Localizing and Globalizing Processes in Brazilian Catholicism: Comparing Inculturation in Liberationist and Charismatic Catholic Cultures

Marjo de Theije, Cecília Loreto Mariz

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LOCALIZING AND GLOBALIZING PROCESSES IN BRAZILIAN CATHOLICISM

Comparing Inculturation in Liberationist and Charismatic Catholic Cultures*

Marjo de Theije
Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Cecília L. Mariz
Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro

Abstract: The authors discuss the various ways in which liberationist Catholicism and the Catholic charismatic movement in Brazil take positions in the overall globalizing and homogenizing cultural forces in universal Catholicism and wider society. They argue that in their discourses and practices, these two contemporary Catholic movements refer to notions of both local and global and identify with specific parts of global Catholicism by confronting processes of syncretism, acculturation, and inculturation. Through an analysis of the meaning of tradition and roots, the use of music, and the practice of pilgrimage, the authors show how both movements manage the construction of distinctive religious cultures and forms of inculturation in the context of tension between the local and the global.

INTRODUCTION

One of the most significant changes brought about by Vatican II—namely, the celebration of Mass in the vernacular—reflected the resolution of the Catholic Church to accept cultural differences and local singularities. In a period in which the world seemed to be achieving uniformity of cultures and societies as a result of intensified communication and increased economic connections, the Catholic Church—which for centuries promoted cultural homogenization through the use of its own language (Latin) in prayer and liturgy, its standardized rituals, and the provision of a uniform religious education worldwide—changed its policy and initiated the

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process of aggiornamento. This meant, for example, the pursuit of dialogue with other cultures and respect for cultural diversity and local forms of expression, at least at the level of discourse. The Vatican II shift clearly illustrates what sociological theories on the globalization process called its "double dimension" (Bauman 1999; Robertson 1993). Globalizing processes reinforce local distinctiveness and, at the same time, homogenize social life.

In this article, we analyze the discourses and liturgical practices of two Catholic movements in Brazil that claim to have originated from Vatican II. We compare how these two movements interpreted the Catholic Church's aggiornamento campaign and its intention to be open to local cultures, which Catholic theologians have called "inculturation." We also analyze the Catholicism that is inspired by liberation theology (which we refer to as liberationist Catholicism or *catolicismo da libertação* [CL])[1] and the Catholic charismatic renewal movement (*movimento de renovação carismática católico* [MRCC]), because both are important movements in contemporary Brazilian Catholicism, although in many respects they are poles apart and are dissimilar with respect to their position and current strength in both the church and society.

In the past decade, the visibility of the MRCC has grown a lot compared to CL, but it is difficult to establish concrete numbers of Catholics who identify with each movement. Our estimate is that about one-fifth of Brazilian Catholics can be categorized as sympathetic to CL and an equal number as involved in the MRCC.[2] Looking at the two Catholic movements at the level of discourses and daily practice is interesting, because the question of aggiornamento and inculturation blends so well into the discussions about the interrelationships between the local and the global expressed in religious terms. Our focus in this article is on daily practices; we do not intend to analyze the discourses of theologians. We dif-

1. In Brazil, the Catholicism that draws on liberation theology is often called *progressive Catholicism,* a term we find unfit for the current analysis because of its strong (and limited) political connotation. We use the term *liberationist Catholicism,* referring to the ideological rooting of this Catholicism in liberation theology, also beyond its political reading (de Theije 2002).

2. Research carried out by the Centro de Estatística Religiosa e Investigacões Sociais (CERIS) in six state capitals shows the importance of the movements: 18.2 percent of the Catholics identified with the MRCC and 19.3 percent with a form of community-oriented Catholicism. It is important to remember that these are not exclusive categories. The CL movement has no membership system or specific activities that could be defined as exclusively liberationist. The CERIS research distinguishes a category of Catholics who identify with the social dimension of Catholicism and uses participation in community centers and other community activities as criteria (Fernandes 2002, 109–110). Nevertheless, we observe that part of those identified with MRCC also participate in these community activities. The census of 2000 revealed the relative decline of Catholicism in Brazil; however, 73.77 percent of the population (125 million people) still identified themselves as Catholic.

ferentiate three genres of discourses: those of theologians and intellectual members of the clergy; those of the "pastoral agents" or militant leaders, who are the main actors who refashion ideology and theology into liturgy and religious practices;[3] and those elaborated by the followers or ordinary members of each movement, who are the targets of the campaign. Here, we concentrate on the discourse elaborated by the pastoral agents as it can be found in booklets, songs, preaching, and prayers, and on the practices of the laity. The analysis of the production of the intricacies that are involved in the use of the notions of global and local in the discourse and practice of two different movements offers new insights into the process of the production of religious signification and understanding in the context of ever-more-complex globalizing and localizing forces.

Many authors have tried to identify the consequences of globalization for Brazilian belief systems (Ortiz 2001; Velho 1997). However, most of these works discuss globalization at a high level of generalization. Our aim is not to repeat these debates, but to show how activist religious leaders and lay church members formulate notions of and references to the global and the local in religious practices and discourses, and how these references set standards for the way in which religious institutions and groups function in contemporary Brazil (see Peterson, Vásquez, and Williams 2001; Vásquez and Marquardt 2003). The central questions of this article emerged during our fieldwork research in Pernambuco and Rio de Janeiro states, where we studied the relationships between CL and the MRCC in several local contexts. The very different references each makes to local and to global culture motivated us to analyze the way in which the Brazilian CL and the MRCC position themselves in and cope with the tensions between local and global in their local, regional, and national practices and ideologies. We are especially concerned with the attitudes that are discernible in the religious material and discourses produced in each movement with respect to notions of the local or the global.

