

Missionaries in a Globalized World: Catholic Communities in Argentina and the Making of New Catholic Citizenships

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ABSTRACT

This article examines contemporary orthodox or traditionalist communities that have emerged within the heart of Argentinean Catholicism. The discussion aims to contribute to current debates concerning global religious citizenships in relation to orthodox or traditionalist Catholic communities. Vigorously promoted by Pope John Paul II and now Benedict XVI, such conservative communities have exceeded the nation-state boundaries in which they have arisen and, using global resources from diverse international networks within the Roman Catholic church, they work hard to expand still further throughout the globe. Conservative Catholic communities, which ground their activities in the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965), have found in Argentina conditions particularly favorable for growth. While Argentinean Catholics who participate in such groups are still a clear minority, they currently enjoy a visibility in the public sphere and recognized space within the Catholic church. As they justify their expansion, the communities redefine both the goal and the appropriate territories for missionization. The construction of Catholic community draws on perceptions of a memory of Christianity that go beyond national loyalties, generating for participants new worldviews and forms of sociability within the frame of a “renewed” Catholicism.

Keywords

Catholicism, Argentina, communities, globalization, mission

Introduction

From the time the Spaniards arrived in the sixteenth century to impose the regime of Christianity, the Catholic church in Argentina has been a

“monopolistic” cult (Di Stefano and Zanatta 2000). Thus religious identities in the country have been linked tightly with political ones. Independence from the Spanish crown in 1810 established Catholicism as the nationally dominant religious faith, a status that persisted until the twentieth century. In 1947, almost the entire population (93.6%) identified as Catholic, a percentage that in 1960 dropped slightly to 90% (Dirección Nacional General del Servicio Estadístico 1947; Dirección Nacional de Estadística y Censos 1960). A slight diversification of the religious field (Bourdieu 1982) was not visible in government censuses until the beginning of the 1990s, following the return in 1983 to a democratic regime and concurrent official establishment of guaranteed protections to religious freedom. By 2008, the percentage of avowed Catholics recorded by the national census had fallen to 76.5% (Mallimaci, Esquivel, and Giménez Béliveau 2009)—a proportion of Catholics to non-Catholics that remains large relative to other Latin American countries.

The high rates of Catholic affiliation in Argentina have been linked to the development, beginning in the 1930s, of a church ideology of “Integral Catholicism,” which claims to imbue all spheres of life, and to offer guidance for Catholic believers in every aspect of their spiritual and physical needs (Mallimaci 1988; Ben-Dror 2009).¹ This ideology also underlies close ties between the church and political and military power—for example, the church and the Army were key accomplices to the fervent populism of the regime of Juan Perón 1946–1955, and the church was also closely linked with the dictatorship of Videla 1976–1983—and overall has meant that the Catholic church enjoys an unusually strong public presence in the country. Through the last quarter of the twentieth century the Argentinean Episcopal Conference made itself into one of the most conservative of Latin America. With strong connections to the military dictatorship headed by (devout Catholic) General Jorge Videla (1976–1983), the Catholic hierarchy remained either indifferent to or actually participated in repeated human rights violations during the Dirty War, even when the victims of state terror included thousands of Catholics (Barrionuevo 2007; Catoggio 2010). With the return of a democratic form of government in 1983, the church managed to alter its negative public image that had stemmed from its association with Videla’s dictatorship and to reposi-

1. Integral Catholicism is a kind of Catholicism that proposes an extension to all the spheres of the society. According to Hervieu-Léger (1997, 109) in France, in the aftermath of the Revolution (approximately 1830–1850), Integral Catholicism was a springboard for the mobilizing utopia of a church dreaming of reestablishing its total hold on society. In Argentina, this type of Catholic renaissance had its “golden age” between 1930 and 1940 (see Mallimaci 1988; Mallimaci, Cucchetti, Donatello 2006).

tion itself as an institution that still exerted considerable influence over the government.

Within the debates in Argentina that surrounded the “absolute divorce” law (which was finally passed by the Chamber of Deputies in 1986), attempts at the legal approval of same-sex marriage (approved in 2010), and various reproductive health laws (2000, 2003), the church has deployed various strategies to perpetuate its institutional power and impose a particular view of society. Indeed, in the 1980s the church even threatened to deny sacraments to any member of Senate who voted for the divorce law. As Esquivel notes (2009), the hegemonic political culture in Argentina has traditionally regarded such demands of the Catholic church in a largely uncritical manner, creating a close, though still compromised relationship between political and religious spheres. The unique character of Catholicism in Argentina has informed social, economic, and political processes, including the so-called “crisis of institutions” of the last few decades—a combination of deep economic crisis and pressures for democratic reform that has also touched the Argentine Catholic church as much as it has other institutions.

The crisis has also involved a weakening capacity of customarily dominant social institutions to regulate everyday life and the dynamics of identity construction. While the vast majority of the faithful in Argentina identify as Catholic, they do not allow the church or its agents to intervene in what they consider to be the intimate sphere of their everyday lives. A kind of religiosity therefore dominates in the country in which people draw on Catholic signs and practices throughout their everyday lives, but largely within the frame of individual construction. At the same time, an unusually intense and exclusivist sociability exists in the two conservative Catholic communities I discuss here—a sociability that binds such minority religious communities and establishes autonomous features of the group rather than the individual. These religious communities hence comprise a clear doctrinarian, ideological, and organizational cult formulated strictly in accordance with church institutional regulations.

Today, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, the Catholic church in Argentina is considered among the most conservative of national Catholic churches in South America. It is very “Roman” in its actions and demonstrates a strong fidelity to papal authority. At first glance, the emergence of orthodox or traditionalist communities within the heart of Argentinean Catholicism might appear to be aligned with the ideological orientation of specific conservative archbishops. Conflicts and tensions regularly arise, however, between certain community leaders and bish-

ops in the Argentinian ecclesiastical hierarchy. Indeed, both of the communities I examine in this article have experienced serious disciplining at one time or another from within the Argentine Bishops Conference of Argentina. Within a church that likes to present obedience to Rome as one of its distinguishing virtues, the emergence of communities (regardless of doctrinal orientation) represents a challenge coming from within the church itself. They construct boundaries and autonomous loyalties that generate tensions within the same Catholic hierarchies that, in turn, try to resolve conflicts through specific agreements negotiated with the communities, rather than through drastic means such as an official severing from the church body. These communities are still a minority phenomenon within Argentinean Catholicism: only 2.9% of Catholics claim to channel their faith through such groups (while 22% claim affiliation to the church itself, and 64% claim to relate to God independently and privately). Yet over the last quarter of the twentieth century, the communities have become an active minority that does not shrink from the public voicing of their demands—particularly through insisting on the inclusion (in line with pro-life principles) of a Christian perspective on sexuality in government policies, and the securing of support for the communities' vast network of educational institutions, which extends from primary schools to universities. In Argentina there are currently forty-seven registered lay Catholic movements and associations registered with the Bishops' Conference.² They encompass roughly 450,000 persons (approximately 1% of the national population), including lay leaders, active “militants,” and a more marginal membership that follows community activities and publications without actively participating in the groups.³

