Peter Beyer

CAN THE TAIL WAG THE DOG?

Diaspora reconstructions of religions in a globalized society

Abstract

In the context of contemporary global society, major religions of the world are subject to varied and hybrid reconstruction in various regions of the world, both in traditional heartlands and in various diaspora locations where adherents are generally a small minority. The article poses the question of whether and how diaspora constructions can influence those in the heartlands rather than only the other way around. The abstract question is explored through an illustrative analysis of the religious reconstructions of second generation Muslims in Canada. The upshot is that such diaspora locations are unlikely to have a direct influence on the heartlands for the foreseeable future, but that indirect influence is possible to the extent that diaspora forms become the accepted models for how the religions in question are seen and understood by the dominant populations in diaspora regions. This result, however, is likely to depend on a high level of integration of the diaspora migrants into the power structures of the host societies.

Key Words: Diaspora, immigration, Islam, hybridization, religion, globalization

Omar:

Q: What would you say is the most important aspect of Islam, the sine qua non, without which you can’t be a Muslim, so to speak?

A: Having the good will. Just having the will to do something, even if you never get to it. Like, if I’m constantly trying to be successful, but I’m constantly failing, that’s the same thing as if I succeed. The thing is, it’s not in your power whether you succeed or fail. It’s God’s will, whatever happens to you. But you won’t succeed if you don’t try. So you’re constantly trying, constantly putting in the effort. You constantly have the will and the effort. … It’s the striving, whether it is to try to fast, to try to pray, to try to help others, to try to study harder, that kind of thing.

….

A: I think they’re a bit more extremist [in South Asia]. For some reason, […] they’re more extremist than we [Egyptians] are. They haven’t developed as much. In India they are developing, but it’s not the Muslim group that’s developing. Right? I mean, it’s great they’re developing, but
it’s not coming from the Muslim group, which it should be. They should be developing. They should be studying more, things like that, but it’s just not happening there. But from my personal opinion, they’ve stagnated. I mean, so have we. Look at North America and look at us. Like, we’re Third World. Why? Laziness. The only reason. There’s no reason why a country full of wealth, seventy million people; it’s got land … They just don’t do it. Just laziness.

Hassan:

Q: What would you say are the chief characteristics of your religion, for you?

A: Chief characteristics? One is prayer, absolutely. Second is… not to hurt others. I think, that’s … a major characteristic of Islam, when I look at it. I mean, not to hurt others in a way that, you know, not to take their life, of course, but just not to hurt others. That’s what I look at Islam as. I look at something that, you know, that you see all these people as more, as well, as a people that have not yet found, not freed themselves, that’s how I look at people, honestly.

Q: Do you consider that as a major teaching of Islam?

A: Absolutely. I mean, we’re all in this world; this world is a form of punishment, and I do look at it as a form of punishment. … You know, we only exist through the mercy of Allah, more or less, I mean, [it’s] through his mercy that we exist.

Prologue

These quotes are from two young Muslim men who grew up in Canada. Their parents immigrated with them from Muslim majority countries during the 1980s, when the children were still quite young. What is more, they are currently both devout, practicing Muslims. Omar (the two names are pseudonyms), contrary to what one might think from reading the quotes, is actually more assiduous in his daily prayers than Hassan, even though the latter obviously also considers salat to be very important. I put their words here at the beginning of this article because they point in a very concrete way to the central question that I wish to pose, which is this: When speaking about the contemporary construction of religions – in this case Islam, but the question is asked more broadly – is the distinction between diaspora and heartland salient and, if so, how? [Note: throughout the following, I use the word «heartland» rather than the perhaps more common «homeland» in order to include those for whom the region or country meant is not and never was «home»; and to encompass the meaning of «core» or «centre» of authenticity that the term implies in contrast to diaspora.] Put somewhat differently, to what extent is the character of the world’s major religions – such as Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, or Christianity – being affected by the influence of adherents and movements that have migrated or are otherwise situated outside the global regions with which these religions are historically most closely associated, in which the vast majority of their adherents live, and where their major centres of authority are supposedly located? Should we, for instance, be on the lookout for a typically European Islam, an American Buddhism, or an East Asian Christianity, perhaps very much peripheral phe-
nomena at the moment, but each of which might prefigure major directions that world-wide Islam, Buddhism, or Christianity is taking? As the title of my presentation puts it, can the tail wag the dog?

The quotes from the two Canadian Muslims are a concrete illustration of how the possible answers to such a question are not going to be that straightforward. They are «diaspora» expressions, but there is nothing identifiably diasporic about them, while at the same time they may easily be read as somehow «non-standard» and even peculiar. Therefore, to understand better what may be going on, I want first to abstract from their concreteness, to take a step back and consider in a more analytic way the overall context in which they were spoken. After this theoretical excursus, I shall return to them to ask the core question anew.

Difference and identity, hybridity and purity in global society

The idea of globalization and discussions about this idea have become very widespread over the past two decades. Both in academic and wider circles, however, there persists a great variety of ways to understand the term and profound ambiguity as to what globalization implies. Above all, one finds substantial disagreement as to whether we are heading towards greater and greater homogenization of our social worlds or, on the contrary, globalization provides the conditions for the renewed importance of our differences. Two well-known works from the 1990s, Francis Fukuyama’s *The End of History and the Last Man*, and Samuel Huntington’s *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (Fukuyama 1993; Huntington 1996) can perhaps serve as examples of the two directions, one taking a dystopian, the other a more utopian stand. Perusing such arguments as a whole, however, it becomes evident that one of the peculiarities of a totalizing concept like globalization is that it includes its «other side», and that therefore the arguments for seemingly contradictory analyses and assessments are equally convincing.

