Introduction: Religion and Borders in (Post–)Cold War Peripheries*

Angie Heo / University of Chicago
Jeanne Kormina / National Research University Higher School of Economics in St. Petersburg

This special issue comes out of a workshop that brought together anthropologists and anthropologically oriented historians in June 2016 to discuss three themes: religion, borders, and the Cold War. Convening in St. Petersburg—the city historically known as the “window” between the West and the non-West—we discussed the topic of geographic borders and Cold War imaginaries to consider how the geopolitical legacies of post–World War II world-making have impacted the everyday, religious lives of people on the ground. Most of us are scholars of religion, as well as ethnographers and historians of Eastern Europe and East Asia, who work on practices, discourses, and ideologies of religion. In the true spirit of a workshop, we pushed forward out of our normal comfort zones of expertise, toward experimenting with various approaches to the relationship between religion and the Cold War.

In the initial stages of envisioning this workshop, all the way back in 2014, we were inspired by a convergence of events and rhetorics that suggested that the Cold War imaginary remains very much alive in our current understandings of the geopolitics of West and non-West. In late November 2013, mass demonstrations began to take place in Kyiv for the integration of Ukraine into Europe.1 In March 2014, Russia annexed the Ukrainian territory...
of Crimea. These actions also recalled Russian and American denials of the revival of Cold War tensions after Vladimir Putin’s interventions in Europe, in stark contrast to the resurrected image of a “new Cold War” in public discourse. In 2016, as we wrote this introduction, the American presidential campaign was being fueled by Hillary Clinton’s and Donald Trump’s disputes about whether or not the United States stood in antagonistic relation to Putin. In addition, in December 2014, cyberterrorists attacking Sony Pictures’s film The Interview (a comedy film depicting the assassination of the North Korean leader Kim Jong Un) sparked discussions about the state of US–North Korean hostility. As one of the last Cold War frontiers in Asia, the Korean Peninsula’s divide captures tensions between North Korea, one of the last communist states in the world, and South Korea, a highly contested site of ongoing American military influence in the Pacific Rim.

In organizing our workshop, we were also interested in the fact that religion in the burgeoning scholarship on Cold War history has been relatively neglected. For example, The Cambridge History of the Cold War, a magisterial three-volume compilation, does not include the term “religion” in its index. The only happy exceptions are two edited volumes by Diane Kirby and by Philip Muehlenbeck, which mostly include chapters by political scientists and historians who focus more on the politics of religious institutions and less on the grass-roots practices and local imaginaries which ethnographers have been known to study.

To consider the religious aspects of the Cold War, we further wished to draw attention to geographic peripheries and religious traditions that have not received much attention in scholarship and are often regarded to be at the margins of Cold War history and politics. As anthropologists and historians, we wanted to learn about the local implications of global processes, that is, of how the macropolitics of state and economy had influenced lives of local communities and how local people had contributed to the Cold War’s symbolic meanings. In this issue, the following articles also shift attention from the Cold War’s geopolitical centers to some “provincial” perspectives and points of orientation toward the Cold War divide. Furthermore, they examine religious and antireligious practices and discourses from lesser-known traditions in Euro-American scholarship in religion such as sha-

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4 Lisa Yoneyama provides a distinction between “Cold War” and “cold war”: the former refers to the US-Soviet confrontation, and the latter to various regional manifestations, including the “hot wars” fought abroad. Although we do not use it in our article, we find this distinction helpful for future work. See Lisa Yoneyama, Cold War Ruins: Transpacific Critique of American Justice and Japanese War (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016).
manism, Chinese popular religion, Buddhism, Orthodoxy, and atheism. These articles examine key geographic regions on the peripheral edges of Soviet-US contest: the Russian Far East (between Eastern Siberia and the Pacific), Southeast China and Taiwan, Southeast Asia and South Asia, and the Korean Peninsula and Japan. By foregrounding these relatively understudied religions and geographic zones, we join a growing field of scholarship in the project of decentering the Soviet-American divide as the origin of the Cold War and open up new possibilities for narrating the Cold War’s effects on the Third World, postcolonial nation-states, and special political zones of autonomy.5

