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Rita Laura Segato
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Rita Laura SEGATO

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The consequences of identity politics in patterning religious experience and affiliation today, described here as an aspect of a new territorality, are vast in many fields. The functional relation existing between a new territorality defined by network, biopolitics as a form of control and the spectacularization (i.e., the visible nature) of identities greatly affects the field of religion today. In this new territorial environment, networks suffocate internal dissidence on doctrinal and theological matters, and in facing the outside world they stress their unity by means of the management of bodies, placing a premium on exterior signs of belonging.

Keywords: religion · fundamentalism · territorality · bio-politics · identity

Les conséquences des politiques d'identité dans la modélisation de l'expérience et de l'affiliation religieuses aujourd'hui, décrites ici comme un aspect d'une nouvelle territorialité, sont importantes en de nombreux domaines. La relation fonctionnelle existant entre une nouvelle territorialité en réseau, la biopolitique comme forme de contrôle et le spectacle des identités, affecte considérablement le champ de la religion aujourd'hui. Dans ce nouvel environnement territorial, les réseaux en concurrence étouffent le désaccord interne sur des sujets doctrinaux et théologiques, et affirment leur unité en faisant face à d'autres réseaux, au moyen de la gestion des corps, en mettant l'accent sur les signes extérieurs d'appartenance.

Mots-clés: religion · fondamentalisme · territorialité · bio-politique · identité

1. Religion under the light of a new territorial order

Contemporary world religion appears to be undergoing a transition towards a new territorial order. In the new setting, there is competition between old and new forms of government, that is, old and new forms of political control over people and resources. A variety of signs hint at an emerging territorially structuring surface behaviour. This article presents a guide for a new reading of familiar elements in contemporary religious practice by means of a model

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that organizes and interprets a number of apparently diverse and unconnected events in today's religious life. After all, a sociological model is no more than a vocabulary to highlight selected connections and illuminate from one particular angle many elements of social interaction.

Two aspects of the usual approach to religion may preclude us from understanding what follows. First, in our field, established categories, such as "secularization" and "religious mobility", can prevent us from seeing new patterns that demand a shift in the questions posed to the religious phenomenon; in this case we must step back and apprehend social reality from a new angle in order to point at what lies behind those categories. Second, those studying religious organizations have often disregarded the difference between the projects and goals of managerial groups—the boards of directors of the churches studied—and the projects and searches of the ordinary, plain faithful members of those churches. This article will focus on the patterns evidenced in the behaviour of the latter but originated in decisions that could be described as "church public policies".

A series of categories lie at the heart of the approach here proposed: territority and territoriality, in the sense of an epochal concept and experience of territory; government as control, particularly the transitions from government of territory to government of people and, nowadays, to government of people's networks as territory; biopower and biopolitics, in which control is exercised over people's bodies as territories; and the spectacularization of difference (i.e. making difference visible): identities are established through the physical differences between the ways in which individuals use or adorn their bodies. These categories allow us to posit that the field of religion is greatly affected today by the functional relationship between a new territoriality shaped by networking, biopolitics as a form of control, and the spectacle of identities. In this new territorial environment, competing networks suffocate internal dissidence and stress their unity vis-à-vis other networks by means of the management of bodies as emblems of belonging. The emergence of a new religious pattern can be better grasped if placed in continuity with the history of government elaborated by Michel Foucault.

Foucault's periodization should be understood here as enabling the presentation of a new trend in the religious field. According to Foucault, the feudal and early modern form of government was the government of territory, that is, of the land or domain of a feudal lord or king, including all the things and people it contained. Only later, from the 18th century on, did government become government of population, the administration of the human group settled in a given territory. Disciplinary techniques and exemplary exhibition of punishment, located by Foucault in the 18th and 19th centuries, started to give way in the 20th century to the methods of a society of control. The exercise of pastoral power was a crucial element in this transformation. Originally used in the Hebrew and Christian world during Biblical times, this technique is for Foucault the most efficient of power technologies, "a simultaneously individualizing and totalizing form of power". Practised at first within ecclesiastic institutions, pastoral power is extremely efficient in modelling subjects because "it cannot be exerted without the knowledge of
the insight minds of the people, without examining their souls, without making them reveal their most intimate secrets. It demands knowledge of consciousness and ability to command them” (1983: 213–4). This progression develops further into a final stage within control societies; that of power as bio-power, exerted through biopolitics as its corresponding type of government, that is, the government of people as biological beings by means of the administration of their bodies. Policies, in this stage, refer to bodies. (Foucault, 1997, 2004a and 2004b)