In the first part of this article, we expand on the historical context in which, for centuries, Catholic Church leaders have promoted standard discourses and practices, and have therefore faced the need to respond to the local and the global. We also introduce some of the main concepts that recur in the debate, such as acculturation, syncretism, and inculturation, each of which refers to the same phenomenon but has its own distinct connotations. We then present a brief description of the two movements under study and their attitudes toward processes of acculturation, syncretism, and inculturation.

We subsequently discuss the way in which CL and the MRCC conceptualize and deal with their followers' traditions and roots, in order to

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3. This group includes the actors whom some authors call *basistas* (De Theije 2002; Lehmann 1990, 1996).

illustrate the goals and aspirations of the two groups. In the remainder of the article, we analyze the discourses of the two movements with respect to expressions of localizing and globalizing references, as these are to be found in the texts and music styles, and in the ritual practice of pilgrimage. Our analysis shows that CL and the MRCC have quite different ways of coping with the overall globalizing and homogenizing forces in universal Catholicism and with the tension this creates between the local and the global, both in their discourse and in their practices. Our observations suggest important contradictions between the expressed ideologies and the actual practices.

It should be stressed that we have not set out to reify or essentialize the concepts of local and global. In our interpretation, something can be local or global depending on the context in which it is placed and the social experiences it refers to or of which it speaks. Elements that are regarded as local or global interact and can be redefined in the process. Thus, the globalization process attributed new significations and values to local cultures. Local experiences and symbols acquire new dimensions and lose importance in this process, or they become revalorized in the search for the roots of cultural identities and practices. This revalorization leads to a redefinition of what local culture and tradition is. Although this redefinition and constant re-creation are processes inherent to any tradition or culture, globalization has intensified them. And because this has taken place in a relatively short period, the tensions and contestations in this process of cultural production became more visible and perceptible. Therefore, we call attention to the dynamic character of local and global characterization, which, as distinct sides of the same coin, are part of a unique refashioning process.

TRANSLOCAL CATHOLICISM: UNIVERSAL BELIEF, SYNCRETISM, ACCULTURATION, AND INCULTURATION

As Robertson (1993) has shown, all world religions have promoted a kind of globalization. Catholicism, like Christianity in general, has been part of a translocal project ever since it started to disseminate the message of a universal ethics. The specificity of Catholicism, though, is its emphasis on a unique church and a unique authority: the pope. With its hierarchical structure and centralized leadership, Catholicism is a "primary example of purposeful transnational religious development" (Levitt 2001, 2). Therefore, Catholicism has had to deal with the tension between its ideology of universality and its own culture, or that of its agents who are working to spread the universal ideology and moral principles. Catholicism has continually needed to adapt to local cultures, and the tension between the Catholic universals and the practices and experiences rooted in particular cultural contexts has always been present.

The Catholic Church has used several policies to respond to the problems posed by its universal claims. Different forms of syncretism and acculturation that have occurred and are occurring, albeit to different degrees, are responses to these questions. *Syncretism,* the word usually used to label the combination of elements taken from various religious sources, was one result of the encounter of cultures (Droogers and Greenfield 2001). Often these syncretisms were incorporated into the official tradition without actually being perceived. But in the theological and religious discourses, syncretism was considered a negative process, to be rejected as doctrinal or liturgical distortion (Teixeira 2001). Therefore, syncretism has been viewed not as a simple cultural adaptation or translation, but as a contamination and mixture with alien creeds that change the content of the religious message. In contrast to syncretism, acculturation was not always considered harmful to Catholicism. In the discourse of church authorities, acculturation entails a dialogue with existing local tradition, which, although it needs to be controlled, may lead to some adjustments to the universal liturgical customs. This acceptance of local tradition, however, has its limits because the need for a common language contradicts the wish to bring about acculturation. In addition, the ethical principles of religion are universal and cannot be localized.

In Brazil, as in other parts of the world, Catholicism adopts localized appearances. The representatives of the official church use the expression *catolicismo popular* (popular Catholicism) or *religiosidade popular* (popular religion) to describe the result of the translation of universal Catholicism into local culture. The relationship between Roman Catholicism and the popular has always been tense (Brandão 1980). As Ortiz (2001, 62) puts it, "the dispute between the lettered religion and popular religiosity is a constant in the history of all universal beliefs." The agreement on a unique, official, universal version, defined and defended by the intellectuals of the religion, has always been an ideal rather than reality. A significant part of the history of the Brazilian Catholic Church has been the quest to convert popular religious practices and beliefs into the official version of the times through periodic campaigns (De Theije 2002, 2004).[4] Each campaign has embraced different attitudes toward the question of syncretism and acculturation. The process of Romanization, in the first decades of the twentieth century, and the campaign fostered by liberation theology, in the 1970s and 1980s, are the clearest examples of such campaigns.

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4. Campaigns are organized endeavors to change the prevailing religious order. They are usually carried out by clergy or intellectuals who introduce specific interpretations and expressions, often in accordance with the ideas and policies of the national and universal church. We draw on the work of Ortner (1989a, 1989b), who used this concept to analyze cultural politics in the realm of religion.

