience of diaspora prompted them to construct an identity that was meaningful transnationally. To reinforce group cohesion over time and space, they had to create community values that would be relevant in the home and host country. Her work suggests, however, that although Harari ethnicity was constructed within the context of a transnational movement, and responded to pressures from the Ethiopian and Canadian states, what it means to be Muslim has been transformed from a localized, culturally-specific version to a more homogenized, globalized tradition of standardized practices observed by other Muslims in Canada. As a result, Hararis are more oriented toward other Muslims in Canada than toward other Ethiopian groups. By developing a pan-Muslim identity, they can communicate with a wider community based on their shared religious traditions.

Because few of the studies I report on are longitudinal, they do little to elucidate how transnational religious organizations change over time. Work on the Soka Gakkai International (SGI-USA), a Japanese Buddhist group, is one exception. At first, Japanese immigrants married to American military personnel constituted the majority of U.S. members. They relied heavily on the organization in Japan for practical and financial support. Initially, SGI-USA maintained much of its Japanese character – it was organized hierarchically, leaders achieved their posts based on personal mentor-disciple relations, and women were excluded from holding office. Taking part in activities such as mass pilgrimages to Japan to visit the head of Nichiren Shoshu temple to worship the *Dai-Gohonzon* (the ancient scroll inscribed by Nichiren) reinforced members'

attachments to Japan. Until temples were constructed in the U.S., new converts either had to travel to Japan or wait until priests came to the U.S. to become official members of the group. The subsequent influx of U.S. converts, who quickly predominated, transformed the SGI-USA. The group began holding its meetings in English, and Japanese customs, such as kneeling and taking off one's shoes during worship, were abandoned in favor of more American worship styles. When the Japanese organization became embroiled in scandal, the U.S. chapter which still relied heavily on the mother temple, formally separated itself from its Japanese leaders. Becoming more American was also a way to avoid falling victim to the anti-cult fever spreading throughout the U.S. (Machacek 2000:288).

The research I have summarized highlights institutional variations in transnational religious life but transnational religious practices are also enacted outside of organized settings. We must therefore examine the ways in which believers use symbols and ideas to imagine and locate themselves within religious landscapes and analyze how religious and political geographies overlap with one another. The following section lays out these issues in greater detail.

TRANSNATIONAL RELIGIOUS SPACE AS AN ALTERNATIVE LANDSCAPE

Ancient pilgrims traveling from one sacred landmark to another, and their contemporary counterparts, create imaginary religious topographies whose boundaries are delineated by these holy places (Eickelman and Piscatori 1990). Transnational migrants also use religion to delineate an alternative cartography of belonging. Religious icons and sacred shrines, rather than national flags, mark out these spaces. The imagined moral and physical geographies that result may fall within national boundaries, transcend but coexist with them, or create new, alternative spaces that, for some individuals, have greater salience and inspire stronger loyalties than politically or nationally-defined spaces.

For example, Haitian migrants in New York simply added Harlem to the roster of places where they carry their spiritual work. By doing so, they extended the boundaries of their spiritual practices and superinscribed them onto the actual physical landscape of settlement (McAlister 2002). By building and conducting rituals at a shrine to their national patron saint, Cuban exiles in Miami create what Tweed (1999) calls transtemporal and translocative space. These rituals allowed migrants to recover a past when they were still in Cuba and to imagine a future when they would return. Through these enactments, migrants also asserted their enduring membership in their communities of origin. Families also brought their newborns to the shrine to formally transform those born in America into citizens of the imagined Cuban nation. In this way, the community used religion to extend the boundaries of Cuba to incorporate those who were living outside them.