This article contends that, as regards government and its objects, we now face the slow emergence of a third era, in which states compete with non-state agencies, many of them religious, both exerting their control on population through pastoral technique. In this new stage, the distinctive trait of a population is that it is now an extensible and fluid network, and is no longer confined to a state-managed jurisdiction, that is to say, within a territory fully enclosed under the administration of a state. Governed populations, previously anchored in a limited and fixed territory, are gradually breaking loose, and the focus of control is moving instead onto a mobile human flock that cuts across national borders. To control the flock, the governing agencies of the networks must strengthen their pastoral control and biopower as much as possible. This has an impact on the behaviour of religious institutions, since they participate in and contribute to the general pattern of politics, economy and social behaviour in today’s world. As the new paradigm gains ground, the relationships between the state, churches and the peoples settled in a given nation reorganize themselves. However, this article will not go as far as examining the new pattern of relationships that emerges articulating these three varieties of actors, but will limit itself to a general view of the process.

This latter stage introduces a shift in territoriality itself, if we understand “territoriality” as a particular, culturally defined, experience of territory. Subjects and their “territory” are co-produced by each given age and form of government’s discursive fabric, so to this extent, the elements constituting territorial experience are not fixed but historically defined. Territoriality can also be said to be a ‘dispositive’ (in Foucault’s terminology) through which subjects are hooked into belonging. Advanced modernity and a form of life colonized by the market economy tend to release subjects from state-bounded territory and to produce people and territoriality organized in networks. Networks, in their turn, produce their own landscapes. Religious institutions participate in this new form of being-in-territory, a territorial dispositive under a web design.

In the previous stage of control society, the state deployed pastoral techniques and biopolitics to produce docile subjects. In the present transition, a network’s own managerial organizations are in charge of subjectifying policies. The state apparatus and its previous territory are intersected by these new jurisdictional realities, which acquire important influence over decision-making and access to resources. In the new scene, some displacements are occurring and their ongoing emergence can be observed. First, as we have observed, the state is not the only agency in command of pastoral
techniques of individualization and massification of the population settled in the territory under its administration: there are also diversified and internally stratified networks cutting across its former territory, governed by their own nomenclatures; second, because flocks are released from national territories and fixed landscapes that previously served as reference for identification and agglutination, the subjection and cohesiveness of members must now be expressed exclusively by a unified exteriority, that is to say, their unity must be spectacularized, and relies on performative clues. So pastoral power regains its original religious character, and religions and other consecrated loyalties redesign the territory as proto-political entities, co-existing with national states in the control of populations.

It may be possible to say that the kind of loyalty that Habermas (1994: 135) called “patriotism of the Constitution” is replaced by “patriotism of the network’s rules”, and the new unbounded territories are constantly expanded through a process that can be described as mild annexation. Religious networks, as we have seen, are not alone in this new panorama. They belong to an environment formatted by the more encompassing paradigm of identity politics. Race, ethnicity, religious affiliation, gender and sexual orientation seem to have obtained a double entry into social life: they shape interpersonal interaction and serve as reference for network formations based on political identities. This article concentrates on the latter, which now provides surrogate territorial homelands for ordinary people.

2. Religious networks as territories

As, on the one hand, territories have become extensible lanes of common identity and shared interests within a given corporative network and, on the other, fixed landscapes have started to lose their power as references for identity, ritualized exhibition of formulae expressing loyalty have started to play a crucial role. In this new setting, persons carry territory, and a population is made up of the persons belonging to a network. So the group of persons who belong to a particular network together constitute the territory and population of that network. So we can say that bodies themselves are the landscape—they are, so to say, heraldic emblems of the presence of their territory, which grows as new members join the network. The body is the tablet in which the signs are inscribed, and to which typified attributes of belonging can be added or attached.