This article hopes to contribute to scholarly discussion and debate about global religious citizenships (Campos Machado and Mariz 2000; Casanova 1994; Hervieu-Léger 1997; Meirelles 2009; Oro 2003) through the close examination of two international orthodox or “traditionalist” Catholic communities based in Argentina—the St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Community (*Fraternidad de Agrupaciones Santo Tomás de Aquino*, or FASTA) and the Institute of the Incarnate Word (*Instituto del Verbo Encarnado*, or IVE). These religious communities have extended beyond the nation-state boundaries in which they have emerged thanks to resources of the Catholic church's international network, and have explicit aspirations

2. Departamento de laicos de la Conferencia Episcopal Argentina, DEPLAI. www.deplai.org.ar, accessed May 31, 2011.

3. This number is based on the number of active registered communities, multiplied by an average membership size of approximately 10,000.

at further global expansion. By effectively managing the same resources (material, logistical, social, human, and emotional) that the institution offers the faithful, such communities challenge not only the control of the Argentinean episcopacy, but also the long term legacy of the Catholic Church in Argentina. International circuits of these Catholic communities generate new forms of global citizenship imbued strongly by conservative or orthodox Catholicism, creating a kind of citizenship that both foregrounds and challenges national and ethnic loyalties. Such Catholic citizenships therefore establish themselves as a universal referent beyond the customary identity barriers of the faithful.

This article explores the way in which these Catholic communities deal with their contemporary location in Argentinian society and in global society more broadly. Drawing from fieldwork conducted in two conservative Catholic communities in Argentina, I here analyze these two groups in terms of how they define their group identity, their doctrinal choices, and their practices.⁴ The influence of globalization processes, especially the intensification of flows of signs, people, and identity referents that now transcend national borders, has pushed many Catholic communities to revise old practices and discourses of self-representation. Following a brief introduction of the two groups, the discussion introduces the community-specific concept of “Catholic globalization” that I argue these groups deploy in conscious opposition to other concepts of globalization in common scholarly and popular currency. “The mission” itself emerges as a socio-religious practice that inserts itself in a world defined in terms of the struggle of Catholic globalization against the more encompassing process of (corporate capitalist-driven) globalization, which members regard as atheist, non-believing, and problematically liberal. The construction of the goals of their mission itself encourages a kind of Catholic mobility that figures centrally in the communities’ perception of the world and their place and purpose within it.

“Catholic Globalization”: Rethinking Contemporary Spaces

The communities I discuss here emerged in Argentina in the last few decades of the twentieth century at the margins of Catholic church. Both the *Fraternidad de Agrupaciones Santo Tomás de Aquino* (FASTA) and the *Instituto del Verbo Encarnado* (IVE) consolidated as groups after a long series of conflicts and negotiations with the hierarchies of the church.

4. Fieldwork on which this article is based was carried out between 1999 and 2004 (in the cities of Buenos Aires and San Rafael), and from 2007 to 2008 (in the Argentine cities of Mendoza and Buenos Aires, and in New York City).

The IVE and FASTA were both founded by priests following a specific charisma or spiritual gift. Father Carlos Buena began the IVE in 1984 in the Argentine city of San Rafael. Later, a branch for women religious was established—the Institute of the Servants of the Lord and the Virgin of Matará (*Instituto Servidoras del Señor y de la Virgen de Matará* or SSVN)—and a Third Order for lay Catholics. The two religious Institutes share the same charism, have twin constitutions and active and “contemplative” branches. The IVE is guided by the charisma of an “evangelization of the culture,” and by the specific goal, as detailed on its website, of committing “...all of our efforts to inculturate the Gospel, to prolong the Incarnation in all men, in all of man and in all of the manifestations of man, in accordance with the teachings of the Magisterium of the Church” (www.ive.org). The IVE has organized itself as a Religious Family (the *Instituto del Verbo Encarnado* and the *Instituto Servidoras del Señor y de la Virgen de Matará* were approved as an Institute of Diocesan Right in the Italian (Roman) diocese of Velletri-Segni on May 8, 2004), and has dedicated a large part of its efforts to training religious members and shaping them into missionaries. Currently, IVE religious members live in twenty-six countries (www.ive.org) and maintain regular daily interactions within the different local church hierarchies. The IVE has approximately 1000 priests and religious brothers, 2000 lay members of the Third Order. Approximately 8000 persons could be considered peripheral members, including students of IVE schools and their relatives.

The FASTA was founded by the Dominican priest Aníbal Fosbery during the late 1960s (between 1962 and 1968—around the time of Vatican II—various groups that could be considered its antecedents emerged). The group is especially oriented to working with youth and lay community members to form Christians for the dissemination of “Catholic Culture” (a concept explored later). FASTA focuses its efforts on families and youth, and its apostolic mission is centered on formal education, by means of a network of schools and the FASTA University. This network allows the community to transmit the values that it considers fundamental: a love of God, respect for the homeland, and the centrality of the “Christian family.” Currently the FASTA maintains eighteen schools in Argentina, two in Spain, and it has active groups in Peru and Brazil. During the papacy of John Paul II, FASTA was recognized by the Holy See (in particular, by the International Association of the Faithful of Pontifical Law), and as such it depends directly on the Vatican and not on the Argentinean episcopacy. Currently, FASTA has approximately 10,000 members, among them a minority of priests and nuns, and a majority of lay Catholics (Giménez Beliveau 2004).