Haitian migrants from Ri Rivy  who settled in Palm Beach County not only use religion to locate themselves within an alternative sacred landscape but to extricate themselves from it as well (Richman 2002). Although most of the members of this community are Catholic, many also believe in *lwas* or "saints" who can afflict and protect members of the descent groups to which they belong. *lwas* must be fed, entertained, and lavished with copious offerings because when they feel neglected or ignored by their heirs, they are likely to retaliate by afflicting illness, hardship, or property loss. According to Richman (2002:14)

Although they are characterized as ancient, immutable symbols of "African" tradition, the *lwa* have shown that they can be most adaptable to changing conditions of global reproduction. With so many of their "children" now living and working "over there" the *lwa* is busier than ever. I once had the opportunity to interview a spirit about her protection of migrants. The female spirit was possessing a male ritual leader, who was conducting a healing rite for an absent migrant in the presence of the migrants' parents and myself. The spirit, whose name is Ezili Dant / Our lady of Lourdes, said to us, "Every three days I am in Miami...I have to keep watch over everything that goes on. Miami is where the core is....like all of the spirits whose movements are said to be like the wind, Ezili Dant  can instantly traverse these international boundaries.

Those who believe in these saints situate themselves in a ritual space transcending political boundaries where spirits easily move back and forth to take care of them. In return, they must continue to take care of their *lwa*, often at tremendous expense and effort. While some see their success in Miami as proof of the *lwa*'s intervention on their behalf, others feel that too many of their remittances are wasted on the *lwa*'s care and have converted to Protestantism as a way to extricate themselves from this system of kinship and ritual obligations.

Suh's work brings to light the complex relationship between ethnic and religious transnational landscapes. The Korean American Buddhists in her study use religion to locate themselves more centrally both with respect to Korea and to the U.S., particularly in relation to their Korean-American Christian counterparts. Many of the Buddhists in her study associate Buddhism with a nationalistic sense of belonging to Korea. They see Buddhism as an authentic marker of Korean identity and use it to construct a barrier against the undesired westernization and Americanization that, from their perspective, characterizes the Korean-American Christian experience. At the same time, they claim that Buddhism makes them better Americans because Buddhist doctrines of self-enlightenment are more in line with American democracy than the Christian doctrines they associate with a lack of free will.

Suh argues that Chogye temple membership reinforces homeland ties, even if members never return to Korea. The group hosts numerous Korean monks who give lectures and train members. Because religious leaders travel frequently to Korea, there is always news from the Order back home. The main order of the Chogye established a Los Angeles Branch of Seoul-based Eastern Mountain Buddhist College, which offers a two-year certificate course in Buddhist Studies to lay members. Although the Sa Chal Temple is run independently, unlike other U.S.-based groups which are still officially administered by leaders in Seoul, Abbot Lee, the group's leader, still considers his ties to Korea to be crucial to the development of Buddhism in the

West.

Many of the Salvadoran youth that Vásquez and his colleagues (2001) studied felt they belonged neither in the U.S. or in El Salvador. They joined transnational gangs which provided them with a close, tight-knit community and helped counteract their feelings of marginality in the society at large. Gang members shared many of the characteristics of transnational migrants because they acted, made decisions, and developed identities shaped by relationships and resources that crossed borders. In fact, when the Salvadoran peace accords were signed in 1992, they were approved in both El Salvador and Los Angeles.

The appeal of gang life gradually wore thin when some members became involved in drug trafficking and gangs grew less effective at providing places for adolescents trying to belong. Pentecostal churches stepped in to fill this gap. They functioned much like gangs, "savings souls transnationally" by using contacts in El Salvador and the U.S. to reach potential converts. These efforts worked because they "combined deterritorialization (the operation of transnational webs) with reterritorialization (re-centering of self and community)" (Vásquez et al 2001:34). Religion engendered an alternative, ultimately more satisfying space, because it successfully synthesized self and community.

Some of the Brazilians and Pakistanis I am studying in Boston also use religion to create alternatives places of belonging. Some imagine themselves within global Muslim or Christian denominational communities which are grounded in particular national contexts because they have ties to particular sending and receiving churches. Others locate themselves within global religious communities that supercede national boundaries. Pastora Eliana, a leader of a renewed Brazilian Baptist church in Watertown, Massachusetts, said she felt invisible in her dealings with government offices, educational institutions, or census takers when she first came to the U.S. because no category allowed her to express her Brazilianess. She only felt that she belonged in

this country when her church formed a partnership with the American Baptist Convention (ABC). It is her identity as a Baptist, rather than her identity as a Brazilian American, that facilitates her integration into the U.S.