Approaching the topic of the new meanings of religion from the examination of contemporary believers’ subjectivity, Marcel Gauchet refers to this new pattern as “the metamorphosis of beliefs into identities”, and he perceives the “appearances hoax”, in which the “accent is placed more on exterior forms or in the ways of life, while the properly transcendent nucleus of beliefs weakens” (2003: 109). For Gauchet, this new prevalence of the matter of identity over religious experience is an aspect of secularization (2003: 108) and an index of a general trend towards a world of minorities, “even in the cases [where] they may be true majorities” (2003: 104). Contesting somewhere else Charles Taylor’s recent essays on Williams James’s
Varieties of Religion Today, I refer to this as a pressure towards “denominalization” of all religions in a global unequal world (Segato, 2007). Gauchet observes that, together with this, as religion has become a matter of choice and not a heritage, the demand for rigorous loyalty has become exacerbated. Rigid loyalty, in turn, leads to monolithic confinement to one’s worldview and, as Amartya Sen has pointed out in his critique of Huntington’s thesis on the clash of civilizations, demands that within religious groups internal differences should be concealed and dissent suppressed. According to Sen, “the illusion of singularity” behind the notion of identity obscures and represses the possibility of each individual’s manifold affiliations (Sen, 2007: 74–5). Though modern individual rights to choose open up options of religious mobility, once the move has occurred, and while it lasts, subjects are pressed to exteriorize their choice.

If a premium is placed on external signs of religious affiliation to display the unity of the group, of necessity internal dissent and deliberation must be restrained and repressed—and of course this is most convenient for the internal elite or managerial board within the group. Suppression is achieved by failing to nourish doctrinal or theological complexities, by neglecting scriptural polisery, and by reducing the group’s symbolic density to unproblematic and linear semiosis. In his detailed ethnography of North American fundamentalist literalism, Vincent Crapanzano offers much evidence of the reduction and confinement of theological debate and the dismissing of philosophical concerns: “If inerrancy (of scriptures) is abandoned, ‘reason becomes the source of authority and reason sits in judgment upon the text of Scripture’” (2000: 62). Fundamentalists “shun the larger philosophical-theological dimensions of scripture” because “philosophy had negative connotation for many of them: it was too ‘heady’”. They read Scriptures “as a series of commands that required narrowly construed obedience” (2000: 64). According to Crapanzano, in the age of literalism “icons mark prêt-à-porter stances and frequently preclude critical, creative thought”: since they “act as signals, giving rise to monologues, diatribes, riffs, spils that end only from exhaustion—I would suggest because they are not dialogically engaged”, neither with reference to the internal contradictions of the positions they themselves represent, nor outwards towards the position of other groups (2000: 353).

As a result, religion acquires a shallow quality, and spiritual search is not stimulated. Contradicting common sense views, we could also say that emphasis on exterior gestures, rituality and dramatization are aspects of secularization today. Despite the appearances, Islamic fundamentalisms partake of this general pattern. They are not merely the product and consequence of westernization, a reaction to secular modernity and to secular scientific culture spreading from the West, as Karen Amstrong has pointed out (2000: 11–2). They too conform to this model in that they do not engage in or permit reflexivity, internal debate and open deliberation regarding custom and the interpretation of doctrine. They adapt thus to the pressing territorial paradigm based on the display by subjects of diacritical signs of cohesive loyalty. There is no need here to rehearse the numerous examples of Islamic inscription on the bodies of the faithful, such as the
so-called “mummification” of Somali and other Northern African women’s bodies, covered under layers of fabric following the advance of Arabization in their homelands. In this sense, Muslim fundamentalism may be said to be the most westernized of Islamic variants, since it is reactive, thus derivative from the presence and the pressures of the West, and completely functional within this general organization of relationships shaped by the West. What is highlighted therefore is that collectivities do not clash because they are different, as in the causal explanation put forward by Huntington in his well known clash of civilizations thesis, but because they are well in accord, actively producing and spectacularizing difference in order to constitute themselves as a unified people. The weight of façade progressively prevails over the receding strength of reflexive doctrine and theological debate. Probably, the world was never more unified in grammar and more anxious for difference.