FASTA and the IVE consider themselves an integral part of the Catholic Church and position themselves clearly within its most conservative wing. The groups invoke the Second Vatican Council or Vatican II as the rejuvenating moment in church history from which they were born; the groups regard Vatican II as having unleashed a renovation, yet one anchored deeply in Catholic church tradition. For example, the founder of FASTA, Aníbal Fosbery, has claimed that,

[I]t is clear that the historical continuity is given by the continuity of the teaching authority of the church [*magisterio*], as the other [First] Vatican Council⁵ taught us...Historical continuity, doctrinal continuity, and continuity in engagement with the great problems of today's society, that are the same as 2000 years ago—the union between Christ and his church. (Fosbery 1999, 577)

The relations between the church and the world are thereby redefined within the framework of “Catholic tradition” and the church’s original Truth. Each community underlines distinct aspects of Vatican II as a means of legitimating its own experience. The IVE recognizes itself in the conciliar directives that sustain the premise that, “the church is essentially “*misionera*” (Instituto del Verbo Encarnado 1994b, 8)—a missionizing church—thereby establishing a link between its self-definition as a missionary congregation and the postulates of Vatican II. Similarly, members of FASTA see themselves as the direct heirs of Vatican II, in particular the decree *Apostolicam Actuositatem* (“Apostolic Activity”), which enjoins lay Catholics to lead non-believers to the faith “with a view to instructing, strengthening, and encouraging them to a more fervent life” (Paul VI 1965)—as echoed in the community’s dedication to the evangelization of the laity.

These Catholic communities are inspired by a specific charisma, and the imperative of generating an identity that distinguishes them clearly within the church. This is a contradictory process, for they must constitute themselves as distinct groups while at the same time reaffirming their belonging and loyalty to the institutional church. This is realized within a particular organizational, symbolic, and discursive field. The communities’ claims to autonomy clash with the church’s attempts to control them and assert its control over its congregations. While the communities therefore must often limit their claims to autonomy, the church likewise must also hem in its own penchant to discipline their activities and discourses. The profound sense of identity that the communities engender also works as a recruitment draw: the IVE and FASTA encourage a Catholic militancy undergirded by a strong sense of conviction, exhorting

5. The First Vatican Council (1868–1870) was called by Pope Pius IX to deal with contemporary problems regarded as threatening both the world and Catholicism, including increasing materialism, rationalism, and liberalism.

members to act out this commitment in their everyday lives and fiercely defend their cause in public space. Thus, FASTA and IVE “militants” form part of a Catholic “hardcore” who live faithfully according to institutional and community precepts; they are also deeply convinced of the truth and justice of such principles and hence are determined to extend them to the entire society.

Within such a framework of identity, the communities have dedicated themselves to reconstructing the image of a world around them as one rife with corrupted values. For example, the groups read the advance of “modernity” as an attack on the very pillars of Christianity and as an attempt to diminish the outreach of the teachings of the church. This attitude can be observed in countries where the FASTA and the IVE see that there is unbridled commercial consumption, excessive liberties among the young, the dissolution of commitments and of family bonds—all of these destroying the basic cell of society: namely, the “Christian (Catholic) family.” Legislation that permits divorce, legalizes abortion, and allows the free expression of homosexuality is regarded by these groups as “perverse.” The communities’ sense of mission is undergirded by the desire to reshape a “true” Western culture that is Catholic down to its very roots and in its destiny. They construct a national Catholic imaginary that encompasses a redefinition of “the lands of mission” and a concept of “Catholic globalization” that contrasts with their negative view of capitalist globalization.

The work of creating a self-identity for the communities implies making explicit the difference between “self/Us” and “other/Them” by means of clear boundaries drawn between individuals or groups (Calhoun 1995). FASTA and IVE, like other Catholic communities in Latin America (Giménez Béliveau, 2004), view their growth as stemming from the activist Catholicism inspired by Vatican II, and from Pope John Paul II’s emphasis on evangelization. The affirmation of Argentine and Latin-American identity by drawing on the idea of a Catholic renaissance—in which the communities also see themselves as participating—assumes a definition of an “Other.” Within this process, the communities identify the enemy as the “secular,” “liberal,” and “progressive” encroachments of the United States and Europe. Local agents behind these encroachments are present within the wider population that, because of pervasive ignorance, participates in a colonization of culture the communities regard as dangerous, morally bereft, and unmistakably foreign. It is precisely within the larger, lay global population that the communities focus their efforts, as they strive to “help” people to recognize their authentic Christian origins.

As a nun in the IVE, for example, explained it to me:

Our cross is the cross of Matará. It is the first cross that was found in Argentina, from the time of the evangelization that was carried out here, mainly by Jesuits. And since our charisma is the evangelization of culture, for us it is a very important sign. As [the Jesuits] did with us here in our land, we want to evangelize, take the gospel there, where it has not yet reached; carry out a re-evangelization of the Christian peoples who have drawn away from the faith—Europe, for example, which is Christian in tradition but Pagan in its current customs.⁶

The quest to take the faith back to the place whence it came but no longer flourishes is the driving goal underlying the notion of Mission among FASTA and IVE community members.

The communities' reflections on the social and political evolution of the planet articulate with their particular language for talking about globalization. The world towards which the communities project themselves is no longer a world divided into nation-states, nor is it the globalized world orchestrated by the dominant economic super-powers—especially the United States and Europe. The communities maintain a confrontational stance vis-à-vis modernity, the age they see as marking the onset of a decadence of traditional society, of the Christian empire, as well as the origin of “Catholic culture.” For example, Father Anibal Fosbery explains this Catholic culture as something essential, immutable and almost suprahuman:

The Catholic culture is not an effect of civilization but of a supernatural knowledge that, making itself present in the spirit of man as a gift and grace of revelation, is projected upon nature, which can be transformed and transfigured, thereby providing its final destiny of glory. (Fosbery 1999, 370)

With an eye toward its extension throughout the contemporary world, the communities inspire themselves through recourse to the history of the Catholic church in order to create the concept of Catholic globalization. Thus, rather than seeing the world as composed of isolated spaces separated by national borders, the FASTA and IVE represent the world as a continuous space covered by different (though hierarchically ordered) cultures, to which the community must respond with an agenda firmly rooted in Catholic tradition. “Catholic culture,” the only kind of culture associated with “truth,” occupies a place that is central in both geographic and ontological terms. From this conception of culture, community leaders propose an expansion of this true culture to other peoples and cultures—including those who have distanced themselves from Catholicism and those who have never known it.