The Romanization campaign aimed at restoring and centralizing clerical authority, and in the process, expressions of syncretic religion and popular forms of Catholicism were to be reformed or eradicated (De Groot 1996; Oliveira 1985). This policy started changing in some aspects after Vatican II, when the plurality of Catholicism became acknowledged and regional expressions gained a place in liturgy and rituals. To say Mass in the vernacular can be interpreted as an adaptation to the local. Nevertheless, this recognition of diversity was accompanied by a process of homogenization caused by the liturgical and theological renewals that were also endorsed by the centralized authority of Rome (Hervieu-Léger 1997, 105). At the local level, these opposing policies often caused conflicts between different Catholic groups or between the clergy and the people (De Theije 1990, 2006).

The CL campaign was initially characterized by a tolerant discourse toward local expressions of the Catholic faith, which eventually developed into the inculturation discourse.[5] Not only the social and political situation of the faithful but also their culture became a central component of, and source for, religious meaning making. The poor Catholics of Brazil became the target and the inspiration for pastoral practice and policy. As part of this focus on the underprivileged, CL also attempted to appreciate the religion of the people (Lehmann 1996). The local is no longer merely the deviant, to be controlled or expelled. Instead, inculturation became an important topic in theological and pastoral practice. The intellectuals of the CL campaign used the term *inculturation* to mean the integration into the Catholic ritual of indigenous religious rituals, symbols, and objects (Miranda 2000). Inculturation is the process that gives expression to a religion that is specific to a certain community, and it often entails a reformation of the religion itself (Lehmann 1998, 612).[6] It thus refers to a conscious process of religious re-creation in which, ideally, none of the composing elements dominates the others. As we understand it, the difference between acculturation and inculturation lies in the ideological underpinning of the process. While the first might go unnoticed as a side effect of disseminating the Catholic faith, the second is a deliberate campaign of religious change, the main goal of which is to integrate indigenous and Catholic religious practices and beliefs. It is an ideologically desired form of acculturation.

In the subsequent decades, Brazilian Catholicism was affected by a new campaign of religious change, in which the emphasis shifted toward forms of Catholicism that had a predilection for the development of a per-

5. For a detailed analysis of this shift, see Lehmann (1996, 67). For a history of the neologism *inculturation,* see Teixeira (2001).

6. In Latin America, the discussions about inculturation address the indigenous religious practices more than those of Afro-Americans or other groups (Brandão 2002; Norget 1997).

sonal relationship with God. From the 1980s onward, charismatic Catholicism began to occupy a place in the Brazilian religious landscape as part of a worldwide growth of charismatic Christianity (Introvigne 2004). The first studies on the MRCC in Brazil associated the movement with the conservative reaction of the church to CL. Perceived as socially alienated and apolitical, the charismatic Catholics were described as being allied to the hierarchy's proposal to demobilize CL (Oliveira 1978; Comblin 1983; Della Cava 1990, 1992). The content and form of the religious meanings of the MRCC are generally described as individualistic, emotional, and therapeutic, and they are classified as a form of Catholic Pentecostalism (Machado 1996; Mariz and Machado 1994; Prandi 1997). The similarities between Pentecostalism and the MRCC led to the suggestion that the growth of the MRCC would help the Catholic Church to withstand the competition from growing Pentecostalism in Brazil. Scholars no longer agree that the contrasts with other Catholic groups are as strong as is reported in earlier research (Boff 2000; Mariz and Machado 2000; Souza 2000). Although the two kinds of Catholicism are different (and in some respects, even opposing) ways of interpreting and experiencing Catholicism, in local practice some groups and individuals adhere to both. In some areas, such as the Diocese of Garanhuns (Pernambuco), members of the MRCC participate in the rather liberationist-oriented pastoral work of the diocese and share with the latter their concern for social justice. Double membership is no exception here (De Theije 1999, 2002). In other places, however, the two forms of Catholicism seem to clash (Prandi and Souza 1996).

In just two decades, the MRCC has developed into a major phenomenon in Brazilian religiosity. In contrast to CL, the MRCC is not tolerant of local or indigenous forms of religion. Although MRCC followers often make references to Afro-Brazilian religions and to Kardecist spiritism—which is very popular in Brazil, especially in its Afro-spiritist blended version—they do so in a negative way, repudiating these popular religions. Thus, in the past three decades, several religious refigurations have taken place. While CL emphasizes the link between religious beliefs and local and national social structures, the MRCC stresses the sacraments and a personal—and, notably, nonlocalized—bond with God. In the first years of the twenty-first century, both types of Catholicism exist in Brazil, each coping in its own manner with localizing and globalizing tendencies in Catholicism.

Globalization and Religious Campaigns

As a result of technological innovations that intensify the historical tendency toward globalization, the tension between the local/popular and the universal/intellectual/global has acquired new forms and meanings, and it surpasses the borders of the religions of universal ethics. For certain groups of Catholics, the globalization of culture, the crisis of na-

tional identities, and the reappraisal of local and ethnic identities, among other processes, brought into question the universality of some of their practices and beliefs that have traditionally been seen as global. In Brazil, Catholic campaigns no longer propose a simple homogenization of religion, as those of previous times did. The following is an analysis of the processes that gave rise to the formation of the campaigns of CL and the MRCC. It contextualizes the policies and cultural resources they use.