The religiously inscribed body as territory

Biopolitics as the ultimate form of control completes the understanding of this new territoriality and its demands for ostensible loyalty: power works now directly upon the body, and also from this perspective it can be said that bodies and their immediate milieus—sometimes battlegrounds of conflicting powers, sometimes docile exhibits of annexation—make up the chain of territories of today. And it is in bodies as battlegrounds that powers compete in this transitional moment of history. Of course, the female body adapts more effectively to this general function because it is and always has been cross-culturally imbued with territorial meaning, as can be seen, for example, in the way that women have been raped and inseminated in wars of all ages (Segato, 2003, 2006). This fate of female bodies can be observed in the increasing pressures on religious institutions to prove their ability to rule over the body, not only over the priestly body, as in the past, but also, and more importantly, over the secular body.

This approach enables us to understand all fundamentalist impositions of our time, East and West, Muslim and Christian, under a different light: neither as moral rules nor as inherent to doctrinal persuasion, but as demands for rigid externalization of signs of belonging. They are intended to display beyond doubt the strength of the group and the capacity of its elite to control the flock. Belonging has to be externalized, dramatized. When the domain is not a given fiefdom or nation but a fluid congregation, expressive signs of adhesion gain in importance, and engagement in philosophical reflection on doctrinal, spiritual and theological matters is relegated to the background or even censured. Performative efficiency and ritualized identity acquire crucial relevance. The obedient body is now a function of a unitary territory that cannot be conveyed otherwise. The central theme, within the logic of politics of identity, is less a matter of persuasion than of representation.

A growing obsession for controlling sexual behaviour and the procreative capacity of the female body, as well as an active vigilance against abortion on
the part of Christian religious groups, are also part of this imperative of publicizing the faith by controlling the faithful body. On 24 April 1994, during the El Cairo U.N. Conference on Population and Development, Pope John Paul II beatified two women: pediatrician Gianna Beretta, who discovered a uterine cancer while she was pregnant with her fourth child, declined to make an abortion and died shortly afterwards; and Elisabetta Mora, who remained married to a husband who permanently abused her physically (Lamas, 1997: 159–60). When we compare this obsessive control over bodies with ecclesiastical manualistics of the past, we discover the distance between biopolitical rules and morality. The latter was concerned with disciplining desire and repressing pleasure as manifestations of the Dionysiac and the diabolical; in this sense it aimed at the moralization of the subject, understanding morality as a war waged against evil. Biopower, on the other hand, deploys strategies to make the body obey and comply with commandments of a biopolitical order, which relate to it as a biological entity and impinge on its biological functions in order to create territorial signs.

The conversion of the Catholic Church to this congregational/denomina-
tional lingua franca is sensed these days probably more in Latin America than anywhere else. Contraception, pre-marital sex, use of condoms for AIDS prevention, and numerous practices centred on the body mean that the sphere of privacy and intimate jurisdiction has acquired an ostensible role in the sphere of religious allegiance. Behind pseudo-doctrinairema matters lies the main issue of flock cohesiveness. The visit of Pope Benedict XVI to Brasil in May 2007 coincided, and this was not by chance, with the decriminalization of pregnancy interruption by the Mexico City legislature. It is also greatly significant that the papal visit coincided with the moment when Brazilian Federal authorities reopened discussion about abortion, the issue of the criminalization of homophobia was about to be treated at a public hearing in the Congress, and the Supreme Federal Court, for the first time in its history, summoned expert witnesses to appear before a public hearing in order to reach an informed conclusion on the scientific use of stem cells from human embryos. All the newspapers proclaimed that the Pope came “to do politics” in Brazil, the most numerous Catholic nation. What they did not highlight was what kind of politics he was engaging in by intervening in public legislation impinging on the body. This was the Church engaging in biopolitics, cutting through the state within the telos of a territorial paradigm, attempting to control bodies in order to make visible the congregation.