6. Interview with a nun from the convent of Santa Catalina de Siena, San Rafael, Mendoza, January 1, 2000.

Nevertheless, this evangelization has its limits, since there are persons and cultural perspectives that, firmly entrenched in an entirely different definition of truth, cannot be evangelized, and hence they exist as enemies for the communities. This is the case, for example, with some feminist groups, others who fight for the decriminalization of abortion in Latin American countries where it is still considered a crime, and leftist groups both inside and outside the church who, according to the communities, deny or distort God's image.

Thus, according to the communities, the possibilities of engagement with other cultures, and hence the evangelization of non-Catholics, vary. While it is important to attempt to dialogue with most, the communities recognize that with some cultures this is simply not possible. The "evangelization of culture"—a fundamental objective of both the FASTA and IVE—assumes that groups that are socially and culturally different respond to encounters with "other" cultures in the same way: by identifying the enemy, rejecting hostile parties, working with allies, and attempting to convert those who are different. Their view of Catholic culture is hence the very axis of belonging within both groups, the "core" that aspires to expand out to geographies that are both physically and culturally distant.

FASTA and IVE consider themselves as the legacy of the missionary congregations that evangelized the Americas, especially the Dominicans and the Jesuits. For example, Anibál Fosbery, founder of FASTA, is a Dominican priest who reinforces this sense of legacy that is both concrete—to this day FASTA priests are still formed in the Dominican Seminary in Buenos Aires—and symbolic. The female wing of the IVE Religious Family selected as its name a concrete reference to the evangelizing missions in the Americas—the Servants of the Lord and the Virgin of Matará—in honor of a wooden cross carved in the sixteenth century by a Matará indigenous person.

Thus, today the group relates its activities to the work of the first missionaries on American territory. According to SLVM nuns on their Italian website, the selection of the cross of Matará as their symbol "relates us with the great missionary work done by the church in Latin America, in particular with the Jesuit San Francisco Solano, who evangelized the Matará people."⁷

In the colonial period, "the mission" was also a border institution, designed to incorporate "others," but from within the Iberian civilization (Jackson 2009). FASTA and IVE hold on to this central social thrust of the missionary institution, the movement toward social groups understood in terms of alterity. FASTA and IVE both attempt to transform this alterity, underlining their link with the continent's first missionaries.

7. "Chi siamo," www.vocazionessvitalia.it/nome.htm, accessed May 31, 2011.

The native American, the indigenous subject of the evangelizing missions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, is incorporated into the group's elaboration of its identity in terms of its own collective memory: FASTA and IVE see the indigenous peoples as part of the same Catholic religiosity as the communities. They are also seen as "pure" subjects, "natural" bearers of authentic values. In one FASTA publication "*indios kollas*" (kollas or *collas* are an indigenous population in Northeastern Argentina) are defined as follows:

The baptismal memory of these people is rooted in Viceregal times, in the beginnings of America. Their customs [*gestos*] still show the distinct features of medieval and baroque religiosity in which American Catholicism was born, following a long evangelical inculturation that enriched this Catholicism at the same time.

(FASTA 1996, 18)

Thus, the native American is incorporated into identity itself by means of its ancient conversion to Catholicism. And the aim of missionization is defined based on the group's vision of the cosmos, and FASTA's and IVE's interpretation of history. This interpretation sees "modernity" as the source of the world's ills. In the words of Aníbal Fosbery, for example:

The process of secularization produces three absolute eschatological models that clash with each other and are mutually irreconcilable: national socialism, Marxist-Leninism, and the American [United States] model. These models are not created by the church, but rather by secularism [*laicismo*], by the non-religious world, and they are absolute.⁸

Situating themselves within the most conservative Catholic tradition of the nineteenth century, the communities construe "modernity" as the new enemy, and at the same time as their missionary target: those "peoples" [*pueblos*] who, having known Catholicism, became estranged from it from it because of the pernicious effects of "modernity, that distributes evil gifts with an ostentatious business card that announces "God is Dead" (Spinelli 2000, 13–14). The "mission territory" of the FASTA and the IVE is primarily an imaginary space inside "modernity" that has been shaped by secularization and a lack of faith. Maps charting the growth of the communities confirm this perception: FASTA began its expansion in Argentina and later founded groups in Chile, Brazil, and Spain. The IVE has sent missionaries to a range of Latin American countries, the United States, Italy, France, Spain, and Ireland. The former Soviet region has been the object of more recent efforts at expansion, and the IVE has also founded missions in Siberia, Tatarsan (Russia), the Ukraine, Kazakstan, Lithuania, and Tajikistan.⁹

8. From an interview conducted on November 15, 2000.

9. A complete map of IVE missions across the globe may be found at: www.ive.org.

For the FASTA and the IVE, the definition of the goal of mission enables the missionary praxis: namely, combating the destructive effects of modernity, which in both its capitalist and Soviet models led “peoples” away from the salvific influence of Christianity.

The source of the essential spiritual interconnection between different cultures is not the link between peoples resulting from contemporary processes of globalization. In fact, certain characteristic features the communities consider to be peculiar to current forms of economic globalization are vehemently rejected: an overvaluing of economic processes that tend to exclude religion, and a perceived concurrent erosion of morality. Moreover, the communities’ repudiation of globalization in these terms is grounded firmly in an understanding of the history of the Roman Catholic church as the first organization to propel globalization as a process of beneficent “unification.” A FASTA leader, Alejandro C., explains it in this way:

In the face of [this current form of] globalization, we always have a response... Catholicism, because the first universal was the church. Long before they invented globalization, the church was already founding empires. And before a globalization that devastates all the rich distinguishing features of each culture, the universality of the church tries to rescue and save each of the tones and colors proper to each...culture.¹⁰

As a universality that is assumed to respect locality, “Catholicism” emerges within the communities’ discourse as a project that not only expands in space but also extends itself temporally, from a past that emphasizes the origins of Christianity toward a future regarded as an eventual age of glory.

This concept of Catholic universality celebrated by FASTA and IVE members is affirmed in particular spaces made meaningful by means of church and community symbols that signify these spaces as explicitly sacred. An intense movement of members between distinct community spaces is frequent, and is promoted by FASTA and IVE leaderships by means of constant communication and rituals. Diverse community media (newsletters, magazines, websites) circulate between different community locations, chronicling the activities of members in far-away lands. These are read both for interest and also for the purposes of edifying the lives of FASTA or IVE missionaries—these are lives of great sacrifice, work, and joy, lives seen as examples to be emulated for the sake of increasing the memberships of the respective communities and for supporting the faith more generally.