This introductory article is divided into three parts that together provide an overview of the concepts that guide this issue’s overarching vision. First, we interrogate the idea of the “Cold War” as a discrete historical period and narrative frame for understanding religion’s histories and politics. To do this, we point to asymmetries in experiences of the Cold War legacies across different local contexts. Second, we introduce “religion” as an empirical object of analysis, considering various methods for approaching the rhetorical, ritual, and political-theological aspects of everyday religious life. Third, we consider how the post–World War II era of decolonization shaped the border and territorial politics of the Cold War and examine various concepts of the “border.”

Cold War and (Post–)Cold War Peripheries

Following its standard textbook definition, the Cold War was an international struggle for global influence waged mainly between the United States and the Soviet Union from 1945 to 1991, marking the beginning of the post–World War II era and the collapse of the Soviet Union. During our workshop in St. Petersburg, many of the participants hailed from post-Soviet states (e.g., Russia, Romania, Poland, Georgia) and disputed the relevance of the term “Cold War.” Pointing out that the term “Cold War” was rarely used in Soviet rhetoric (and if so, then bracketed as a foreign concept), they provided an important reminder of its American and Western European origins. Coined by the British novelist George Orwell in 1945 and invoked by President Harry Truman in his address to the American congress in 1947, the “Cold War” advanced the notion of two dominant states seeking global influence through an undeclared state of war. As Anders Stephanson provocatively put it, the Cold War provided legitimating ideological cover “for American globalism

at home and abroad." Of course, the fact that the term was not fully accepted in the Soviet Union does not mean that there had been no experience of international contest and militarization—only that the perspectives and ideologies of framing it were remarkably different.

As most scholars agree, the Cold War was significantly advanced by an ideological binary, two rival perspectives on political modernity and economic development. To quote David Engerman: “The factors making the Cold War a war related to longstanding ideological differences combined with common features of the two ideologies (universalism, messianism, and determinism). Believing itself the end of history, and believing the historical progress was itself inexorable, each side expected to conquer each other and the rest of the world." Both the United States and Soviet Union were anti-imperial and anticolonial in their rhetoric; at the same time, both were “imperial” insofar as they were oriented toward organizing and developing the newly decolonized nation-states as world leaders at the forefront of change. In the postwar United States, state leaders promoted ideologies of market-based liberalism, with its capitalist origins in the post–New Deal era, and of Judeo-Christian secularism, which drove a war between the “god-fearing” free and the “godless” communists. In fact, it was the ideology of the Soviet Union’s lack of religious freedom that served as proof of its totalitarian nature for Cold War warriors in the West. Freedom of belief was propagated by critics of the Soviet system as a basic need in the modern democratic society. Historians of Evangelicalism and Roman Catholicism, for example, have shown how American and European missionary institutions and activity in the 1960s and 1970s were part of the larger enterprise of reaching souls behind the Iron Curtain.


We argue for retaining the Cold War framework to understand historical changes in religion and geopolitics, but with two caveats, which we elaborate below. First, we understand that the conceptualization of the struggle for global influence is substantively different, both for the two core players in the Cold War—the United States and the Soviet Union—and for their peripheral satellite locations of power. While the struggle was advanced as “war” on the American and European front, it was referred to as “peace-building” in the Soviet Union. Moreover, although the Cold War was “imaginary” and ideological in nature for the United States and the Soviet Union, its military outcomes were “hot wars” in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. In other words, there was a vast asymmetry in the ways in which the Cold War was experienced in the First and Third Worlds, and in the ways in which it was rhetorically framed as “militarist” or “pacifist.”