Remembering Foucault’s adage, “The sovereign allows to live and makes die; bio-power makes live and allows to die”, helps us to understand the expensive operation put up in 2006 in Brazil by church authorities in order to help one poor mother to keep her anencephalous baby, while thousands of abandoned homeless children and children in miserable families are allowed to die every year, because no such investments are made to save them.

How can it otherwise be explained, for example, that a Catholic priest who had never seen the pregnant mother interposed a Habeas Corpus to protect the life of her anomalous fetus from abortion, hindering a medical procedure
that had already started to interrupt her pregnancy, and condemning her to incredible pain until the miserable child was born (Diniz and Navarro, 2005)? This confirms the idea that emblematic, ostensible measures, that is, measures that mark and state presence and power among the flock, are considered of utmost importance, to the detriment of any other matters. So biopolitical control is no longer exclusive to the state, but also operates in the territory of the network, within which cohesion and rigid control on the part of network’s leadership is demonstrated through the administration of decisions on the management of the organic. If doctrine is reinterpreted as custom, with its automatism, superficiality and capacity to restrain free thinking, and if deliberation and internal debate within the community is proscribed, then “morality” within the community is reduced to conforming to a unified code of behaviour regarding body practices. This clear display, which we could call a shop-window morality, means that the flock, widely dispersed and constantly proliferating, still receives strong jurisdictional guidance. It was not by chance that Pope Benedict XVI advised the many faithful gathered during the XX World Youth Day in Cologne, Germany, in August 2005, not to practise a do-it-yourself religion, a religion “à la carte” (BBC Brazil online, Sunday 21 August 2005).

This new territoriality treats space in the same way as it treats bodies. It is possible to speak here of bodies in their behavioural space, since territory becomes the outcome of the presence of the plastic human web, imprinting its traces as it expands or consolidates its existence under the new territorial paradigm. This too the Pope hinted at during that same visit, on 15 August 2005: he told his audiences to display their religious affiliation in their workplaces, because: “God must be visible in public and private places and should be present in public life with the symbol of the cross” (ANSA, 2005). Still taking examples from Catholicism, we see the return to the streets of nuns and priests wearing habits more sumptuous and eye-catching than the ones they abandoned some three decades ago. This is no different from the neo-pentecostal pastor insisting to the members of his church that: “in order to get from Jesus what we wish, interior certainty of our faith and praying in a low voice is not enough; we must shout our faith and scream our demands”. This mandate is one of many: the church exercises severe vigilance upon the dress and general appearance of its members, and demands the ostensible display on all occasions of the emblematic object: the unmistakable volume of the Bible. So the spectacular is given greater emphasis than the doctrinal, and religion becomes, above all, a matter of identity. Diminishing doctrinal and ritual differences between Pentecostals and charismatic Catholics led neither to an undermining of identity barriers between Catholics and Protestants nor to a return to the long-abandoned striving for ecumenism of the 1970s and 1980s.

**Tension and mild annexation of lands and bodies**

Mark Juergensmeyer, in his thorough book covering world religious conflicts, attributes great historical depth to what he calls “symbolic” wars.
He seems to be deceived by the representations of his interviewees, whose battles arise out of ancient mystified, even re-invented sources, or, as in the case of protestant preachers of most denominations, traditionally employ martial rhetoric in “pressing their flocks to fight against evil forces” (2001: 183). Thus, for this author, the spirit of crusades and the “idea of holy war had had a mysterious and intimate relationship with religion since a long time ago” (Ibid.: 181). However, to understand the contention here, it is necessary to perceive that what appears to be continuity can be misleading if one does not distinguish the nuances when building a critique. The crusades in Medieval Europe and the Near East were an early example of the conquest of lands in the name of religion and for religious purposes. They can be used as reference to understand the historical transformations of the politics of religion. This is so precisely because the configuration of relationships between religious projects, ideas about territory and the composition of the warring forces themselves changed during the course of history. While the crusades aimed to recover the Holy Land where Christianity originated by seizing Islamic territories in the name of Catholic religious hierarchies, the later conquest and colonization of the New World followed a completely different pattern.