What I see the Brazilian population searching for here in Massachusetts is that we would like to have a sense of belonging. When we go back to Brazil we are no longer Brazilian Brazilians and being here we are not considered Euro-Americans. So we are a people without identity, without a connection, and we are very family oriented. But when we leave our country, our family, our neighbors and we come here after time goes by, we search for a way to belong to this culture. We want to belong to something that we could call family because we are struggling to identify who we are. We have become bicultural, we have changed. But so far, who are we?

Her identity as a Baptist, however, also locates her firmly within a global religious community that is both welcoming and empowering.

Q: Why wouldn't one be a Baptist? Could you imagine a world where the salient identity would be a Baptist rather than Brazilian or American?

I think that this identity already exists. I mean being a Brazilian person and being a Baptist is synonymous with being smart. It is synonymous with wisdom because among us we know that Baptists are capable of thinking or being in a relationship with one another, of having disagreements but at the same time finding solutions and agreement among ourselves. Calling ourselves Baptists is something that we as a community are proud of. When the denomination showed that it was open to establish this relationship with us, giving recognition to us, it was something that we celebrated because it is giving to us the recognition that we are no longer invisible. So far, we have been an invisible culture without any connection with the new system that we are in. But now, this kind of feeling is so strong because we really feel that we are becoming family in a very constructive way. We are no longer invisible. Even through the Census, if I go to fill out an application in any school or any place, I can identify myself as Hispanic or other. And usually I go other. This is what I call invisible culture. I mean we are here but nobody knows yet.

Being a Baptist enabled Pastora Eliana begins to begin to feel part of the U.S. Because her her religious practice takes place within a ethnic Brazilian context, her identity as a Baptist also reinforces her ties to Brazil. The religious landscape she creates fits within and grounds her within the transnational political landscape. Her religious identity inscribes her in a global religious community but one that has strong roots in the U.S. and in Brazil.

In contrast, Pastor Luis of the Brazilian International Church of the Four Square Gospel locates his followers firmly within the Kingdom of God. Good citizenship derives primarily from being a good Christian. The main point, Pastor Luis says, is that

...when they are good Christians, they are good citizens. So when we teach them to be consistent in their faith, they will be, at the same time, good people, good husbands, good people in the sense that they will try to help others, to try to make a difference in their neighborhoods. They will be concerned about other's well-being. So it's not necessary to become legal and become naturalized and so forth. But in the Bible itself, in the way that Christians should be, would be enough for them to be good citizens...There are a set of ways of being in the world that have nothing to do with whether you are Brazilian or whether you are from the U.S. but that have more to do with faith in Christ. I teach my followers that they have a responsibility to all mankind but especially to their fellow Christians. We live in a world where Christ is the king, not George Bush or Fernando Collar.

Pastor Luis stresses that his followers belong to Christ's Kingdom and that religious membership takes precedence over dual political membership. Believers inhabit a Christian world where God and Christ reign supreme over elected officials. This is not to say that national boundaries disappear -- this imagined religious space is populated by political as well as religious landmarks and the rules of national citizenship still apply. But it is Christian rather than civic values that form the basis for membership in good-standing in local, national, and transnational political communities. Unlike Pastora Eliana, whose membership in a global religious community reinforces her dual national memberships, the religious landscape within which Pastor Luis and his followers locate themselves is the source from which the rules of national and ethnic membership are derived.

RELIGION AS A GUIDE TO TRANSNATIONAL CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Just as religion furnishes the elements from which an alternative cartography is created, so it guides believers about their communal rights and responsibilities. Religious institutions differ from other immigrant institutions in that they see themselves embodying

universal and timeless truths. They provide members with moral compasses and orient them to act upon these values in particular settings in particular ways. As global interconnectedness expands, to what extent do religious traditions articulate globally-oriented theologies? What lessons do transnational religious groups disseminate to members about the rights and duties of transnational, if not global, citizens?