On the Soviet front, it was not the term “Cold War” that was used to wage war but the term “peace-building.” Extending the Bolshevik antireligion campaigns of the 1920s and 1930s, the Soviet Union certainly repressed religious activity to a significant degree but also recruited religious institutions to promote their international campaigns for peace-building at home and abroad. The same religious leaders and clerical figures who had suffered under the Soviet antireligion campaigns proved to be religious champions of the peace movement after World War II, when church-state relations became “warmer.” In 1948, a much-respected Orthodox archbishop, Luka (or Voino-Yasenetsky) of Simferopol and Crimea, published writings for the Moscow Patriarchate, which drew on Christian language to indict the United States and Great Britain: “We believe and eagerly hope that they will not allow their militarists to fulfill their bloody plans. With tears, we pray God to inflame the hearts of these good people, our brothers in Christ, with fraternal Christian love.” In 1950, the Soviet-inspired World Peace Council (vsemirny sovet mira) was established, an international organization that opposed American “war mongering” through “peace-building” efforts. Peace vigils, peace campaigns and petitions, and peace councils all made for an international social movement. Soviet religious organizations—Christian, Muslim, Buddhist—were all obliged to participate in peace-building activities and contribute sig-

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nificant donations to the Soviet Peace Fund, a charity organization established in 1961 to finance the Peace Council’s activities.

The Cold War framework also usefully offers a way of addressing multiple experiences of common ideologies, particularly in peripheral zones of the Cold War. Authored by ethnographers of religion, the articles in this issue examine differences in the impact and meaning of the Cold War on local levels. These differences are geographic and temporal in nature—geographic in the sense that they are all located on the periphery of the US–Soviet Union rivalry in variable ways, and temporal in the sense that they situate the ethnographic present in variable relation to the legacies of the Cold War. Our attention to the geopolitical frontiers, margins, and edges of religious institutions and movements often require examining the geopolitical contours of religious dissent and diversity. In short, it is on the peripheries of the Cold War that signs of “difference” relative to the core are often leveraged or repressed for political and economic purposes.

In this issue in particular, the articles all highlight the Cold War’s Asian frontier: East Asia and the Soviet Far East. In Asia especially, China played a leading role during the formative years of the Sino-Soviet communist alliance and especially after the Sino-Soviet split of 1960–89. As we will see, the Soviet and Chinese relationship to religious groups was not so much one of wholesale repression as it was one of state rhetoric and the bureaucratic management of dissent. As Ivan Sablin notes in his article on the Soviet state’s legislation and regulation of its Buddhist ties to Southeast Asia and South Asia, the issue of tolerating religious diversity was a key issue for the Soviet Union (as opposed to China) to showcase its ability to lead postcolonial Asia. “Religious diversity,” in other words, was a key political concern for the Soviet Union and China inasmuch as it served as a lobbying platform for international showcasing their position as leaders of the Communist world. In Robert Weller’s article on the Chinese state’s regulation of the Mazu cult and the Taiwanese diaspora in Southeast China, he examines the historical background of China’s United Front Work Department. Parallel to the Soviet Union, China also established the United Front to manage the religious diversity of overseas Chinese in Hong Kong, Macao, or Taiwan, as well as minority Chinese on the mainland. Here, our point is simply that geographic frontiers and circuits of mobility—frequently, the loci of religious diversity—are often the ethnographic sites where Cold War logics of international governance were actively staged and exercised.

In this special issue, we understand that the historical periodization of the Cold War is questionable; hence, the nervous hyphenation “post-” and parenthetical (post) appended to Cold War. Is the Cold War a discrete historical period? How does one mark its origin (e.g., the late 1800s, 1917, 1945) or its end (e.g., 1945, 1989, 1991)? And what is at stake in marking its finish when its continuing legacies so clearly suggest elements of its durability and per-
manence? Or should we better treat it in the *longue durée*?\(^\text{16}\) In the strictly technical sense of a historically plottable timeline, since most of our anthropological work is ethnographic and taking off in the observable present, we are dealing with the post-1991, “post–Cold War” period. However, as much scholarship has demonstrated, Cold War legacies of militarization and religious ideology are so readily activated in the present, particularly in current outposts of anticommunism and “free world” expansion such as those in the Asian Pacific Rim or the Middle East.