10. Interview with Alejandro C., Buenos Aires, July 24, 2000.

In community ritual practices, the presence of the missionaries is constantly reaffirmed by the frequent mention of the names of those who are on mission, and the call to pray for missionaries' health and wellness as well as for the continued success of their efforts to spread the faith—especially in view of the challenge to learn foreign languages. In fact, IVE priests may make appeal at certain moments during celebrations to liturgical celebrations. Depending on the extent of their knowledge and the presence of visiting missionaries, they may begin to pray in the languages of the countries in which the IVE missions are located. Thus, the community recreates the imaginary of the “missionary community” that has expanded around the globe by a Catholic evangelizing movement born in the heart of Latin America, a space signified as a “pure” Catholic reservoir.

The Mission in the Times of Globalization

The concept of *Catholic globalization* frames the community expansion to distant geographies with a renewed representation of the world. According to Carlos Buela, founder priest of the IVE: “We are a missionary congregation...in some places we evangelize, and in others we re-evangelize; we go to places where the gospel has never been heard, and many others in which they have not even seen a white man.”¹¹

In this vein, Aníbal Fosbery states: “The lay [movements] within which the FASTA is included, are places where the experience of the mystery of God can be made, and from where the mission is received.”¹² The Mission (“*la misión*”) is the concept by which the communities’ movements to new geographical and/or cultural spaces are signified. According to Catholic church canonical understanding, “mission” denotes investing a certain person with the juridical authority of the church (*missio canonica*); *sacras missionas* are for the conversion of sinners and the confirmation of the just, and *missionas externas* are for the spreading of the faith among unbelievers and heretics (Mulder, in Pels 1990, 78). The new project of “Catholic mission” has been studied as one of the current pastoral strategies of the Catholic Church to recuperate its public visibility (Palard 2006). Indeed, Pope John Paul II underlined the imperative of missionization (and its core concept, *inculturation*) in various public declarations, such as his well-known apostolic letter of 2000, *Novo Millennio Ineunte*. The mission is part of the New Evangelization that had been heralded by the Pope towards the end of his papacy: “the ‘new evangelization’ which the modern world urgently needs...must include among its essential elements a proclama-

11. Interview with Father Buela, founder of the IVE, Buenos Aires, September 15, 2001.

12. Interview with Father Aníbal Fosbery, Buenos Aires, November 15, 2000.

tion of the church's social doctrine" (John Paul II 1991). Pope Benedict XVI has sustained this emphasis on the idea of "mission" as the theme inspiring the church's Third Millennium. In disseminating the church's new twenty-first-century doctrine, international conservative Catholic movements inspired by missionizing intent have been given a special role. International organizations such as the controversial Opus Dei, the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, and lay missionary movements such as the apostolic movement Schoenstatt¹³ have been promoted by the Vatican, and although originating in Europe, they are especially strong in Latin American countries. New Catholic missionary movements emerging in *Latin America*, such as the IVE and FASTA, however, have yet to receive much systematic scholarly attention. The mission in both IVE and FASTA is a mandate assumed by lay and religious members with joy since it is seen as the only manner of contributing to the growth of community life. The mission involves assuming new challenges that the community proposes. The educational domain is central to mission strategy for both the FASTA and IVE. FASTA missions in fact begin with the establishment of a school; IVE missionaries begin their work with the instruction of the catechism (Giménez Béliveau 2004). In the words of the principal of one of FASTA's schools: "At 24 years old, I was in charge of the Catherina [School], and more than the labor involved it is really about the mission, as it can be understood, the fact of having to construct, sustain, and protect what is the work of the FASTA."¹⁴

The fact they have no choice but to move in order to accomplish their mandate is an extra challenge for group members, one for which the community quite consciously prepares them. Readyng members for movement, regular international circulation, and transfers form part of the training principles of FASTA and the IVE. Such movements also become ways of promoting inter-community exchanges.

The FASTA and the IVE both encourage the mobility of their members by means of intensive, life-long training [*formación*] programs that are held outdoors for the youngest members. The formation of youth is essential for both communities, and the groups dedicate programs and activities to adolescents and youth.¹⁵ Indeed the communities consider their

13. <http://www.schoenstatt.org/es/>, accessed June 7, 2011.

14. Interview with the principal of the Caterina School, Buenos Aires, November 6, 2000.

15. The IVE organizes an annual event in the city of San Rafael (Mendoza, Argentina) called *Jornadas de la Juventud*. Also in San Rafael, it creates permanent training activities called "Oratorio festivo." FASTA considers as a fundamental part of its activities the formation of youth in Christian ideas, and creates special groups (named *Escuderos*, *Templarios*, *Adalides* and so on), common in all FASTA accommodations.

future existence to depend on the transmission of community principles to younger generations. Father Carlos Buela observes: “Our youngsters are prepared for the missions because we insist on participation in camps. So they already know what it is like to live outdoors. Afterwards, they can go to the missions in the poorest places.”¹⁶

For those faithful who have decided to commit to a religious life, international movement becomes more regular. For instance, novices of the IVE’s female branch must take their final year of studies in Rome, in the SLVM’s central house; many IVE priests also fulfill their postgraduate studies in Roman universities. The principal of one of the FASTA schools and an official community member, emphasized to me that

From the time we are kids, we are used to grabbing our backpack and meeting up together. ... There are no borders, no borders: you have people from Tucuman that today are in schools in Spain, or they say: go for a week camping in Chile.... For us it is something very common. We have two big trips during the year, and we are used to this rhythm, and to share with people from different provinces. It is a unique richness.¹⁷

The community organizes training and exchange trips to consolidate ties among the faithful, senses of identity, as well as particular group rituals. Movement between diverse geographic and cultural spaces in which the communities exist has become the model for the mission of the FASTA and the IVE.