Many assume, for instance, that Pentecostals are apolitical and would be so with respect to transnational as well as national concerns. The Salvadoran Pentecostal churches Menjivar studied in Washington lend credence to this perspective. They kept in close touch with their sister congregations in El Salvador. They supported community development projects in their home communities, sponsored speaking exchanges between sending- and receiving-country pastors, shared a monthly newspaper, held conventions that brought congregations together, and participated in international Evangelical church councils. However, evangelization rather than community development goals motivated these efforts. According to one respondent, "We only keep in touch with our own countries if it's going to help them accept Christ as their savior. And then the nationality doesn't matter any more. What's important is that we bring them the good news, the Word. This is a much better gift than any amount of money or clothes you can send (Menjivar 1999:607). The political or civic consequences of these activities were accidental. Members' primary goal was to strengthen and extend the community of God.

Peterson et al. (2001) take issue with this view. Pentecostal communities are only moderately successful at erecting clear boundaries between the safe, sanctified world of faith and its dangerous, violent secular counterpart. Because members fulfill multiple roles and participate in multiple settings they influence the secular world and it continues to influence them. Pentecostal churches also reproduce patterns of domination and exclusion. Their

rhetoric of spiritual warfare creates a “terrain of control” that is difficult to challenge. “Since this closed social terrain is ultimately grounded in the radical deterritorialization demanded by the reign of God, it mirrors the erasure of borders and identities that is central to globalization. In other words, for all its emphasis on the self, Pentecostalism, like global capitalism, homogenizes, making particularity only a strategy or stepping stone toward the production of globality/universality” (Vásquez et al 2001:40).

Peruvian migrants in the U.S., Spain, Argentina and Japan brought images of their patron saint with them to their new homes, raised funds for ritual celebrations, and conquered host-country public spaces by organizing annual processions (Paerregaard 2001). Though some of these activities involved initial communication with the mother church in Lima, homeland ties gradually weakened. There was little evidence of coordination between brotherhoods in the same receiving country or between different host country contexts. Instead, Paerregaard argues, members used religious engagement to pursue host-country-oriented goals such as carving out a place for themselves in the public sphere and differentiating themselves from other minorities. Transnational religious activities, to the extent that they took shape, promoted host-country political integration.

My work suggests a number of variations in the forms and consequences of religiously-motivated transnational politics. When new Irish, Dominican, and Brazilian migrants extend the global Catholic church through their homeland ties, they become part of powerful, resource-rich networks that are potential venues for protection and representation in their home and host communities. When Irish migrants attend church, for example, they learn about a range of social and legal services and receive in-direct lessons from the pulpit on local community problem solving and mobilization. At the national level, the Irish Apostolate US., an umbrella organization encompassing all the Irish pastoral activities around the country, has

joined forces with a coalition of Irish Immigration Centers, to create an informal political action committee advocating for immigrant rights and amnesty. The Irish Apostolate also functions as the Irish government's window onto the lives of emigrants in the U.S.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs came here three years ago and the Minister for Social Welfare came last year. Any time a President comes, like Mary Robinson or Mary McCalese, they come and talk to us. Mary Robinson came and talked to us at lunch and asked us about the different issues we confront. We also visit Irish prisoners here and we keep the government informed about whether they are being treated properly, what their sentences are, whether they can be sent back home. We are the voice of the immigrant community for the Irish government (Father Mike, Boston, 2001).

The Protestant churches in my research also deliver services to, advocate for, and politically socialize their members but within the context of weaker organizational networks. These pastors also help their members get jobs, find housing, or regularize their immigration status. The message of living "in God's Kingdom," though, produces different views on appropriate civic engagement.

Some church members interpret this call as one to go outside the religious sphere and make a difference. Religious membership encourages them to exercise substantive citizenship and religious teachings show them the right way to do so.

I know there are some people who think of themselves as living in the Kingdom of Christ. Pastor Manuel talks about that a lot. But I see myself as firmly planted on the ground. My life is here and in Brazil. I feel very strongly about my church and about the lessons it teaches. But I see these lessons as telling me to get involved in the world around me. So when the police want to meet with the Brazilian community to understand us better or there are meetings to try to get people driver's licenses (which is illegal without a social security card), I go. My God tells me to be here and to help out (Umberto, 52 year old migrant, Framingham)

Other church members located themselves squarely within a Christian geography. Their civic engagement is motivated by their religious identities and beliefs, rather than a sense of ethnic pride or patriotism. They carry out their activities within civic arenas out of convenience,

because these are the kinds of institutions that are in place, although they would rather work within religious contexts. They are doing the work of God which sometimes also happens to be political.