Marking the beginning and end of the Cold War is consequential for narrating the rise of religious activity. In anthropological scholarship on religion in post-Communist contexts, for example, the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 marked the explosion of religious movements such as Pentecostal Christian missionization\(^\text{17}\) and transregional networks belonging to Sufi cults and the Eastern Catholic Church.\(^\text{18}\) Similarly, in Robert Weller’s article, the Chinese economic reforms in 1989 marks a significant turning point for understanding the United Front’s liberalization of polices toward the Mazu cult. By encouraging the flow of capital from the Taiwanese diaspora to the mainland, the state permitted religious offerings as part of its openings to the market economy.

On another periodizing front, the Cold War’s enduring effects of militarization cast doubt on whether or not one can presume an “ending point” to the Cold War. In many respects, the Cold War continues.\(^\text{19}\) The Cold War’s legacies of militarization, on both former Soviet and American occupied territories, suggest that its lived effects are durable and permanent for the people who continue to live there. In this volume, Dominic Martin shows in his article how one old city in the Russian Far East called “Drydale” had been used to decompose Soviet-era radioactive nuclear submarines, and how the health of its inhabitants continues to suffer from the material remains of the Cold War arms race. In her article on shamanic possession, Seong Nae Kim also describes how American occupation in southern Korea during


the early Cold War years gave rise to atrocious acts of violence in the name of anticommunism. Today, shamanic possession is one ritual means through which Koreans on Cheju Island remember the legacy of this foreign militarization and address the repressed effects of unrecompensed violence.

By retaining the parenthetical status of the “post” in (post–)Cold War, we aim to signal the plurality of time-spaces that these various articles suggest with respect to these disputed historical periodizations. We also hope to open up conversation about what is at stake in tracing the continuities and ruptures between the Cold War and the post–Cold War moment. Through ethnographic traces and glimpses of its lived legacies, we can engage the ways in which present worlds challenge histories of violence that linger at the Cold War’s peripheries.

RELIGION: PROPAGANDA, RITUAL, AND POLITICAL THEOLOGY

In this special issue, we further examine how Cold War history and politics gave rise to new discourses and practices of religion in Soviet and post-Soviet Russia, China, Taiwan, and Korea. These discourses and practices of religion operated at various levels. First, there is state rhetoric and propaganda, which regulated religious institutions, authorities, and activity. As mentioned before, if American state policy propagated the individualist spirit and religious freedom during the Cold War, then the Soviet state propagated atheism and scientific humanism against religious dogma and false spiritualization, continuing its Bolshevik legacy from the pre–World War II period.20 Second, there are ritual practices of spiritual mediumship and cult veneration, which were subject to state and local authorities. In addition to communicating an experiential sense of transcendence, these ritual practices organized material grids of time and space that intersected with historical changes in memory and territory.21 Third, there are contests to state power posed by religious authorities, which challenged and extended configurations of sovereign power. Such contests over authority were, at times, political-theological in nature, demonstrating the inextricable entanglements between religious and state domains of power.22


Contrary to American Cold War depictions of the communist state, Soviet state secularization was not so much a process of eradicating religion as it was one of destabilizing and recomposing it. Under communist rule, the Russian Orthodox Church was subject to state regulation, its clergy promoted and demoted according to state authorities, and its curriculum and publications vulnerable to state veto and revision. Integral to socialist modernity and state building, the Soviet antireligion campaigns also relied on propping up “the believer” as the antithesis to the doctrines of scientific atheism and secularization. Promoting scientific atheism as the ideological alternative to religion, state officials disseminated educational propaganda through print media and visual arts and introduced atheist rituals and ceremonies during state holidays and celebrations. It was during these periods of religious repression that religious leaders also developed strategies of dissent and anti-state dissidence—a historical phenomenon that Ivan Sablin describes in his article on the relationship between state propaganda and Soviet Buddhism. Rather than functioning solely as dissidents such as Bidiya Dandaron, Soviet Buddhist spiritual leaders also leveraged their status as international diplomats to promote the image of the Soviet state abroad as a “tolerant” advocate of religious freedoms beyond its boundaries. Blending ideologies of global peace with socialism, they also propagated a politicized doctrine of Buddhist pacifism worldwide. Here, it is significant to note that, although religious teachings were repressed and marginalized, they were also transformed and instrumentalized during the Cold War period of peace-building. Following Catherine Wanner’s argument, although the post-Soviet years witnessed the growth of religious movements, we should not understand this growth simply in terms of the regime’s failure but rather explore the ways in which the promotion of atheism itself “fueled religious change.”