The mission is thus a central element for the expansion of the community that becomes possible in the context of an “integral” Catholicism that is lived completely. The community appears to new members as a concretely defined and orderly space in which regulations established by the group guarantee spiritual, and frequently, material fulfillment for the faithful. Religious members, for example, are dependent on the group for everyday subsistence: they live in community accommodations, are fed by the group, develop their own activities within the community, and spend their free time in activities organized by the group. For group members, participation within the community implies the inclusion in a space that receives and protects them and that binds their lives with a single, principal meaning—that of the mission. The Catholic religiosity promoted by the FASTA and the IVE is assumed to be carried through members’ whole lives and assumes the total immersion of the subject within the community and institutional project. Community militancy is not part of a person’s individualized identity, but instead denotes a com-

16. Interview with the Father Buela, founder of the IVE, Buenos Aires, September 15, 2001.

17. Interview with the principal of the Catherina School, Buenos Aires, November 6, 2000.

mitment to the group that is made for life. Such a sense of belonging has a utopian thrust that assumes the presence of the group in all aspects of life: work, family, study, and even free time. All these spheres are regulated by the community, using as their organizing principle a specific form of Catholicism. One FASTA militant, for example, describes this sense of belonging in this way:

The important points in a person's life, for example, in my own life, are touched by that spirit of the FASTA as being the work of the church. When you arrive at a significant point in your life either professionally or personally, FASTA is there... FASTA are all the days of my life...When I formed a family, I also did that within the FASTA framework, my husband is from FASTA, Father Fosbery [FASTA founder] married me—it is all related.¹⁸

The announcement of a wedding of two FASTA members appearing in the Internet web portal of the FASTA youth wing reflects this strong, totalizing sense of community identity: “A large part of the *militia* had a date in the province of Cordoba to assist in the marriage of two members of the *militia*, Ana and Mario. Share with us the joy of this new Christian family.”¹⁹

The community is active and present in the lives of the faithful, the social ties orienting towards the interior of the group, thereby uniting members in a revitalization of the utopian tradition of the missionary Catholicism. This allows us a better understanding of the communities' view of transnational expansion.

The various and frequent movements of FASTA and IVE members from one country to another are not the result of personal decisions of individual members but rather an intrinsic aspect of community strategy. The community decides who is sent where and when. For community members, to move is also a decision made by those at the upper echelons of the community organization. Community members may receive decisions made by superiors with surprise or fear, but they still accept them as directives to be obeyed. For example, one religious IVE member who has been transferred from Argentina to a convent in Brooklyn, New York, stated to me, “Truly, I never imagined that now, here in the mission abroad, I was going to end up in a small school of religion.”²⁰ In a similar vein, a FASTA member stated that, “At 23 years old, and having just received my degree a year ago, Father Fosbery has put me forward as a principal of the FASTA Catherina school, in Buenos Aires. As we say, it is crazy... but we are formed that way.”²¹

18. Interview with the principal of the Catherina School, Buenos Aires, November 6, 2000.

19. www.jusfasta.org, consulted in June 2008. Names have been altered to ensure anonymity.

20. Interview, Brooklyn, New York City, January 28, 2008.

21. Interview with the principal of the Catherina School, Buenos Aires, November 6, 2000.

Motivating the militants is the possibility for personal growth within the group and within the community itself: members are socialized in the idea of sacrifice to glorify God, the church, and the community; complete obedience is the way of achieving common goals. For the faithful, a call from a hierarchical superior to propose a migration in order to take the community to a new destiny is simply part of community expectations. Further, the option to refuse cannot be clearly conceivable except as a repudiation of the missionary project itself.

The principle of obedience is the basis of the strategy for community expansion. In fact, more committed FASTA and IVE members show themselves to be willing to accept the requirements of mobility that organizes leadership “transplanting” as a preferential mode of growth outward to new territories. The “transplanting” (a term used by FASTA members) is the operation by which FASTA and IVE leaders set themselves up in a particular diocese to plant the community in a new context. This principle enabled, for example, the foundation of the Universidad FASTA in the city of Mar del Plata (when about twenty families moved to the city, located a couple of hundred miles south of Buenos Aires). It is also the directing principle of the administration of two schools in Barcelona, Spain (where two Argentine FASTA families moved), and of the creation of *militia* groups in Madrid, Peru, Brazil, and Chile. The same strategy also allowed the foundation of new provinces of the IVE abroad.²² The province of Peru, for example, was founded by Institute priests in 1988; ten years later it had grown to include twenty-seven priests, thirty-two seminarians and about fifty nuns.²³ The province of the United States was begun around 1990 by three priests of the Incarnate Word in New York City. Around the same time, IVE missions in Africa and Asia were also launched. Such “budding” movements initiated by lay and religious members are regarded as disciplined, voluntary responses to community leaders and community mandates.

The FASTA militant or the IVE religious member who relocates to another place is simply following community planning; thus, he or she is supported in all ways possible by the community. It is the community

22. In the IVE, the province (“provincia”) is an administrative unit that encompasses various groups. In 2011 IVE provinces were: Provincia Nuestra Señora De Lujan (Argentina, Chile), Nuestra Señora De Chapi (Perú), Inmaculada Concepción (Canada, the U.S., Guyana), Nuestra Señora De Loreto (Italy, Spain, Albania). The IVE also has “viceprovinces” (newer missionary territories that have not yet achieved “province” status): Nuestra Señora De Sheshan (Taiwan, China [Hong Kong], Papua New Guinea, and the Philippines), Nuestra Señora Del Desierto (Egypt, Jordan, Tunisia), Nuestra Señora De La Aparecida (Brazil), Nuestra Señora De Fátima (Russia), Nuestra Señora del Cisne (Ecuador), and the “delegations” of Nuestra Señora de la Misericordia (Sudan, Kenya) and Nuestra Señora Zarvanitsya (Ukraine, Tajikistan).

23. Information gathered in 2000.

that decides, for example, the location to which the missionary is going, and provides the house; these arrangements are generally agreed upon with personnel of the local church. The community also manages a special visa for religious members in those countries when required, organizes daily activities and social interactions with other members of the community who may be living nearby, and grants the position and the status that the missionary will occupy within the local group. As one FASTA member explained to me:

A large part of the process of establishing the FASTA, in [the provinces of] Jujuy, Tucumán, Neuquén, [and the cities of] Buenos Aires, Córdoba, [and] Barcelona [Spain], was made by transplanting families... Members in good standing, all officials, are covered by and follow the FASTA Order; they are entrusted with mission work. These families go away in an organized way, with someone responsible, and they are in charge of founding the work in a place... It is a process like colonizing.²⁴

This striking comment reflects the communities' conception of their mission, and the parallel between community missionaries and the pioneering church "civilizers." In line with classic colonial conceptions of the original evangelizing process, FASTA and the IVE regard this missionizing as an extension of "civilizing" Catholic culture toward spaces considered culturally, and implicitly morally, Other. This Other is not necessarily an inhabitant of "savage" indigenous territories, but can also be a resident of New York, Russia or Spain, who are seen by community missionaries as equally in need of a civilizing through immersion in true, enlightening "Catholic Culture."