Indeed, in the colonial model, conquerors, colonial administrators and religious agents worked as partners in the enterprise, but their perspectives and aims were not a coherent whole. While the missionaries worked for the domestication of the new Indian and African slave labour force, their interests and world views did not coincide with those of the lay colonizers. As Gill Gott has pointed out, the relationship between the partners in the colonies was one of “arrested dialectics” (2002), in which the properly christianizing project was always hindered by partnership with colonial administrators and, one could add, by competition between religious congregations. Thus, though there was a conflictive encounter with Indian cosmologies and African religions, the representation and laws ruling this conflict were not the same as in the period of the crusades. In the present day, characterized by politicization of identities and globalization of corporative networks, as we have seen, the expansionist programme of religions can be described as “mild annexation”, through which the human flock itself is the colony and we are faced with a networking colonialism and mobile territoriality with their correlative forms of competitive violence.

It is one of the characteristics of such mobile territorality that previous inscriptions are effaced from a given space, which is then re-inscribed with new signs by the congregation in its spatial spreading. Space is understood as unmarked, tabula rasa, entirely available, open to transits and appropriations by new markings, inscriptions and the logos of the expanding webs. It is significant, for example, that field research by the present author in the late 1980s in the Central Andes of Argentina discovered that evangelical conversion of new members used to begin with the pulling down of stone mounds called “apachetas” located since ancestral times in the fields of the recently converted families. This is not merely an act of breaking pagan idols by incoming Christianity. It is the reconfiguration of space itself by means of effacing the stone altars that in Andean religion served as
markers of the places where Mother Earth was always fed, the precise points on the surface where ritual libations were offered to the earth and to the mountain divinities by the family settled there, in the company of community members invited for the ceremony. These markers organized natural space according to an oikonomic approach to land and resources, in contraposition to an economic one. The pulling down of the apacheta markers signifies that territory, in its previous radical singularity, becomes universally commensurable and exchangeable by reference to a universal equivalent, indispensable for the advent of exchange value and merchandise. Once the ancient stone altars that kept each piece of land unique have been removed, space becomes entirely equalized, measurable as merchandise, and appropriable by the incoming congregation (Segato, 2004).

Possibly the best enactment of the molecular process of competitive network expansion described above as “mild annexation” is the ritual that takes place regularly in the meetings of the Universal Church of God’s Kingdom (Iglesia Universal del Reino de Dios, IURD) in order to expel the devil from the body of a person in the audience. The devil presents itself always as a spiritual “entity” belonging to the pantheon of so-called “religions of the African matrix”, and is generally recognized as pertaining to the group of Exus and Pombagiras. The elementary ritual that takes place aims to expel the presence from the body of the possessed person. Much has been spoken and written about this piece of exorcism (see, for example, Soares, 1993; Birman, 1996; Ruth, 2003).

What intrigues specialists is the fact that pastor and believers do not express doubts about the real existence of the African spirits, with whom they compete. On the contrary, an entire scene is staged, within a Pentecostal church, involving possession by Afro-Brazilian spirits, and the ritual then proceeds to a violent purge. The divinities and spiritual entities that adepts must leave behind in order to enter the new faith are invoked and called “to come down”, “seizing” the prospective converts in possession, who have been induced “to receive” them, so that a violent “holy war” can be launched against them. Screams, shouted commands and more often than not physical violence are directed against the possessed, sometimes hurting them. People of the IURD pride themselves on what they call their “oraço de guerra”, that is, a “prayer of war”; and the members of neighbouring churches recognize them also by their forceful, utterly aggressive way of praying. Sometimes, when the pastor and community of another church cannot tackle an African-Brazilian entity that persists in attaching itself to an aspirant to conversion, they appeal to IURD and take the person to one of its churches to be freed from possession by the alien through IURD’s “prayer of war”. So there is a politics of alliance among churches, and a vigorous common antagonism towards African religiosities.