The situation is well exemplified in how we are «doing difference» in global society. Irrespective of whether one considers such differences as constitutive of the globalized condition or as futile or effective markers of local resistance to the homogenization that it represents, one of the hallmarks of globalizing differences is that they tend to be thematized and structured in analogous if not entirely identical ways. In other words, as we in global society are increasingly implicated in the same global social space, for the sake of comparability, but also critically as forms for contestation, struggle, resistance, and conflict, the categories of difference around the world themselves have become more and more identical. Thus, when we talk about and enact our differences, we do so in terms of particular universalizing categories such as the individual, the nation, a gender, a culture, a class, a race, an ethnicity, a civilization, or a religion. All of these have developed peculiarly modern meanings. Yet, just because they have become identifying markers of difference under the single conditions of globalization, what they contain has to be invented, re-invented, or at least reformulated for that purpose, so that it will operate effectively in terms of them. Temporally, this can mean
radical or declared discontinuity with the past in the sense of the emergence of new differences, new nations, new individuals, new religions, and so forth; but in most cases such discontinuity will adopt the stance of continuity with the past, if only as a critical moment in their own legitimation: our nation, our religion, our civilization is real and incontrovertible because it has its roots in the sometimes distant, but certainly unquestionable past. Something similar applies to biologically rooted identities like gender or race. Substantively, these identities declare themselves, sometimes as absolutely unique, but certainly as recognizably particular, meaning that the features we select in such declarations may be skewed towards those that will best demonstrate how «we» are or «I» am different. Socially, however, these assertions declare – in the context of comparison – their equality with all others, at least in terms of value and legitimacy. Such claims to equality can also, of course, subtly or overtly shade over into attitudes of superiority.

Regarding differences as identities that we construct specifically for the globalized social conditions in which we live thus points to a combination of necessity and contingency. Practically, we declare and to a large degree accept them as unquestionable and essential so as to render them comparatively immune from corrosive and relativizing observation through globalized and systemic power modalities like capitalist economy, scientific rationality, and even – somewhat paradoxically – the political state. Their ability to function as categories of difference depends on this relative and, from the perspective of the global systems, arbitrary immunization from such «homogenizing» effects. On the other hand, visibly these identities could be done differently; in many cases we can trace their invention historically – even the biological ones (see e.g. Appiah 1996). In consequence, they are therefore themselves the subjects of continuous contestation as to what precisely belongs to them, what that implies for being in the world, and, indeed, which identities are to count in the first place. Put in slightly different terms, we can say that these categories of difference, these identities, declare and must declare themselves as substantial purities, as what they are because they can be nothing else; and yet they are at the same time the contested and provisional crystallization of processes of hybridization, of recombination and invention for the current circumstance (see Beyer 2005a). This situation raises the very important question of precisely how these identities emerge and have emerged, who gets to say what they contain and which ones count, and where the constructions take place.

In this last respect, the already introduced distinction between heartland and diaspora takes on a certain importance. This spatial distinction carries within itself all the ambiguities that I have just outlined. The connotations of these terms imply that the heartland is the location of the safe, the pure, the authentic; whereas diaspora is a place of dislocation, depaysage, adulteration, mongrelization, inauthenticity, and assimilation precisely to a foreign identity. In light of the hybridity of the pure, however, such understanding cannot be taken at face value. It is but another moment in the construction and contestation of the identities in question. And therefore the constructions of the heartland are in principle just as contingent and even precarious as the parallel processes in diaspora. And thus the tail could wag the dog. In particular, the sites for the authentic construction of an identity could be anywhere, even
Peter Beyer: Can the tail wag the dog?

if the putative heartland can be expected to retain a symbolic importance in many or most such constructions. What matters is the efficacy of such constructions, their ability to represent and to structure contestation for meaning and power effectively. From these opening considerations, I move on to the specific case of religions.

Religion and religions in global society: Modeling and diaspora

Over the past decade and a half, a significant movement within the discipline of religious studies has once again suggested that the concept of religion is itself problematic, that it is at best an analytic category, a useful artifact of the scholar’s study, and at worst a cynical conceptual tool in the service of Western imperialism and in defense of Western hegemony. This sort of critique targets especially the idea of the «world religions» (cf. Smith 1982; Smith 1991; see e.g. Chidester 1996; Fitzgerald 1997; McCutcheon 1997), above all through the idea that these are nothing more than Western «inventions» and therefore by that token, if not entirely unreal, then certainly largely illegitimate (e.g. Masuzawa 2005; Peterson & Walhof 2002). There is much that is cogent in these critiques. They clarify the (recently) constructed nature of both religion and religions and effectively challenge the largely unreflected «innocence» of approaches to religion that dominated the discipline during much of the 20th century. They also go too far, however, especially in their suggestion that deconstructing an idea and demonstrating its implication in social power relations thereby renders it false, illusory, or illegitimate. Nonetheless, it is notable that their recent prominence within the discipline corresponds precisely to the rise in popularity of the new totalizing category of globalization. All the critiques of this sort adopt an at least implicitly global perspective, taking the entire world as their empirical point of reference and not just one part of it, notably not just the so-called West. Indeed, the prevailing basis of their questioning is that the ostensibly «Western» concept of religion that is based on a Christian model does not apply or is inappropriately applied to other parts of the world, that the illegitimacy of the idea corresponds to the illegitimacy of the Western imperial project because the latter denies the equal value of different ways of conceiving and structuring the world and social relations. The critique of religion and the religions is thereby a moment in the understanding of globalization as a homogenizing force which must be resisted by re-valuozing precisely difference. Moreover, it explicitly implicates religion in this relation and implicitly refers to the spatial difference between West and non-West, which is not coincidentally usually also manifest in the difference between heartland and diaspora as currently understood.

Within sociology one could outline an analogous controversy, only here controversy centres on the concept of secularization (see esp. Davie 2003; Hadden 1987; Hervieu-Léger 1993; Stark & Bainbridge 1985) and on the distinction between institutionalized and non-institutionalized religiosity (e.g. religion vs. spirituality) (e.g. Heelas and Woodhead et al. 2005; Inglehart 1997; Roof 1999). The upshot from the various approaches in both disciplines is that it still seems to matter where in the world we are, that, when it comes to religion and the religious, contextual influences deriving
from location in the world are highly relevant in spite of an unavoidably globalized social context. One might conclude therefore that the homogenizing gaze encouraged by our more intensely globalized situation favours the sociological observation of difference. Again, with reference to my central question, this should mean that the distinction between heartland and diaspora will also make a difference. But that, of course, is the question.