CL is the fruit of liberation theology, which in turn is the product of an intellectual reflection, although it was sometimes suggested to be a creed that sprang from the poor. Elaborated by Latin American theologians, the theology addressed the liberation of oppressed people in peripheral countries. The CL movement can be seen as the result of a cognitive bargain between theologians and pastoral workers whose background in the social sciences was an important inspiration for the theology and pastoral policy they developed.[7] Marxism, the dominant orientation in the social sciences in the 1960s and 1970s, was particularly inspiring for liberation theology (Löwy 1996; Mariz 1993, 1994; Lehmann 1990). The discourse was built upon the "social reality" of Latin America, emphasizing the battle against poverty and the economic and political dependency of the continent, while criticizing modernity as something arising from the rich or coming from abroad (Mariz 1993; Lehmann 1996). For CL, the relationship between local and global culture is a theme for explicit debate and reflection. Both CL and liberation theology—the theology that inspired it to a great extent—are involved in a battle against any type of domination of peoples in general. As such, this Catholicism attempts to overcome the cultural oppression that results from the invasion of local culture by global culture. To emphasize the place of the believers and their problems, CL always makes references to the social and economic problems of Latin America and Brazil. The whole idea of "option for the poor" entails a localization of the religious interpretations.

The text of the Tenth Intereclesial Meeting (held at Ilhéus, Bahia, in 2000) illustrates this position. Inculturation was a central theme of the meeting. In the text, "global culture" is denounced for being located in specific social and local contexts, as well as for defending the interests of some and oppressing others. Global mercantilism and the occidental way of life are criticized because they lead to the destruction of local cultures (Secretariado 2000). In some discourses, the local is interpreted as the excluded, the threatened with extinction, which must be defended

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7. This concept refers, in a broad sense and on a highly abstract level, to cognitive assumption exchanges between people who have held different worldviews. It can be interpreted as a kind of syncretism. Cognitive bargain does not assume that this exchange is necessarily related (although it could be) to any process of economic or political domination (Berger and Luckmann 1966).

because it is the root of the dominated and explored peoples' identities in the process of capitalist expansion. In this respect, CL resembles the international antiglobalization movement. Despite the criticism of globalization and global culture in its discourse, CL (like most antiglobalization movements) depends on and is part of a global network, and has been highly affected by the international context.[8] Thus, CL not only was very much influenced by global events, such as the crisis of socialism and the fall of the Berlin Wall, but also offers (again like other antiglobalization movements) an alternative model of what a global society should be.

This view of globalization also gives a new status to popular religion as the expression of local cultures. In northeastern Brazil, some of the written material produced by liberationist Catholics is in the form of the traditional *literatura de cordel* (literally "string literature"—the booklets are hung from a string in the places where they are sold); much of this literature is locally produced and concerns such popular themes as love, local history, and religious stories. Local popular music is incorporated into the liturgy, and Catholic rituals are adapted to local lifestyles, for example by using local foodstuffs as offerings or organizing a via crucis through the neighborhood (De Theije 2002).[9] In Bahia and elsewhere, CL has introduced the *Missa Afro* (African mass) in an attempt to relate to the black movement by introducing elements from the Afro-Brazilian religions into the Catholic mass (Sanchis 2001; Burdick 1998).

The MRCC is different from CL in its attitude toward local cultures. In part, this may be due to its roots. The MRCC arose among the laity—North American laypeople who wanted to undergo the experience of the Holy Spirit in the same way the Pentecostals did. Thus, the MRCC emerged from mystical experiences and from a cognitive bargain with Pentecostalism in North America's pluralistic society. In Brazil, the MRCC has avoided discussing the tension between the universal and the local values, and it presents itself as a universal or global discourse. For the MRCC, debates on acculturation seem to be an absolute nonissue: the theme is absent from the movement's publications, inculturation is neither discussed nor reflected upon, and there is no discussion about ethnic identity or culture. The movement refers to universal faith rather than a localized, Brazilian, or Latin American Catholicism. It regards universal Catholicism, as well as humanity in general, as the community of all individuals, without mentioning any peoples specifically. Thus, contrary to CL's reaffirmation

8. Liberationist theologians and Catholics have been active participants in the various meetings of the World Social Forum held in Porto Alegre in Brazil and elsewhere.

9. In this turn to the authenticity of the popular religiosity, CL gave significance to some elements but not to all. Several authors have shown that the CL discourse also took away a large part of the enchantment of popular Catholicism. For a systematic analysis of this point, which is often utilized as an explanation for the failure of CL to achieve overall success in Brazil, see Mariz (1993).

of Latin American roots, the MRCC emphasizes its Catholic roots, which are universal, from and for all places. The charismatic discourse focuses on individual spiritual need and sufferings rather than on the community experiences. By addressing a universal individual, the MRCC tends to promote a global culture.[10] Despite this, research in one northeastern parish has shown that local MRCC prayer groups can develop a localized version of the general system of beliefs and practices. In this particular parish, CL is well developed, and the charismatic groups incorporate part of its discourse and practice. The paradoxical outcome of this blending was that a group of charismatic youngsters sided with the liberationist *basistas* during the election campaigns in the early 1990s and formed a fanatic left-wing militancy (De Theije 2002).

This brief discussion reveals paradoxes in the refashioning of the original roots of the movements into localized religious practices. First, the different origins mark each movement in a contradictory way. The MRCC arose from a religious practice with geographical and specific cultural characteristics but proposes a universal religion. In contrast, CL—which arose from a reflection on the poverty in Latin America in the cognitive bargain between religion and transnational social sciences—proposes inculturation. In this case, the defense of local cultures was the fruit of a universalistic way of thinking, of a rationalist and theoretical theological and sociological reflection. Second, both movements can be considered a form of syncretism, even if their participants would not readily admit this. Although CL is the fruit of a reflexive and intellectual endeavor, and the MRCC of a ritual and mystical experience, both movements have redefined Catholic religious life as a whole. In this process, the intellectual roots of CL also gave rise to new mystical and ritual forms of religious experience, and the experience of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the MRCC also brought about theological and intellectual reflections. Both were formed through creative redefinition, living the religion, and exchange and fusion with other worldviews.