When I volunteer at the soup kitchen or at my child's school, it is because this is what God would want me to do. I am not guided by what the Worker's Party has to say about Brazil or the Democratic Party has to say about here. I live in a Christian world that just happens to have national boundaries which criss-cross it. If what good I do helps bring about political change, that's okay with me, but that is not my primary goal (Eliana, 47 year old migrant, Framingham).

Global religious identities and the political activities that they engender are not confined to Christians or to those belonging to formal religious groups. Tariq Khan, a 51 year old Muslim from Pakistan, is also an example of a person who identifies primarily with the global Muslim community and whose political activities reflect his religious preferences. The following statement reflects the tension he feels between his religious and ethnic affiliations although he ultimately decides that his "Muslim self" is the most important part of who he is.

I do believe that for me at least there may not be a single answer. Fundamentally I believe every morning that I wake up I believe that I am a Muslim but then the other two important elements are being born in Pakistan but for all intents and purposes I consider myself an American. To me it is a balance between those three things. Maybe if it comes down to it I would still consider myself to be a Muslim and that part is supreme. And if you ask me to relate myself to others I probably relate better to American Muslims than to let's say Muslims in Morocco.

Ethnicity, he says, are things like language, music, food, and ways of dress but morality,

Well, I do believe that a lot of my moral values stem from my religious beliefs. Just recently I was talking with someone and he was telling me some of the characteristics of being in a start-up company and why for instance I may or may not be successful and I was very clear to him I said look there are certain values that are very important to me and whether I am successful or not I am not going to sacrifice those values.

Which were those values?

Just in terms of the human and the interpersonal. For instance lying to somebody, which sometimes in business you may have to do. Or being what I would consider to be unfair to people, people who work for you or people around you. And so those are some of the things I would not sacrifice.

So is it fair to say in your case that what motivates you in your dealings with others is your Muslimness rather than your Pakistaniness?

Yes, absolutely. So for instance if I were to cheat on my taxes, I would not cheat because of my belief in being truthful and honest rather than being afraid that the IRS is going to find out. Yes I am aware of that but what drives me is more of my own values. I would be more likely to give money to a Muslim charity than a Pakistani charity.

Mr. Khan goes on to say that he feels more of an affinity with Muslims around the world than with other Pakistanis or with Americans. He is more likely to participate in activities or give to charities that aid his co-religionists than those aimed at his co-nationalists or those in his adopted home. Muslim principles guide his behavior. The salient landscape for Mr. Khan is one in which global Muslim communities are in the foreground while ethnic and national communities form the backdrop to the stage. His political priorities, and how he conducts himself when he acts upon them, emerge in response to his religious beliefs.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

This paper proposes an approach to the study of one aspect of global religious life -- migrants' transnational religious practices. I suggest that studies of transnational migration and religion focus on the everyday, lived practice of migrant religion in at least two locations. I propose that they examine the ways in which host-country incorporation changes religious practice, how these changes affect sending-country religious life, and how these changes mutually reinforce one another. Research on transnational religious practices are not just about organizational manifestations of faith. They are also about the alternative places of belonging that religious ideas and symbols make possible and about the ways in which these sacred landscapes interact with the boundaries of political and civic life.

Clearly, there is much work to be done. I have offered only a brief sketch of what is known about the nature and impact of transnational religious practices based on selective studies of U.S. migration. This article is intentionally short on conclusions and long on calls for more empirical, grounded studies of everyday religious experiences and beliefs. Future work needs to flesh out how transnational religious practices are actually enacted, what their impacts are, what explains the variations between them, how transnational religious life differs from transnational life in other social arenas, and what these dynamics means for home- and host-country life.