This idiosyncratic ritual of the largest Brazilian neo-pentecostal church, which has expanded through Latin America, and to the US, Asia, Africa and Europe, represents the very act of conversion of the new faithful to the Church as an act of war, through which a conqueror spirit, Jesus, defeats a spirit looser, Exu, reducing and expelling him from the body of the new
believer—a body that functions in the drama as a conquered, annexed territory, freed from the previous holder. The freeing and conquering of the body territory warrants its incorporation to the new network, which in turn achieves a new growth by means of the annexation. Through this brutal inclusion strategy, the body of the future member is treated as inhabited territory, literally possessed by alien spirits, foreign and malignant, inimical to God and, above all, of African origin, that is, coming from a continent believed to be antagonistic to Christianity and carrying a religious heritage dysfunctional with the precepts of the market and advanced capitalism, incompatible with the logic of production and unsuited to modernity and development. The subject-territory must be freed from these spiritual dwellers through a true action of conquest in order to be incorporated into the net. This drama stages conversion as an act of war and conquest of a new member, a body territory defended by its previous occupants. Conversion is experienced as an extreme form of shift in jurisdiction resulting from a process of defeat and capitulation at the hands of a better equipped spiritual world.

The whole dramatization is so theatrical and forceful because what the community witnesses there is a play of signs: the eradication of a mark, a logo, from the body of the faithful, its effacement, so that a new set of emblems can immediately be implanted in it to testify to its inclusion in the new congregation and its annexation into the new network. However, it is important to realize that this combat is not, as one might think, merely symbolic, but it has a material dimension as well: the network is aggregating not only the person of the new member but also the resources associated with them, including their capacity as a member of the electorate. It is the conquest of a territory, inextricably spiritual and material, in the unrelenting expansion of the flock.

The consequences of identity politics in patterning religious experience and affiliation today, described here as an aspect of a new territoriality, are vast in many fields. Competing networks, through internal repression and external aggression, spread freely in a hand-to-hand low-key combat. Even Brazil, a country traditionally perceived as pacific, is witnessing today what locals are calling a “holy war of Pentecostals against Afro-Brazilian religious people”.

Denominational structures tend to prevail and frighten a society such as, for example, that of the Candomble people, which was not used to identity confrontation—their tradition instead emphasized the strong principle of encompassing the other (Reinhart, 2007; Segato, 1998). Human rights and, particularly, freedom of belief may in such circumstances become compromised. People are pressed to become aware of the new laws ruling the encounter of religious networks in the public space under the new order which has been described here as network territoriality. In Latin America, Pentecostals and Christians of all kinds launch their wars in a variety of settings: in prisons, with renewed efforts and means among those of Indian origin, and even before the law, denouncing practices of animals sacrifice in Afro-Brazilian religious rituals as crimes of cruelty (Tadvald, 2007).
we have seen, the inter-group war front bars the healthy practice of intra-group conflict and deliberation of doctrinal, theological and moral matters inherent in religious consciousness. However, only unencumbered dissension over all philosophical aspects of faith within religious groups will enable increalising plurality and universality between people and greater enlightenment in times to come.

NOTES

1. See, for a new insight on this process of transformation of disciplinary tech-niques, Deleuze (1990).

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Rita Laura SEGATO teaches Anthropology at the University of Brasilia and directs the research group on *Anthropology and Human Rights of the Brazilian National Research Council* (CNPq). She has published *Santos e Daimones: O Politeísmo Afro-Brasileiro e a Tradição Arqueal* (Editora da Universidade de Brasília, 1995 and 2005); *Shango Cult In Recife, Brazil* (in collaboration with José Jorge de Carvalho, FUNDEF/CONAC/OEA, 1992); *Las estructuras elementales de la violencia* (Prometeo, 2003); *La Nación y sus Otros: Raza, etnicidad y diversidad religiosa en tiempos de Política de la Identidad* (Prometeo, 2007). She also organized, in collaboration with Jan-Ake Alvarsson, the volume *Religions in Transition: Mobility, Merging and Globalization in the Ermergence of Contemporary Religious Adhesions* (Uppsala Studies in Cultural Anthropology 37, 2004). ADDRESS: Universidade de Brasília, Instituto de Ciências Sociais, Departamento de Antropologia, Campus Universitário Darcy Ribeiro, Asa Norte ICC Centro, Sobrelôja, B1–347 70.910–900, Brasília, Brazil. [email: rsegato@terra.com.br]

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