The two types of Catholicism deal with the tensions between the local and the universal in quite different ways. The local and the global become ideological references in the positioning of the movements and in the identity they construct and perform. The connecting point here is the allusion in the religious discourses to questions of origin and tradition. In the following sections, we look at how these different constructions of origins and worldviews are reflected and reworked in the practice and discourse of the two movements. We start by analyzing the tradition that is evoked and revived in the two movements.

10. As Robertson (1993) argues, the globalization process reinforces the idea of individual autonomy.

Discourses on Tradition and Roots

Universal religions engender global identities. How do the MRCC and CL respond to the input from and the constraints imposed by the globalizing world and their translocal religious connections? Vertovec (2000, 26) considers the growing awareness of global religious identities as one feature of global religious change. In Catholicism, the expression "Mother Church" illustrates the importance of the identification with Rome and the "family" of Catholics on all continents. Although this image is not new in Catholicism, people may have become more aware of it as a result of the proliferation of print and electronic media, and the three visits (1980, 1991, 1997) by Pope John Paul II to Brazil. Both CL and the MRCC identify with the universal church of Rome, albeit with a different intensity and in different ways. Both movements also allude to a tradition, in the sense of memory and identity, that exemplifies the connection with the world community of Catholics. However, in this process of religious identification, the two movements allude to different traditions. The difference is related to the fact that each seems to have a different purpose in referring to Catholic identities. Also, the degree of reflection about what the tradition should be and the role of the movement in the elaboration of it differs. While the texts produced by the intellectuals and leaders of CL elaborate arguments on the need to find roots and the plurality within one religion, the texts of the MRCC emphasize the universality of creed.

The MRCC seems to assume a unique tradition or memory—the Catholic tradition that needs only to be revived or renovated in order to gain supremacy. Membership in the universal Catholic Church is valued as an important and positive element of charismatic Catholicism. As a result, it is the Catholic identity as such that the movement tries to influence, an identity that is conceptualized and treated as a homogenous one and the only genuine Catholic identity. The MRCC emphasizes those symbols that differentiate Catholicism from other religions and from secular society. The charismatic priest uses the cassock or other signs that identify him as a Catholic clergyman (Mariz 1998). The MRCC also reelaborates typical Catholic practices and rituals, such as the rosary, the veneration of Our Lady, and the adoration of the Most Holy Sacrament. Especially the veneration of Our Lady is a vital and distinctive element of this Catholicism, which is also significant as a diacritic element in relation to Protestant Pentecostalism (Machado 1996). In addition, members of charismatic groups are very attracted to sites in Brazil or abroad where recent apparitions of the Virgin Mary have been reported.

There was a practical reason behind this emphasis on Catholic roots in the Brazilian situation. In its first decade, the MRCC encountered strong opposition from the Brazilian church's hierarchy and, as a consequence, found it difficult to expand among the laity. Acceptance as a legitimate

movement among bishops and clergy, as well as adherence by ordinary Catholics, in a context where liberationist thought and liturgical practice was dominating, was sought through the explicit and repeated reference to the importance of obedience to the church hierarchy. In the instructions for the music ministry, it is stated, "We must also seek catholicity. . . . We must pursue obedience to our Church that hierarchically is represented by our priests and bishops. Be obedient. Obedience is the fruit of love" (Nascimento 1998, 14). Charismatic Catholics in local prayer meetings stress their deference to clergy repeatedly and in many forms; for example, when they say "I am at the side of the pope" to express their opinion on controversial topics such as party politics or birth control (De Theije 2002).

The Catholic roots are sought also in specifics of Catholicism, its symbols, and the practices that mark the differences from other religions. The Catholic distinctiveness has to confront the secular cultural standardization. Members of the MRCC sport bumper stickers or wear T-shirts declaring, "Proud to be Catholic." "Mary goes first" is another slogan that underscores the Catholicity of the movement (Nascimento 2001). The Catholicism of the MRCC is also used to confront the identity of other religious groups. In Brazil, MRCC members seem to be more concerned (and are certainly more concerned than are those linked to CL) with the growth of evangelical churches in the country than are most Catholics. They interpret the growing visibility of these churches in Brazilian society as a threat to their Catholic beliefs and identity. A significant example of the importance of the Catholic identity is provided by the song "Arengação" (Declamation), which starts with the line "I am Catholic, apostolic, Roman" and continues, "I am Catholic, apostolic, Roman. I won't leave my faith for another faith" (Associação 2001).

This positive attitude toward the universal claims of the Catholic Church stands in sharp contrast to the outlook of CL, where the authority and legitimation of the church of Rome is contested and even seems to be pictured as a symbol of the domination of the West over the South or of the injustice of capitalism as a world system. In the case of CL, prominence is given to the intention to revive the tradition and culture of the faithful, stressing Christianity rather than Catholicism. This is stated in the following citation from the text of the Tenth Intereclesial Meeting (Secretariado 2000, 30):

Jesus was faithful to the tradition and culture of his people, which is why his message is so universal! Because in the most profound and faithful source of any race, culture or religion, there is human life, there is the common ground of all peoples, where God speaks to us.

