Competitive Sharing of Supposedly Indivisible Sacred Spaces

Competitive Sharing of Supposedly Indivisible Sacred Spaces - nagranie seminarium

[Competitive Sharing of Supposedly Indivisible Sacred Spaces, Robert M. Hayden](#) [1]

Ron Hassner's assertion that sacred spaces are by nature indivisible ignores the empirical reality that in many places, over many historical periods, sacred spaces are and have been shared by adherents of theologically incompatible religions (e.g. Hinduism and Islam in India, Islam and Christianity in the formerly Ottoman space, Roman Catholicism and other forms of Christianity in Europe since the 11th century). They are rarely, however, shared equally; and the overwhelming pattern is that the community that is dominant politically will be predominant in control over main religious sites, even when members of other communities may still be permitted to use them. In such cases, the main symbolic features of the site will reflect the iconography and styles of the dominant community, and thus are likely to change as dominance changes. The conflicts that inspired and inform Hassner's model are actually exceptional cases, not representative of common configurations. Instead of viewing religious spaces as inherently indivisible, it is better to see them as frequently shared, but shared unequally; and the major issues concern exactly which parts of the space are controlled by which community, and when. Coordination may be least conflictual when one of the communities involved is clearly dominant politically, or when an external power (imperial, colonial or the post-Cold War variants of externally supervised rule) is dominant. Coordination of the use of religious spaces will be most conflictual when the communities involved are still vying for supremacy, and an assertion of unilateral, exclusive rights to use a supposedly indivisible site has greatest political significance. This paper makes these arguments through discussion of a range of empirical cases, mainly drawn from India (colonial and contemporary), the Balkans (early modern, modern, contemporary), central Europe (historical and contemporary) and Iberia (historical).

Robert M. Hayden (J.D., Ph.D.) is an anthropologist of law and politics. His primary research for more than three decades has focused on the Balkans, but has also done fieldwork in India (1970s, 1992, 2013) and among the Seneca Iroquois of New York State (1970s). Following ethnographic research on Yugoslav socialism from 1981-89, he did extensive work on issues of violence, nationalism, constitutionalism and state reconstruction in the formerly Yugoslav space, as well as on transitional justice issues stemming from the Yugoslav wars. From 2007-2013 Professor Hayden headed Antagonistic Tolerance: An International & Interdisciplinary Project on Competitive Sharing of Religious Sites , which developed and analyzed, variously, ethnographic, historical and archaeological data from Bosnia, Bulgaria, India, Mexico, Peru, Portugal and Turkey. His new research stemming from this project include studies of sufi/ dervish orders in post-imperial settings, and the (re)construction of religious sites to mark competing national territorial claims in Bosnia since the end of the war there. More information about his research and teaching can be found at:[www.pitt.edu/~rhayden](#) [3].

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