The group departure is organized in detail, as are social networks for the missionary at her/his destination. A superior from an IVE group in charge of a parish in Brooklyn described the process in this way: "Every weekend we meet with the sisters of the convent. We take Mondays off, and we met with the sisters and the fathers of the Institute. And then we meet with all of the people of the Province."²⁵

The annual visit to Argentina or back to a missionary's place of origin is also orchestrated by the group. In the case of the IVE, religious members can arrange to visit their family for a month of every year.

In general, the path of the missionary-migrant is not easy. The community, however, provides an organizing scheme that allows missionaries to make sense of their hardships within a specific religious frame. The community sees Christ, considered a founder of the church and the community, as a principle of authority that hierarchically organizes in turn

24. Interview with a FASTA leader, Buenos Aires, July 24, 2000.

25. Interview with superior of the *Servidoras del Señor y la Virgen de Matará*, Brooklyn, New York City, January 28, 2008.

the entire universe. For the community, the domain of Jesus is not linked to earthly power in this world: reborn from his sacrifice on the cross for the salvation of all human beings, and thereby opening a unique possibility for grace and salvation, Jesus imposes a superhuman order upon the human world. At the same time as Christ presents the path of salvation, his sacrifice is held up as a model of commitment for both IVE and FASTA militants.

As one of the IVE priests stresses, “[A]n ideal of Jesus Christ is presented as a whole; it has beautiful things, but also the awareness that the holy life is one of a cross [one of suffering].”²⁶ Thus the community constructs a heroic life model that refuses to make any concessions to the world: whoever decides to follow the model is willing to sacrifice all for the principles that it sustains. Illustrating such principles, one FASTA militant affirms that, “The message of FASTA proposes a God to youngsters. And giving them a God gives them a reason to live... We propose to the youngsters that they be saints... Of course this means sacrifice, a lot of effort, convictions, values, knowledge—but it is also what gives a meaning to life.”²⁷ Echoing these sentiments is this comment from the founder of the IVE: “The secret of having vocations is in brutally presenting to youth the cross of Christ... The consecrated life is not a call to have fun, but to have a difficult time, as a teaching of the Holy Spirit... You have to die every day, crucify yourself with Christ” (Instituto del Verbo Encarnado 1994a, 4, 6).

Within such a scheme of the religious life, the suffering caused by living away from one’s family and place of origin, often in places with a different language, or very different cultural and social codes, is a sacrifice that brings one closer to divinity. The missionary-migrants understand themselves in relation to an interpretive scheme that, in spiritual terms, converts their sorrows into benefits.

The closeness between community members who reside in different sites of the globe is reenacted permanently by means of channels of communication that allow them to establish continuous dialogue with different community spaces. These spaces of exchange are quite formalized and carefully sustained. The IVE has a bulletin, *Ave María*, whose pages are mostly dedicated to the accounts of experiences from missionaries around the world. In “Russian Chronicle,” it begins as follows:

Dear brothers and sisters all in the Incarnate Word, I write the first part of this chronicle soon after arriving from New York. I do not want to go to sleep before writing a few lines, at the least. By God’s grace I have arrived in Moscow today, thus

26. Interview with one of the priests of the IVE, San Rafael, January 21, 2000.

27. Interview with the Director of the FASTA youth, Buenos Aires, December 14, 2000.

starting what we expect to be a grain of sand that our religious family contributes to the great desire of Our Lady expressed in Fatima: the conversion of Russia.
(Instituto del Verbo Encarnado, 1994b)

Not surprisingly, the Internet has become an almost indispensable tool for FASTA and IVE members: different branches of the FASTA have web pages with intranet spaces for the exclusive communication of members of the community. During my research at the Santa Catalina de Siena convent (SSVM/IVE), in the small Argentinean city of San Rafael, a nun who celebrated the arrival of an email describing the evangelizing tasks of IVE priests in Tajikistan commented to me, in seeming wonder, “The Internet seems like it was invented for us.”

The concept of the mission gains strength from within the Catholic Church tradition. Considering themselves as heirs of the lineage of Dominican and Jesuit missionaries that evangelized America, FASTA and IVE members reenact a tradition that allows them to retrieve elements that reaffirm their belonging to Catholicism and project their expansion in the name of Catholic history. As one of the IVE leaders affirms: “The missionaries, for example, have transformed many societies throughout history, many cultures with the strength of the gospel. Thus we think that such a transformation is possible.”²⁸ To reaffirm past glories of the church and to project the community as a privileged agent for earlier, preordained transformations exemplifies the dynamics of memory and utopia that are at the basis of religious beliefs (Hervieu-Léger, 1993). What organizational and symbolical structures support these beliefs, and allow the IVE and FASTA to fashion themselves as “new missionaries” within a globalized world?

The Community in the Center

The organizational model proposed by the FASTA and the IVE creates a community that is internally oriented. The group forms its militants and their religious specialists inside its own borders, generating intense spaces of sociability among group members, as well as work options for the faithful within already established group structures.²⁹ Without dismissing the diversity of interests and subjectivities that are present within the group’s interior (Segato 2008), a demonstrated intensification of social exchange

28. Interview with superior of the *Monasterio del Verbo Encarnado, San Rafael*, Mendoza, January 21, 2000.

29. The FASTA and IVE priests are consecrated by bishops close to the group. The celebrations to take holy orders and first masses of the neophyte-priests are followed with attention and enthusiasm by group members, narrated in their bulletins, and publicized on banners in community locations.

between community members (that eventually extends to similar communities in the fold of traditional Catholicism—whether in Argentina or in other countries) works to consolidate their identity, enable conservative doctrinal options, and standardize the ideological and political selections of its members.

Both the FASTA and IVE propose an intense intra-community life in which contacts with other members of the community multiply, even with members that reside in other locales, while relations with people outside the group diminish. Intra-community interactions are organized and sustained by different celebrations, which encourage a uniform worldview and instill in members a strong, defensive group identity. The more that committed FASTA and IVE members work in group institutions (such as schools or universities), marry other members of the community, socialize their children within the schools of the group, and dedicate their free time to cultivating friendships with other faithful, the stronger this horizon of identity becomes. According to the principal of one of the FASTA schools:

Every weekend there is always something... during the month of October there were priestly orders, first masses of the priests... That is what FASTA has, within all areas, there are always many activities, so you go with your family, from one place to the other. So my participation in the FASTA is very intense.³⁰

Other visible marks of group belonging are added to the many opportunities for intense social interaction, and play an important role in the consolidation of a community identity. For example, icons that refer to group memories and that mark the body of the faithful are exhibited with pride, defining the territories of the community. The attention to and care of uniforms is a clear example of this: priests and nuns of the IVE, for example, differentiate certain cassocks and habits according to specific categories. Priests wear a black cassock, monks have a white habit, nuns wear a blue and grey habit, and nun missionaries in Asian countries wear a black habit. The standard community uniform—which all members wear during community ceremonies—also assumes an important place within the FASTA: a blue-grey shirt with shoulder flashes, an embroidered shield, a beret, pants for men, and a straight skirt for women.