The simultaneity of homogenization and heterogenization calls for ways of understanding and constructing both at the same time. Religion, as already mentioned, is one of the globalized categories that allows this, namely a globally available way of asserting, inventing, imagining, or manufacturing difference, but one that exhibits sufficient uniformity to allow comparison and contestation on the basis of the differences. On the side of uniformity, however, the category of religion carries with it an additional dimension of universality or universal claim that distinguishes it from other categories of identity – like culture or race – and makes it resemble more the systemic structures of global homogenization like capitalist economy, empirical science, mass media, or sovereign state (Beyer 2006). Specifically, quite aside from the different ways of doing religion, what is generally and globally meant by the category is a structured, systemic instrumentality which is deemed to render access to what is foundational for all human beings, irrespective of their differences. This is in contrast with other categories of difference such as gender, race, culture, nation or civilization, which are strictly speaking non-systemic and, for the most part, more exclusively categories of difference. Another way of approaching this feature is to say that religion is the only one of these categories in which it is common for one particular manifestation, one religion, to include within its self-definition, not only criteria of its own particularity, but also just as critically the notion that, ideally, everyone could and often should «adhere» to that religion and even implicitly already does so, even if they may not realize it. Quite a number of core religious concepts reflect this feature, among them conversion and orthodoxy. The first refers to the implicit, desired, or possible inclusion of everyone, including both those «without religion» and those of «other religions»; the second to the necessary boundaries of exclusion without which the inclusion would have little meaning or purchase in real life. Similar or analogous ways of expressing the same feature include the ideas of «reversion», of «seeking refuge», the notion that there are «many paths but one goal», the status of «chosen-ness» as representing all of humanity, and many others besides. It is this bounded openness or particularistic universalism that makes religion different from the other categories of identity, but not so radically as to negate the similarity. This observation brings us back to the consideration of the implication of the heartland/diaspora distinction as concerns religion.

As already noted, in contrast to the idea of heartland, the meaning of «displacement» attendant upon the idea of diaspora implies contextual pressure towards changing and even corroding identity, but also reflecting clearly upon identity or how one is different, what differences are important and therefore important to maintain. Diaspora is a context in which comparison, reflection, and therefore selectivity are seemingly more inevitable. That comparison occurs with respect to the heartland, the «host», but also other diaspora locations. As concerns the religions, however, the systemic univer-
sality and, for the most part, globality of these social constructions encourages a clearer abstraction from any particular place, except ritually and symbolically. This characteristic means that the pressure towards change inherent in diaspora may indeed be understood by adherents as a situation of threat, of potential mongrelization and inauthenticity. But it can also produce the opposite conclusion, namely that diaspora allows clearer possibilities for «purifying» the religion of inauthentic accretions which it acquired in the heartlands and of which the adherents in the heartlands are not or no longer aware because of the lesser pressure toward reflective comparison. Just because the religions have become structured as globalizing systems (and in certain ways some of them have been that for quite some time) and therefore not just as ecologies of life practices, this kind of abstraction from place becomes more likely. Diaspora may become a place of greater, not lesser authenticity, or at least be seen as an alternative rather than an inherently suspect location (see Beyer 1998). In contrast, the heartland may come to be regarded as a place of barnacled and inauthentic accretions, of decay and corruption about which its inhabitants are only dimly aware.

That is one aspect. Another concerns the criteria by which the selective reconstruction of religions will occur, whether in diaspora or in the heartlands. Since the issue is simultaneously one of identity and difference, one can expect two sources: those deemed peculiar and therefore internal to the religion in question, and those that derive from comparison with other religions. If we accept that religion itself has become a relatively homogeneous and globalized category of heterogenization, that it represents a common way of doing difference, then constructing or reconstructing the particularity of any given religion will involve selections that identify the difference of that religion, but in comparison to others and therefore at least somewhat analogous to the others. This raises the question of modeling. Since there is no single global religion that could serve as the model of what any religion should be, the only possibilities are the constructed and recognized particular religions themselves, which of course also appear only in variations. Then the question becomes, which of these existing religions and which variants of those religions will have more influence in such modeling than others. In this respect, two factors are likely to be critical. The first concerns global dominance and global presence: the larger, more powerful, more clearly structured, and more widespread religions are bound to have more influence. For reasons having to do with the history of Western imperial expansion that has been so critical to modern globalization, Christianity will and does loom large here, all the more so in those diaspora locations where Christianity in various subdivisions is and has been dominant. Yet that is not the only possibility. Beside Christianity, Islam is quite obviously another powerful global model of what a religion looks like and should be. In large swathes of global society, from the northern half of Africa across to Southeast Asia especially, Islam is the dominant religion and has, especially since the latter half of the 20th century, emerged in some ways as a rival model to Christianity. We should expect that the reconstructions of Islam in diaspora will also be affected by this global importance, just as in the analogous case of diaspora Christianities, this religion’s global preponderance will have an effect.
We should not, however, expect this modeling to be an orderly and predictable process. Nothing precludes, for instance, the emergence of efforts at what one might call «counter-modeling», reconstruction efforts that attempt to avoid what are seen as the weaknesses or otherwise negative aspects of the established and recognized religions, including especially one’s own. Similarly, modeling can be another way of saying hybridization as reconstructive efforts seek to combine what they see as the positive features of more than one religion, often with express theological justifications which disguise or deny that anything is being borrowed. In addition, just because religions like Christianity and Islam can be expected to be the dominant models because of their sheer presence and their long history of distinct construction vis-à-vis the social world around them, that does not mean that other religions will not also play this role: perhaps Buddhism with its great stress on meditative practices, its comparative a-theism and its greater accommodation to «multiple belonging»; or Hinduism and its modernly imagined tolerance of «many paths». There also exists the constant possibility to reconstruct by constructing what claims to be and may become a «new religion», its newness being a critical feature of the modeling with respect to the already recognized and constructed religions. Finally, counter-modeling efforts may seek to avoid the category of religion altogether because of perceived problems with it. Here is where the much discussed and greatly diverse efforts at pursuing «spirituality» directions fit in; they are at least in part reactions against the limitations of the religions and thereby of the available models.

As already intimated, the question of religious modeling takes on somewhat different characteristics depending on whether we are looking at diaspora or heartland situations. The difference, however, is not so much attached to the distinction itself as it is to the relative minority status of the religion in question. Most situations that we identify as diaspora are in fact minority situations, usually contexts in which the adherents of a particular religion are in a tiny minority and in which they have arrived comparatively recently. Under such circumstances the comparative pressure to reconstruct the religion more closely in conformity with the model presented by the locally dominant religion – in North America and Western Europe this is of course Christianity – will be significantly higher, although by no means determinative. Discussions of the possibility of a European or an American Islam, for instance, can be seen largely as centred on the question of whether the minority religion of Islam in these locations will or will not conform more closely in its particular reconstructions to the «Christian» way of doing things prevalent in those regions. Far from being unique to Islam in the West, the question applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to diaspora minority religions in all the regions of the world, whether that be, for example, Christianity in different East Asian countries, Hinduism in Southern Africa, the Caribbean, and North America, or Rastafarianism in the United States and Britain.