Anthropologists of ideology, culture, and propaganda have approached the relationship between the Soviet atheist state and religion in ways that reveal their creative interplay instead of their opposition. For example, Sonja Luehrmann’s ethnography of religion and atheism in the Volga region reveals that the experience and skills that cultural workers developed in the Soviet era, sometimes directly in the sphere of atheist instruction, have often been transferred to new roles as religious leaders in post-Soviet times. Rather...
than presenting this as a narrative in which “religious and secular form . . . simply replace and supersede one another,” she speaks of the “constant back-and-forth between the dynamics of secularization and theologization.” Such elective affinities between pedagogies show how the state’s transmission of propaganda was far from a complete, unidirectional enterprise, rather enabling culturally creative crossings between atheism and religion. In a similar vein, Victoria Smolkin-Rothrock’s work on Soviet antireligious rhetoric and propaganda shows how state officials abandoned the combative framework of the science-religion binary and instead created new atheist dispositions by addressing their audience’s “spiritual needs.” This structural interaction between religion and atheism suggests that the two ideological domains were historically shaped by one another in content and form under Soviet state power.

In addition to studying propaganda and ideology, ethnographers of religion have examined the role that ritual has played in reproducing and subverting state authority. Following Catherine Bell’s useful schematization, the concept of “ritual” and ritual-like activity usually includes the following six characteristics: (1) formal, restricted code; (2) archaic, anachronistic elements; (3) strict, repetitive patterns; (4) strict code of rules; (5) sacral symbolism; and (6) public display. Much of these descriptive features emphasize the notion of ritual as a social-structural vehicle of stasis and reproduction. What we find especially useful for studying the formal continuities between religious and state authority is an enlarged notion of ritual that these features draw into analytic visibility. Ritual is a medium not only of religious traditions, but also of political traditions of communicating authority in the broadest sense. Like ideological and propagandistic form (between atheism and religion), ritual form therefore opens up an empirical space for analyzing the historical continuities and discontinuities between religion and the (anti-)communist state in Cold War contexts.

In the Cold War Asian context, studying rituals of state power and religion inevitably confronts the historically vexed issue of territorial sovereignty in the Pacific Rim. In the next section, we will further explore the concept of borders and nation-state making. For now, we wish to consider how rituals mark politically vital identities and create the means for forging new social horizons of identification. In the early Cold War period of the 1950s, Taiwan
and the Korean peninsula each entered into “civil” wars that were driven by competing notions of nationhood. As this volume’s articles show, religious rituals have been deeply shaped by the aftermath of these wars, particularly in the ways that state authorities (e.g., in China and South Korea) repressed rituals of territorialization and commemoration.

It is worth pointing out the gains of a material approach to ritual, or the ways in which ritual practices create felt orders of space and time. In addition to creating an experiential or meaningful sense of transcendence, religious ritual can index political orders of regulating physical movement across territorial space and historical memory across time. On the topic of space, for instance, Robert Weller’s article examines the ways in which the cult of Mazu, a maritime deity that originated in northern Fujian, eventually expanded its temple networks through diasporic migrants from Fujian to Taiwan, Southeast Asia, Europe, and North America. By marking the territorial location of her various temples, religious rituals of pilgrimage, tourism, and cosmic renewal are the vehicles through which the Mazu cult establishes its spatial reach. For the Taiwanese diaspora of Fujian origin, the Cold War cut the Taiwanese Mazu cult off from Fujian, where popular religion was prohibited, and the end of the Cold War resulted in the revival and reconnection of Taiwanese-Fujian connections. What is striking is how the Chinese-Taiwanese Cold War division resulted in new religious differences, or variations in the ritual form of Mazu’s birthday celebration. Whereas in Taiwan, Weller observes the integration of the local community in the regulation of ritual affairs, in mainland China, he finds that the Chinese state employed a highly bureaucratic Confucian ceremonial model to ritual celebration. This empirical difference in ritual practice—one local, and the other state-bureaucratic—serves as an instructive example of how the Cold War spatial divide can be indexed in religious form.