The central theme of the text for this meeting is the acculturation of faith. The authors defend a versatile Christian religion because they want to protect the cultures of all peoples, accepting that culture, lifestyle, and re-

ligion always mix. The esteem for cultural diversity is expressed in many phrases: "Since its origin, Christianity has been born in various and diversified forms. Variety shows the beauty of God's face" (Secretariado 2000, 38). Such phrases reveal clearly the positive attitude in relation to cultural diversity as well as the abandonment of the project of universal standardization of religious experience. A little further on in the same text, the authors adhere to history and use the cultural differences in the Roman Empire to state:

Because of these differences in living conditions, it was impossible for all communities to have the same face. It was like today. In the north-east, the ways the people celebrate the word of God are different from those in the south. The decorations in a chapel in inland Minas [Gerais] are different from those in the cathedral of Brasilia. A mass in Afro-Brazilian rites is different from a mass sung in Gregorian. (Secretariado 2000, 38–39)

What is emphasized here is the need to recognize the different styles and tastes of each people within the same religious universe. However, the diversity is explained by the geographical localization of each culture or by the ethnic background (as is the case with the Afro-Brazilian cultures).

In contrast, the texts and songs of the MRCC contain very few references to Brazilian or Latin American identity or to ethnicity in general. Moreover, where there is such a reference, it has a connotation quite different from the above-described liberationist one. Of the 1,308 songs in the 2001 edition of the much-used book of songs *Louvemos o Senhor* (Praise the Lord), there are only three geographical references—two to Brazil and one to Latin America. The songs are "Families of Brazil," "Brown Mother of the Heaven," and "Our Lady of Brazil." The "Brown Mother" refers to Our Lady of Guadalupe (Mexico's patron saint) and contains references to Latin American devotion: "Dark Skinned Mother of Heaven, Lady of Latin America / With a look and charity so divine, and the same color as many races." These texts show that there is not absolute indifference to the notion of regional or national identity, or to ethnic identity. Nevertheless, questions of identity are drawn on to enforce a Catholic identity. Sure enough, difference is recognized, but the aim is to reaffirm unity. Using a notion of national identity based on geographical markers, the Catholic identity is nourished, rather than vice versa. As with the devotion of Brazilians to Our Lady Aparecida, the devotion of Latin Americans to the Virgin of Guadalupe is emphasized to demonstrate the equality of all believers within one Catholic faith.

The differences between CL and the MRCC become evident if one looks at the attitudes of each movement toward Afro-Brazilian religions. A large number of MRCC followers are greatly discomforted by Afro-Brazilian religions; for them, it is unthinkable to integrate African rituals into a Catholic mass. Like the non-Catholic Pentecostals, many MRCC followers consider African religion demonic (Mariz and Machado 1994).

From the CL point of view, religious agents should respect the diversity of traditions and recapture the various cultural roots of the faithful. Its project of inculturation thus signifies the reelaboration of a plurality of local cultures, including Afro-Brazilian culture (Sanchis 2001; Burdick 1998). However, the integration of local elements is concentrated on the level of political conscientization and ritual forms and does not include beliefs held by the people, such as beliefs in the miraculous power of saints, the practice of *promessas* (vows), or the danger of macumba (Afro-Brazilian sorcery). Tolerance by the CL of popular and local religious traditions conceals a basic disbelief in the possibility that spiritual entities may accomplish effects in real life (Mariz 1993). Consequently, the inculturation strategy of CL is a cognitive rupture with the popular culture.

The MRCC in turn can also be said to be reelaborating a tradition, but because it is primarily a Catholic identity, its boundaries are the globe rather than a region. However, although the MRCC tries to avoid any discussion on the topic of acculturation or inculturation, the movement does not manage to escape the local cultural propensities and ends up acculturating. The prominence given during local meetings to the presence of demonic evils in adherents' lives shows that these also form part of the religious beliefs—albeit in a negative sense (De Theije 2002). Nevertheless, MRCC members share with spiritists and other popular religions many cognitive assumptions about the supernatural world (Mariz 1994). In the discourse of many Catholics (including charismatics), the spirits, the enemy, and the devil are acting beings that can cause illness, poverty, deprivation, and family problems (Maués 2003). At the beginning of this century, the charismatic clergyman Frei Inocêncio exorcized demons and neutralized harmful *despachos* (ritual offerings in Afro-Brazilian religion) in the central cathedral of Rio de Janeiro, during meetings that were called "sessions of deliverance" (*libertação*). The actual expulsion would take place behind closed doors, the friar said, in order to prevent the evil spirit from entering the persons attending the session. These examples show that popular religious beliefs are integrated in charismatic Catholicism. The MRCC also shares rites and body expressions with other religions, as Maués (2000) shows in his comparison of charismatic healing practices and those of indigenous groups in the Amazon region. Notwithstanding common elements, the MRCC discourse rejects all religious forms that are not part of Roman Catholicism. This difference between the two types of Catholicism in contemporary Brazil becomes still more evident when we analyze the music of the songs of each group.

Local Music, Globalized Tunes and Styles

The campaigns of both CL and the MRCC use music to give expression to faith. Not only the texts but also the rhythms and melodies of the songs

they use are very different, further revealing the position of each movement in relation to what we have called the tension between the local and the global. The songs of CL disclose the quest for a foundation in the local culture by adopting regional rhythms. For example, it is common for religious songs in the Northeast to be based on a *forró* or *baião*—music styles that are typical of rural areas in northeastern Brazil (De Theije 2002).