Although religions in their respective heartlands are thus in a contrasting situation, being almost by definition in majority and having been established there for a much longer period, the issue of modeling is by no means unimportant there. Probably prime evidence of that are the modern reconstructions of religions in these regions. Hinduism, for instance, hardly existed as a single religion before the 19th century, when
various Indian elites began to undertake its imagining as such in a colonial context that
couraged – not to say forced – modeling in comparison with parallel processes in
Christianity, Islam, and later on Sikhism as well. At the same time, in China, by con-
trast, an analogous but also critically different context led to the more or less total and
quite conscious refusal on the part of Chinese elites of a comparable construction of
Confucian traditions as one of the religions, as «Sinism» or «Ruism», for example. The
powerful reform movements since the 19th century in Muslim heartlands from Africa
to Indonesia should also be understood in this light: efforts to assert or reassert the
specificity of Islam – usually portrayed as purification – in the face and context of glo-
balization processes characterized by a dominance of Western power and the increas-
ing salience of the modern category of religion (Beyer 2006). Just as in the diaspora
situations, all such modeling is as much a creation of identifiable and effective differ-
ences as it is of conformity to a common pattern. Modeling is at the same time counter-
modeling or modeling in opposition and comparison.

A case study: Canadian Muslim youth

With these theoretical reflections in mind, I want now by way of concrete and empirical
illustration, to return to my point of departure, the diaspora second generation Muslims
from a couple of whom I quoted at the outset. One could, of course, engage in such
illustration by focusing on any segment of any diaspora population, including the
larger Muslim populations of places like North America and Western Europe, but for
reasons of space, the greater discontinuity between second generation migrants and
their putative heartland cultures/religions, and because my current research happens to
focus on them, I limit myself to this small subpopulation (for the by now vast literature
on diaspora Islam in the United States and Europe, see Buijs & Rath 2003 and Leonard
2003).

I begin by underlining the fact that the second generation Muslims, like the Hindu
and Buddhist examples to which I shall also refer, are by upbringing and socialization
Canadians and in that sense part of an «indigenous» population. And yet the religion
that they carry, Islam (or Buddhism or Hinduism), is in Canada a religion of diaspora.
Hassan and Omar carry the ambiguity of the distinction between diaspora and heart-
land within them and therefore within their Islam. This is part of what it means to be
of the «second generation». Their relation to Islam, their personal constructions of
Islam are inherently hybridized and yet they obviously have no difficulty in presenting
them as authentic and even pure. A closer examination of their specific versions of
Islam, of the relation of those versions to others, both in Canada and elsewhere, can
therefore offer a way of understanding in greater detail what is involved when we speak
about the (re)construction of religion, in their case specifically Islam, in global context
and in particular as concerns the diaspora/heartland distinction and the global diversity
which it indicates.

Before proceeding to the concrete analysis, it may be well to outline very briefly
the research project from which the two interviews are drawn. This is an important pre-
liminary step because it will deal with the question of how and to what extent the people I am using in illustration are or are not representative of wider phenomena in Canada and elsewhere; and therefore how generalizable their cases might be.

Between 2004 and this past spring, I and a team of researchers in Ottawa, Toronto, and Montreal, conducted about 200 semi-structured and in-depth interviews with a sample of young adults (ages 18-27) who grew up in Canada, but were of immigrant families and of either Muslim, Buddhist, or Hindu background (see Table 1 below). About half of them were from Muslim families, the rest divided more or less evenly between Hindu and Buddhist backgrounds. A strong majority were women. The purpose of the research is to discover how «second geners» like them are constructing – or failing to construct – the religions of their heritage. Participants in the project were solicited from among current or recent university students because from 80-95% of people in their demographic category – adults in their 20s who grew up in Canada in recent immigrant families – have post-secondary education (Beyer 2005b). The participants self-identified as of Muslim, Buddhist, or Hindu background and knew that the project was specifically about religion. Therefore, although the sample was drawn from a very large segment of the target population, it was not representative. From the saturation that the interviews produced, we were, however confident that we had found most of what is out there, even if we cannot say with any certainty in what precise proportion.

In summary form, some of the more significant conclusions that we have been able to draw are as follows:

– Muslims are as a group far more involved and practicing than either Buddhists of Hindus.

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* 2 Muslim women arrived as adolescents
** 2 Sikhs, 1 Baha’i

Source: «Religion among Immigrant Youth in Canada», research funded by Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

In summary form, some of the more significant conclusions that we have been able to draw are as follows:

– Muslims are as a group far more involved and practicing than either Buddhists of Hindus.
Peter Beyer: Can the tail wag the dog?

- half or more of the Muslims, whether male or female, were what we judged to
  be highly involved, the rest somewhat to not at all.
- few of the Hindus practiced the religion of their heritage although many – espe-
  cially among the women – bore a positive relation to what one might call a
  Hindu cultural identity.
- Buddhists, with very few exceptions, did not practice and even had little to no
  knowledge of this religious tradition, although most expressed a positive affin-
  ity towards it and many felt it was a source of their own moral sense.
- Whether second generation Buddhists and Hindus in Canada – and therefore
  perhaps by extension in diaspora more broadly – will eventually contribute sub-
  stantially to the reconstruction of these traditions in those locations remains to be
  seen. In this regard, it should be noted that the Canadian second generation among
  all three of these religious groups is still quite young, only a small minority having
  reached the age where they typically have families and careers (and this explains
  why the literature on this second generation in Canada and the United States is still
  quite sparse; for American Muslim youth, see Leonard 2005).
- Muslims, by contrast, are very actively engaged in such reconstructions, even at
  this early adult age. The way that they are reconstructing this religion, however,
  varies a great deal and includes a strong influence of global connections via tran-
  snational ties, mass media exposure, or through the internet.
- People in all the subcategories are, with some exceptions, very well integrated into
  mainstream Canadian society, even and especially if they are religiously involved.
  These youth engage in what one may call «seamless compartmentalization» in that
  they easily combine the various aspects of their identities, including religious; they
  feel comfortable and, again with some exceptions, at home in Canadian society. As
  a group, they are no more marginalized or alienated than anyone else in their age
  group who does not share their background. Above all, this includes the great
  majority of the devout Muslims, who do not appear to be more marginalized than
  other religious people. In this regard, it should be noted that these youth live in
  large urban areas where immigrants form a significant portion of the population;
  and that these immigrant populations, while residentially concentrated in some
  areas more than others, are on the whole not marginalized in poorer districts of
  these cities.