Similar to the ways in which it shapes spatial orders of religion, ritual also shapes temporal orders of religion in Cold War contexts. Ritual commemorations of the dead and the “political lives of dead bodies” provide sites for analyzing the difference between local memory and state-sanctioned official memory. In this volume, Seong Nae Kim examines the role that religion plays in recovering violent memories from the era of American occupation of southern Korea in 1948 (before the Korean War), and especially the April 3 massacres, when the Republic of Korea army killed Cheju Island ci-

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villians in the name of “anticommunism.” For decades, the state had prohibited any public recognition of the Cheju victims, effectively repressing local memories of dead kin. It was in this context that shamanic ritual practices of possession flourished, as a temporal medium of recovering repressed memories of murdered, lost ancestors. Rituals of exhuming dead bodies are therefore another example of embodied acts of religion that serve as a response to the material effects of repression and occupation. If forgetting the past was part and parcel of South Korean state rule, shamanic possession sheds light on the temporally durable traces of state violence into the present. Religious phenomena, in short, offer the material vestiges of Cold War militarization and repression.

And finally, in addition to studying ideology and ritual, this volume engages with the more recently burgeoning field of political theology to understand various types of sacred and sovereign power, and their relation with one another. The uses of theological discourse in political culture have already been well studied. In scholarly literature on the rise of American Protestantism during the Cold War, for example, historians have shown how doctrines of original sin and apocalyptic millenarianism were refurbished and mobilized toward ideologies of both the fascist right and communist left.33 By invoking teleologies of transcendence and salvation, Cold War Americana profited from fears about future violence and prophetic promises of victory. Scholarly literature on political theology, by contrast, has focused on the ways in which political formations are fundamentally owed to original foundations of sovereignty and transcendence.34 In the Soviet and post-Soviet context, ideologies of eternity, utopia, and sovereignty over life were prevalent,35 although they were not “theological” notions per se, these concepts may also be mapped onto histories of resurrecting transcendence and sacred power into political cultures of war. Engaging political theology has been one strategy for scholars to rethink sovereignty in post–Cold War zones where the nation-state is no longer the main vehicle of sovereign power.36 Much of this work has placed the domain of religion and politics on equal analytic footing and on overlapping discursive grounds, to examine the origins of state exceptionalism in theological practices. For example, in his article on the revival of Old Believers living inside an old “closed city” of the Russian Far East, Dominic Martin draws on political theology to consider the legacies of the Cold War for religious dissent in the post–Cold War

34 Carl Schmitt, Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).
present. Martin brings together politics and theology into the same material history—what he calls a “subterranean link” defined by the “empty throne” of Soviet power in cities where Soviet military research and development had been conducted in secret during the Cold War.

As in the study of ritual, the study of political theology entails engaging the spatial and temporal practices of the Cold War in the present—whether it is the decomposition of nuclear submarines or the revival of old spiritual claims to authority. Theological form is therefore also materially consequential to the Cold War’s legacies in formerly militarized zones throughout the Pacific Rim.

BORDERS: NATION-STATES, MILITARIZED ZONES, AND DIASPORA

The Cold War ushered in a changing geography of new nation-states in the post–World War II era of decolonization, in addition to an emergent geopolitical order of rule and knowledge. New geographic borders were created as postcolonial byproducts of the Cold War. In the Soviet world, decolonization translated into the creation of East European “satellite states” through which new forms of political incorporation, control, and intervention were developed. These satellite states included, for example, states in Central Asia which were treated as members of the “Third World.” In the wake of the decomposition of old European empires, the formation of new states resulted in the artificial making of new borders, for example, throughout sub-Saharan Africa. In the American academy and state think tanks, the Cold War gave rise to modernization theories such as the “Three Worlds” imaginary, which partitioned the world into bounded geographic spaces, and against which Sharad Chari and Katherine Verdery have alternatively proposed studying the Cold War as a “spatial, institutional, and ideological phenomenon.”