However, preservation and fortification are accompanied by changes. In the search for authentication of the liberationist ideology in the local culture, the CL campaign also reelaborates traditions and practices. This process of reinforcing the local while simultaneously changing it through the introduction of new elements that are universal rather than local can be illustrated by one of the favorite songs in Pernambucan base communities: "I am happy in the community." One verse goes, "Community in the Northeast / Struggle for liberation / To form a chain / To break the oppression." Here, an explicit geographical reference is combined with a political goal. This politico-religious project has a homogenizing character, because its goal is to unite the communities under one political flag. Thus, this project of inculturation contains universal and global elements because it refers to values, ideas, and principles that are standardized and of all places.

The music of the MRCC has far fewer links with the local or regional traditions, and its songs sound more modern, in the sense of being connected to the globalized (or, rather, Americanized) popular mass culture. Many songs have a pop, rock, or other international rhythm. The criterion for choosing a rhythm is not whether it is a local or a global one; it might be both, and this is not considered important. What matters is the sound and its capacity to touch the faithful. Because the followers tend to have "globalized" ears, the music acquires this characteristic, too. The MRCC songs are based on rhythms that are popular in the secular world. The song "Senhor me queima" ("Lord burn me") sounds like a Bahian *axé;* "Vira de Jesus" is sung to the tune of a Portuguese folk song (the *vira*), and there are a "Blues do Senhor" and a "Funk de Jesus." These are all examples of attuning to the dominant styles in wider society. "Today we need to put more popular music," a musician of a charismatic band said, "to really jump, sing, dance; that is what moves the churches today" (Oliveira 1999, 27). This is not to say that all that comes from outside is incorporated: the MRCC picks and chooses from the available tunes, and the cultural resources it draws on are global. We might call this popular culture urban popular culture—a popular culture that differs from the one admired in CL ideology.

In general, media and modern means of communication played an important role in the charismatic campaign (Souza 2001; Fernandes 2005; Carranza Davila 2000). In the interviews with followers of the MRCC, many mentioned that they listened to charismatic programs on the radio every

every day. Rede Vida—the first nationwide Catholic network, which has been on the air since 1995—broadcasts mainly charismatic programs (Mariz 1998, 47). An exclusively charismatic television broadcasting network— TV Século 21—was established only in 1999, although it had launched as a production company already in 1981. The use of these mass media may promote a relative homogenization of the form and content of the MRCC. As Levitt (2001, 12) puts it: "There has also been a proliferation of emotional and spiritual communities and affinity groups that cross-cut national traditions and make Catholicism even more portable than it was before."

TRANSLOCAL CONNECTIONS: PILGRIMAGE

The study of diaspora religions has drawn attention to another aspect of religious change that is of interest to our argument. The easier forms of contact between different localities resulting from cheap long-distance travel give religious groups the opportunity to maintain intensive contact with the important centers of their religion (Cohen 1997, 187). In Catholic history, pilgrimage has been the ritual used to confirm the contacts between holy places and the community of believers. In contemporary Brazil, both CL and the MRCC utilize this tradition, confirming the connection with the universal church and with larger regional and local centers of sanctity: middle-class Brazilian Catholics make pilgrimages to Rome and Medjugorje, and local base communities in the Northeast organize trips to Juazeiro do Norte or to smaller places in the region.

The connection with the centers of the religion may largely be an imagined one, though this does not necessarily make it meaningless. The case of Medjugorje exemplifies this. Medjugorje is especially popular among middle-class MRCC pilgrims, although this Bosnian site is not on Rome's list of officially recognized sacred places. Pilgrims from Brazil include it in their tour through Europe, along with such places as Rome, Lourdes, and Fátima. For the MRCC, the apparitions of Mary are especially important, which correlates with this movement's emphasis on the veneration of Mary. Recent research in Brazil indicates that charismatic Catholics are taking over Brazilian sites of recent, and sometimes Marian, apparitions (Steil, Mariz, and Reesink 2003). In contrast, it is important to stress that, despite their occurrence in Brazil, in general these alleged apparitions adopt the discourse and follow the model of the European apparitions at Lourdes, Fátima, and La Salette.

In CL, too, the tradition of pilgrimage has been revived. The religious campaign of CL sought to rewrite the Catholic customs into the Brazilian context rather than emphasize the connection with European places and times. In this process, CL pilgrimage became both a localized and a globalized practice. Pilgrimage in CL is localized because pilgrims visit local

and regional sites, often those close to where they live. A well-known feature is the *romaria da terra* (land pilgrimage), in which poor and landless peasants undertake a religious journey to reflect upon their dispossessed position in society or to draw society's attention to their quest for land on which to live. Here, sites are selected because of their significance to the local communities, and they are given a religious meaning for social and political reasons rather than divine interventions. At the same time, CL pilgrimage becomes globalized because the focus of the pilgrimage is more on the process of getting there than on the place where the journey ends. In the discourse of CL, the more general term *caminhada* (journey) is a much-used concept. The journey is undertaken by God's people and the ultimate goal is to reach the Promised Land.

With respect to translocal connections, we want to briefly mention two other forms of contact with the world community of Catholics that have an impact on CL and the MRCC. First, many Brazilian priests and nuns are foreign born and maintain intensive contacts with their home countries. It is interesting that most of them identify themselves as liberationists, as part of CL. Thus, the inculturation of Catholicism in Brazil is paradoxically partly promoted by non-Brazilian priests. In contrast, although the MRCC was brought to Brazil by two American missionaries (Carranza Davila 2000), it now has a predominantly national cadre in the country.