The lack of marginalization and high level of integration raises the question of whether
the diaspora populations in Canada are the exception or the rule in comparison with
similar populations in other, especially Western countries. Certainly as far as Muslims
are concerned, the literature on European Muslims leaves no doubt that the two regions
are quite different in this regard (see, e.g. Khosrokhavar 1997; Vertovec & Peach 1997;
Vertovec & Rogers 1998). And here I must stress that we are speaking about native-
born or locally-raised generations and not relatively recent arrivals. Be that as it may,
and even assuming that the Canadian situation may be exceptional, such comparisons
merely point out the diversity of diaspora contexts, the fact that, irrespective of precise
comparisons, it makes a difference where in the world one is. Therefore, the issue is
not whether the Canadian situation is representative, but rather of how diaspora communities are or are not reconstructing versions of their religions and how that activity relates to and eventually influences analogous constructive efforts in other parts of the world, whether diaspora or heartland, for any particular religion.

With this contextualization in mind, I want now to look more closely at the reconstructive efforts of an illustrative sample of the Muslims in our research, including Hassan and Omar. I focus on Muslims because they are, as a group, much more clearly engaged in such efforts than are either the Buddhists or the Hindus. The key questions in this regard are what directions these constructions are taking and what relations they bear to Islam both in Canada and in other regions. In other words, what are some of the diaspora constructions like? What resources are implicated in their construction? And what influence might these versions eventually have both locally and globally?

**Individualism and Islamic core**

Perhaps the single most salient pattern among the styles of religious involvement in this sample of Canadian Muslim youth is the lack of a clear pattern, or, perhaps more accurately, the individualistic style of such involvement. The vast majority of the participants took personal responsibility for deciding what constituted proper Islam and came to their conclusions on the basis of personal research and discovery. Correspondingly, they did not, on the whole, rely in any consistent way on their parents or other family members, even if family was an important source for a great many of them. Symptomatic of this relative independence is a consistent distinction that most of them make between their family’s religion, Islam, and their family’s culture. The elements of their parents’ Islam that they rejected, they were likely to attribute to the parental culture, whereas that which they accepted was most often deemed part of the common religion. That said, they accepted much more of their family Islam than they rejected. Similarly, in only a minority of cases did they rely on their local community and community leaders such as the imams at the local mosques. As a source of authority, they are generally not mosque oriented. Their Islam is not so much the Islam of their migrant community, whatever that may happen to be, as the outcome of their own, in almost classic Islamic fashion, journeying for knowledge. That journeying, it should be noted, now takes place to a significant extent on the internet, or at least translocally. In consequence, they exhibit a tremendous diversity in orientation and emphasis. This feature, however, does not mean that there is no convergence in the results at which they arrive. Quite the contrary. To begin, most identified as Sunni and within that identity put very consistent emphasis on a core set of beliefs and practices, usually the five pillars of *shahadah, salat, sawm, zakat,* and *hajj,* and everyday behavioral norms, especially dietary and sexual restrictions. This was more or less the case, with some variation, for the non-Sunnis as well (see Table 2). In the context of that consistency, they also tended to put great emphasis not just, as one would expect, on the oneness of God and the status of Muhammad as the messenger of that God, but also on the unity of the Muslim *ummah.* In other words, although they generally recognized that there were differences among Muslims, they did not want to give those differences much impor-
tance or legitimacy, stressing at least the religious ideal of the worldwide oneness of Islam. Moreover, as regards the sources of their Islam, the majority of the religiously involved exhibited a *de facto*, often explicit, *salafism*: ultimately, the only legitimate sources were the Qur’an and the Sunna, the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad and the early community. Intermediary sources, such as especially the authority of the *ulama*, of Sufi *tariqat*, or the five schools of law, were rarely mentioned. The notable exceptions in all these respects were the Ismailis and the Iranian Shi’is. The former distinguished themselves clearly from other Muslims, including in terms of sources of authority; the latter were more or less completely alienated from Islam, a consequence, as one Iranian youth put it, of the fact that «the religious Iranians stay in Iran».

### Table 2. Type of Islam, Regional Origin, and Level of Religious Involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Islam</th>
<th>North Africa / Middle East</th>
<th>South Asia</th>
<th>Sub-Saharan Africa</th>
<th>Iran / Caribbean</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sunni</td>
<td>9 11 3</td>
<td>20 3 3</td>
<td>3* 1*</td>
<td>1 2</td>
<td>33 17 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shi’a</td>
<td>1 1</td>
<td>3 2 1</td>
<td>1 2</td>
<td>1 5†</td>
<td>6 10 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ismaili</td>
<td>1 1 3</td>
<td>1 3 1</td>
<td></td>
<td>3 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmadiyya</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 1</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>10 12 3</td>
<td>25 6 7</td>
<td>7 6</td>
<td>2 7</td>
<td>44 31 17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

H = Highly Involved; S = Somewhat involved; N = Non-religious
† = Iranian origin
* = Somali origin

Source: «Religion among Immigrant Youth in Canada», research funded by Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

Already from these general features, we can venture some observations regarding the core questions I am posing. First, diaspora Islam is not just a matter of preserving or losing the communal Islam of the heartland; it is and is becoming a distinct (re)construction. Second, these (re)constructions nonetheless exhibit a strong tendency toward a kind of globalized Islamic orthodoxy, something that by no means precludes significant variation on that core. Such variation, in turn, is at least in part due to the individualistic style in which diaspora Muslims do this construction. Whether that style should be attributed to the Western cultural atmosphere in which this population grew up, or whether it is part of a more global phenomenon, perhaps along the lines of Inglehart’s post-materialism; this can remain an open question. The combination of convergence and variation is, however, illustrative precisely of the simultaneity of homogenization and heterogenization that I discussed earlier. Canadian Muslims are engaged in global modeling, but they are doing this in ways that are particular to them. In that context, it is significant that the sources used by these Muslims to engage in their convergent heterogenization are themselves both global and local. To illustrate the mechanisms of this
glocal (re)construction, I return to a more detailed look at Hassan, Omar, and a few of their fellow Muslim participants.