Organizations such as the Social Science Research Council (SSRC), the Rockefeller Foundation, and the Ford Foundation were all established during the early Cold War period. Furthermore, the institution of “area studies” in research universities served as a powerful mechanism for organizing the world into newly defined regions.

Following scholarly literature in border studies, the concept of the “border” has expanded beyond the territorial frame of geographic and geophysical borders. The “Iron Curtain,” the Cold War master trope for the US-

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58 Chari and Verdery, “Thinking between the Posts,” 12.
Soviet divide, is itself an imagined “virtual” border resulting in the realization of hard territorial borders corresponding with a constellation of bloc states. From the 1990s onward, anthropological work on borders began to delink the “nation” from the “state,” emphasizing the symbolic boundaries of identity and culture that make it possible to consider national ties aside from the physical structures of territory, government, and state. In this issue, for example, Robert Weller’s article on religious movement between Taiwan and China also develops a distinction between “border,” as in the international “border” between nation-states, and “boundary” which designates a more general line between categories of belonging of any kind. Following Sandro Mezzadra’s and Brett Neilson’s focus on “border as method,” the multiplication of different types of borders also means “the reemergence of the deep heterogeneity of the semantic field of border.” In short, the shape and significance of “border” exceed the territorial literalism of the nation-state’s edges, enabling ways of approaching relations between geopolitical imaginaries and their cartographic translations, as well as zones of mobility and containment that cut across states.

Religious phenomena are inextricably intertwined with the material and historical making of territorial states and their borders. As we have been arguing so far, the Cold War was generative of religious practices and ideologies shaping cultural orders of space and time. In the post–Cold War era, moreover, there are religious forms and spaces that continue the Cold War’s legacies in partial and fragmented ways. How did the Cold War’s organization of borders—national, territorial, symbolic—intersect with spaces of religious authority and ritual? What geographic circuits and transnational crossings do religious institutions enable and disable? And how does religion under the Cold War transcend and circumscribe the territorial politics of autonomy and mobility?

We wish to elaborate on two particular themes concerning “borders” that are ethnographically analyzed in this issue’s articles on religion and the Cold War. Focusing on structures and histories of enclosure, the first theme explores the militarization of borders and the ways in which religion takes part in making spaces of containment and circumscription. These spaces include those territorial zones and frontiers where the Cold War was fought, as well as their remnants and infrastructures in the post–Cold War era. The second theme, by contrast, examines the flow of religion across nation-state borders (e.g., land and maritime) in ways that demonstrate the transnational

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41 Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson, Border as Method: Or, the Multiplication of Labor (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013), vii.
and diasporic trajectories of ritual and capital. As the articles of this issue show, such trajectories were shaped by Cold War histories of state and empire building, as well as post–Cold War legacies of territorial occupation and resistance to it.

Both Dominic Martin’s and Seong Nae Kim’s studies address Cold War militarization of the Northeast Asian Pacific Rim—Martin with Russia, and Kim with the United States. Martin’s nuanced account of Orthodox dissent in “Drydale” of the Russian Maritime Region demonstrates how a Cold War ZATO, or “Closed Administrative Territorial Formation,” transformed into an enclave of spiritual sovereignty. This transformation relies on the special territorial status of Drydale, which maintained its isolation and effectively autonomous status during the Cold War, along with its existentially dangerous status as a site of denuclearization in the post–Cold War period. Geographically demarcated by an “internal border,” Russia’s Drydale is a virtual “state within a state” that receives special subsidies for restrictions on its movement, commerce, and civil association due to its radioactive materiality as a site where nuclear submarines decompose. Martin tracks how the late 1990’s Far Eastern revival of Old Belief, Russia’s oldest tradition of Orthodox religious dissent, converges with the special territorial sovereignty of Drydale. Building on Drydale’s contained city status, a group of Old Believers launched their claim to an autonomous diocese that is independent from the Russian Orthodox Church. In addition, these Far Eastern Old Believers strategically developed spiritual transnational ties with an older Old Belief lineage outside of Russia with the Belokrinits Metropolitan in Romania. By doing so, these special revivalists crossed the territorial confines of the post-Soviet Russian state to erect and expand a sovereign ecumene across borders of Orthodox Church dissent and Cold War militarization.