These tasks pose methodological and epistemological challenges. How do we make concrete the landscapes and communities that people imagine? How can we go beyond the in-depth, grounded field work needed to make explicit what is implicit in so much research so that comparisons can be made across groups. How would our questions change if we shifted the central organizing principle from nation to faith community – if we took seriously, as many respondents do, a world that is primarily organized around Islamic, Hindu, or Baptist identities rather than ethnic or nation affinities and that is built upon religious values rather than civic ones?

The study of religious and cultural life across borders raises particular challenges not posed by the study of economics or politics. Religion is not a fixed set of elements but a dynamic web of shared meanings used in different ways in different contexts (Gardner 1995). It is as much, if not more, about individualized, interior, informal practices and beliefs as it is about formal, collective manifestations of faith carried out in institutional settings. Many features of religious life are imagined. It is hard to hold them constant or to determine their boundaries. They are deeply felt but often difficult to express.

On the other hand, several studies indicate parallels between transnational religious,

economic, and political practices. Like economic and political transnational practices, religion plays a role in transnational community creation and perpetuation (Espinosa 1999, R.C. Smith 1995). Religious festivals, and particularly Patron Saint Day celebrations, have always been important sites of contact, maintenance, and renewal of relations between migrants and nonmigrants. Immigrants churches often contribute significant sums of money to community development in their sending communities. Furthermore, transnational religious practices also generate some of the same kinds of conflicts over legitimate membership and status between migrants and nonmigrants that others have described (Goldring 1998, Levitt 2001b, Espinosa 1999). We need to sort out what is unique about transnational life in the religious sphere and to systematically compare religious transnational practices to transnational activities in other arenas.

As the title of this article implies, the relationship between religion and migration has a long history. Abraham began a journey, guided by his faith, that millions have followed. The intensification of life across borders will only increase the numbers for whom social, political, and religious membership is decoupled from residence. It is time we put religion front and center in our attempts to understand how identity and belonging are redefined in this increasingly global world.

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¹ I focus on the U.S. because, to the best of my knowledge, no systematic attempt has been made to summarize the scholarship on the transnational religious practices of to this region. In addition, much of the literature on the religious lives of North American and European migrants

focuses primarily on receiving-country life (i.e. Metcalf 1996, Clarke, Peach, and Vertovec 1990, Vertovec and Peach 1997, Ebaugh and Chafetz 2000, Warner and Wittner 1998, and Schiffauer 1988. Selective notable exceptions include Gardner 1995, Huwelmeier 2001, Eickelman and Piscatori 1990, Vertovec 1995, and Sahin 2001). By purposefully narrowing my focus, I do not wish to suggest that European and U.S. scholarship should be considered separately. In fact, one goal of the conference that produced this volume was to explore the continuities and discontinuities between the two.

² However, U.S.-based scholars of diaspora and postcolonialism such as Kachig Tololyan, James Clifford, Arjun Appadurai are also important contributors to these debates.

³ I propose these types as heuristic tools. They are not static, impermeable categories. In fact, religious institutions may pass from one form to another over time.

⁴ My research is an ongoing study of transnational migration among Dominican, Irish, Indian, Brazilian, Pakistani, and Israeli migrants to the greater Boston Metropolitan area. Findings from my work on Dominicans from the village of Miraflores who live in the Jamaica Plain neighborhood of Boston, Irish from the Inishowen Peninsula who live in Dorchester, Indians from the Baroda District of Gujarat State who have settled around the city of Lowell, and Brazilians from Governador Valadares who live in Framingham are discussed in this paper. The project research team includes myself, colleagues in each sending country, and a group of graduate and undergraduate researchers. In the United States, we collect data by interviewing first and second-generation individuals and organizational leaders, observing meetings and special events, and reviewing pertinent documents. After each interview in Boston, we ask for the names of nonmigrant family members to contact. We then travel to each sending country and conduct a parallel set of interviews with individuals and organizational leaders in sending communities at the local, regional, and national level.

⁵ Williams (1988:230) calls these Hindu Organizations of Indian Americans "made in the U.S.A...assembled in the U.S. from imported components by relatively unskilled labor (at least unskilled by traditional standards) and adapted to fit new designs to reach a new and growing market."