Glocal imagining

In terms of the sources from which they draw their Islam, Hassan and Omar already show sharp differences. Hassan was actually one of the more community-oriented in the sample, being strongly influenced by the elders at his local mosque, his father in particular, who is the imam there. In general, however, he felt that most of the world’s Muslims had gone astray. He said:

I look at Islam in the modern world and what I see is, [...] I see Muslim people trying to look for a way to find the true teachings of Islam, which have been lost. For me, they’re lost... That central belief structure is lost, and of course, the certainty of Islam is lost.

While he does not privilege his diaspora location, declaring in fact that Canada is a difficult place to practice Islam fully, he does not see the heartland regions as being any better off, and this for analogous reasons, namely the influence of the West, Western power and culture in particular. Omar, by contrast, has become a follower of what some have described as a Muslim televangelist. In describing his reasons and methods of searching, he declared:

Up until recently, like the last couple of years, I started realizing that there’s a lot of things that I don’t like not having answers to. And I don’t like taking things for granted without knowing, like, why. So I researched a couple of things and found that I didn’t have any answers. Like a lot of things, like for example, what is happiness, how do I become happy? Why are we here? What is right, like the difference between right and wrong? ... What I started to learn was, like, I ran into a guy on the internet who basically is very religious, but was in a suit. That intrigued me, as to, is he actually religious or is he a new breed? [chuckles] Like where is this coming from? Anyways, I started understanding from him basically a bit more about the religion, like, he started explaining things that I had memorized [from the Qur’an] ... His name is Amr Khaled.... He’s an Egyptian fellow, he’s not ... an imam.

As a third example, Mohammad is one who does privilege his diaspora location, claiming that it allows his Islam to be more authentic. In response to a question which asked him if growing up in Canada had affected his beliefs differently than if he had grown up in his parents’ heartland country of Pakistan, he said:

Yes, I think so. We have a fairly good multicultural model here in Canada, whereas in Pakistan I think there’s more racial polarization, you know, no acceptance of people who are even slightly different from you, much less people who are fundamentally different.... I think I have an advantage over people who lived in Pakistan all their lives because I can see from the dominant culture, which I consider to be the Christian Canada, I can see from their vantage point as well as what happens at home and what my parents believe. So there’s much more of a basis for comparison, and I think that makes my choice more genuine.
In some ways, this attitude is typical of many: in the heartland, it is difficult to see the line between human culture and divine religion; in diaspora that is easier. Interestingly enough, however, Muhammad does not simply assume that his diaspora-raised generation is therefore somehow «getting it right». He in fact attributes some of their reconstructions of Islam to youthful rebellion against the influence of parents:

I think I may be echoing other people when I say that every generation has its rebellion, and the rebellion in my generation has been something called the Islamic Revival Movement. So the movement that says that our parents’ way of following religion was not strict enough, things like that.... Specifically things like the hijab and the beard, those are more prevalent in the new generation than in the older one.

Like the others cited thus far, Muhammad has his own variation on the sort of Islamic orthodoxy that he shares with so many others. Similar to Hasan, he stresses the relation between Islam and peace, but explicitly thereby puts standard items of orthodox practice in a secondary position. In response to the question about what is most important in Islam, he offers this opinion:

Most important practices? The way in which you treat other people, kindness and things ... of that nature. Working towards a better tomorrow. So those are the primary objectives, and then secondary objectives would be praying, fasting, the rituals.... The primary objectives would be the goal of Islam. And I may be a heretic but I say the goal of Islam is world peace. That isn’t something that I’ve found echoed by a lot of people, not negated either, but they say that the goal is to focus on the ritual worship. Those are secondary for me.

When then asked what were the main challenges facing Islam today, Muhammad goes a bit further in this direction:

Islam is supposed to be something significant. It’s supposed to be something that transcends throughout the world. And if you go to Muslim lectures today, they’re all about how Muslim men should grow beards. And I find it difficult to believe that that’s why Prophet Muhammad was sent down, that that is the noble purpose of mankind, that that’s why God created the world. I think we’re focusing too much on the little things and we’re forgetting the big things.

Muhammad’s independence from specific Islamic authorities is also intimated in these quotes. He wishes to maintain his Pakistani and parental culture, but also to distance himself from features of its Islam. He feels most comfortable in the company of his fellow Muslims of the second generation, but also criticizes the degree to which their Islam is imitative and stresses what he considers secondary. His self-assigned life task is in fact very global, not to mention ambitious:

I’m majoring in Ethics, so I’d like to be something of a leading moralist of my time, something of a reformer.... Job number one would be to give some kind of moral accountability for the things that happen in the Islamic world, put back in the morality that is missing in so many implementations of Islam. Then, after that, perhaps to participate in a global ethic.... I think the trend in the world today is to form some kind of unified world view and I think that Islam should participate in it; and that means that Islam first needs to take a good look at itself and see if it’s any good, so
to speak. So, correcting ourselves, and then participating in the correction of humanity, if that’s not too presumptuous.

Turning now to two female Muslim participants, we get a fairly similar picture. Here too we find a combination of a moral and ritual emphasis along with the resort to a variety of sources and authorities for deciding what belongs in Islam. The first, Noor, replied in the following way when asked what she thought was most important in Islam:

I would say it’s modesty and being humble. Those are one of the main characteristics of somebody who should be Muslim. And there’s of course the five pillars where you have to pray five times a day, to believe in God, and Mohammed was the last prophet of God, fasting during the month of Ramadan, paying charity which is *zakat*, and going for *hajj* which is pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia, if you can afford it. So those are the 5 pillars which you should follow, but there’s also things about being humble, being modest, being honest. Honesty is, like personally to me, honesty’s a huge thing.

As concerns the sources from which she drew her understanding of the religion, this exchange is revealing:

Q: In principle what would you say are the main sources of authority in Islam?

A: Authority? I would say the scholars, like present-day scholars.

Q: Where would you go if you had a question?

A: Well, I would first just read the Qur’an and the Sunna, which is the words of Prophet Mohammed. And if I didn’t understand them, or if I had difficulty interpreting them, I would probably go to the MSA [Muslim Student Association] president ... – not as an authority, but just to ask him where I would go to further understand ... not information, just sources... And then I can read up on present day scholarly teachings. But I wouldn’t rely too much on them because it’s obviously human interpretation again. I would go directly to the source, which is the Qur’an and Sunna.