Whereas Martin’s article examines the Cold War’s militarized borders through the lens of sovereignty, Kim pays attention to how Cold War militarization occurred through national division and territorial occupation. Kim turns to South Korea’s Cheju Island, an island that belongs to a geographic region historically associated with resistance movements against foreign occupation, whether Japanese (1910–45) or American (1945–48). During the early onset of the Cold War immediately after World War II, the Korean peninsula was divided at the 38th parallel, and each half of the peninsula was under temporary occupation of the Soviet Union (North Korea) and the United States (South Korea). Contrary to common perception, it is worth emphasizing that this Cold War division preceded the Korean War (1950–53). Because of the Cheju residents’ protests of the installation of the border—that is, the peninsula’s division into two zones of control—they were deemed “anticommunists.” Kim examines how the US Military Occupation Government and the Republic of Korea Military Government engaged in a six-and-a-half-year civilian massacre in Cheju beginning in 1948 called the “April 3 Massacre.” By linking the space of national territorial division, also
an “internal border,” with mass massacre and mourning, Kim details how the Cold War’s border politics gave rise to shamanic rituals of spirit possession and ancestral worship.

Examining the transnational movement of religion across geographic borders, Ivan Sablin studies the Soviet state’s implementation of policies toward religion via political delegates traveling across Asia. Like Kim’s Cheju nationalists, Sablin engages a Cold War period during which postcolonial nationalists were divided in terms of whether to support the Soviet Union or the United States. Whereas Sablin engages the Cold War imperial front of moving across borders, Weller look at how postcolonial nationalists expanded the geographic territory of religion through diasporic mobility. As a consequence of Cold War politics, it was the Southern Chinese diaspora who disseminated Mazu cult territory via river trade routes and sea travel. Following Weller’s proposal, the term “boundary” rather than “border” better captures the intertwining trajectories of ritual and capital at various moments in China-Taiwan relations during and after the Cold War.

The concept of the Cold War “border” is one that encompasses the geographic idea of a territorial demarcation linked to the state, as well as the broader spatial and temporal aspects of imagining political boundaries and transgressions. Emerging out of US-Soviet wars over territory, militarized zones of isolation and occupation gave rise to particular practices of religious authority and dissent. Diasporic communities, moreover, advanced the flow of money, individuals and organizations across national borders in post–Cold War contexts.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

In a recently published short comment, Katherine Verdery asserts: “The Cold War is not a trope.” By this concise and memorable phrase, she takes a stance against metaphorical invocations of the Cold War that vaguely signal imagined enmities along geopolitical faultlines. The alternative, following her argument, is to engage the Cold War as a “concrete reality” involving specific institutions, characters, resources, and social ties of power and meaning. In keeping with Verdery’s call for investigating the Cold War as an empirically accessible phenomenon, this issue engages with particular locations, events, and groups in the Russian Far East and East Asia to consider the Cold War’s effects outside North American and European contexts.

More specifically, this issue’s focus on religion and borders draws attention to the potential contributions that studies of religion can advance toward understanding the wider geopolitical processes of nation-building, militarization, and diplomacy during and after the Cold War. Foregrounding

everyday practices of dissent, mourning, and transgression, the historical and ethnographic research presented in this issue demonstrate how religion is not merely an “incidental” or “epiphenomenal” feature of nation-states and imperial politics. Rather, we hope to encourage debate and discussion around the centrality of religion in defining the inhabited contours of the Cold War whose effects continue on into the present.