Second, relationships are established by means of virtual travel. Television and the Internet offer tremendous possibilities for contacts with religious sites and people worldwide. In a country as big as Brazil, national links are also important. Although CL uses the media to spread its message, MRCC followers are much more active in this realm. One of the most outstanding features of the cultural campaign promoting the MRCC is its prominence in the popular media. News about the MRCC and the most popular priest representing the movement—Father Marcelo Rossi—is regularly reported in newspapers and magazines, and Father Rossi has appeared on several very popular Brazilian television shows. The role of this popular priest in the growth of the MRCC can be attributed to the adoption of a secular style of making a show and providing entertainment, which adds a religious content to these forms (Souza 2001; Abreu 2005). Representatives of CL almost never appear on the television news or in the daily papers because of their negative attitude toward the use of media. CL leaders criticized the American evangelical electronic preachers (Assman 1986) because they considered television an unsuitable tool with which to evangelize people or liberate the poor. Della Cava and Montero (1991) showed that no project to establish a Catholic television channel could develop during the period that Brazilian Catholicism was under the leadership of liberationist bishops. They distrust television and consider it alienating and unfit for transmitting liberationist messages (Mariz 1998, 42). Protagonists of MRCC perceive television in a posi-

tive way, and the movement's emphasis on music, body movement, and emotion—rather than on ideas and words—provides it with a religious language that is easily translatable into visual television language.

The Brazilian church's growing interest and investment in media is not a peculiarity of the Brazilian church, but part of global developments. Pope John Paul II incited this turn toward the media, and especially toward television, when he urged Catholics to search for strategies to evangelize via the new means of communication. The more global orientation of the MRCC as compared to that of CL seems to facilitate its performance in the realm of popular media.

CONCLUSION

Both syncretism and acculturation are concepts that were developed in anthropological theory, while inculturation was elaborated in the context of universal Catholicism as an answer to the tensions between a universal belief and local meaning-making. The homogenizing forces of globalization pose a challenge to the Catholic movements in Brazil that we studied. Through a focus on processes of inculturation, we have shown that notions of the global and the local are subject to reflexivity and are being reworked and reinterpreted, at the level of both institutional religion and local communities.

Before we turn to our evaluation of the intricacies involved in the use of the notions "global" and "local" and the attitudes related to the strains caused by the processes of cultural homogenization and localization, here is one last definition of inculturation:

The Guidelines of the Evangelization of the Church in Brazil say that inculturation is: "the process of penetration of the Gospel in the day-to-day lives of a people, in such manner that it can express its experience of faith in its own culture." In other words, it is the way to embody the Gospel in the life of each people with its language, its culture, without losing the substance of the message. (CNBB 2001, 44)

This text was taken from a booklet issued by the Brazilian National Bishops' Conference for use in local communities throughout the country. It exemplifies the policy of the national Catholic Church toward cultural diversity and respect for local religious traditions. Nevertheless, these general principles are worked out in quite different manners in CL and the MRCC, as we have shown in our analysis. In the production of religious signification, the two movements draw on such different resources and principles that the outcome of the reinterpretation sets them quite apart in the Brazilian religious field. The notions of and references to the global and the local religious and secular context in which these religious groups find themselves are pivotal to understanding their attitudes and actions in contemporary Brazilian Catholicism.

At an ideological level, the two movements take different attitudes toward the secular world, and each refers in a singular manner to universal Catholicism. Where CL refers to globalized ideas in its elaboration of the need to inculturate and to adopt the language of the local people, the MRCC refers to a homogenized universal faith as its unique orientation. The roots of the disparity in the inculturation process lie in each group's understanding of the culture of its followers, or their tradition, and the main source of their collective identity. For CL this is a popular culture, the specific traditional and religious culture of a given geographical region or of one nation or ethnic group. In CL practice this local culture is confounded with the culture of the poorest people; that is, with the non-intellectual popular culture. This was demonstrated in our comparison of the texts and musical styles of the two Catholic campaigns. We showed that CL makes an effort to approximate popular culture, taking the authentic, mostly rural traditional music and culture as its source. In MRCC practice, culture is contemporary mass culture, as the movement tries to associate itself with universal and international cosmopolitan culture, identifiable as urban and modern. While the movement is critical of the contemporary world and its secular values and customs, it acculturates through musical styles and the use of mass media, thereby strengthening identities of youths and professionals who are part of a globalized and international world and lifestyle.

For CL, its rationalized interpretation of the religious message and positive attitude toward inculturation might be just a cosmetic, superficial process, because the theological essence of CL and its political project implicate profound cognitive ruptures in relation to the traditional culture that it is trying to revive. The tolerance of popular religion conceals a lack of belief in the power of the spiritual entities and the power to accomplish effects in real life. In contrast, the MRCC may be inculturating more in Brazilian popular Catholicism because the emotional and personalized style of the MRCC permits certain continuity with elements of popular culture. The charismatic practices that allow laypeople direct contact with the sacred, and through this contact the possibility of physical and spiritual healing, are similar to traditional popular religiosity. In local practice, MRCC appears to take the popular religious local traditions more seriously, notwithstanding the universal Roman Catholic discourse to which it refers. Thus, although the MRCC does not have a policy of inculturation, its adaptability in the local context renders it a more inculturated identity in contemporary Brazilian Catholicism.

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