Q: OK. How about the imam of the mosque?

A: Well, I – yeah, I guess. I’m just not – I don’t really – well after I moved [here], I haven’t gone to a specific mosque regularly so I’m not too familiar with any particular imams.

Elsewhere, she adds that she does on occasion also go to the internet, again to consult Islamic scholars on issues of what is right and wrong in Islam.

Nazia, the second example, is in most ways quite similar, except that, somewhat parallel to Hasan, she relies more on her family as a source of information and authority. She says, for instance,

A: Main sources of authority? That’s hard to find. The one number one source of authority obviously is the Qur’an; it’s the actual word of God. The Prophet’s words, sayings etcetera is also huge. In terms of modern day people that we listen to, I guess imams do have a source of power. ... [I]n Islam we understand that nobody really knows. So it’s more of an interpretation. And you
Peter Beyer: Can the tail wag the dog?

Q: Where would you go, if you had a question or issue?

A: Well, we have family friends who are very well versed in Islam. I think I would go there first and foremost. And to tell you the truth, I trust their judgment, I trust their interpretations, so that’s where I’d go.

Q: Would you go on the internet and ask …an Imam a question on a website?

A: I would. I mean I don’t see myself not doing it.

Q: It’s not something you’ve done though?

A: No, I haven’t done it before. And it wouldn’t be my first source of information either.

Q: So all of the knowledge that you’ve gained has been mostly from family friends and relatives?

A: It’s a combination of everything. It’s a combination of family friends, relatives, websites. It’s just a whole amalgamation of it. But family and friends have been a big source.

On the conclusions she has drawn as to what is important in Islam, she conforms again more or less to the other three:

Q: What would you say are the chief characteristics of somebody following Islam?

A: Understanding, compassion, obedience, I guess those are the three that come to mind.

Q: Which beliefs are the most important to you?

A: Belief in Allah, the ultimate creator; belief in Muhammad his messenger; belief in basically praying regularly, practicing regular charity and showing compassion and doing good deeds towards other human beings, any moment that you can.

Q: What are the most important rituals or practices for you?

A: The praying five times daily, fasting during Ramadan...

In all these cases, we should keep in mind that these are middle to upper middle class individuals who have regular possibilities for international travel, usually keep regular contact with relatives in their various family countries of origin, and often have close relatives in other countries, including other Western countries. Thus, even to the extent that they rely on family resources, as some of them do, these are also usually transnational resources. In this respect as well, it is perhaps remarkable how consistent their visions are, the variations being on this detail or that, but not on what is central to the religion. To be sure, there are Muslims in our sample that look at things rather differ-
ently, but they are with few exceptions generally or completely non-religious, or their differences correlate highly with the fact that they are not Sunni.

If we move now to the issue of what influence their versions of Islam might have in the wider Muslim world, the simple answer is that they are more or less consistent with a very dominant, globalized vision of Islam. The influence, such as it is, does not seem to have a clear direction one way or another. They construct their Islam from sources located in Canada and in the Muslim heartlands, they are both globally and locally oriented; and yet the connections mitigate the extent to which one can identify their Islam as clearly diaspora or heartland Islam at all. It is both, if personally and geographically more the former than that latter. To return to the metaphor of my title, the diaspora Islam of our interview subjects as such may have little direct influence on anyone, but it is as much «dog» Islam as it is «tail» Islam.

The Dog that Does Not Bark

In a famous Sherlock Holmes tale, the sleuth solves a crime by noting the significance of an absence: a dog that should have barked did not, thereby eliminating certain suspects and implicating others. In the current case of this Canadian diaspora Islam, there is also what one might call a specificity that is signaled by an absence, in this case the near total absence and usually express rejection of political Islam (cf. e.g. Kepel 2002), the idea that Islam should be embodied in the structures and policies of states. For those few who believe that religion should have a direct influence in the political arena, it is with the proviso that religions in general should have such influence, and not just Islam. Most participants were in fact scathing about what they variously labeled «extremists», «fundamentalists», or «Islamic political parties». Corresponding to this lack is also a near total absence of talk about Shari’a and the role it should have in the state or even more broadly in the lives of Muslims. Although I cannot defend this idea clearly hear, I would argue that the great stress on kindness, humility, compassion, peace, and other moral precepts as being central to Islam – and even in cases such as that of Muhammad, more central than the five pillars – are indicative of this absence. On the reverse side, and far clearer from the interviews is the almost universally high value accorded to a society that exhibits religious and cultural diversity. Although some would like to live in a Muslim majority country because it would make practice easier, this does not negate their generally pro-multicultural and multi-religious stand nor their wish, on the whole, to keep «church and state» separate. Nazia’s comments on this issue can stand for many of others. When asked if she thought religion should have more of an influence in Canada, she replied,

I don’t know. I’m going to say no because religion ...is a personal thing that people value for themselves and supposed to discover on their own and I think if it has a bigger role, its gonna start – I think with any religion, if it has a large role, it’s going to start imposing its beliefs and values. I don’t know if that’s necessarily a good thing.

Then there is the following exchange:
Q: There are a lot of religions that are represented in Canada. Do you think that’s a good thing for Canada?

A: I think it’s a good thing for Canada. I mean it’s always more exposure, more ideas, more – even ... if you don’t necessarily believe in another religion, you can always take certain aspects of what they practice or what they do if it’s a really good thing. I mean I see it as a good thing, it’s just more diversity and more exposure to ideas you never would have considered before had you been living in a small tiny bubble.

Q: What do you think of Canada’s multiculturalism policy?

A: Oh I love Canada’s multicultural policy [laughs]... Okay, this is again coming from someone who was raised in seven or eight different countries and learning to love meeting new people, experiencing new cultures. For example, you just go up Bathurst [a major street in Toronto], and I mean, all the different like ethnic restaurants, and you can go to Chinatown this way, Greek-town that way, it’s…I love it. It’s just so much exposure, so many different people. I think it’s fascinating.

The attitudes of most of the rest are quite similar: religious plurality and multiculturalism is good for Canada, even if for a sizable number, the actual practice they see around them leaves something to be desired. The religiously devout Muslims, again with few exceptions, did not even want to live in a situation of «pillarization» or «institutional completeness». Religion, for most of them, was something personal and communal; and it was of vital importance. But they did not want to live in a society where religion, including Islam, was enforced. One illustration is Muhammad’s comments cited above. Another is this exchange from Nazia’s interview:

Q: Do you find that you miss living in a Muslim dominated community?