The communities thus establish clear boundaries between various spaces and things they consider to be their own, and what is “foreign”—in other words, between the community and the world. Intense social networks, which involve the bearing of identity symbols on the body, are explicitly constructed for the purpose of making such a separation. The

30. Interview with the principal of the Catherina School, Buenos Aires, November 6, 2000.

path from “outside” to “inside” is strictly structured: newcomers must undergo specific ritual steps before entering the life of the group. During these initiation ceremonies, new members pledge service and complete obedience to the church and the community.

The initiation of IVE religious members is established through a series of ritual tasks. After completing their studies in the community’s educational institutes, neophyte priests are directed by a bishop. Nuns profess vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience in the presence of a community priest. A special veil is then held over their heads as a sign of their devotion to God and the community. In the FASTA, entry to the group is also marked by a ceremony in which the faithful achieve full membership. The rite is also known as *oficialización* (“officialization”), and is presided over by FASTA founder Father Fosbery, who also holds the title of General Chaplain. He then bestows on the initiate a new “militia” name, used by community members to recognize each other, by pronouncing the following formula:

By the authority that was conferred to me as the FASTA founder and Chaplain, I receive you into our Fraternity. And by the merits of Santo Tomás de Aquino, and by our father Santo Domingo, I enable you to take part of all the graces, indulgences, privileges, and spiritual goods of the militia city.³¹

Bonds of obedience establish the governing structure of the community. FASTA members use an extremely elaborate greeting formula to address Father Fosbery and all superiors within group ceremonies. This formula indicates the importance of hierarchical authority and submission that underly the social contract established by the community: in practice, *militia* member hold their closed fists over their hearts in a steady position and pronounce “at your orders” (“*a sus ordenes*”).

Similarly, the IVE define obedience in three levels: carrying out orders (“*obediencia en la ejecución de la orden mandada*”), submission of a member’s will to that of a superior (“*obediencia de la voluntad a la voluntad de un superior*”), and “judgment obedience” (“*obediencia de juicio*”), which implies “accepting the priest or nun’s interior judgment as a superior one” (Instituto del Verbo Encarnado, 2009, Part V, Art. 78). Deference to community authority becomes a contractual obligation for members, embraced at the moment of pronouncing vows. This principle is expressed in the following “Constitutions” of the IVE female branch, the ISSV:

Following the example of the Incarnate Word, the members of the Institute totally devote themselves to God by the obedience vow, by means of which the religious surrender their will. (Instituto del Verbo Encarnado, 1999)

31. Fieldwork Notes, Formula pronounced by the Priest Anibal Forbery in the Officialization of new members ritual, “Oficialización,” December 1, 2000.

Obedience is at the very foundation of the community. Obedience to superiors is at the same time obedience to God. Thus, FASTA and IVE members submit their autonomy as individuals to community norms that are legitimized in religious terms.

Conclusions: Communitarian Spaces, New Catholic Citizenships, and Transnational Spaces

The *Instituto del Verbo Encarnado* and the *Fraternidad de Agrupaciones Santo Tomás de Aquino* emerge at the periphery of Catholicism in Argentina, a country that is itself situated in the margins of Catholic centers of production and circulation of images, doctrinal teachings, and church authority. From this double marginality these communities move toward the Catholic core and to the centers of power and circulation of the world, sending missionaries to places that in previous centuries generated missionary projects that evangelized the peripheries of the Americas. The communities' project supposes geographic and symbolic movements, and the development of an identity that relocates the communities, both physically and metaphorically, within a universe of meaning in which they see a utopia to be possible. The creation of new sacred territories (like the IVE cemetery in San Rafael, which has become a center for pilgrimages and other religious celebrations) establishes new platforms for the community's expansion out into the world, including to traditional centers of sacred production like the Vatican.

The reorientation of Catholic sacred production that now runs from South to North, from the periphery to the center, and then to other peripheries, could not have taken place without an intense reconstruction work of the trajectory of the "true faith." This expansionist project engenders a strong reflection on contemporary society wherein, as a response to the destruction wrought by capitalist globalization, the communities construct a concept of Catholic globalization that is based on traditional, even medieval, church ideas of universality.

As Rita Segato (2008) points out, the overvaluation of identity traits makes processes of displacement, deterritorialization, and reterritorialization easier for the communities: their identity is carried with members and is reinforced along with their movement cross the globe. The habit of IVE religious members, the shields and the uniform of FASTA secular members, the management of educational institutions, styles of celebrating mass, community hierarchies—all are transferred to a new territory that is thus already marked as belonging clearly to the community. Such identity practices make transnational circulation easier for the

group members: community spaces (houses, convents, schools) are recognized as the community's own, even if located in places far from "home." Similarly, different and foreign social and cultural environments, even if not far from Argentina, may be perceived as wholly "strange" (*extraño*).

It should be emphasized that in the course of their continual displacements, community members establish a relationship with local church institutional structures. The affirmation of community identity and the communities' goals of autonomy and self-regulation can frequently cause frictions with the bishops directing the dioceses in which given groups are established. They engage with local diocesan bishops but also with national episcopacies, and even the Vatican. The mobility of the groups facilitates negotiations and community reconstructions in other spaces in case that dialogue with local authorities becomes excessively conflictive.

Church authorities are not the sole institutional agents with whom the communities establish interaction. National, provincial, and local community governments, businesses, and national and international NGOs also interact with these communities, providing them with diverse kinds of resources. These include financial resources or logistical support for their activities or facilitating their establishment, such as agreements to use public municipal buildings as community dwellings or the offer of personal connections to facilitate community members' mobility. Thus, the FASTA and the IVE articulate their expansionary politics in a constant and strategic interaction with different agents and institutions that exercise power within world geopolitics, and which their own repositioning has made accessible.

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