A: I do, I do, I do. It’s um, much easier. It’s…the values that go along with it, it’s just much nicer, much more comfortable. I do miss that.

Q: Do you have a desire to move to it, maybe later on once you finish university?

A: Well the thing is... It’s hard because if it’s a Muslim dominated society in terms of a state Muslim society, then I don’t like that either because a lot of your freedoms are taken away from you. And for example if someone wants to make a choice that goes against Islam, they aren’t allowed to do it. I don’t do that. And a lot, for example, more developed places where you are allowed to pray and places which aren’t dominated by Muslims – Maybe Turkey, which is a fairly secular state but is still Islamic, who knows? I don’t know. But would I like to? I would definitely like to go look for it and try to find a perfect balance in between.

Again, we must be careful if we want to see here a feature of a specifically diaspora Islam. The attitudes expressed in these examples are undoubtedly also present among significant numbers of Muslims in the various heartland regions. If there is something specific it is the relative prevalence of this attitude, or perhaps better, the rarity of an opposite, politically Islamist one. Taking that absence, if only for the sake of argument,
as a peculiarly identifying feature of this Canadian second generation Islam, we can return to the question of influence.

Conclusion: Diaspora religion as globally influential religion?
One provisional conclusion that we can draw from the Canadian research I have just presented by way of illustration is that diaspora religion shows that globally typical combination of homogeneity and heterogeneity that I have stressed as being a central feature of the globalized society in which we all live. The Canadian illustration has shown great continuity of diaspora and heartland Islam, but also the possibility of a general distinctiveness of the former. And so the question remains: Can we foresee this distinctiveness as spreading to other diaspora Islam and that of the heartlands? Given the demographic, visible, political, and theological preponderance of heartland Islam, this may hardly seem possible. The lines of influence from diaspora to heartland are not that dense that we could expect heartland Muslims in any significant numbers to look to their diaspora cousins for guidance. That position, however, forgets that the relation between diaspora and heartland is not static, but rather dynamic. The diaspora particularizations of Islam do not have to export themselves back to the heartlands in any direct fashion. They can, instead, simply continue to build themselves.

Although it is not certain, migration of Muslims from heartland to diaspora is likely to continue and thereby to increase. Conversions to Islam by «indigenous» people in diaspora locations will also continue, even if in most places they are numerically not really very significant (the possible exception is, ironically, the United States). While this may be seen as an exporting of heartland Islam to diaspora, it is also, in fact, the opposite as well. If we take the Canadian second generation Muslims as representative of what happens to Islam as it takes root in diaspora, then the fate of heartland Islam there is much more likely in the direction of the diaspora versions. Quite aside from what happens to the Islam of first generation migrants as they settle in and integrate into their new homes over time, the Islam of their children is taking its own directions, even if more or less in continuity with that of their parents. To the extent that these second (and eventually third and fourth) generations make up an increasing proportion of these diaspora populations – and even in Canada, with its constant influx of high numbers of new immigrants, the next generations are increasing faster than the first – to that extent their Islam will become the dominant version of a constantly increasing Muslim population. Continued migration is much more likely to feed these diaspora variations than to dilute them or turn them into another, perhaps heartland, direction. The diaspora versions will thereby become increasingly present models of Islam, not necessarily for heartland Muslims, but for the diaspora Muslims and the dominant non-Muslim populations of the diaspora locations. The minority could thereby come to carry and represent the models of Islam that the world’s non-Muslim majority looks to rather than the Islam of the heartland. Or at least, diaspora Islam will have an influence among the world’s non-Muslim majority disproportionate to the numbers that actually carry it.
Peter Beyer: Can the tail wag the dog?

That eventuality or possibility, however, depends on a notable feature that is very much present in the Canadian Muslims I have cited. This is their level of subjective and objective integration into the power structures of their diaspora locations. The ironic possibility thus presents itself: to the extent that Muslims (or mutatis mutandis the diaspora adherents of other religions) are not marginalized but rather positively integrated into the mainstream of the societies to which they migrate, to that extent they will in greater likelihood a) develop their own peculiar forms of Islam that model themselves to some extent on the locally dominant religions, and b) have those peculiar forms appear to the world around them as a, if not the, prevailing or most authentic form of Islam. The answer to the question of the influence of diaspora versus heartland versions is from that perspective at least as much a matter of optics as it is of the globally objective situation. Reverting once again to the metaphor of my title, the tail is unlikely to wag the dog if we stay with a view that identifies tail with diaspora or with global minority and dog with heartland or with majority. Taking seriously the degree which global homogeneity of Islam across heartland and diaspora shows the degree to which tail and dog can be interchangeable, the peculiarity of diaspora Islam can take on the appearance of dog, and not tail, if it is sufficiently visible for the broader populations of a given region, especially in the so-called West. And that visibility depends substantially, not on what heartland Muslims say or think, but rather on the degree to which Muslims in diaspora are a familiar and comfortable aspect of the social environment in those regions. In illustration, I close with a quote from yet another of the highly devout and practicing Muslim participants from our study. Let us call him «this Muslim guy I know at work»:

Q: In your opinion, how does Canada compare to other countries in terms of religious tolerance?

A: I think we’re one of the best. It seems to be when there’s a differences in religions, in religious beliefs in other countries, there’s a war that breaks out. We have yet to have that happen here. I hope it doesn’t happen, regardless of religion or faith or colour, or whatever. It would be really sad to see. I think Canada has a really good foundation when it comes to this multicultural, multifaith society. I think it’s really helped the general public open its eyes and realize that there’s a vast variety of people who are out there doing all kinds of different things; that we don’t know about. So, I mean, my working at this public health agency, I’m the only one there who’s practicing Muslim, so these people have gotten to know what I do, how I pray, you know, what I say, how I act, how I treat people, what my views are and things like that... And yet I’m integrated, I work with these people, I get things done, or I try and get things done; we have to work together to fulfill a mandate. Everybody has to work together. In the process, they get to know what kind of person I really am: go-getter, ambitious, determined, driven.... They get to know this, they get to see this, and faith becomes secondary when they know everything about it; when they know everything that they need to know, or everything that says, well, I’m satisfied with what I’ve got, or I’m satisfied with the information that he’s given me about his faith. I can move on.
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